UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE & MATHEMATICS

School of Civil Engineering and the Environment

An exploration of the psycho-social responses and adaptations of citizens to the experience of conflict between consumerist and environmental values in the UK

by

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ABSTRACT
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A PSYCHO-SOCIAL EXPLORATION OF THE RESPONSES AND ADAPTATIONS OF CITIZENS TO THE EXPERIENCE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN CONSUMERIST AND ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES IN THE UK

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The pre-eminence of consumer culture would suggest that the achievement of environmental citizenship in practice is improbable. However, against the shared backdrop of advanced industrial capitalism, some individuals demonstrate levels of pro-environmental behaviour (PEB) and commitment that set them apart from the majority of their fellow citizens.

In an attempt to explore the difference in motivation underlying this phenomenon, the strategy of this thesis is to present a comparative analysis of 'green' and 'non-green' individuals from a psycho-social perspective which focuses on the interface of the personal, social and political. By selecting a sample with similar socio-economic characteristics – apart from their pro-environmental practice – the thesis aims to contribute to accounts of how PEB might be fostered and commitment both deepened and sustained.

The analysis suggests that 'greens' are strongly influenced by experience of nature, especially as children, and that this experience has laid the foundation for an adult pro-environmental orientation in which PEB is one manifestation of a broader and deeper personal ethical stance. The significance of nature implies that, given the dominant emphasis on materialism and a lack of access to direct experience of nature within contemporary consumer culture, the power of environmental education is limited.

Analysis of the data from the 'non-greens' suggests that experience of personal conflict between consumer and environmental values is less significant in deterring motivation towards PEB than experience of the conflict between these sets of values embedded in political, economic and cultural institutions. Recognition of the conflict was common to both samples but, whereas the greens were able to draw on a personal ethical stance to sustain PEB, the response of the non-greens was generally one of demoralisation.

Opening spaces and opportunities for deliberation may be a promising avenue for citizens to explore and confront the conflicting demands of the environment and consumption but in the absence of systemic changes in government, economic and cultural practices, significant changes in PEB are highly unlikely.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, ANNIE DICKSON

declare that the thesis entitled

An exploration of the psycho-social responses and adaptations of citizens to the experience of conflict between consumerist and environmental values in the UK

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

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- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission

Signed: .....

Date:.....

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INTRODUCTION

Although our existence on this planet has always entailed consumption, this is the first time in history that humans have had to face up to the possibility that earth's resources are finite. The combination of current postmodern consumerism and the overwhelming need to find sustainable ways of living creates a unique and conflictual circumstance in which nation states, their governments and citizens are embroiled together.

The concept of sustainable consumption arose in response to the increasing acknowledgement of the contribution of human activity to environmental degradation. The aims, as first clearly set out in the Agenda 21 document in 1992 at Rio, were to strengthen individual and institutional responsibility by reversing or at least minimising the "ruinous cycles of produce-use-dispose" that have had such widespread negative impacts on the environment and society (Hobson, 2004, p.122).

Sustainable consumption remains a contested concept, the particular emphasis being dependent on whether one is prioritising the economy, the environment, or society: a market orientation based on efficient use of resources; global and national inequities of resource use; or social justice (Hobson, 2004, pp.123-4; Pepper *et al.*, 2009). A crucial distinction is whether sustainable consumption implies consuming differently or less, a distinction which has marked its subsequent evolution from concept to application during the past two decades.

Throughout this period, the institutional consensus has been that sustainable consumption "is not about consuming less, it is about consuming differently, consuming efficiently, and having an improved quality of life" (UNEP, 1999, quoted in Jackson, 2003, p.14). The economy is the strand that has dominated approaches to sustainable consumption and consistently gained most political support as a "win-win approach instead of threatening global markets, favouring voluntary rather than prescriptive changes to industrial practices" (Hobson, 2004, p.124; Connelly and Smith, 1999).

As affluence within a consumer culture is recognised as a major societal force in environmental degradation (Vleg and Stek, 2007), consumer behaviour has long been subject to research across a variety of disciplines within social sciences, with the aim of changing current patterns of consumption to accommodate sustainable goals. Although more recent political and media emphasis on the consequences of climate change has underlined the imperative of establishing long-term changes in the attitudes and lifestyles of individual citizens, a clear dichotomy has emerged (Lorenzoni *et al.*, 2007).

On one hand, the majority of citizens in the developed and developing world are by now familiar with and often well informed about environmental issues and with the rationale behind specific pro-environmental practices, in other words, activities that either benefit or at least cause minimum harm to the environment (Steg and Vlek, 2008). On the other hand, despite attempts to change consumption patterns, evidence shows that consumers are continuing to consume at ever more unsustainable rates.

Policies relying on a voluntary reduction in energy use by individuals are simply having no effect (Lorenzoni *et al.*, 2007). Any gains in improved technological efficiency in energy generation and declining industrial demand in the past thirty years are offset by rising energy consumption by consumers, who continue to use more and more household electrical appliances (European Environment Agency, 2005).

Identifying and isolating the crucial variables that hold the key to motivating pro-environmental behaviour (PEB) – for example, values, information, encouragement, peer pressure, background, personal disposition, demographics, proximity to facilities, immediate experience of environmental threat – have been the subject of vast amounts of empirical research over the last thirty years.

The discourse of sustainable consumption addresses some of the tensions between contemporary consumerism and the environmental values necessary for sustainability. My own research questions arise out of the value-action gap with a specific focus on these tensions. The overall enquiry is to determine to what extent the internalised

psychological impact of the phenomenon of consumerist culture undermines attempts to encourage individuals to adopt more consistent sustainable behavioural practices? Is contemporary consumerism implicated as a specific feature of the value-action gap, thus acting as a psychological barrier to PEB?

Three subsidiary questions arise: are individuals aware of consumerist values? How are individual attitudes and beliefs about environmental problems and the need for a more sustainable lifestyle influenced by the demands of consumer culture? Do individuals experience any tensions between pro-environmental and consumerist values and if so, how do they respond? Answers to these questions could point to ways of enhancing motivation towards PEB.

The overlap of my questions will be reflected in the following review of three literatures which, although separate in their purview and rarely in dialogue with each other, are all relevant to the nature of my research enquiry. First is the literature on environmental values from the perspective of green political theory with special reference to environmental citizenship. My research sample will include green citizens and I am interested in evaluating the reality of practice in relation to the theoretical literature which proposes environmental citizenship as a means of counteracting consumer values and educating individuals to adopt more sustainable practices.

The following two bodies of literature both relate to factors believed to mediate between the theoretical ideals of environmental citizenship and translation into actual practice: empirical research into motivation and the significance of pro-environmental values within social psychology and finally, the literature on consumer culture and its influence on social values and norms, with particular reference to the ideology of postmodern consumerism.

CHAPTER ONE A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I:I The evolution of green citizenship

The following review looks at the distinction between environmentalism and ecologism before tracing the evolution of the former through the concept of sustainable development and influence of ecological modernisation on mainstream approaches to environmental problems. I then examine the green political response of ecologism, representing radical alternative political and social ideals, a development which was tempered by the emergence in the late 1990s of a more pragmatic approach. Questioning the nature of the relationship between citizen and the state, green theorists sought a collaborative framework that offered a way to maximize the possibility of attaining a sustainable society leading to a conceptualisation of environmental, ecological or green citizenship as an ethical response to the need to motivate citizens to change their consumer behaviour patterns in line with sustainable goals. This section ends with a comparison of some of the features of differing definitions of ideal environmental citizens.

Environmentalism and ecologism

In one of the first academic overviews of the emerging literature of green political theory, Andrew Dobson makes a crucial distinction between environmentalism which reinforces a "managerial approach to environmental problems" and ecologism, an ideological proposition concerning radical changes to our actual relationship with the natural world and by implication, changes within all our social and political interactions as well (Dobson, 2000, p.2).

In keeping with the principles of environmentalism, the concept of sustainable development emerged within green political thinking and remains essentially contested with different definitions spanning a wide ideological spectrum (Connelly and Smith, 1999). The phrase was launched into current popular use by the Brundtland report (WCED, 1987) which emphasised the need for limitations on environmental resources,

proposing that technology and social organisation could be better managed to make way for a new era of economic growth, aimed at making the exploitation of resources, direction of investments and orientation of technological development consistent with future as well as present needs.

Ecological modernisation, as the dominant interpretation of sustainable development, allows the possibility of economic growth without the environmental degradation, giving an equivalence to two concerns traditionally seen as incompatible within environmental politics: economic *and* ecological. By attributing a price to what was once taken for granted as a free commodity, the cost of using environmental resources is assimilated, allowing for a longer-term perspective.

The principle of Integrated Pollution Control and the Polluter Pays Principle are two key examples of the wide political and legislative influence of this interpretation in most liberal democracies (Connelly and Smith, 1999, p.144). While this may be seen as a sign of the success of ecological modernization, increased efficiency of resource use ignores rising levels of consumption (Princen et al., 2002). From a green political perspective, ecological modernisation leaves unaddressed issues of social justice in terms of distribution of environmental goods and risks and also the instrumental valuation of nature as an economic good (Connelly and Smith, 1999, pp. 65-70; Grove-White and Szerszynski, 1992).

The critique of the instrumental valuation of nature embodied in ecological modernization has its roots in early green political theory which tended to focus on radical orientations towards politics and ethics. A social ecological orientation favoured anarchic ideals of egalitarianism, local empowerment and diversity over traditional political power structures (Connelly and Smith, 1999, p.60). According to Murray Bookchin's influential analysis, the competitive and hierarchical nature of capitalism made the commodification of nature inevitable: nothing short of a radical and decentralised alternative would allow both humans and nature to be freed from domination (ibid.).

While the radical nature of social ecology challenged political structures, the equally radical focus of deep ecologists challenged the assumed human-over-nature hierarchical relationship dynamic (Naess, 1973). The proposition of egalitarianism had profound implications for environmental ethics, stressing the interrelatedness of all living and non-living entities and positing eco-centric or 'non-anthropocentric' perspectives towards non-human nature.

Dobson traces the evolution of modern ecologism to the view propounded in the Limits to Growth report, which concluded there were natural limits to economic and population growth; a finite and fragile view of the Earth underpins the ecocentric core of radical green theory (Dobson, 2000). Ecologism demands nothing less than a radical re-think of our relationships with non-human inhabitants of the earth as well as human, rejecting a hierarchical perspective of relationship for one of interdependence (Smith, 1998). Alternatively, instead of demanding systemic change, environmentalism offers a means of adapting our behaviour to solve environmental problems without the necessity for a profound shift in attitudes. Whereas ecologists insist that the Earth has intrinsic value beyond being simply a means to human ends, environmentalists argue that we should care about the environment because it is in our interest to do so (Dobson, 2000, p.18).

In direct challenge to the instrumentalism of the dominant anthropocentric culture, an emerging ecological perspective sought to transcend the individual self in order to reach a state of identification with the non-human world founded in unity and dependence, a part not apart. This 'ecological consciousness' is the foundation from which a new ethical framework and practice would naturally develop: putting it colloquially, if you get the heart right, the head will follow. Dobson describes the change from an ethics as "a code of conduct" (Dobson, 2000, p.40) to an ethics as "state of being" (Dobson, 2000, p.46).

John Barry describes how, historically, the focus of environmental ethics within the deep green movement (Naess, 1973) shifted from a preoccupation with concern to find an intrinsic (as opposed to instrumentalist) view of nature to an emphasis on ecological

consciousness, a move he describes as "an ontological-cum-metaphysical crisis" of identity (Barry, 1999, p.15).

Ecological consciousness is not without its problems when translating the ideal to reality. From an entrenched and currently mainstream anthropological perspective, this vision inevitably appears completely impractical and, in the circumstances of modern society, inappropriate. An ethics of being presupposes a relationship with nature and non-human species that is more reminiscent of a life spent in the wilds than in an urban environment (Dobson, 2000, p.50). Metaphysical discussion, in other words, has little relevance in suburbia: "Consciousness is not an independent datum, isolated from the social conditions that nurture it" (ibid.).

Barry argues that deep ecology, in its moral stance based in eco- as opposed to anthropo-centrism, also fails to provide a normative basis for green political thinking, lacking coherence between its moral and political discourses (Barry, 1999). The two polarised viewpoints: "anthropocentric – qua mechanistic, reductionist, instrumentalist" –or eco-centric are of limited use in the political process since it matters less why one should care for the non-human world than that one should care for it (ibid., p.160).

The extreme attitudinal change demanded by ecologism militates against the likelihood of mainstream acceptance. A metaphysical analysis, Barry writes, is detrimental to securing sufficient normative agreement: "The problem with deep ecology is that it brings green politics into irresolvable conflict with settled convictions, giving it a 'fundamentalist' complexion which is a hindrance to convincing non-believers to support its political aims" (ibid., p.27).

The environmental citizen

Towards the end of the 1990s, a new discourse emerged around green citizenship in response to the need to change the consumption patterns of individual citizens, a factor recognized as the largest single obstacle to achieving sustainable goals (Berglund and

Matti, 2006). This discourse revolved around a more pragmatic acceptance that a green society could not be achieved in the absence of the state which has a vital role in achieving sustainable goals. These goals could be achieved through market-based or citizen routes assuming that rational self-interest plus a realisation of the common good would lead to environmentally responsible behaviour but not necessarily to a change in attitudes (Dobson and Bell, 2006, p.3). In the absence of genuine acknowledgement of a concept of the common good, citizens express unwillingness to accept stricter regulations, fiscal reform and resent green taxes (ibid., p.5; also Smith, 2004).

Behavioural change without deeper levels of attitudinal change risks political unpopularity and consequent electoral defeat for governments. The environmental citizen embodies a new articulation about the rights, duties and capacities of the citizen in relation to the state, the cornerstone of which is, essentially, a collaborative partnership between citizen and state in creating a sustainable future.

The cultivation of ecological virtues shelves the more problematic aspects about the intrinsic value of nature while allowing aspects of the 'ecological self' – at the heart of ecology – to be incorporated into green political theory. A virtue-based account stresses individual character and the capacity for moral action in the context of the human-nature relationship. It is this focus on social-environmental relations, for Barry, that gives such an account its political credentials.

An emphasis on virtue allows the ethics of ecology to be retained but in a more palatable and more credible political format. Avoiding an outright rejection of anthropocentrism, individuals can be still encouraged to adopt a more critical and ethical approach: "The development of an ethical anthropocentrism divorced from a metaphysical one opens a common space between deep and non-deep green moral theory" (Barry, 1999, p.31). Barry argues that a more pragmatic anthropocentric interest can be maintained while challenging the ecological vice of arrogance that has led to such widespread environmental degradation. Arrogance can be offset by ecological virtue, which

according to Barry acts as "a bridge between deep ecology and a reformulated anthropocentric ethical theory" (ibid.).

James Connelly also stresses that, through environmental virtues, attitudes can be changed without the need for a totally transformed eco-consciousness: by "nurturing the seedlings of an already-existing green consciousness into new forms of ecological citizenship", practice guided by virtues can be directed towards the common environmental good (Connelly, 2006, p.50).

Environmental virtue ethics offer neither ultimate answers to questions about human existence nor permanent (and off-putting) solutions. But as a *modus vivendi* to counteract the dominant ethos of consumerism, it encourages a reassessment of excessive materialistic lifestyles by proposing alternative virtues associated with "being and doing not just having" (Barry, 1999, p.34). Through the key virtue of deliberation on precisely on the meaning and implications of the common environmental good (Connelly, 2006, p.51), citizens can be encouraged to move from selfishness in the direction of selflessness and shared sacrifice.

Virtues shift the focus from philosophical to practical, encouraging the adoption of values appropriate to ecological stewardship: "Ecological virtues are related to social-environmental relations in which human self-interest and *well-being* are fulfilled by modes of interaction which minimize harm as much as possible, without sacrificing serious human interests" (Barry, 1999, p.35). Theoretically, neither humans nor nature need suffer excessively.

As a normative green political theory, ecological citizenship offers the possibility of motivating citizens towards sustainable lifestyles (Dobson, 2003) and challenges more traditional definitions of citizenship. The emphasis, at the heart of ecological citizenship, on virtue, responsibilities and duties is closer to civic-republican than the rights-based tradition of liberal citizenship (Dobson, 2003; Connelly, 2006) but departs from both traditions in three ways.

First, the nature of responsibility is non-reciprocal rather than contractual. One interpretation of ecological citizenship is Dobson's post-cosmopolitan citizen, guided by the principal virtue of justice which derives from humanitarian concern for others, but more crucially, a sense of obligation of one citizen to another, reflecting impacts of more powerful citizens over others through historical exploitation, pollution and resource extraction over past centuries (Dobson, 2003, p.120).

The dimension of asymmetry implies that the post-cosmopolitan citizen must make amends: the decision to make amends necessitates choices within the private sphere of life as well as public which challenges a second traditional boundary. Acknowledgement of past injustice demands care and compassion, emotions typically considered more appropriate in private life as an individual than as a public citizen. Thirdly, ecological citizenship is non-territorial: although as Connelly, points out non-territorial citizenship may be a contradiction in terms, the global nature of environmental problems like climate change demands that responsibilities of ecological citizenship must transcend local and national boundaries (Connelly, 2006, p.63).

It is difficult to know how much of the theory can be translated into reality. Although, historically, citizens of different nations can be held to account as unequally responsible for past environmental degradation and resource exploitation, the asymmetrical distinction seems to conflict with the possibility of universal post-cosmopolitan citizenship: even if, as nationally circumscribed citizens, we are historically unequal in terms of past exploitation, surely *all* global citizens have equal rights to a share of environmental goods (and risks) as well as equal duties and responsibilities in the future (Connelly, 2006, p.64)?

Even if such demands can only be fulfilled in a rhetorical domain, the moral imperative of environmental citizenship is clear. Dobson spells out the deliberately moralising mission of post-cosmopolitan citizenship with the aim of rehabilitating political virtue in the awareness that "unadulterated pursuit of self interest undercuts the kind of conditions

that make a reasonable pursuit of self-interest possible, and that some commitment to the intersubjectivity of social life is desirable" (Dobson, 2003, p.43).

Barry conceptualises a slightly different profile in the form of the sustainability citizen, whose mandate is to address "the underlying structural causes of environmental degradation and other infringements of sustainable development such as human rights abuses or social injustice" (Barry, 2006, p.22). Like Dobson's post-cosmopolitan citizen, the sustainability citizen combines both liberal and republican traditions, having both rights (access to a common good) and responsibilities (a duty to address injustice). A commitment to help the vulnerable requires the sustainability citizen to espouse virtues of moderation, prudence, self-reflection, self-knowledge and a deep commitment to equality. To this list Barry adds: discipline, self-restraint, loyalty, courage, perseverance and commitment; also compassion, care and tolerance (ibid., p.35).

For Barry, though, virtues alone are insufficient. A sustainability citizen must be informed, aware *and* prepared to be an activist, not simply a theorist, if any real change in society is to occur. A sustainability citizen must engage in political and other forms of resistance, particularly towards injustice: the need is to address, to challenge and to change (Barry, 2006).

The list of relevant virtues is further expanded by Connelly. He defines virtue as "an environmentally sensitive disposition" (Connelly, 2006, p.52) and in this way differentiates virtue in this particular theoretical context from a private moral principle or personal quality; virtue here essentially includes a *social* dimension in approach and practice (ibid., p.51). In total, Connelly lists eighteen ecological virtues and ten corresponding eco-sins, reflecting a mixture of Christian tenets (faith, hope, charity) and utilitarian principles (concern, accountability, co-operation).

The overlap with traditional political and Christian virtues reflects a consensus throughout the literature. The value of these virtues or character traits is drawn from the value of the behaviour that these traits tend to produce: in this context, the concept of

right or virtuous behaviour is appropriate to the particular requirements of environmental citizenship. There is also a sense in which these virtues are seen to be essential to general human flourishing. Barry, for example, cautions that sacrifice and suffering should not be overstressed because the practice of ecological virtues is essentially good for us since "they are both partly constitutive of human well-being, while also being instrumentally valuable to human well-being" (Barry, 1999, p.64). The direct focus, though, regardless of any sense of human flourishing that may accompany virtuous action, is to achieve sustainable goals: this assumes an *a priori* conception of the common good (Connelly, 2006, p.51).

It is also worth noting a general consensus that questions concerning relations to the non-human world are not of central significance and, according to Dobson, more relevant to environmental ethics than citizenship: "the moral community can be usefully regarded in an ecocentric way, but the community of citizens cannot" (Dobson, 2003, p114). Inclusion of non-human species remains neither practical nor possible because ecological citizenship demands reasonableness and the ability to deliberate, thus excluding non-human species from a "rights-making and rights-maintaining community" (Connelly, 2006, p.64).

Are the goals of environmental citizenship as a strategy of behavioural change realistic? The overall emphasis on internal change through inculcation of virtues assumes that behavioural change will automatically follow attitudinal change and seems to ignore the acknowledged gap between concern and action. The shortfall between pro-environmental concern and pro-environmental practice is a phenomenon widely researched by social scientists and is referred to as the 'value-action'or 'attitude-behaviour' gap, describing a mismatch between concern for ethical issues and actual consumer behaviour (Blake, 1999; Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Worcester and Dawkins, 2005). This brings me to the second body of literature: the empirical research into constituents of the value-action gap in relation to motivating pro-environmental behaviour.

I:II The value-action gap

On one side of the value-action gap is the frequent expression of concern and "abstract support for environmental policies" prompted by a desire to appear supportive of socially desirable goal and on the other, the rarity of "a personal commitment to pay the costs of environmental protection" (Witherspoon, 1996, p.56). The quest to bridge this gap in order to motivate citizens towards more sustainable lifestyles, without excessive (and unpopular) government intervention, has become a kind of holy grail for the new millennium – particularly in relation to environmental citizenship.

Care about and concern for the environment is abundantly evident from research using the New Environmental Paradigm (NEP). The NEP, developed by Dunlap and Van Liere in 1978 (revised in 2000), was originally regarded as running counter to dominant anthropocentric norms, in the belief that a new kind of relationship is necessary between humans and nature if we are to survive together in the long term (Schultz *et al.*, 2005) This psychometric scale of fifteen items generates a single score representing environmental attitudes and eco-centric concern which describes the degree to which people view humans as part of nature (i.e. an ecological attitude) instead of solely as consumers or guardians of nature (Dunlap *et al.*, 2000).

Subsequent measurements of attitudes and opinions about the environment are aimed at isolating the specific factors which would help to assess a positive or pro-environmental approach. Yet, despite overwhelming empirical evidence of a cross-cultural ecological consciousness and the perception of environmental problems as one of the most pressing social issues, widespread commitment to pro-environmental behaviour is absent (Schultz & Zelezny, 1999; Dunlap, 1991).

Empirical research on barriers to pro-environmental behaviour (PEB) falls generally into two categories: intrinsic (motivation, values, knowledge and attitudes) and extrinsic (institutional, cultural and social) factors (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Roberts and Russell, 2002; Steg and Vlek, 2008).

Intrinsic factors affecting motivation: knowledge, attitudes, values and moral norms

Although environmental knowledge and information are necessary to prompt action, environmental awareness, in itself, has been generally shown in the research to have little significance in motivating PEB (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Lorenzoni *et al.*, 2007). Other factors, for example, the non-immediacy of global events and the pace of ecological change tend to intervene as cognitive barriers (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Macnaghten, 2002). The scientific complexity surrounding environmental issues is believed to intervene between knowledge and information as misperceptions of the human contribution to climate change persist worldwide (Lorenzoni and Pidgeon, 2006). Finally, knowledge does not necessarily activate self-interest: global warming is regarded by many people as less of a priority than other pressing social concerns (Schultz *et al.*, 2005; Lorenzoni and Pidgeon, 2006)

Psychological research into other motivational factors has focused on the rational costs and benefits approach; moral and normative influences; and the role of affect (Steg and Vlek, 2008, p.3). The most influential social psychological framework in understanding motivation has been the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Azjen,1991) founded on the belief that individuals make reasoned choices based on relative social or financial benefits (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). The TPB was designed to explain the discrepancies found in earlier linear models (knowledge leads to change of attitude leads to action) suggesting that attitude did not immediately determine behaviour but was one influence of behavioural intentions along with normative pressures (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

The role of intention was given prominence by Triandis in his integrated model of interpersonal behaviour which demonstrated that intention was an immediate antecedent of behaviour (Triandis, 1977). A meta-analysis of recent research of psychosocial determinants of PEB confirms that intention is still shown to be the highest predictable factor (Bamberg and Moser, 2007). However, in addition to intention, Triandis included

two further factors as mediators of behaviour: habit and social influences (Triandis, 1977). The inclusion of habit incorporates those aspects of behaviour which are automatic and therefore not preceded by careful reasoning: social influences (norms, role, self concept) and especially affective influences again allow for less rational determinants since they can be more or less unconscious (Jackson, 2005; Bagozzi *et al.*, 2002).

In opening up the possibility that behavioural outcomes can be influenced by *less* deliberative behaviours, Triandis hints at an altogether more complex interactive process that potentially offers important insights into psychological conflict. This has been reinforced by research which differentiates between sources of motivation, identifying in particular the factor of *intrinsic* motivation which "energizes and sustains activities through the spontaneous satisfactions inherent in effective volitional action" (Deci *et al.*, 1999, p.658).

As pro-environmental attitudes have been found to reflect a variety of motives, a second broad area of psychological research has focused on the assumption of an underlying value structure of PEB. Schwartz's theory of the universal aspects of the content and structure of human values has been the most influential and widely used, offering a way to study the relationships between human values: to what extent they conflict with or are compatible with each other (Schwartz, 1992). Cross-cultural value models reveal four higher order value dimensions along two polarities between openness to change and conservation and between self-transcendence and self-enhancement (Schultz *et al.*, 2005).

Self-transcendence includes the values of universalism, understood as a concern for the welfare of nature and humanity in general, and benevolence which represents concern for those who are close to us: this particular dimension of values overlaps with the specific virtue-orientation proposed for environmental citizenship. Self-enhancement, on the other hand, is defined by values of power, achievement and hedonism. The polarity between the two is understood to represent the extent to which people's values motivate them to promote their own needs at the expense of others or are able to transcend them for the wider good (Schwartz, 1992).

Schwartz's human values classification has been applied to environmental attitudes and behaviours on the basis that pro-environmental values derive from an awareness of the harmful consequences to valued objects (Stern and Dietz, 1994). Research has concentrated mainly on the value categories of self-transcendence and self-enhancement as these are consistently found to be most positively and negatively correlated with predictions of pro-environmental values. The extent to which people feel a moral obligation to adopt pro-environmental behaviours has been researched using Schwartz's norm-activation model (NAM), which offers an explanation that altruism is more likely to be activated by a recognition of the possible harm to a valued other, together with a sense of personal responsibility to help prevent that harm (Schwartz, 1968; 1977)

Another normative model – the value-belief-norm theory (VBN) (Stern, 2000) – identifies three value orientations: egoistic, social/ altruistic and biospheric. These value 'orientations' are all associated with concern for the environment but are rooted in different underlying priorities: concern for one's own welfare, the welfare of other humans and the welfare of other species respectively. Evidence of the value orientations represented in the VBN model have been substantiated in findings from research around the world (Schultz *et al.*, 2005; Milfont *et al.*, 2006) but while links between values and attitudes have been established, the direct correlation between values and environmental behaviour is weak (Schultz *et al.*, 2005).

Although empirical evidence has been successful in explaining both expressed intention to change and actual behaviour, this applies only to behaviour that is relatively easy: a general level of inconsistency is found when the PEB in question demands far more of a personal 'cost', for example reducing car use, suggesting the influence of both personal and social norms (Steg and Vlek, 2008; Guagnano *et al.*, 1995). Social norms have been distinguished as either injunctive, relating to associated approval/ disapproval or descriptive, based on how commonly the behaviour is seen to occur (Steg and Vlek, 2008; Cialdini *et a*l., 1991). Whereas adherence to social norms is related to perceived

social pressure, personal norms are related to a sense of moral obligation, the latter being more strongly associated with PEB than the former (Thogersen, 2007; Godin *et al*, 2005).

Significantly, in relation to the literature on environmental citizenship, Thogersen suggests that the explanation lies in the degree of internalisation and integration of a norm into an individual's cognitive structure. To encourage environmentally responsible behaviour, personal norms need to be consonant with pre-existing beliefs and goals: personal norms are not only a product of internalised social norms but also of a process of moral deliberation about the consequences of that behaviour (Thogersen, 2007).

Affect

I was interested to find there was little research into the influence of emotion on behavioural outcomes although some evidence points to the relevance of affective factors. An exception is the work of Elisabeth Kals whose own work addresses the neglect of emotional impact in environmental psychology research (Kals and Maes, 2002; Kals *et al.*, 1999). In particular, three categories of relevant emotions are discussed: moral emotions (especially indignation, anger and guilt), emotional affinity towards nature and ecological fear (Kals and Maes, 2002, pp.106-109), all of which offer a theoretical challenge to the prevailing rational-choice model of human behaviour (ibid., p.115).

Maio and Olson report that the degree of internalisation of norms is related to affect and the relative strength of personal values is connected to the strength of feeling attached to them (Maio and Olson, 1998). The relevance of care has been acknowledged both explicitly – individuals must actively care if they are to be motivated to make pro-environmental changes in their lives (Geller, 1995; Lorenzoni *et al.*, 2007) – and implicitly: intensity of motivation determines which value outweighs the other in any conflict and which behaviour will be chosen from available options (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). The affective component also makes pro-environmental behavioural change more meaningful and therefore likely to be more enduring than simply altering

behaviour in response to regulation or incentives (Maiteny, 2002). Finally, affective motives are also implicated in material consumption through the symbolism and meaning attached to certain consumer behaviours (Steg, 2005; Paterson, 2007).

Although the inclusion of affect goes a little way to counteract the exclusively rational focus of most of the empirical research, the over-riding impression is one that offers little coherent insight into the complexity of individual conflict at a non-cognitive level. The psychological dynamics involved in first unearthing and then articulating implicit values in relation to something as important as the environmental crisis is not in evidence. Although the literature on environmental citizenship articulates the importance of social and environmental relations, neither this nor the empirical research literature give an adequate account of the complexity or affective dimensions of the issues involved.

This observation is clearly relevant to the psychological nature of my intended research project: however, given the interactive psycho-*social* nature of my enquiry, it is essential to consider external influences as well.

Extrinsic factors affecting motivation: structural influences, contextual and practical constraints

The social psychological model has been criticised by sociologists, for example, for lacking historical or anthropological perspective on social forces which drive human behaviour: accounts of individual agency omit reference to structure. The development of 'structuration theory' (Giddens, 1991) has been key to bridging this divide by proposing an integrated model that allows for the interconnection between daily life – individual agency – and the evolution of social institutions – collective agency – affording an interactive and less one-dimensional perspective (Spaargaren, 2003; Jackson, 2005).

In relation to factors affecting PEB, structuration theory offers a more complex perspective which sees individuals as subject to both practical consciousness (the specific activity of recycling, for example) with discursive consciousness (the articulation of

reasons for the activity) which do not usually precede the action but help to create an account of it (Evans and Abrahamse, 2009). From an analysis centered exclusively on the individual, the focus moves to an analysis of lifestyles and daily practices which define that individual (Spaargaren, 2003).

Drawing on Giddens' work, Spaargaren has argued that by contextualising norms and environmental behaviours within the role of systems provision (Shove, 1997), PEB can be influenced from within. This approach addresses problems of imposing policy from without, in the absence of genuine understanding of real everyday problems of citizens who then fail to see a connection between policy goals and their own lives (Spaargaren, 2003, p. 697; also Burgess *et al.*, 1998). Although this perspective highlights the interplay of external and internal factors, again I believe that what is missing is the affective component: how, for example, does this lack of connection affect perceptions of lack of control and helplessness in relation to environmental concerns? How realistic an option is a green lifestyle within current social practices?

James Blake, who first used the term 'value-action gap', argued for a more 'holistic' approach: investigation of individual motivation is important but limited unless one takes into account the wider infrastructure. He suggested a blend of extrinsic and intrinsic barriers intervening between environmental concern and PEB: the first two are 'individuality' referring to personal attitudes and perceptions of 'responsibility' for environmental problems, shaped by uncertainty as to whether one's own actions can be effective (Blake, 1999). The third is 'practicality', which relates to the external constraints imposed by lack of time, money, information or facilities (ibid., pp.266-268).

Practical barriers – infrastructure, availability of products, costs, technical facilities – are also relevant to the facilitation or constraint of PEB. Steg and Vlek describe both direct influences (for instance, provision and convenience of alternative transport and facilities) and indirect influences as contextual factors. These, in turn, are mediated by individual attitudes, ultimately determining which type of motivational factor will be of most personal relevance (Steg and Vlek, 2008, p.4).

One attempt to integrate both kinds of influence is Stern's Attitude/Behaviour/Constraint model (ABC) which structurally revolves around the relative strength or weakness of individual and contextual factors (Stern, 2000; Stern *et al.*, 1999). Empirical data has shown that, for example, if recycling facilities are very easy, people will recycle whether or not they are attitudinally predisposed to recycle (Guagnano *et al.*, 1995).

In their review of environmental psychological research, Vlek and Steg argue that the significance of contextual factors – ecological, technological and socio-cultural – which require structural interventions is considerably under-researched (Steg and Vlek, 2008). They argue that more research is needed into the interface between motivational and contextual factors, particularly with regard to the relative effectiveness of appropriate informational strategies (aimed at changing internal barriers of motivation) and structural strategies (aimed at factors such as availability and provision of products and services or legal measures and pricing policies)(ibid., p.5).

Although it is obviously important to take contextual factors into account – if there is no public transport, it ceases to be an option to travelling by car – again, a more nuanced picture appears to be missing. Contextual factors relate not only to the practical provision of facilities and products as they impact in concrete terms on individual motivation to PEB but represent the wider and less easily determined conflict present in institutional and socio-cultural value structures.

Despite wide research into attitudes and values underlying PEB and the identification of external and internal barriers, there seems a generalised tendency within the research literature relating to PEB to examine value-conflict from an intra-individual perspective, while excluding any possibility of broader value-conflict. This is true of both empirical research on values, i.e. measuring dimensions of personally held values in relation to the environment and PEB and also the literature on environmental citizenship.

As outlined earlier, Schwartz's model of value measurement which is predictive of PEB is based on two fundamental dimensions of human values (Schwartz, 1992). The measure along the dimensions of self-enhancement to self-transcendence reflects the relative priorities given to the pursuit of self-interest and a concern for the welfare of others. The polarity between the two represents the extent to which people's values motivate them to promote their own needs at the expense of others or to transcend them for the wider good: crucially, self-transcendence and self-enhancement indicate respectively the most positive and the most negatively correlations with predictions of pro-environmental values.

In the context of environmental citizenship, it is evident that this value-dimension is a crucial link: environmental citizenship depends on being able to move from self-enhancement to self-transcendence. However, if we extend this from an intra-individual focus to a broader context, it is possible to see individual value-dimensions reflected in and influenced by the same dimension expressed within the broader culture: in other words, individual measurement could be contextualized within a cultural context.

It is precisely this overlap that prompts me to take a psycho-social approach in this research. I now turn to the third body of literature – on consumer culture – and instead of regarding it as independent of the first two, explore relevant insights about ideological influences on collective and individual values and on social and moral norms with particular reference to the implications of a *cultural* shift along the dimension from self-transcendence to self-enhancement. This perspective is directly relevant to my own investigation of the potential of consumer culture to be a psycho-social barrier to PEB.

I:III The psycho-social influence of consumer culture

This chapter presents an overview of the literature on contemporary consumer culture. I begin with the dominant account of the emergence of the influence of capitalism to which consumerism is intrinsically linked. I then go on to review key areas of consumer ideology before looking at some of the conflicting arguments concerning the relative agency/passivity of the role of the consumer. Finally I look at the impact of consumer norms and values on society and individual lifestyles with particular reference to the influence of post-modern consumerism during the last thirty years.

Contemporary consumer culture and values

The phenomenon of contemporary consumerism is, of course, only one point in a historical trajectory of cultural and economic trends: what sets modern consumption apart from earlier patterns is the growth of spending power across social classes and strata which created the equation of consumption as living life to the full (Gabriel and Lang, 2006).

The ideology of consumerism cannot be considered without reference to the fundamental economic and political underpinning of capitalism which has itself undergone several transformations moderated by a combination of historical and geographical factors, as well as industrial and social developments (Lee, 1993). The trajectories of consumerism and capitalist enterprise are inevitably intertwined: as the system of capitalism changes, so too has the form of consumerism.

The significance of this symbiotic relationship in terms of contemporary consumer culture began with mass consumerism in the 1950s and 60s. It is generally agreed that an early catalyst for contemporary consumerism was the Fordist ethos that linked consumption with labour, both of which have to be constantly reproduced in the process of accumulation: needs have to be constantly generated to ensure constant consumer demands for products can be maintained. The consequence was the phenomenon of mass

consumerism marking a shift from an elite to a mass market underscored by the interconnection of national economies, trans-national corporations and international trade and politics (Gabriel and Lang, 2006, pp.10-11)

Of particular relevance to my own research is the transition to neo-liberal capitalism in the 1980s and 90s and the subsequent evolution of post-modern consumerism. Based on some revived aspects of the liberal ideology proposed initially by Adam Smith in the 18th century, modern liberal economic ideology became especially influential in the UK and US, the central tenet being that individuals are best left to engage in economic activity without state intervention and that the heart of the economy is the market. Expounded unsuccessfully by Milton Friedman decades earlier, it re-emerged as an ideological response to the economic slump of the mid-70s: Keynesian doctrines that had held sway since the end of World War Two were rejected and neo-liberalism acclaimed (Clarke, 2005). Of particular significance was Friedman's contention that government intervention was an affront to individual liberty. The supremacy of the free market was adopted notably by Thatcher and Reagan, continued by policies under Blair and Clinton and is the dominant (though recently questioned) economic policy today.

The subsequent expansion of global capital further advanced the neo-liberal ideal of liberalising the world market. The global economy has been, and continues to be, heavily influenced by liberal principles which centre on the belief that the key economic actor is the individual who will maximise the benefits of economic exchange for society (O'Brien and Williams, 2004, p.19). "Consumption becomes an index of measurable satisfaction and pain", the overall equation being the more individual consumption, the greater the benefit to the public (Trentmann, 2006, pp.2-3).

The classical economic or utilitarian explanation of the consumer's role therefore pivots on the fundamental assumption that although demands for goods may fluctuate, a consumer's desire is insatiable (Jackson, 2003, p.23). Allied to this assumption is a second: societal well-being is equated with ever higher levels of economic consumption,

taken as a 'given', described statistically but never actually subject to explanatory analysis (Jackson, 2003; Slater, 1997).

A further catalyst was provided by the demise of Soviet communism which opened up opportunities for neo-liberal ideology to spread around the world in the 1990s as various countries adopted the new economic model that regarded social progress and welfare as contingent upon economic development. State intervention was diminished in favour of allowing market forces to allocate resources: economic policies favoured free trade, deregulation and global competition.

In addition, free market reforms were made a condition of loans for developing nations through the strategy of Structural Adjustment Programmes under the auspices of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Approval of entry to the global market was made subject to accepting specific new terms of government policy: an export oriented economy; reduction of wages and suppression of labour activism; radical cuts of government spending on health, education, welfare; privatisation of state enterprises; and deregulation of government controls on labour, the environment and resources (Bello, 2001; McMichael, 2004).

Global trade expansion thus provided a further catalyst for a new phase of contemporary consumerism, facilitated by vastly increased corporate expenditure on brand-name advertising, a huge increase in number of marketable products and the use of deliberate consumer education regarding improvement of goods and services (Storper, 2001, p.105). Consumer education espoused consumer values which, through the shaping of social practices by "agencies of capital" – regulation, commercial and state institutions and organisations – anchored in the structural relationships of consumer culture, have become integrated into daily life (Lee, 1993, p.86).

A major aspect of consumer infrastructure has been the "socialisation of finance" (ibid., p.*x*). The 1990s, for example, witnessed the development of 'consumer service' followed by an extension of consumer credit facilitated by the proliferation of ATMs, in-store

credit facilities, credit cards, incitement to take personal loans and extended purchase schemes, all of which encouraged borrowing on a previously unknown scale (Lee, 1993; Lock and Ikeda, 2005).

Deregulation of the financial markets and the exponential growth of information technology are two further significant catalysts in the launch of the current phase of 'late-consumer' or 'postmodern consumer' capitalism (Barber, 2007: also referred to as 'millennial' capitalism', Comaroff & Comaroff, 2001). Barber summarises the shift from:

> the manufacture of goods to the manufacture of needs, from an entrepreneurial to an managerial market place, from the founding of companies aiming at creating capital to the leveraging of mergers and acquisitions aimed at expropriating and liquidating capital, from financial investment to currency speculation, and from saving to spending (Barber, 2007, p.44).

So far, we can build a picture of the consumer as simply one small cog in an unimaginably vast and complex system: the relentless bid to keep consumers consuming is essential to the inherently competitive dynamics of capitalism (Clark, 2005). Competition drives the pressure to produce ever new commodities or revamped old models to replace previously bought products that have not worn out but are simply out of fashion. Product development implies diversification and specialization: ever new products are invented and therefore ever new consumption desires are created (Ropke, 1999; Lock and Ikeda, 2005). Lee refers to this the core of modern consumer culture: "a social consciousness based on commodity consumption...inscribed through everyday life and practices" (Lee,1993, p.88).

Material needs and the pursuit of happiness

I find that Lee's term 'social consciousness' conveys the more diffuse and intangible aspect of the influence of consumerism as an ideology. Having reviewed briefly some of the more concrete facts from a historical and developmental perspective, it is the effect of

consumerism as an ideology on both individual and social consciousness that I focus on next because the ideological influence is to be the focus of my research.

The maintenance of consumer practice, inextricably bound up in the ideology of consumerism, has led to a societal belief that a devotion to material needs and possessions is central to the pursuit of satisfaction and happiness. One could argue that this belief has become normative to a point that it is only when one witnesses the changes in previously non-consumerist societies – for example, among nations of Eastern Europe or China and India – that such obvious aspiration to the consumer lifestyles of developed nations in the West holds up a mirror to reflect back what has long become so familiar and commonplace as to be scarcely worth noting. Values, as Nash and Lewis write, "become so ingrained they are taken as reflective objective reality" (Nash and Lewis, 2006, p.159). The power of consumerist values appears more sharply delineated when so enthusiastically imitated and internalized by others as a departure from alternative societal values and norms, especially when such alternatives, in the highly industrialized world, have arguably been eclipsed by the extent of this very power.

My assumption of the underlying force of consumerism concerns our relationship to the commodities we buy and consume. There are two aspects to its influence: commodities produced for consumers both respond to and simultaneously reinforce cultural norms and they also affect us psychologically as individuals within that culture.

Evidence of the symbiotic relationship between commodity and culture can be seen through fashion in clothing, lifestyle, leisure, home décor, transportation (Lock and Ikeda, 2005, p.35). Since a commodity appears detached and unrelated to the material and labour used in production (reification), value becomes intrinsic to the commodity itself. As the entire social and material history of production is rendered invisible, would-be purchasers are able to project certain socio-cultural values onto the object (commodity fetishism) thereby reinforcing cultural norms (Slater, 1997). As each commodity has a price, money becomes the 'absolute commodity' obscuring social, labour and

environmental costs, exemplified by the 'hidden' networks of global supply chains behind cheap food and clothing (Haley *et al.*, 2005).

Much of the critique in the discourse on consumer culture targets the repercussions of commodity relations on our ability to relate to other human beings, attributing to consumerism new forms of insecurity and unhappiness in post-industrial society (Lasch, 1979; Schor, 1999; Kasser, 2002; James, 2007). Several theories of envy have opposed the classical economic theory that consumer demand is driven by insatiable wants, for example, Veblen's idea of 'conspicuous consumption' and Hirsch's 'positional goods'.

More recently, Juliet Schor has described a change in the dynamics of envy since the advent of neo-liberal consumerism. During the 1980s, she argues, there was a qualitative change in the competitive ethos, a change from defensive to aggressive positioning, with new consumerism being more anonymous and less socially benign. She attributes this partly to the fact that reference groups have become "vertically elongated" with people "now more likely to compare themselves with, or aspire to the lifestyles of, those far above them in the economic hierarchy" (Schor, 1999, p.43).

One indicator of this process of upscaling is that people are now more likely to believe that the good life can be attained by material goods. It is generally acknowledged that during the so-called decade of greed – mid 80s to mid 90s – the share of income of the top twenty per cent dramatically increased. An intensification of competitive spending started with the rich, followed by imitative luxury spending among upper middle class consumers with the lower echelons "engaged in a round of compensatory keeping-up consumption" (ibid., p.46). Not only did the earning gap widen but the aspirational gap increased, fuelled by the availability of commodities to buy (Schor, 1999; Frank, 1999).

Just as competition is intrinsic to the dynamics of capitalism, as explained earlier, a competitive ethos is also considered integral to the psychological dynamic of consuming. The experience of new desire is always tied to the existence of others who spend more: personal desire becomes shaped by social need for hierarchical status (Frank, 1999). Frank traces back the aspirational gap to basic evolutionary psychology, claiming that

humans are naturally competitive. Even if status is achieved, we must always be on the lookout as "complacency with high rank often results in losing it" (Frank, 1999, p.137). This view suggests that all levels of society feel the pressure to spend more in a constant process of climbing the ladder of social status: even if you don't have the money, you can keep up by using credit.

Social anthropological theory extends the normalization of our relationship with commodities by emphasising its communicative role. In ritual presentation, the function of commodities is to allow for our needs to share goods and create a social universe for which we need the services of fellow consumers, both to participate in social events and also to co-constitute the meaning of goods in the context of social power (Douglas, 2006, pp.242-3). Although normalizing consumption within social relationships offers a counter-balance to unnecessarily pathologising consumer behaviour, questions of excessive and therefore *un*sustainable consumption remain largely unaddressed and the ideology of consumerism unchallenged.

Complicit agent or unwilling victim?

Even if the aspirational gap is a facet of a natural and hierarchical human competitiveness, it appears vulnerable to manipulation. There has been (and still is) concerted agreement that advertising is deliberate propaganda to achieve "the systematic moulding of consciousness" (Gabriel and Lang, 2006, p.16); that the task of advertisers is the production of consumers (Kilbourne, 1999; Barber, 2007).

Much of the critique of the ideology of consumerism has been aimed at advertising for this very reason. Early critics such as Vance Packard and J.K. Galbraith responded in the 1950s and 1960s to the phenomenon of mass consumerism which involved consumers being more strategically targeted through psychological techniques from the late 1940s onwards (Kilbourne, 1999). They attacked the advertising industry for its deliberate manipulation of consumers, arguing that as mass-produced goods necessitated mass-produced markets, artificial needs had to be created to provide consumers for the growing

numbers of nonessential or luxury goods being produced, generating a 'false consciousness' nourished by the fantastic forms and images employed in advertisements (Lasch, 1979).

Advertising is regarded by some as a powerful propaganda tool that promotes consumerist ideology to the ultimate detriment of democracy. Crispin Miller, for example, claims this is due to the ideology itself in that aggressive consumption is itself anti-social because the individual pre-occupation with constant desire and acquisition negates any possibility of self-sacrifice or civic virtue (Crispin Miller, 2004). He dismisses the belief that giving consumers choice is a form of democracy, arguing that democratic participation involves far more than shopping: it requires dissent, efforts to improve the world and taking civic responsibility seriously (ibid.).

Barber refers to "identity politics" and argues that the commercialisation of identities, conducive to buying and selling through branding, undermines agency, community and democracy (Barber, 2007, p.167). A further indictment comes from Lasch who insists that the functioning of democracy requires a vigorous exchange of ideas and opinions (Lasch, 1995, p.10): in contrast, he argues that the advertising and public relations industries have grown to such power and influence that they substitute for an open public forum of debate: informational media now resembles advertising in its partiality and lack of controversial opinion (ibid., p.174).

A particular tension evident in the literature concerns a broader agency/structure divide: to what extent do consumers match the economic model – rational, coherent and essentially the agent of his or her own wellbeing – or the passive victim, unconsciously seduced by advertisements into desires completely unconnected to needs? The question of how desire and the desirable are constructed is considered critical.

Juliet Schor accuses advertisers of cynical exploitation through deliberately creating desires on behalf of producers and economic demands, thereby generating a persistent

dissatisfaction among consumers: this causes a systemic yearning that she describes as no less than "an ongoing tragedy of modern consumer society" (Schor, 1999, p.50).

On the other hand, attributing too much emphasis to the capitalist quest for higher profits fails to acknowledge the consumer's own desire for bigger and more highly differentiated versions of existing products (Frank, 1999). Desire is manufactured by giving goods a social meaning, in other words, material things that we need "are made to represent other, non-material things we need; the point of exchange between the two is where 'meaning' is created" (Featherstone, 1991, p.14; see also Lee, 1993). This indicates a more collaborative venture: corporate brand advertising manufactures desire but it is we, as consumers, who invest in commodities values of "potency and potential" (Sennett, 2006, p.142).

Despite disagreement regarding the relative degree of agency, an underlying consensus suggests that the ideology of consumerism:

> sustains itself by becoming an intimate part of the action frameworks of individuals, how they see themselves and define their interests, how they approach the world, and how they present themselves to others (Storper, 2001, pp.105-6)

So *how* is this achieved? Judith Williamson's meticulous work on decoding advertisements from the 1970s appears unique in its attempt to explain how the ideology of consumerism becomes an intimate part of our psyches by explaining the actual *dynamics* of the unconscious process that occurs between advertisement and viewer, through the manipulation of signs.

Williamson blends three perspectives: Marxism, psychoanalysis and semiotics. She starts from the premise that advertisements have to translate statements from the world of things into a form that that conveys meaning: ideology is embedded in form and form is the hardest aspect to see which is why she emphasises *process*. The process of the linking

is unconscious, so we have no cognitive awareness of how the product and image and feeling become linked together in our minds. I believe this is significant: even though we may consciously dismiss our susceptibility to advertisements, the image remains in our minds and it is this image with the associated ideal – family/home/food/body shape/holiday/car – which remains indelibly imprinted in the psyche.

Advertisements stimulate desire: by "correlating feelings, moods or attributes to tangible objects, linking possible *un*attainable things with those that are attainable" they stimulate the possibility that those unattainable things are actually within reach (Williamson, 1979, p.31, italics original) The system of signs doesn't work by simple brainwashing: we take part in a dialogue in a common language. This has more recently described as the process of consumer participation, for example, in the act of branding (Sennett, 2006).

What is vital for Williamson is that when we make this exchange, it is not simply for the commodity itself. Advertising aims to sell associations and it is these associations that we acknowledge and accept, identifying ourselves as particular consumer/subjects (a process she terms appellation) and reinforcing essential ideological components conveyed through the image. We are given meaning through the things we buy: meaning equates with money and the power to buy (Williamson, 1979).

One key strategy used by advertisers is the process of 'decontextualisation': Williamson describes the danger of taking real objects out of material reality to be used in a closed system of symbols, which substitutes for reality and real emotions (ibid.) A second strategy is to target the subject as individual: "The you in ads is always transmitted plural, but we receive it as singular" (Williamson, 1979, p.51). One can see in certain brands of mobile phone or car or hair colouring or insurance policy, the appeal to uniqueness, with the form of the image reflecting and symbolising the individual needs of a unique subject, instead of seeing that the quality of uniqueness is (supposedly) emanating from the features of the product itself. She stresses the importance of ideological assurance that "we *are* ourselves, separate individuals, and that we *choose* to do what we do" (ibid., p.53) (italics original).

Her concept of appellation is crucial to understanding how we are affected by advertisements. "The product both appellates us and separates us, for it is the pivot around which the meanings of the ad, and our identity, are exchanged" (ibid.). Images can highlight individuality by appealing to 'you' or part of 'you', reinforcing again the individuality of relationship with the product displayed. She hints at the narcissistic implications: "Appellation...gives us imaginary blinkers in preventing us from looking sideways and recognising other people, contiguous to us; it only allows us to see forwards, into the ad" (ibid., p.54).

When the advertisement signifies the product as object of desire, the process involves our (willing) participation in the exchange of signs as appellated subjects; this necessitates to some extent a motivation on our part as seeking coherence of meaning, as seeking a coherent self through the product. Therefore part of the desire for the product is predicated on the desire for a self, so the object of desire is not only the product but oneself (one's self). In this way, Williamson concludes: "We recreate ourselves every day, in accordance with an ideology based on property – where we are defined by our relationship to things, possessions, rather than to each other" (ibid., p.179).

Williamson's work offers a powerful and convincing account of the deeper psychic mechanisms at work in our relationship with 'things' and the meaning we attach to them as well as a plausible explanation of how the advertising industry uses this information in its strategies of persuading consumers to keep consuming. However, inevitably, her account stops short of suggesting a means of effectively challenging the ideology of consumerism, other than through the simple acknowledgement of the immense power of corporate advertising. If, as she herself writes, the ideological reinforcement works at a level that is below consciousness, it is reasonable to assume that, even if the unconscious dynamic is a two-way interaction, there is little that the consumer can do to escape the process of being seduced.

Returning to the agency/victim tension described earlier, it seems that the weight of evidence contradicts the classical economic definition of rational choice: otherwise, how does one explain the ultimate irony that our relationship to things and possessions fails to bring us the happiness we seek? There exists a long historical pedigree of warnings about the moral dangers of materialism (Richins and Dawson, 1992) and it continues to be popularly acknowledged that greater happiness and fulfilment are not contingent upon greater wealth and greater possession of goods (for example, James, 2007). Schor proposes a cyclic relationship to commodities: we desire to have more; we work harder to buy and then maintain more things which detracts from time and energy spent on more rewarding aspects of human life, making us unhappy and needing to consume more by way of compensation (Schor, 1999).

Empirical evidence supports this view. Tim Kasser's work is particularly significant in showing how the enticements of consumerism become entrenched in our psyches and why it is we become 'hooked' on a process that is fundamentally so unrewarding (Kasser, 2002). His Aspiration Index has been used for over a decade to measure goals specifically relevant to consumer culture among adults and college students to see what correlations emerge. Findings show conclusively that the greater focus on money, image and fame, the less potential for self-actualisation. Correlations have since been expanded to show that material values are also strongly associated with tobacco, drug and alcohol use. In other words, the more materialist our outlook on life, the more we are likely to experience feelings of anxiety and insecurity.

Underlying feelings of insecurity mean that self-worth is always tenuous resulting in a chronic shortfall between actual and ideal situations. Whereas discrepancy in itself – between the actual and the ideal – provides impetus and motivation, discrepancies become chronic as materialistic ideals are "almost over-determined by circumstances of contemporary life" through "articles, images, and advertisements on television, radio, highways, and the internet (that) proclaim how much happier life would be with this product or that image" (Kasser, 2002, p.52).

Empirical findings thus reinforce Williamson's account: since commercials present a rosier picture of the lifestyle than is *actually* the case, we are lured by *un*attainable ideals and so chronic discrepancies are inevitable. Even if we do achieve a goal, we will not be happier so even higher ideals form, creating a new cycle of discrepancies and disappointments (Kasser, 2002). A further irony emerges: the very emotional responses to the experience of alienation or the dissatisfactions of a materialistic lifestyle have, in themselves, become consumer commodities: commodity culture provides a fix for the emotional ills it generates (Kilbourne, 1999). The same observation is endorsed in a psychoanalytic critique of "the current economic appropriation of the psyche", which argues that our affective needs are exploited by the consumer industry: marital relationships and friendship, professional identities, sexual pleasure, moral, ethical even religious beliefs are all grist to the commodity mill (da Silva and Lirio, 2005, p.219).

Kasser adds his own indictment of the advertising industry: advertisements create "an image (being the person in the ad who has the product and a great life) that is different from our actual state (being yourself, sans product, with an average life)" (Kasser, 2002, p.54; for a detailed Lacanian psychoanalytic interpretation of this discrepancy, see Williamson, 1979, pp.60-65).

How does the literature on consumer culture impact on that of environmental citizenship? The first problem is the consideration of how ordinary individuals can rationally reflect on needs and wants that revolve around *un*conscious psychic dynamics. A second concerns the wider psychological repercussions of consumer norms and values on personal and social interaction.

Williamson's earlier allusions to the implications of narcissism, for example, are amplified by further evidence that preoccupation with one's own image is detrimental to our capacity for relationship. Clear correlations indicate that the higher the importance of materialism, the lower importance of relationship and community: "Materialistic values of wealth, status, and image work against close interpersonal relationships and connection to others, two hallmarks of psychological health and high quality of life" (Kasser, 2002, p.72). Lasch's narcissistic society of the 1970s has been updated (Lasch,

1979): the "new narcissism" and its attendant fascination with identity, self-presentation and image cause great concern to psychotherapists who see the danger of a consumer society becoming "a simulacrum society par excellence", when ordinary daily life is presented as a spectacle where being 'seen' is all that matters (Boczar *et al.*, 2005 p.206).

Again from a psychoanalytic perspective, Susan Long extends the detrimental effect of post-modern materialism to include an actual change in the relational dynamic. Instrumentalist relations are the inevitable outcome of the consumer/ provider paradigm which she defines as "a relationship where people use one another to gain their particular ends or fulfil their own specific agendas with little or no attention to mutual aims or to the quality of the relationship per se" (Long, 2008, p.29).

The impact on relationship and evidence that material values are inversely correlated with values associated with relationships and community have, I believe, a significance beyond the immediate consequences of emotional impoverishment. Again, with the aspirations of environmental citizenship in mind, I wonder whether another difficulty relates to the repercussions of current consumer values, not only on personal, but also on social and civic relationships. These might be called the collective as opposed to individual consequences of consumer ideology, particularly the ideology associated with the postmodern consumerism of the last three decades.

The evolution of economic values to social values

In view of empirical evidence of an inverse relationship between support for free-market ideology and environmental interest and willingness to address the consequences of climate change (Heath and Gifford, 2006), I am interested to address the psycho-social repercussions of both direct and indirect consequences of neo-liberal reforms which, in prioritising economic policies and global competitiveness in social policies, have contributed to societal value change.

Even without conscious awareness, I suggest we are exposed to the influence of consumer ideology, not only in the narrow role of consumer as purchaser, but more

importantly, to the derivative values we are 'consuming' in daily life within a post-modern consumer society through our actual experiences: for example, as employees, parents, students, pensioners, carers, passengers or patients. In other words, wider value change can affect our experience of identity and by extension, the quality of our personal and professional relationships.

Economic ideological values evolve into social values, their influence extending way beyond the domain of financial transactions and commerce (Barber, 2007). Privatisation, as an economic ideological value, rationalises and facilitates consumption by privileging personal choice, the fundamental neo-liberal concept of individual empowerment and liberty. As a *social* value, privatisation reinforces narcissism and personal preference through what Barber refers to as the "ethos of infantilization"(ibid., p.127) which he defines as a form of childishness induced by combined strategies of dumbing down of goods and shoppers and the targeting of children as consumers (ibid., p.7).

The related emphasis on individualisation is reinforced by commoditisation: advertising and marketing industries sell us all kinds of commodities by promising they will allow us to express every facet of our individuality: to meet our unique needs and allow us to express our difference through material objects. Postmodern capitalism has extended the commodity-form into previously uncommodified areas of social life, even allowing for marketable commodities to become substitutes for personal relationships and creativity (Manno, 2002).

Commodity value has taken on an added meaning in the last three decades. Although marketing industries have long exploited their knowledge that consumers use brands and products as a means of creating and reinforcing identity (Mittal, 2006), Zygmunt Bauman notes a significant change: current consumer society is not dependent on expanding desires alone, but on the commoditisation or recommoditisation of the consumer, "raising the status of consumers to that of sellable commodities" (Bauman, 2007, p.57).

Bauman echoes Williamson's comments thirty years earlier: "advertisements alienate our identity in constituting us as one of the objects in an exchange that we must ourselves make, thereby appropriating *from us*, an image which gives us back our own 'value'" (Williamson, 1979, p. 64, italics original). The process has simply been intensified under more competitive conditions. Consumer goods become a vehicle through which we increase our own 'price' or worth on the social market (Bauman, 2007, pp.62-63). We are both product and consumer: our lives become our own creations, through buying (Williamson, 1979).

An associated development in contemporary consumerism has been the shift to an emphasis on individual lifestyle, a concept that has its roots in the cultural aesthetic of postmodernism. Instead of passively consuming commodities, it is argued that the consumer has become a more self-conscious actor who makes "lifestyle a life project" (Featherstone, 1991, p.86). The imperative of lifestyle cuts across traditional divisions of class, gender and ethnicity reminding us we all have room for self improvement: the fabric of our lives can be tailored to our individual needs expressed through "the possession or consumption of the socially sanctioned and legitimate commodities" (ibid., p.89).

I believe, however, that the significance of contemporary consumer values extends beyond purely descriptive changes in consumer profiles: it is more the *pre*scriptive impact that concerns me here in the context of tension between environmental and derivative values associated with changing norms. One major impact, for example, can be detected in the way professional relationships have changed for many ordinary citizens in contemporary consumer culture.

Paul Hoggett details a sequence of extrinsic events that have been formative in social change (Hoggett, 2009). As economic policy change resulted in responsibility for public service standards being shifted to the private and voluntary sectors, allocation of resources became increasingly tied to performance indicators to make the delivery sector competitive. This led directly to growth of the audit culture in which public service

employees – identified as 'resources' – have since been subjected to monitoring for 'performativity' (ibid.). These systems of supervision comprise, for example, output and outcome indicators and returns, risk assessments and reviews all part of "an intensified proceduralism" as a means of quality control (Hoggett, 2009, p.11).

The human dimension within the new audit culture was transformed. Many professionals, whose work previously revolved around 'relationship' with pupils, students, criminals, patients or vulnerable members of the public, became subjected to more administration of the targets and standards. As a consequence, the direct engagement with their charges not only decreased but was changed qualitatively as well since "even the actual encounter was more regulated and subject to standardised behavioural repertoires" (ibid.). Hoggett describes the disappearance of "two separate subjectivities in which client/user is recognised as a unique locus of experience" to a relational dynamic in which the client/ user becomes "an object to be acted upon and measured" (ibid.).

Long's research goes on to reveal that the universal audit culture, with the dominance of individualism as an intrinsic value, has not only damaged professional relationships but has generated an implicit norm: the "me first" of egotism, which has permeated group and organisational life, psyche and practice mutually sustaining each other (Long, 2008, p. 28). The effects of privatisation on the nature of large institutions, Long observes, have been influential in altering the institutional psyche: accountability to the community by corporate or private owners of public services and utilities has declined as the prevailing, unchallenged value of egotism underscores the legitimacy of serving a privileged population while disadvantaging others who have limited or no access to global markets (ibid.). She goes on to claim that what has long been acknowledged as a narcissistic culture has now evolved into a perverse society, where " a blind eye is turned to perverse and exploitative behaviour, through increased privatization and withdrawal of checks and balances from the public sphere" (ibid.).

The acceptable face of inequality

These writers imply a cultural acceptance, even endorsement, of egotism as a value, a value which leans more easily to the latter end of the self-transcendence/self-enhancement dimension. It also stands in direct opposition to PEB that demands putting aside personal gratification in consideration of the needs of others now or in the future. Similarly, a cultural prioritisation of individualism and egotism automatically devalues reciprocity and equality, both essential to the ethos of environmental citizenship.

Long's reference to the 'legitimacy' of serving the interests of a privileged section and potential collusion with exploitation of the more disadvantaged serves to underscore the inequality intrinsic to neo-liberal reforms. Economic rationality is intimately and inextricably connected to the legitimation of power and inequality (Fevre, 2003). Bauman is one of many critics of the increased inequalities consequent on implementation of neo-liberal policies across the world. He argues that "the neglect of all but economic considerations...gave a new push to the relentless process of polarization both inside and between societies" resulting in new extremes of "intercontinental, interstate and, most seminally, intrasocietal" inequality (Bauman, 2001B, pp. 84-5).

Without wishing to diminish their significance, I am less concerned here with the concrete dimensions of inequality than understanding how the phenomenon of inequality has shifted from being a social 'bad' to a social 'inevitable' in the lived experience of ordinary citizens and the psychological effect of this value change. Once again I draw on literature that gives a concrete account of changes in organisational culture as a starting point from which to explore this phenomenon since the repercussions of changes and value shifts within large economic enterprises have since spread to many other fields of human enterprise that were previously immune to market norms.

Richard Sennett offers insights into the changes in the workplace in the late twentieth century and their effects on employees, ascribing the increased ethos of inequality to the system of modern meritocracy that took shape when "modern measures of efficiency"

were introduced which intensified systems of competitiveness in institutions (Sennett, 2006, p.52), reflecting intensification of market competitiveness described earlier. Among the costs of a meritocratic system, he counts "deficits of low institutional loyalty, diminishment of informal trust among workers, and weakening of institutional knowledge" (ibid., p.63).

Sennett is clear that working within a meritocracy creates social and emotional traumas for those who cannot embrace the 'new values'. An idealised self, oriented to short-termism, has emerged with an emphasis on potential ability rather than accomplishment and with little value placed on learning from past experience. Being a 'winner' rather than 'loser' in the modern meritocracy requires prioritising talent over craftsmanship.

Craftsmanship, for Sennett, intrinsically entails values of doing something for its own sake; pride in completing a task; making an object to the best of one's ability; care about the work being commensurate with one's increasing level of skill. All these have been superceded by the search for talent which "now cuts reference to experience, and the chains of circumstance, eschews sensate impressions, divides analyzing from believing, ignores the glue of emotional attachment, penalizes digging deeper..." (ibid., pp.121-122).

While the winners in a flexible organisation are employees who demonstrate social skills, there are bound to be many losers:

> ...those who do not respond well to pressure to produce results quickly with constantly changing goal-posts; those who prefer to see a task through to the end; those who need a sense of achievement to flourish; those who like to show what they can achieve; those who find lack of support or loyalty with colleagues enervating and dispiriting and isolating; those who may not have an obvious talent for getting on with everyone but still take pride in their work...the steady self-disciplined worker has lost his audience (ibid., p.78).

Bauman articulates the psychological effects for many of the "the social condition of work at the cutting edge" (ibid., p.122):

> Only a few people among us can be really sure that their homes, however solid and prosperous they may seem today, are not haunted by the spectre of tomorrow's downfall. No jobs are guaranteed, no positions are foolproof, no skills are of lasting utility, experience and know-how turn into liabilities as soon as they become assets – human rights do not entail the right to a job, however well-performed...the right to care and consideration on account of past merits (Bauman, 2001B, p.86).

A value system that sanctions inequality as a norm also acts to the detriment of alternative values such as co-operation and community: values, already weakened by materialistic values of wealth, status and image (Kasser, 2002), are further marginalised through the intensified systemic conditions of competition and the push for individual success.

Sennett's distinction between achievement and the new search for talent is relevant: "An achievement compounds social and economic circumstances, fortune and chance, with self. Potential ability focuses only on the self" (Sennett, 2006, p.123). The tension between meritocracy – privileging the value of individualism – and values of community or concern for the less advantaged is not only attributable to personal selfishness or a dislike of self sacrifice but, as Bauman points out, "the very principle founding a coveted distinction is here at stake" (Bauman, 2001A, p.59). Successful individuals do not need community because "an integral part of community is a fraternal obligation – to share benefits, regardless of how talented or how important they are" (ibid). In a meritocracy, on the other hand, "the weak...are those individuals ...who are not able to practise individuality – people deserve what they manage to attain by their own wits and talents" (ibid.).

A further obstacle to any real notion of community is that the new elite are cut off from the material and psychological realities of the majority (Bauman, 2001A, p.54). Inequality militates against the public good: access (for high-earners) to private medicine, schools and transport, for example, obscures both the need for and concern about provision of these 'goods' for the majority of citizens (who earn less) (Sandel, 2009; Lasch, 1995; Barber, 2007). With obligation depersonalized, the more privileged classes can remain physically and emotionally independent of what Lasch refers to as "common life" (Lasch, 1995, p.45).

A 're-prioritisation' of social values

As all kinds of organisations and institutions, previously governed by non-market norms, have been absorbed into the market system, economic priorities have spread into society at large, facilitating the evolution from market economy to market society (Sandel, 2009). Every transition has involved what might be termed a 're-prioritisation' of values, a process where, slowly but surely, certain values take precedence over others. As the fields of sport, education, medicine, politics, the media, the arts and publishing, for example, have been absorbed into the market, monetary values have eclipsed traditional values embodied in gamesmanship (Miles, 2001), teaching (Princen, 2002; Brennan, 2003), healing, governing (Barber, 2007; Sandel, 2009), independent journalism (Lasch, 1995; Crispin Miller, 2004), performing and literature (Schiffren, 1999).

Thomas Princen conveys a sense of the ramifications of the new ethos of market values in one particular field, that of higher education:

> Production (teaching) must be streamlined (made efficient) with larger classes, advanced electronic services, and flexible instructors (temporary, part-time, low paid), so as to maximise value (job skills) for the customer (student). To compete with other producers, courses must be packaged attractively (eye-catching titles, lots of visuals, cheery instructors) and be convenient (not too much writing or critical reflection; few, if any, low grades (Princen, 2002, p.320).

The transition to market values within education – and loss of emphasis on relationship – is considered to have been detrimental at a human level. The combination of government cuts in spending on education and the audit culture ensures a preponderance of administrative tasks which interfere with the vocation of teaching, ultimately a cost to teachers and pupils alike (Brennan, 2003, p.93).

The accumulated evidence of significant value change is the basis for my assumption that ordinary citizens will be affected by the repercussions on their daily subjective experience of their workplaces, in their neighbourhoods, on the streets and in the media. Even without academic explication, it is surely possible to be aware from firsthand experience that the value of community has been eroded, linked with the repudiation of dependency which has become socially 'undesirable'? The natural process of ageing, for example, is now culturally problematic: behind the subjective experience lies the age-ethos of the new capitalism and the belief that dependency is a personal fault which diminishes the legitimacy of members of society who need assistance of some kind (Sennett, 2006).

The roots of this particular shift can be traced to early neo-liberal economic policy when poverty was deliberately ascribed to one's own failure to be sufficiently market-wise and entrepreneurial or simply lazy (Clarke, 2004, pp.55-56). It continues today as individual successes or failures are interpreted "in terms of entrepreneurial virtues or personal failings (insufficient investment in education) rather than being attributed to any systemic property, for example, class exclusion which is usually attributed to capitalism (Harvey, 2005, pp. 65-66). If we add, as discussed earlier, the reform of welfare along the lines of private enterprise, it is not surprising that a commitment to public responsibility has become a casualty (Sennett, 2006). All of these factors can be understood as contributing to the diminishment of the value of interdependence and the need for or benefit from a communal or collaborative endeavour, thus weakening the psychological possibility of embracing the concept of a common good.

Perhaps a final, related casualty in this context is the capacity for compassion, linked to both the ascendance of instrumental relations and to what Hoggett suggests is an endemic indifference to suffering within an audit culture where human lives are hidden behind a virtual reality of statistics, providing "mountains of data, but no people" (Sachs, 1993, p.19; Hoggett, 2009). Hoggett ascribes such indifference to a psychological 'thick skin' which acts as a defence against suffering, a defence deemed necessary because:

> Suffering gives voice to the passive rather than active voice, to our needs as dependent rather than independent beings, to what is chronic and enduring rather than what is open to social engineering and quick fixes (Hoggett, 2009, p.8).

I have presented this particular section of the literature to support my assumption of substantive value change within the past thirty years. UK citizens were encouraged since the Thatcher years to accept these new values through a process of 'forging' popular consent via "the cultivation of a middle class that relished the joys of home ownership, private property, individualism, and the liberation of entrepreneurial opportunities" and in this way, the neo-liberal market based populist culture has spread into every corner of life (Harvey, 2005, p.61). I now discuss the impact of this value-change as a potential barrier to the ethical assignments of environmental citizenship.

Any conflict between the pursuit of self-interest and realising the common good is a social dilemma facing a citizen who must choose between individual and collective preferences (Karp, 1996). The environmental crisis confronts citizens with a conflict of ethics: if the ethic underpinning values of consumerism – assuming natural resources to be infinitely available for exploitation by humans – has brought us to this crisis, then we need to find a new ethical commitment to resolve it (Grove-White and Szerszynski, 1992).

The virtue based account of environmental citizenship offers guidelines, or flexible social 'coping strategies'" to help citizens deal with this conflict of interests (Barry, 1999, p.70).

According to the theory, the principles of green politics remain firmly rooted in the reality of people's lives, but firmly prioritising the ecological interests of the citizen *over* the economic interests of the consumer (Barry, 1999). Whether or not this is realistic overlaps with the debate about possible conflict between the ideological roles of citizen and consumer and the definition of citizenship in this particular context.

Consumer and citizen – compatibility or conflict?

The implicit duty of a citizen as consumer has always served an ideological purpose (Trentmann, 2006). As the particular 'zeitgeist' of each era in history has changed, so has the wider social meaning of consumption: the path to eternal salvation, the triumph of reason and progress of modernity, the promotion of capitalist affluence over the miseries suffered under communism, and with postmodern consumerism, the individualism of neo-liberal ideology (Barber, 2007, pp.38-41).

The definition of a citizen necessarily entails a relationship to a state and to the rights and/or responsibilities as defined by that state. A major part of the state's role today is provider of as wide as choice as possible to guarantee equality and liberty, in return for which the citizen must exercise his or her 'free choice', continuing to consume. Consumption is defined as a main obligation of what it means to be a citizen (Clark, 2004) thus obscuring the distinction that MacGregor makes between "citizenship as a practice (involving human agency) and a status (whose attainment entails political, civil and social rights" (MacGregor, 2006, p.118). The underlying contention, therefore, follows the traditional definition of citizen and consumer: the former is concerned with the public good, the latter with self-regarding interests and wants (Clark, 2005; Barber, 2007).

This conflict is especially pertinent to the discourse on sustainable consumption and considered a barrier to PEB (Witherspoon, 1996). The green consumer has emerged as a potential solution to this conflict, one who can adapt by consuming not less but differently (de Geus, 2003). 'Green' and 'ethical' consumption are used interchangeably but in this review (and throughout my research), I am distinguishing between the two on

the grounds that an ethical consumer implies more of a deliberative moral rather than fashionable choice of commodity. Either way, the economic definition of the consumer-citizen holds sway: the individual is still exercising freedom of choice, and maintaining requisite levels of consumption.

Green consumerism has been criticised for generating a burgeoning market in green commodities while occluding the need to address serious systemic problems (Princen, 2001; Hatt *et al.*, 2005). While providing an individual, personal mandate for addressing problems of unsustainability, green consumerism offers no collective, political mandate and without this, underlying power structures and current inequities remain unchallenged (Maniates, 2002; MacGregor, 2006). Green shopping may help to allay personal health fears, for example, through the purchase of organic produce but leaves unquestioned the environmentally destructive practices of corporate agriculture (Szasz, 2007).

Others argue that the dual roles of citizen and consumer are not necessarily antithetical but can be combined effectively. Berglund and Matti, for example, argue that the split is unnecessarily rigid: the materialist values of consumers do not have to be regarded as completely incompatible with the altruistic values of a citizen since, in reality, individuals are capable of responding to both (Berglund and Matti, 2006).

Ethical or 'socially conscious' consumerism is one manifestation of this combination: a range of behaviour including the purchase of ethical goods and services, ethical investment and boycotts which, although effective in delivering on social and environmental goals, are inevitably constrained by competitive markets and choice (Clouder and Harrison, 2005). Although ethical consumers can be innovators, critics argue that ethical product choice is still embedded within a commodity culture and that more radical change is needed to challenge the deep-rooted ethos of consumerism (Lang and Gabriel, 2005).

Within limitations, ethical consumption is still a viable and important practice (Clouder and Harrison, 2005). Nick Stevenson even suggests that ethical consumption could be

one path by which we can maintain our consumer rights to be different and simultaneously make a political commitment to social justice (Stevenson, 2002). He cautions, however, that shopping cannot entirely replace citizenship and that, as citizens, we should raise questions about the political context of production and consumption, stressing once more the participatory role described in the literature of environmental citizenship (ibid.).

To the debate about the relative compatibility or conflict of the consumer/citizen roles, I would like to add the impact of neo-liberal populist cultural change: in other words, how compatible is the role of *postmodern* consumer with that of the potential environmental citizen?

Postmodern consumer v. environmental citizen

The ethical context of the discourse of environmental citizenship is part of a more widespread theorising about citizenship over this period which specifically aimed to remoralise political discourse in general as a critical reaction to increased voter apathy and indifference, the resurgence of nationalism and the rise of rights-based individualism under neo-liberal free market conditions (Kymlicka and Norman, 1994, p.352).

It is acknowledged, therefore, that postmodern consumerism has impacted on the nature of citizenship. John Clarke has charted the "trajectory of the contemporary figure of the citizen-consumer" in the last three decades within the UK from the particular political-cultural conjuncture of neo-liberal policies around the nexus of consumer choice (Clarke, 2005, p.3). What has remained axiomatic is the narrow, traditional, economic definition of a consumer as a rational agent: the individual makes a choice and enacts that choice through money (Clarke, 2004).

Privatisation, as we have seen, helps to rationalise and facilitate consumption by privileging personal choice, fundamental to the neo-liberal concept of empowerment and liberty so that limiting economic growth equates with limiting choice which flies in the

face of 'democratic' values that insist citizens should be free to pursue their own tastes and values without state interference (Levett *et al.*, 2003). This concept of 'freedom' is challenged: Barber's analysis states that liberty "here has a negative connotation: to be free *from*, not to be determined or controlled by someone else's power and will" promoting the notion of freedom from the tyranny of the state (Barber, 2007, p.118, italics original).

Freedom can also be a Trojan horse: 'consumer sovereignty' is interpreted as the individual's right to free choice but in reality, what has occurred has been "the conquest, annexation and colonization of life by the commodity market..." (Bauman, 2007, p.62). So-called consumer 'freedom' obscures the subtle power of market coercion: "The market does not tell us what to do, it gives us what we want – once it gets through 'telling' us what it is we want and helping us to want it (that's marketing)" (Barber, 2007, p.127). As an alternative, Barber urges a different concept of liberty, positive rather than negative and public rather than private, grounded in moral limits, education and civic participation (ibid., pp.125-6; Sandel, 2009).

Even the actual process of civic participation is not immune to the repercussions of privatisation. A revealing insight comes from research conducted in Denmark, a country boasting a long-established tradition of active citizen participation in the democratic process (Laessoe, 2007). After state funding and support for citizen deliberation changed with privatisation, Laessoe reported a move "from an encompassing notion of sustainability that emphasises the collective good and inter- and intra- generational equity to a liberalist laissez faire approach that focuses on the private good here and now" (Laessoe, 2007, p.247). This example lends fuel to Barber's claim that privatization misconstrues freedom and is thus antithetical to democracy because "it delegitimizes adult public goods such as critical thinking and public citizenship...in favour of self-involved private choice and narcissistic personal gain" (Barber, 2007, p.15).

If consumption is a main obligation of what it means to be a citizen today, traditional obligations of citizenship are negated, because "individual desire is not the same as

common ground and public goods are always more than an aggregate of private wants" (Barber, 2007, p.126). Barber makes an important point: in inculcating the idea of 'choice' as a social value, consumers are confined to asking "what do I want" rather than "what do we as a community to which I belong need?" (ibid.). Although the answers to both questions may be self-interested rather than altruistic, the important difference is that the first is answered by the market and the second by democratic politics (ibid.).

If civic participation as an ordinary citizen is problematic within a market society, the potential environmental citizen encounters even further obstacles. In fact, if we accept Susan Long's argument, we might go so far as to suppose that the postmodern consumer is a particular species of citizen, exposed every day to culturally subscribed values which are diametrically opposed to those required to be an environmental citizen and where envy, aggression, greed, exploitation and cynicism do not count any longer as "eco-sins" (Connelly, 2006, p.71) but as acceptable, even normative behaviour.

Conclusions

This chapter has considered three separate literatures: theoretical work on environmental citizenship; social psychological empirical research into motivation and factors intervening in the value-action gap between pro-environmental concern and practice and finally, the cultural influence of consumerism with particular reference to the postmodern consumerism of the last thirty years. At the forefront of this analysis has been the need to establish long-term changes in attitudes and lifestyles of individual citizens in line with sustainable goals.

The virtue-based theory of environmental citizenship is proposed as an ethical response to the need to motivate citizens to change their consumer behaviour patterns. Virtues of equality, justice, frugality, altruism, compassion, concern for the collective or wider community are fundamental to environmental citizenship precisely because, without an ethical basis to inspire a moral 'transition' from materially-oriented consumer to environmental citizen, current excessive habits of consumption are likely to continue.

Although a generally optimistic view prevails, little is written about the *process* of inculcation of ecological virtues. On the grounds that the virtue of justice will appeal to the rationally aware citizen, Dobson writes that environmental citizens can be educated into being through raising awareness about the moral and ethical dimensions of social life and kindling appropriate values through citizenship education (Dobson, 2003): conventional education is a starting point, at primary and secondary levels and in further education.

Yet, given clear social psychological findings that suggest a weak link between provision of information and actual behaviour change, there is a risk that emphasis of the rational dimension fails to take into account the complexity of a process which demands the evolution of a sense of personal responsibility and pro-environmental commitment expressed through lifestyle choices and community actions. Although there is some reference to the role of affect in motivation within the empirical findings of social psychologists, both literatures share an emphasis on the dominance of rationality despite the acknowledgement that the capacity for moral reflection is fundamental to the process of change from one system of values to another. The internal rationalization of an elegant counterpoint to consumerism, as Marius de Geus proposes, in the conceptual form of "'restrained luxury', 'artistic austerity', 'pleasant frugality' or 'ecological hedonism' (de Geus, 2003, pp.176-181) may be intellectually plausible but could prove to be an unrealistic personal challenge.

Dobson pragmatically acknowledges that not all citizens are likely to make suitable candidates for his own post-cosmopolitan citizenship, a determining factor in his view being a person's lived experience of the realities of environmental breakdown (Dobson, 2003, p.94). There is further recognition within the literature that the transforming process – from materialistic cultural norms to more virtue-based attitudes and behaviour – will demand some pretty thorough deliberation. Szerzynski writes of the need for a would-be environmental citizen to develop a certain 'blindness' to his own private identity and interests while simultaneously developing a breadth of vision that transcends

local and personal boundaries. In this way, the imaginative capacity for "enlarged thinking" can be gained: the ability to see one's own life within a global context (Szerszynski, 2006, p.85).

However, this is still problematic. First, is such a profound transformation realistically possible? Or does it assume, as Dale Jamieson suggests, "a level of self-consciousness and an ability to plan the development of one's own character that is quite unusual" (Jamieson, 2000)? Secondly, Nash and Lewis write that values evolve into "society's commonsense beliefs about the world, rooted in culture and history" (Nash and Lewis, 2006, p.159). In other words, values are not easily changed because they are not always explicit but create a subtle yet dominant motif in the fabric of everyday life. Today's modern citizens are private citizens where, the "private sphere of work, the home, family and domestic life is in fact held up to be the main locus of a fulfilling view of the good life in modern society" (Barry, 2006, pp.36-7), devoid of associations with "notions and practices of public service, citizen in participation, loyalty to the community, and activity for the common good" (ibid., p.37).

In the empirical social psychology literature, we saw a distinction between internal and external motivational factors. The third body of literature on consumer culture adds a crucial and perhaps over-looked dimension to the process of personal moral transition. Little allowance is made for the external conditions in which the individual soul-searching of a would-be environmental citizen is expected to occur.

This is a culture, after all, which encourages ecological vices through promotion of "the simple contentment of want satisfaction, or from the pull of habit or the effortless sway of dominant structures" (Connelly, 2006, p.55). Can citizens really be expected to resist the overwhelming cultural invitation and endorsements of consumerism: spend freely; dispose easily; acquire unnecessary commodities; exult in personal choice; enjoy the right to satisfy desires for material comfort, convenience and luxury? Although this reality is acknowledged, in that it represents the starting point from which, in collaboration with the state and broader political community, a potential environmental

citizen must effect a personal transformation, it is far from clear whether the power of the ongoing promotion of oppositional cultural norms is sufficiently recognized in current formulations of environmental citizenship.

For example, these formulations appear to discount the oppositional discourse of economic priorities: how far, for example, can ecological values and virtues be nurtured in the current climate of economic rationality (Fevre, 2003)? Kilbourne *et al.* summarise the essential elements of the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) as:

> ...technological optimism that culminates in the techno-fix, liberal economics that focuses on self-interested individuals satisfying preferences in relatively free markets, and liberal democracy with its focus on private property, political neutrality, and possessive individualism (Kilbourne *et al.*, 2001, p.215).

The role of the state as it functions through our technological, economic and political institutions continuously reinforces an entrenched ideology, prioritising industrial and economic interests over values of ecological citizenship. Economic institutions and corporations maintain their position of advantage through their privileged position close to the heart of government, by marginalising ecological interests and finally by shaping "the cultural values of a society so that individual preferences are aligned with the dominant group" (Nash and Lewis, 2006, p.57).

There is evidence to support the contention that as beliefs in the elements of DSP increase, not only does perception of the existence of environmental problems decrease but, logically, so does the perception of the need to make any changes to alleviate such problems (Kilbourne et al, 2001). Consumers adopt ideological values which become deeply ingrained. While I am not suggesting that ordinary citizens are subjected to any process of coercion or "brainwashing", the literature on consumer culture has shown that consumer ideology works at conscious and unconscious levels. This gives cause for doubt as to whether the ideals and intentions of environmental citizenship are any match for the continued and pervasive power of the DSP to influence individual consumer aspirations.

How do the prospects of environmental citizenship appear when placed alongside the literature on postmodern consumerism? Apart from having to negotiate the considerable barriers just outlined with materialist lifestyles and unchanged levels of consumption that continue to be promoted by the media, an additional external impediment appears: the very virtues needed to guide deliberation and encourage self-sacrifice in favour of the common good are themselves eclipsed by more recently evolved cultural and social norms.

Various profiles of the consumer have emerged in the literature ranging from rational economic agent to passive and stupefied victim. The postmodern consumer appears around the middle of the continuum: active enough to claim rights and entitlements to a continuously growing level of material well-being; to believe that failure to achieve such well-being is personal failure (and nothing to do with society); to focus on self-gratification and maintain a narcissistic preoccupation with appearance; and finally, to objectify others in instrumentalist relationships. Towards the passive end of the continuum, the postmodern consumer has been characterised as unreflective, addicted, gullible and childish.

Environmental citizenship theory clearly stresses active participation, through deliberation and engagement with political 'wrongs'. However, if, as Szerszynski writes, environmental citizenship should not be conceived of in abstract ethical principles or rules, but through values that are seen as "emergent from ongoing transactions and relationships" (Szerszynski, 2006, p. 95), one could conclude that the potential for collective action, concern for the public good, interest in community building and the needs of current or future 'others' – all essentially associated with democratic citizenship – have suffered 'demotion' within the public forum. These barriers cannot be viewed only in psychological terms: they are also political, social and cultural.

Although the degree of conflict and also consciousness of conflict will vary, it is likely therefore that many citizens will experience various interacting *levels* of conflict between

the values and 'sensibility of disposition' required to be an environmental citizen and consumer ideology. This assumption provides an incentive to investigate the motivations behind the chosen lifestyles and commitment of green individuals who currently live out some of the aspirations of environmental citizenship. One line of this investigation relates to how these individuals resolve or manage such conflicts, especially in view of such overwhelming oppositional influences.

The empirical literature has provided a useful overview of the terrain that I wish to explore in more detail through a qualitative study, which, as I have stated, is to be psycho-social in order to disclose the interactive and affective processes which influence individuals as they deliberate on pro-environmental problems and practice.

In response to the existing theoretical and empirical literatures, my intention has been to execute a qualitative research project which can capture some of the nuances of intra-personal conflict, missing from both social psychology and green political theory, and perhaps provide some additional insight into what enables and what hinders pro-environmental practice.

CHAPTER TWO METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

My overall research question is to determine to what extent the internalised psychological impact of the phenomenon of consumerist culture undermines attempts to encourage individuals to more consistent sustainable behavioural practices? In this sense the thesis aims to investigate whether and to what extent contemporary consumerism constitutes a psycho-social barrier to PEB: how does the interaction between personal, social and political factors contribute to the value-action gap described in the empirical literature?

II:I Research design

The basic research question was broken down into four secondary questions:

1. To what extent are individuals aware of consumerist values?

2. What are individual attitudes and beliefs about environmental problems and the need for a more sustainable lifestyle?

3. Is there evidence of a perceived tension between the two systems of values? If so, how do individuals rationalise their actions or non-actions. In other words, what is the relative influence of both value systems in any experienced conflict?

To gain further insight into the questions above, I added a fourth:

4. If there is a conflict between consumer and environmental values, how does one explain the existence of individuals who already live a sustainable lifestyle?

In order to begin to answer these questions, the decision to make a comparative study of two groups – 'green' and 'non-green' – was taken with the intention of gaining insight into motivational factors behind real life 'green' lifestyles. This should then help reveal what may be missing in the accounts of ordinary non-green citizens. My definition of

'green' in this context was based on the individuals whose practice involved more than minimal PEB and whose lifestyles demonstrated personal commitment and willingness to make sacrifices in favour of the environment.

Research method

Environmental degradation is both a concrete phenomenon comprising scientific evidence – emissions, calculations, statistics, scientific predictions and disputes – and also a construct in the minds of citizens. It is the latter that I wanted to explore which constitutes an overlap between a social structures and social constructionist model (Silverman, 2005). What does the phenomenon of environmental degradation *mean* to ordinary individuals and what do they feel in response to environmental concerns?

Rather than examining the relationships between a small set of reduced variables that I had predetermined and then submitting them to statistical analysis in order to test a particular hypothesis, I wanted to find out what variables arose in the data. Although surveys have been used to provide numeric descriptions of opinions and attitudes towards the environment, my own quest was to understand the context in which these variables interacted with one another, which therefore assumed a qualitative research method. Little qualitative research has been carried out in relation to barriers to PEB. Focus groups have been used (for example, Macnaghten, 2003 and Maiteny, 2002) and mixed method approaches (Lorenzoni *et al.*, 2007) but I wanted to focus on individual narratives. This would allow time and scope for less easily accessible material to emerge, in other words, to go beyond immediate opinions and attitudes to determine underlying values, feelings and conflicts.

The principal method of generating data was therefore an in-depth, semi-structured interview, suitable for providing an insight into underlying motivation. An in-depth interview was appropriate to the nuanced and contextual nature of the data that I needed to obtain (Mason, 2002, p.125).

Exploring a gap, by its very nature demands a certain open-ness and flexibility on the part of the researcher and also a capacity for reflexivity from both researcher *and* respondent (Mason, 2002). It was my intention to search beneath the instant answers on occasion precisely in order to facilitate the reflexivity of the respondent: to challenge, to revisit previous answers they had given, to offer some interpretation or point out a possible connection for them to consider.

Selecting this method to generate data is consonant with an ontological position "that sees individual personalities as empirical realities and social life as a collection of these, or as an arena in which they are played out" (Mason, 2002, p. 35). Consumerist and environmentalist discourse – and how they are experienced – are the products of individual perceptions, motives, personalities and psyches. In wanting to know what people *perceive*, my approach can be described as basically humanistic (Mason, 2002). In other words, I viewed my interviewees as 'psycho-social beings' whose views, understanding and interpretation are meaningful constituents of the phenomenon I wanted to explore (Hollway, 2000).

My assumption was that from listening to and interacting with individual testimonies, I would be able to generate some insight into the impact of consumer ideology on environmental values. This is not so much a process of unearthing information but more of an interactive process of formulation and articulation. As Mason writes, an interview allows the "construction or reconstruction of knowledge rather than the excavation of it. In other words the knowledge (data) emerges through the interaction of researcher and interviewee" (Mason, 2002 p.64) and cannot be treated as concrete fact. For this reason, this method is dependent on the capacity of interviewees to give voice to their experience.

The dimension of emotion was also important. One of my observations after reading the literature was the dominant emphasis on the 'rationality' of both the environmental and consumer citizen in ongoing academic discourse. I believe this inevitably closes off further insights into the difficulties of facing up to environmental problems.

Bendelow and Williams write that "emotions provide 'the missing link' between 'personal troubles' and broader 'public issues' of social structure" (Bendelow and Williams, 1998, p.xvii), a link obscured by the dominance of western rationality. Alison Jaggar has also argued for a 'mutually constitutive rather than oppositional relation between emotion and reason' (Jaggar, 1989, p.157) and my research interest is founded in this argument. As a psychologist, I have been educated in a perspective that sees the inclusion of emotions as essential in any attempt to find and articulate meaning in individual behaviour. Significantly, this *intra*-individual dynamic extends to an *inter*-individual dynamic. Bendelow and Williams view emotions as "... existentially *embodied* modes of being which involve an active engagement with the world and an intimate connection with both culture and self" (Bendelow and Williams, 1998, p.xvi).

Emotional experience is interactive and relational in character: this theoretical perspective therefore understands emotion to be part and parcel of "'meaning-making', but also institution-making'". Although the "'interactive and relational character of emotional experience'" has been investigated in relation to consumerism, I believe that, as an aspect of our response to environmental problems, it has been under-researched and overlooked (Bendelow and Williams, 1998, p. xvi).

My own experience has taught me about the importance of emotion and also the influence of unconscious mechanisms: the assumption of these influences has guided much of my subsequent interpretation of portions of the data. Although not a psychoanalyst, I felt I could draw on the research in Hollway and Jefferson's work which is both theoretically and methodologically based in the practice and tradition of psychoanalysis in its assumptions: "our subject...is... positioned within the surrounding social discourses ... motivated by unconscious investments and defences against anxiety...our data analysis depends on interpretation" (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, p. 77).

My chosen method raised issues of objectivity and reliability as well as boundaries and I considered these a great deal. A major difference between therapeutic and research contexts is the 'remit': the content and level of the interaction we are discussing and the contract between interviewer and the interviewee. Each person was given a written explanation of the research project beforehand so that both of us knew the constraints before we started. My interventions and questions were therefore strictly related to the topic under discussion rather than (in my opinion) unethically pursuing an individual or personal issue that would have been appropriate in a therapeutic context. The focus was always the relation between individual and external world and not the individual *per se*. Any questions or challenges were made with sensitivity and never with the intention of persuading someone trying to fit into my own preconceptions.

Other ethical issues were raised during the lengthy and thorough process of obtaining ethical approval from the Ethics Committee in the School of Social Sciences. These included ensuring informed consent from every interviewee; the opportunity to withdraw at any time; handling any distress caused by the interview; confidentiality and anonymity; and security of data storage.

Selection of sample

The aim was to generate a target sample consisting of individuals who were 'on the cusp', so to speak: neither extreme consumers nor extreme greens. I felt that related potential factors of compulsive or addictive shopping at one end of the scale hand or living on the margins of society at the other would complicate the data that I wanted to generate. The target sample would be most useful to me in my objective of understanding the psychological mechanisms involved in either the self-justification for *not* making a commitment to PEB or in maintaining such a commitment in spite of adverse socio-cultural influences.

Large-scale quantitative research has tended to focus on general populations – with as wide a sample as possible – rather than focus specifically on ecological individuals.

Studies of ecological consumer profiles in Spain using a survey of around 600 individuals confirmed some links between certain personality characteristics and consumer behaviour (Fraj and Martinez, 2006). Situational and moderating factors were excluded from these studies.

Moisander and Pesonen's discourse analysis of written accounts of green consumers and narratives of inhabitants of eco-communes investigated the role of personal ethics and moral agency in ecologically oriented citizens and provided insight into my own supposition of a conflict between consumerist and ecological values (Moisander and Pesonen, 2002).

Small-scale qualitative research into the lives of those who are already 'green' and living sustainable lifestyles is even more unusual. Terry Newholm used a case study approach to research individual strategies of ethical consumers (Newholm, 2005). David Evans' recent research – qualitative interviews with 25 self-selecting green respondents – comes close to my own design and choice of sample (Evans, 2008): a similar but slightly different approach was taken by Lars Degenhardt who conducted a qualitative study of 'lifestyle pioneers' using biographies to investigate what meaning and moral values individuals attributed to their own sustainable lifestyles (Degenhardt, 2002). Although both studies point to the significance of a moral underpinning of a commitment to sustainable goals, Degenhardt's premise more closely resembled environmental citizenship in his specific assumption of an ecological-political dimension of engagement in his participants, possibly due to a German as opposed to British definition of sustainable development (ibid., p.129-130).

Four studies have specifically put the theory of environmental citizenship to an empirical test. Dave Horton conducted ethnographic research into the everyday lives of green activists and concluded that formal education in environmental citizenship was less important than green cultural practices (Horton, 2006). A study of organic food networks investigated the expression of ecological citizenship through consumer behaviour (Seyfang, 2006) and a case study undertaken by Wolf *et al.* confirmed that principles of

Dobson's post-cosmopolitan citizenship – commitment to political justice and responsibility for personal and asymmetrical contribution to climate change (Dobson, 2003) – were integral to their subjects' behavioural response to climate change (Wolf *et al*, 2009). Finally, in a random survey of 3000 Swedes, Jagers identified around twenty-five per cent of the sample as willing to act (pay increased environmental and poverty taxes) and from these produced a profile of a typical ecological citizen in Sweden (Jagers, 2009).

Like these researchers, my own inclusion of green respondents is intended to approach environmental or ecological citizenship from an empirical point of view, in order to "*...verify, identify and explain the presence of ecological citizens*" and to find out whether the theoretical qualities matched the reality (Jagers, 2009 p.21, italics original). My particular emphasis, however, is an interest in accounting for the process of becoming an environmental citizen, in view of what I regard as strong opposing social and cultural influences: for this reason, I intended to use green respondents as a point of *comparison* with the public at large, to understand what is missing or intervening in the accounts of non-green individuals.

As the potential sampling frame is vast, time and financial constraints had to be limiting factors so I decided on a minimum of thirty respondents, aiming for a spread of respondents between the ages of 18 and 75 and for a balance of genders.

I decided to hold constant educational and socio-economic variables: all interviewees had received some form of higher education and no interviewees were living in dire poverty. The former constraint meant that all individuals would be reasonably well educated, likely to be familiar with and generally informed about climate change and other environmental problems as well as some of the prescribed behaviours to address these problems. The second factor would eliminate poverty as a reason for lack of commitment to environmental behaviour. There was no need for other variables because, as citizens, everyone is addressed by current government policies and exposed to climate change issues in some measure.

One factor for which I aimed to ensure variance was the age of the respondent as I wished to make some comparison between different age groups to understand the perception of any shift in consumer values. While the under-30s would have grown up with contemporary consumer values; the over-60s could offer a different perspective. The bulk of my respondents were to be from the middle age range – 40s and 50s – because I believed these individuals would have experienced the particular value changes of the past 30 years as well as knowing that environmental crises would have immediate relevance in their own lifetimes.

Theoretical or purposive sampling offered a means of obtaining the most useful information from the limited number of people to be sampled (Walliman, 2006). Maxwell suggests four goals of purposive sampling. The first is to achieve information that can be seen as representative or typical of average members of the population; the second goal counterbalances the first by "capturing the heterogeneity" of a range of the population; the third is to intentionally examine critical cases, (for me both the 'green' and 'non-green' members of the sample) which leads to the final goal, that of establishing comparisons to illuminate the differences between individuals (Maxwell, 2005, pp. 89-90)

The subsequent sample selection was guided by an attempt to combine the green/non green contrast while remaining aware of the need for both a gender balance and a range over the three age groups. There was no particular sequence to this, but more a random exercise using a variety of informal and social networks. Some contacts were made through university email lists of students in both environmental science and politics. As no sampling frame was available, it involved a process of recommendation of interviewees, which worked in both directions: a green interviewee would recommend someone believed to hold strong consumer values; a non-green interviewee would suggest a 'greener' contact for interview.

The 'non-green' half of the sample were taken from a general population as there has been no evidence so far of particular characteristics – classes or educational or age variables – that usefully predict whether or not PEB will be taken up (Maxwell 2005). The green sample was more strategic. My sampling criteria related to my definition of 'green' described earlier. I required green individuals to demonstrate behaviour that was over and above minimal PEB, in other words, recycling, purchase of low-energy appliances, organic gardening and composting were insufficient on their own. I was more interested in determining the ethics that guided PEB and presumed that the extra personal commitment and sacrifice demonstrated by a refusal to own a car or to travel by plane or engagement in political protest about climate change would reveal the presence of a stronger green ethic within that individual.

A strong green ethic is defined as an awareness or consciousness of the green agenda that acts as a kind of 'ethical compass' throughout an individual's life, in terms of his or her lifestyle impact on planetary resources. Although these were the guidelines behind selecting the green sample, it transpired that there was no such neat correlation between a strong green ethic and current pro-environmental practice which meant that the resulting data was far more nuanced and interesting.

II:II Data generation

1. Semi-structured interviews

Two sets of questions (*Appendices I and II*) were drawn up for both groups involving a considerable overlap for the sake of comparison. Specific questions for the green sample assumed a commitment to the environmental agenda and therefore I included some questions as to a) whether there was a defining moment of awareness becoming practice b) whether or not they experienced conflict with cultural norms and how they managed it c) what were their sources of support? For the non-green sample, my questions related to their perception of the environmental problems and potential impact; whether or not they would consider changing their behaviour and their rationale for *not* doing so.

For both sets of interviewees, I included questions about consumer ideology and consumer values; whether they felt such values had permeated into society at large and if so, how did they feel about this? Everyone was asked about how materialistic they believed themselves to be, and also to describe their 'consumer' and 'green' stereotypes. Again this was to generate data on contrasting viewpoints between green and non-green respondents.

A semi-structured interview allowed the space, time and privacy for respondents to consider, reflect and occasionally surprise themselves with some of their own answers instead of confining their responses to pat formulaic responses. The interview questions were used as a *guide*, as a kind of signposted trail through the landscape of each interview. I made it clear at the outset that this was not a question-and-answer format. I would allow the questions and answers to proceed with their own momentum and own sequence according to the individual's interest and concern: towards the end I would then check to see if any area had been left out and then address it. This approach maximised the opportunity for each interviewee to find their own meanings in their own time: different emphases here and there were part of the idiosyncratic richness gained from the subsequent data.

Conducting the interview entailed keeping my research questions in mind while "continuously orchestrating the intellectual and social dynamics" within the interview context (Mason, 2002, p.67). My confidence in being able to do this was grounded in past professional experience which also alerted me to the dangers of inter-subjectivity. I have always believed that meanings are unique as well as shared and felt myself capable of maintaining a requisite distance for each respondent's meaning to emerge of its own accord. On several occasions, when asked for my opinion or agreement, I would gently remind the interviewee that this was not a discussion.

A further reason for allowing questions and meanings to evolve was that my previous experience of doing research in this area for my MSc had taught me that individuals were

slightly anxious about 'knowing enough' about the subject matter and tended to see me as an 'expert'. I was attentive to the need to let each person find their own associations and expose, as it were, each person's unique 'take' on the subject matter under review.

2. Carbon footprint calculation

As an additional method of generating data, I decided to use a carbon footprint calculator. (*Appendix III*). Out of several available, I selected one produced and published by the Quaker Green Action group because it was reasonably comprehensive and 'user-friendly' (www.quakergreenaction.org.uk). It was easy to follow and could be completed within approximately twenty to thirty minutes; it also required no utility bills to be referenced or any preparation beforehand.

Its purpose was two-fold. I wanted to include an actual score alongside the other data to help locate a spectrum of PEB among the respondents. There are obvious flaws in that the scores are self-assessed and insufficiently tailored to individual practice so there is room for over- or under-scoring, intentionally or otherwise. However, as the data was only ever intended as circumstantial evidence and an analytic adjunct to the interview material, this did not represent a problem of validity.

The second purpose was to provide an introduction to the range of PEB covered in the interview and a specific springboard to the issues under discussion. As it transpired, but for three of the interviewees, it was the first experience of calculating a carbon footprint and the exercise was generally received as an informative and interesting exercise.

Sample interviews

From the beginning, this project has been highly reflexive process. I began with three sample interviews designed to 'test' the general effectiveness of the questions in terms of what they produced. I approached a woman who worked for the Hampshire Sustainability Centre as representative of my sample 'green' and two non-green members of the general

public, aged 20 and 70. These three interviews led to a slight adjustment of the terminology used to frame some of the questions.

For all sample interviews, many questions were more or less superfluous. It became obvious that some questions elicited repetitive responses while others failed to engage the interviewee. The focus revolved around certain key points of enquiry. These included the interviewee's response to the calculation; barriers to changing lifestyle; 'green' and 'non-green' stereotypes; cultural value change in the last thirty years; general emotional response to/concern about current environmental issues and their place in the wider scheme of things.

One further point of reconsideration was the actual terms I used: 'conflict', 'consumerism', 'values', even 'green' were not immediately clear or perhaps too abstract which surprised me. None of the three interviewees related to my meaning of 'values' although one later immediately understood 'ideology'.

This concern led me to compose a letter of introduction which was sent out to all prospective interviewees explaining the areas to be covered in the interview. A further minor amendment to the procedure was that completion of the calculation beforehand proved to be far more efficient in terms of time so the calculator was sent out with the introductory letter to all subsequent interviewees before the interview took place.

A further reconsideration related to the dynamic between myself and the interviewee. I had noticed in my MSc research interviews that I needed to consciously reassure respondents that they were not expected to be scientifically knowledgeable. The sample interviews indicated a further area of concern that needed reassurance: they were not expected to be greener than they were. If not addressed both these presuppositions risk setting up a feeling of inadequacy which is counterproductive as far as enabling the interviewee to feel relaxed.

A final tension for me was how much I should challenge interviewees. Clearly I needed to dig below superficial responses or opinions or responses in order to gain material of any quality or value so I introduced each interview with a gentle remark about how they may find themselves challenged during the interview, a gesture that appeared, on the whole, to stimulate rather than intimidate.

Process of analysis

Gathering this data involved listening, talking, transcribing and reflecting as a process of formulating thoughts and ideas relating to my research. The whole sequence of sorting and organising the data by indexing categories, revisiting my research question, analysis and interpretation has not been linear but an ongoing interactive process. My intention has been to generate theory and explanation through inductive reasoning from the data (Mason, 2002, p.125). As a strategy of inquiry, this has involved generating categories of information to sort the mass of interview material, then targeting one or more specific categories to analyse more fully their interconnection and significance and to generate insights that were 'grounded' in and across the data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Corbin and Strauss, 2007).

I started the analysis early on in the interviews by recording initial thoughts and observations in memos to my supervisors, followed by discussion, reflection then making initial interpretations of possible connections to analyse further (Creswell, 2009). After interviewing seven 'green' respondents and eleven 'non-green' respondents, it became apparent that evidence of a conscious, internal conflict between environmental and consumerist values was not emerging. None of the 'non-green' interviewees espoused consumer values: on the contrary they distanced themselves from them. Even the *least* environmentally responsive individuals were not disposed to extravagant consumer spending, insisting they preferred to make things last and avoid waste. Upon questioning, this was attributed to upbringing, so I added a category of childhood/ parental influence to my illustrative categories.

At this point, I was tempted to expand my sample to include individuals who could be classed as high consumers but decided to stay consistent with my research questions. Evidence of the perception of a clear consumer stereotype, on one hand, together with my respondents' concern to distance themselves from it, on the other, would prove important to my subsequent analysis.

Emerging themes

At this halfway stage, the theme of integration appeared in various contexts. The stereotypical ideal of a green lifestyle among the non-green group emerged as one into which PEB was integrated into a way of life rather than being simply an adjunct: this matched the pattern I observed within the lifestyles of the green respondents. Among these respondents, I could detect the presence of an integrated context of green values reflecting the virtue-ethos described within environmental citizenship theory. In other words, there seemed to be evidence of an alternative system of personal, social and cultural values which remained independent of those associated with the ideology of consumerism. While this, in itself, might be helpful in relation to hopes for educating citizens towards sustainability, it was also significant that among the non-green participants as well, several respondents criticised materialistic excesses and pre-occupations: for some, religion offered a definitive counter-ethic to materialism and consumerism; for others, disapproval emanated from a broader, less-defined ethical viewpoint.

Over the next six months, I interviewed fifteen more individuals. The parameters of selection were consistent with those of my original enquiry: a balance as far as possible of men and women across the three age ranges and between 'green' and non green'. The final range of thirty-two interviewees is not evenly spread but I was aware that the data I was generating had begun to consolidate around certain categories, reaching what might be termed saturation point.

It seemed unnecessary to continue when the small size of the sample had meant from the outset that any findings are very limited in scope. I was satisfied that the data already obtained would meet the criteria suggested by Maxwell, namely to achieve some kind of combination of what could be described as typical of the population at large, as well as some of the heterogeneity of general opinion alongside the critical contrast from the green members of my sample (Maxwell, 2005).

The resulting data consists of a range of interviews illustrated below.

Age	**Non-Green Male**	**Non Green female**	**Green Male**	**Green Female**
20 +	Charlie Neil Jed		Mel	Ellie
30+	Nigel	Sally	Joseph	Tessa Carrie
40+	Eddie Martin	Ingrid	Jeremy Walter	Tori Simone Carol Sophia
50+	Jim Malcolm	Judy Kate Janice	Ken Simon Tom	
60+	George	Eileen Mary Breda		Trudie

Each interview lasted on average between sixty and ninety minutes (sometimes longer) producing an enormous amount of data to be transcribed and read many times over.

In addition, there were thirty-two carbon footprint scores from the calculator exercise:

Name	Score
Jeremy	3,860
Tessa	3,925.5
Carrie	4,025
Mel	4,094
Carol	4,309
Sophia	5,325
Tori	5,805
Ellie	7,036.8
Simone	7,227
Joseph	7,380
Tom	8,237
Sally	8,410
Martin	8,609
Kate	9,170
Eddie	10,199.5
Eileen	10,257.5
Breda	10,580
Charlie	11,080

Name	Score
Neil	11,600
Mary	11,920
Ken	12,050 (6,050)
Judy	12,130
Nigel	12,169.5
Jed	12,613
Janice	14,328
Trudie	14,429 (7,000)
Malcolm	15,150
Ingrid	16,100
Jim	16,240
Walter	20,070 (7,070)
Simon	20,151
George	45,781 (14,981)

I have italicised the names of the green respondents to indicate that their calculator scores are among the lowest figures as might be expected and which would be consonant with their self-description as 'green'. Where a double score is given, the lower bracketed score represents the figure excluding travel: all four respondents volunteered their double score to indicate what their carbon footprint *would* have been without having to travel by car or plane for work

The final range of literal categories used to organise the data from the transcripts and calculations included age and gender; the calculation score; extent of PEB among the greens (using subcategories of recycling/energy use/ethical consumerism/ car use/ flying and activism); knowledge of environmental issues; partner/children; employment; world view which embraced religious and/or spiritual affiliation. These various points of comparison across the sample will be presented as the thesis progresses.

Illustrative categories within the transcripts included green and consumer stereotypes; references to consumer culture; value-change; perception of dominant values; time in relation to the urgency of environmental problems; the difference between attitudinal and behavioural change; relationship with nature; presence or absence of a strong green ethic; frugality v. waste; rationalisation for personal limits to PEB and evidence of deliberation about PEB; and finally, emotional responses.

My approach is clearly an interpretivist approach in that my interviewees' *own* interpretations and perceptions have formed my primary data sources. In other words, I regard my interviewees as social actors who have to make sense of their world, find meanings for their own behaviour and these meanings, articulated in the words they use, constitute their social reality (Blaikie, 1993, pp.36-37). Interpretivism has its roots in the intellectual traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology which implies a process of constantly interpreting the world – social situations, our own behaviour, other people's behaviour, natural and humanly created objects – and the development of meaning and ideas in order to make sense of our behaviour in this context (ibid.; Ray, 1994).

Although my interest therefore has been in the language that respondents use, it is the meanings *behind* the language that I have used in my analysis, rather than the mechanics of linguistic structure. This meant that conversation or discourse analysis was not appropriate for my purpose.

Finally, I would add that this research project has grown out of earlier MSc research into the psychological experience of the value-action gap. Linked with this work, I was given the opportunity to facilitate some undergraduate workshops at the University on Environmental Citizenship as part of the green politics module. This gave me direct access to around two hundred students in total, in a series of seminars both in 2007 and in 2009.

The experience of interaction with these students taught me a great deal about the relevance of environmental issues to their lives, the likelihood of them driving or flying less, the relative sway of the desire to live one's own life to the full versus moral constraints regarding the future: in short, their potential to be environmental citizens. This has informed some of what I write in the following sections.

The terms ecological citizenship and environmental citizenship are often used inter-changeably in the literature. I intend to use the generic term 'green citizen' unless referring specifically to literature on environmental citizenship.

CHAPTER THREE PERCEIVING AND BEHAVING: COMPARISON BETWEEN GREEN AND NON-GREEN SAMPLES

In the following chapter, I focus on the discrepancies and similarities between the two groups regarding perceptions of environmental problems and the subsequent behavioural response. I begin by introducing the respondents. Apart from self-description, being green assumed a minimal level of PEB. Each respondent completed a carbon calculator score.

The green sample

Table I below illustrates the lowest to the highest carbon calculator score in current lifestyle practice of the green sample.

Name	Score	Recycling	Low energy	EC	Car Use	Flying	Activism
Jeremy	3,860	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Community
Tessa	3,925	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Eco-home
Carrie	4,025	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Protest
Mel	4,094	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Career
Carol	4,309	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Eco-home
Sophia	5,325	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	
Tori	5,802	Yes	Yes		Yes	?	Career
Ellie	7,036	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Protest
Simone	7,227	Yes	Yes		No	?	Career
Joseph	7,380	Yes	Yes		No	Yes	
Tom	8,327	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Kate	9,170	Yes	Yes		Yes	?	
Ken	12,050 (6,050)	Yes	Yes		Yes	?	Career
Trudie	14,429 (7,000)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Community Education
Walter	20,070 (7,070)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Career

Table I: carbon calculation score and pro-environmental practice of the green sample

Jeremy (46) priest and director of therapeutic community in Dorset, two teenage children
Tessa (36) started web eco-site with her sister, two young children
Carrie (33) university lecturer, keen activist
Mel (23) undergraduate in environmental sciences
Carol (48) runs a small holding with her family in SW France, one young son
Sophia (43) college lecturer and yoga teacher
Tori (45) director of a sustainability centre in Hampshire
Ellie (22) undergraduate in politics/international relations
Simone (49) eco-psychologist
Joseph (30) lawyer, one infant son
Tom (52) computer scientist
Kate (50) horse trainer
Ken (53) director of local council
Trudie (62) ceramicist, two grown up children
Walter (48) university professor, two teenage children

The actual extent and range of pro-environmental practice differed among individuals but recycling and low energy usage were common practice to all individuals, as can be seen from the table. PEB also included insulation; growing vegetables (Tessa, Ken, Carol, Sophia); buying organic produce; use of solar power and vegetarian (Carol, Joseph, Trudie) or vegan diets (Sophia, Carrie, Mel).

Ethical consumption (column headed EC) included making purchases that were low in energy use (for example, washing machines) or less harmful to the environment (for example, cleaning materials), buying local instead of imported produce that entailed excessive air miles and also avoiding cheap clothes from stores associated with exploitative labour conditions.

The car use column shows that only five of the fifteen individuals owned no car though that simple fact concealed a continuum of attitude. Ken's score is given in two parts: the second figure represents his score without taking into account the use of his car to get to

work. Carrie refused to own or even travel in a car; Sophie had never owned a car and had made a commitment to living without one; Ellie believed nobody should have both a car and a house at the same time so, at the time of interview as a university student, she lived in a house but did not own a car. Simone had made a decision to give up her car after becoming aware of the environmental damage it was causing; Joseph didn't own a car but this was due less to environmental reasons than to a preference for cycling as a more practical and less expensive mode of travel. Jeremy's use of the car was modified by sharing vehicles among community members.

Air travel represented a general source of conflict. Carrie, Sophia and Ellie refused to fly. Four individuals have question marks against their names: their circumstances at the time of the interview were such that flying didn't have any relevance to their lives but it was impossible to evaluate whether they might fly in the future which obviously differs from a self-imposed pro-environmental commitment never to fly. Walter and Trudie also have two scores, the lower scores representing what their respective totals would be without flying for work (Walter) and for pleasure (Trudie).

Even this initial tabulation raises interesting issues: the relevance of structural factors as obstacles to PEB (Ken); the conflict of values between the environment and the need to work or the desire to enjoy travel, suggesting that being green is more complex than the sum total of a numerical calculation.

This last point is also reflected in Joseph's inclusion. When we met, he immediately expressed his concern that he was being interviewed under 'false pretences' because his values were coincidentally aligned with green values. He didn't see himself as 'green' because a green way of life suited his own disposition and preference for simple living rather than being motivated by a strong desire to address climate change, an issue about which he felt quite sceptical. This added again to the nuanced picture of a green lifestyle.

The non-green sample

Name	Score	Recycling	Low energy	EC	Car Use	Flying
Sally	8,410	Yes	Yes	?	Yes	Yes
Martin	8,609	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
Eddie	10,199.5	Yes			Yes	
Eileen	10,257.5	Yes			Yes	Yes
Breda	10,580	Yes and no			Yes	Yes
Charlie	11,080	Yes			No	Yes
Neil	11,600	Yes			Yes	Yes
Mary	11,920	Yes			Yes	
Judy	12,130	Yes	Yes		Yes	?
Nigel	12,169.5	Yes			Yes	Yes
Jed	12,613	Yes			Yes	Yes
Janice	14,328	Yes			Yes	Yes
Malcolm	15,150	Yes			Yes	Yes
Ingrid	16,100	Yes			Yes	Yes
Jim	16,240	Yes			Yes	Yes
Simon	20,151	Yes			Yes	Yes
George	45,781	Yes			Yes	Yes

Table II: carbon calculation score and pro-environmental practice of the non-green sample

Sally (36) part-time administrator and Jehovah's Witness

Martin (41) vet, four young children

Eddie (47) newsagent, two young children

Eileen (66) grandmother

Breda (76) psychotherapist and grandmother

Charlie (25) undergraduate in political sciences

Neil (22) newly qualified lawyer

Mary (74) retired schoolteacher and grandmother

Judy (50) accountant, two teenaged children

Nigel (31) computer scientist, recently married

Jed (23) graduate in forensic science, currently unemployed

Janice (57) administrator and grandmother

Malcolm (54) consultancy enabling businesses to envision becoming 'companies of the future', one undergraduate daughter
Ingrid (48) lecturer in business school
Jim (56) executive director of district council, two grown up children
Simon (53) accountant, grown up children
George (70) retired neurosurgeon and grandfather

All interviewees stated they recycled though to different degrees and for different reasons. All owned cars except the three youngest men, a fact determined more by economy than principle.

The first points of comparison between the two samples are perception of environmental issues and personal behavioural response to that perception. I shall start with the non-green respondents as these were selected to represent the majority of the population among whom the value-action gap is most widely discerned.

III:I Perception of environmental problems

All seventeen respondents acknowledged the need for minimal pro-environmental practice and generally exhibited a generally high degree of reflexivity concerning the debates about the causes of climate change, the role of the government (and its inadequacies) and the relevance of PEB in resolving global problems. They demonstrated a range of environmental awareness and concern referencing many documentaries (for example, climate change, the plight of polar bears, melting of icebergs, shifts in ocean currents, factory farming and 'green' living). This would appear to be evidence of the role of the global media in not only communicating environmental information but also constructing the environmental agenda (Macnaghten, 2002). As one respondent put it: "You'd have to be very deaf and stupid not to know there was concern about the environment and that you ought to do something about it" (Breda).

As has been explained, green and non-green respondents were chosen to fit into one of three age groups. In analysing the data from the non-green sample, various sub-groupings emerged in relation to attitudes and response to environmental issues.

The older men – Jim, Simon, George, Malcolm, Martin and Eddie – could be described as having reached a point in their lives when they enjoyed some financial security as well as having achieved some professional and social status. All these men exhibited a tendency to frame environmental problems in terms of current scientific debates about climate change.

Jim had recently been 'converted' to the green agenda through having to be responsible for implementing local government initiatives:

> I think my interaction at work has actually changed my perception. You could have put me fairly firmly in the sceptical camp a few years ago...in terms of what's my impact, what's the impact of mankind in general on the climate change. I would have probably subscribed to it being part of the natural cycle of the evolution of the earth, we've been through two ice ages, what caused that?
>
> I am a pragmatist and I think it's probably both...shall we say mankind is accelerating a natural process and maybe accelerating it in a very dangerous way...and making it an unnatural cycle.

Jim's doubts about which interpretation to believe were echoed by other interviewees:

> There is still some doubt about whether global warming isn't just a blip, you know, caused by sunspots or whatever, the Channel 4 documentary, or is it the real deal as laid out by Al Gore...I saw it and was enormously impressed by it, I think it was a well argued, outstanding film but I'm told there are serious scientific errors in the film. (Simon)

> I guess my problem is in many ways...I don't accept many of the arguments because time has been so short...I've listened to Bellamy on this, he's very into climate change but he's not into global warming and there's a distinction there to be made...and it's very difficult to base any major scientific theory on that small allotment of time. (George)

Malcolm's approach epitomised a corporate response of faith that the right technology – or business strategies – would resolve all environmental problems as part of a package: "The survival and success of tomorrow's global company is bound up with the help of a complex global system, made up of three interdependent sub-systems, the national environment, the social and political system and the global economy."

Martin dismissed the carbon footprint as "a nonsense. I'm one of those that goes against the Al Gore concept and I'm a believer that it's a global conspiracy to make us pay more tax and force us away from oil." For him, a more authentic cause for concern was resource depletion: "I don't think it's a nonsense at all to guard against resource depletion. Things like oil, too many people in the world, aren't there? That's the problem."

Eddie expressed similar worries about resources:

> By the time my children grow up we'll have filled up all the landfill sites...having to dump stuff offshore, we probably won't have much in the way of reserves of petroleum...and therefore the chances are we'll probably be being reliant on nuclear fuels with all the dangers that ensue with that and I think their lifestyle will be greatly impacted...that's my concern.

In the younger age group, there was some awareness of the global nature and complexity of environmental problems:

> It's global warming, the ozone layer, it's taking a bit of a long term view on things and making sure we're not destroying the environment for our children and for our children's children and...weather patterns a huge part of the environment and global warming and the melting of the ice and the flooding...have a huge impact on the earth. (Nigel)

For Charlie, disaster loomed large:

> If I were to be completely honest with myself, the only solution to it would be to devote my life to trying to make things better, to trying to raise awareness, probably the most important thing really and do something about it. As it happens, that is not necessarily what I intend to do. I think things are likely to become terribly worse...it is possible that during the latter part of my life, there might be erratic weather patterns on a grand scale, perhaps catastrophes, and I suppose that will the beginning of the whole thing.

On the other hand, Jed believed these issues were "a bit of a waste of time but it's drawn people's attention to where they could be saving on greenhouse gases and where they're going wrong on stuff but, generally...I don't think it's really hit home that it's really a problem to be honest...not a major issue...I know it should be but..."

Neil was aware of:

> a huge drive, a lot of consciousness in the public domain...it's asked of us to do our part regularly as citizens and we are targeted as a younger generation to be responsible...to participate in purchasing environmentally sensitive products or you're being...discouraged from generating too much waste, charged by weight for the amount of litter you need to dispose of every week.

Although it was not my intention to investigate this issue in terms of gender, it was impossible to ignore the fact that the responses of the women in the sample were more

personal and more emotional in tone, as conveyed in the following examples. This appears to underscore both the distinction of environmental impact between personal experience and abstract concepts (Macnaghten, 2002) and also empirical findings of gender differences in concern about the environment (for overview, see Zelezny *et al.*, 2000).

Eileen took climate change "very seriously. In the last six years I've noticed a huge change, we don't have separate seasons now, they all run into together. Autumnal days in summer, climate seems to be all over the place."

Others expressed fear for the destruction of the beauty of nature:

> I suppose I think that with this planet, this beautiful planet, it's a shame we are destroying it...I think within the next fifty years, the scientists say the earth is already struggling... (Sally)

Sally's perception was reflected in other women's comments. Mary lived on the Dorset coast:

> Well, the effect of all the rubbish and so on, on the environment, and particular chemicals and plastic, I hate it, it's awful, just ruins everything everywhere... You grow up in a beautiful place, you don't want it ruined, do you?

Janice lived in a large Northern city and her concern was equally emotional in tone:

> For me it's...when I look at paper, I do see trees. I value green, I value growing energy, I value trees. When I think about petrol and carbon emissions and I think about the atmosphere, I think about...what we're doing, what's going to affect my children and my grandchildren? It frightens me sometimes...because I think about my age and I think well, maybe things aren't going to be as badly affected in my time but I do think we're wearing it out, we're wearing our planet out.

Judy felt strongly about:

> ...the ruination of beauty. We have all this natural beauty which we have to preserve, we have to keep it, may not be able to keep it just as it is but we've got to do our very best and we can do that by cutting back on all the other awful things that clog the whole place up.

Breda claimed to feel indifferent:

> That feeling...I don't know whether it's old age, compassion fatigue or what but I don't any longer respond in the same passionate way that I did to things and so the green, the environmentalists...it's much more difficult to have a heart response to it...that's very difficult for me because that's really my compass.

One experience though had deeply affected her:

> The one thing that really got to me, that really *hit* me rather than in the head, was the reversing of the Gulf Stream...I saw a programme that really frightened me but it didn't make me feel more active in doing anything about it. That's the trouble...A sense of powerlessness. I'm not going to stop the ice flows melting...

Environmental problems had also come home dramatically to Ingrid during a recent experience of visiting a supermarket in France (her background is in food retailing). In the store she had seen:

> ...a freestanding gondola...twenty five metres long and all it contained was frankfurters and the funny thing was...just standing there taking stock and looked at these frankfurters, I thought ...how many kilos of meat? I literally followed it through to the abattoir, to the field, the farmer – why it hit home is I thought I bet when most people eat them, think they're not eating meat... Just tracing it back, intensive farming personified...it was that excess, an absolute display of excess

> and because it was a processed product, I thought...this is really sick, this is a real display of something gone horribly wrong...it really hit home: this is not sustainable, this cannot continue, this is not possible. Absolutely at a gut level – you could show anyone, most people would say this is insane...even if you didn't create ~~any carbon~~ emissions by what we do, it's just not sustainable.

Was there any significant difference between the green and non-green samples in either awareness about environmental problems or their perceived significance? Comparing the framing of environmental issues between the two groups, little difference could be noted in content but the overall need to combat the effects of climate change was expressed with more urgency:

> I think it's the most important thing to do at the moment – above terrorism, above disease, above everything. Not just affecting us, more than the human race. Not just about us...terrorism is .00001% danger to population in London but the entire population is in danger. (Tori)

> ... the planet is becoming an ecological disaster. (Tessa)

> I think it's incredibly urgent but nothing anywhere near enough is being done. (Kate)

> (even my carbon footprint)...exceeds what's meant to happen by 2050 and I make loads of effort to try to reduce it – that means everybody needs to be like me but actually reduce it by another half. (Carrie)

Combating climate change was the ongoing rationale for the pro-environmental practice of Ellie, Mel, Sophia and Walter. This was also true of Trudie, Tori and Ken who were all engaged in educating the general public in practical steps towards reduction in energy-use.

After citing climate change statistics, Ken added a more local reflection: "We live in such a beautiful part of the country and it would just be dire to let something awful happen to it and it's that applied to a global situation..."

Finite resources were key concerns for three respondents:

What had persuaded Tom to act had been:

> ...the weight of a number of different potential crises for the planet – wild life, what we're doing to the species, how much we're using resources, fish in the sea, what we're doing to the land use, a number of different things which all add up to making it worth doing something about it.

Simone described her main concern as the effects of over-consumption because "the earth's resources are running out." Jeremy felt the same:

> If everybody kind of lived in the same way as we do in this country, consumed as much as we do in this country, we'd need six planets to resource it all and we're running out of resources and I see it getting worse.

The only green interviewee to refer to scientific doubts connected to the causes of climate change was Carol:

> I think I'm probably confused because...obviously I think it's important to reduce carbon emissions, to consume less etc but I've heard things recently...watched the Al Gore video and that seemed very convincing and that made us very worried and concerned and then someone spoke to us about another theory which was something to do with the sun and basically saying environmental things, natural things are bigger than we are and...activities of humans will be as nothing to some great catastrophic things which would have happened anyway and it's almost like

> there's no point in bothering. I'm still doing it anyway but I sometimes wonder, are we doing all this for nothing? It's just there as a kind of little thought.

While there seems to be little significant difference between both samples in relation to awareness of environmental problems, Carol's own lack of scepticism in response to ongoing scientific uncertainty reflects a more general lack of scepticism throughout the green respondents' accounts. In other words, lack of 'incontrovertible' scientific proof did not constitute a rationalisation for lack of PEB which appeared in the accounts of several interviewees in the non-green sample. What other barriers did the non-green respondents perceive between their own professed concern and practice: how did they rationalise their resistance?

I'll recycle but...

At one end of the non-green spectrum was Charlie's current response to the environmental crisis:

> One thing I'm definitely not going to do is have children, I think that would be the ultimate selfish act, so I would adopt perhaps but I wouldn't have children, they will probably live in much worse place than we had.

For the other respondents, current levels of PEB reflected less profound life decisions. Sally, for example, recycled but found food purchases a source of ethical conflict:

> I always like fine green beans and it always says by air so I'm aware that they're bad but I just love them...so I'm a bit of a hypocrite really. I think it is my personal taste, because I don't eat very much, so I try and eat what I like especially when it comes to vegetables but I've started buying apples that are from England...so I am trying to be a bit more aware.

All the non-green respondents stated they recycled:

> In terms of food, I'm probably light green in the sense, I'm alright as a five and a half day a week vegetarian, kind of thing, in terms of materials and waste, I'll conscientiously sort what local authorities give me the wherewithal to sort. (Malcolm)

Jim's newly found environmental awareness had led to some definite changes:

> Certainly in terms of our recycling habits at home, (we've) gone from being casual recyclers to far more specific, saying no, we must make the effort, we must actually sort out what is recyclable and what's not recyclable and make the effort, we will now run a compost heap at home and stuff like that.

A stumbling block, however, on the green path was Jim's passion for fast cars:

> There are areas of my lifestyle which I'm finding very hard to change...I have always been a motoring enthusiast and I like track racing, and I belong to the Porsche club...there's a bit of a conflict there, clearly, running three cars in the family because my wife and I both work and then the third car is my hobby...

Simon also admitted: "My problem area is flying and cars. I live in an extremely old house with an oil fired Aga, not well insulated, uses a lot of oil, no possibility of gas and I have an expensive car, fuel hungry car." He might consider a change of car but "the thing that would hurt most would be giving up ski-ing – that is something I just wouldn't want to do. That would have an enormous impact on my quality of life."

Jed had been brought up by his mother in the habit of recycling but without a clear understanding of why:

> I've just always done it...I do try and use as little as possible, carrier bags and things like that, don't use them if I can get away with it...but I'm not sure I know enough really.

Nigel was also happy to comply with recycling as it was easy for him because:

> Richmond's got a pretty good system. I think I could do more in terms of trying to buy local produce that hasn't been flown in from thousands of miles...also I could do more to make the house a bit more energy efficient.

Doing without a car though was too difficult:

> It's a tough one, I guess. I didn't have a car for years and I really enjoy having a car and enjoy the freedom it gives you – I don't use it excessively but I can't imagine giving it up at the moment to be honest.

Neil was firmly intent on enjoying his young life to the full:

> I'm unconvinced that any of the science to date has convinced me of the need to actively, prevent me from any self indulgence...I'm conscious of the need to do so because of resources but...I don't feel bound by it...I don't feel guilty when I get on an aeroplane...I'm certainly aware of it. The irony is I'll make very small changes. Recycling can be slotted in...not a huge inconvenience for me to put a bottle in a particular bin or to make sure it goes into a particular bag.

Breda was happy to save energy because it made sense: "I'm absolutely clear leaving a computer on... telly...you can see the lights blazing, just stupid." She was also happy to recycle if it was made easy:

> They give you two bags here so we are delighted to use them. (In) Richmond it's a real fuss to take good care of your waste and we've never managed to get them to leave the blue bag, so we don't.

However, she could not imagine ever giving up her two pleasures in life: flying and short journeys in the car.

Ingrid described herself as conscious but inconsistent: "I do think about it when I use the car or particularly with flying." She ate meat but not "loads of meat". Reducing detergents use was something she was "doing but slowly. I do more than pay lip service to it but I am not particularly radical."

Extrinsic factors were implicated as they had been for the green respondents. Judy's commitment was hampered by work circumstances. She was a keen recycler "because that's an easy thing to do" but:

> the car is the worst thing – that's the thing I feel most guilty about. I don't need such a big car but...we have a certain policy within the partnership and I'm stuck with it.

Living in a rural environment, Eddie also professed to recycle a lot but willingness to reduce car use was diminished by the practical constraints of lack of public transport:

> There's a limit to what I can achieve in terms of use of the car...as a household we do have two cars. If we were really drastic and got it down to one car, it would leave my wife without a means of transport...and today, time is money, so you'd have to wait around for a bus and if there wasn't a bus, you'd be wasting time you could spend doing something else...

Recycling becomes problematic for the less able-bodied. Mary had been happy to use the free light bulbs she'd been sent and thought insulation made sense economically but recycling was too demanding:

> If I was more agile and able to carry and that sort of thing, I could do more recycling. I could certainly do that but even carting my rubbish bags out...I think age has to come into this, doesn't it, you know...the physical work, the carting and saving and sorting...I *care* but when it becomes physically difficult, it's a bit frustrating really that you can't do more.

Strong motivation can be dented by the factor of cost. Martin and his family recycled a lot "more on the principle of resource preservation rather than carbon footprint." Martin was keen on alternative energy sources:

> I looked into completely converting my house to solar power, you know, voltaic cells...because I liked the idea of independence from the...reliance on everybody else. If you can be self-sufficient, why not? It's just too expensive...the pricing was just horrendous.

In summary, the non-green interviewees described a range of minimal PEB, most of which includes some recycling, some purchasing of locally sourced food and eco-friendly products. Behind these details, it was evident that PEB in these respondents' lives seems peripheral and subject to the existence of conscious or less conscious polarities between pleasure and sacrifice, convenience and inconvenience and between fulfilling basic pro-environmental tasks and more radical changes such as changing patterns of travel. The findings confirm those of generic surveys (for example, Witherspoon, 1996; Downing and Ballantyne, 2007)

III:II The dilemma of travel

Along a continuum of consumer to pro-environmental behaviour, reducing driving and flying represent the possibility of real personal cost and have been identified as behaviours that are difficult to change (Guagnano *et al.*, 1995; Downing and Ballantyne, 2007, p.38; Lorenzoni *et al.*, 2007 p.447).

Jim remained both adamant and pragmatic about his choice to run three cars:

> I think the bottom line is I don't rationalise it...I accept there is a conflict but in my own view, I think what I'm saying is that my personal desire outweighs my green credentials. I'll recycle, I'll do this but that's it. I think I've accepted that. don't want to be false about it...that isn't going to change and I can't think of anything really that would make it change.

Neither Breda nor Nigel could ever 'imagine' giving up the particular pleasure of driving. George, Simon, Martin, Eddie and Mary justified car use on grounds of lack of alternatives and the need for convenience. Sally and Judy both expressed a feeling of guilt when driving.

Not a single non-green respondent gave any indication at the time of interview of willingness to make a commitment to live without a car. It is significant that in the green sample, only three respondents had made such a commitment. The remainder all demonstrated the capacity to deliberate about car use i.e. to use it as little as possible – for emergencies or when there was no alternative or for work – or to drive a low emission car. Mel, Carol, Trudie, Ken, Walter and Tom expressed guilt and/or discomfort in their use of cars and made it clear that it was an ongoing and uncomfortable compromise.

If reducing car use was seen, at best, as impractical, travel by air engendered – for both green and non-green samples – far more soul-searching:

> If you were green...you would be making real sacrifices such as not flying, not jetting out on holidays two or three times a year, making real sacrifices as opposed to just recycling...(Nigel, non-green)

> If you don't know, you're unlikely to act, if you do know, as in the case of flying, you still may not act. (Malcolm, non-green)

Some green respondents – Kate, Ken, Tori, Carol, Sophia and Tessa – had not flown in the past year and neither had Mary or Eddie. A mixture of personal circumstances and green principles meant that flying did not constitute a significant issue at the time of interview.

For the remaining respondents across both samples, flying constituted a difficult dilemma. The calculator exercise surprised and even shocked respondents in both groups. Despite having the information, actual numbers can have an impact:

> I mean I knew but when you see it written down in figures, I think, my goodness, I could have had half the emissions if I just hadn't indulged myself. (Trudie, green)

Flying constituted a pleasure which was both a 'need' and a 'want' with gradations emerging in differentiating between flying in Europe, for holidays, to see family (Tony, Trudie and Mel) or for work (Walter, Jeremy, Malcolm, George, Ingrid).

> Even though for work I've had to fly...I have changed certain behaviours at work in terms of flying, might be minor, but when I go to France, I take the Eurostar. Also I ask is it really necessary to go? (Ingrid, non-green)

> We think as a family now more about long-haul jet flights in terms of holidays...we're actually sort of starting to think, well, maybe we should be holidaying closer to home, I think that's a significant impact. (Jim, non-green)

> I think I'm just...selfish...for want of a better word. I don't know whether I'm ready to stop having holidays abroad...because I've not been having them that long because we couldn't ever afford to go abroad...it feels like a treat. (Janice, non-green)

Simon (non-green) claimed his desire to fly to the mountains was a need because "ski-ing is almost a spiritual activity like sailing or surfing." He was reluctant to give up this "power – derived, I suppose, from economic wealth – to travel where I want to when I want to."

Neil (non-green) also refused to give up his freedom to travel:

> I'll save my paper and bottle my bottles but then I'll jump on an aeroplane and I know then I'm making a conscious decision to save plastic...but I know I'll undo everything I've done by jumping on an aeroplane probably a hundred times over.

While Neil expressed no guilt whatsoever, Jeremy (green) tussled with his own desire:

> I'd love to go to Greece, to go for the sunshine but I'm not going to do it, because it's wrong. That one bugs me but my conscience prevents me from doing stuff which would be good for me...to fly is so damaging for the environment...I'm trying to live more simply as well...and have lower expectations...of what I need.

Trudie (green) also agonised about conflicting values:

> I'm weighing up the disastrous impacts of my flying in terms of CO2 and also my huge desire to see other parts of the world, experience their wildlife, their culture, my curiosity to see totally different ways of life. It is a self-indulgence, I know, but it's just something I've always loved to do but I'm beginning to think maybe I won't fly, you know...just the urgency of the situation...we've only got ten years to turn things round and if I who profess to be a green person can't cut out flying

> and then, by my example, speaking to other people about it, they might think well, she doesn't do it any more so perhaps I shouldn't. I mean it's just got to be done.

The urgency of climate change gave Mel (green) cause to deliberate:

> If there were no evidence base that says flying contributes to greenhouse gas emissions or in any way to global warming, then I wouldn't have a problem with it. I've almost decided not to fly...because I wouldn't ever fly to Europe...but I had such a good time when I was travelling in Australia and it was one of those opportunities where I reflected on my life and it changed who I was as a person and I don't think I could ever write off...the opportunity of being able to do that again.

Tony (green) weighed up ecological harm against family commitment:

> Which bits can I cut out essentially without really reducing happiness or enjoyment of life and which bits do I really need to do that to keep in with existing society? My wife's American and she says she wants to go to California and...you think, I don't want to do that for ecological reasons but you do want to do that to keep in with family...certainly it's a compromise at the moment.

Some respondents eased their conflict by using a comparative discourse, in other words, comparing their own green 'track record' with others:

> I just rationalise it...we're not outrageous in other respects, that's our indulgence. It seems to me there's two things, the social side of it where if other people don't do it or you measure it against other people, (you can say)...I'm not so bad and it's like I deserve that because we don't do this that and the other...like a 9 or 10 year old...I notice myself doing internal sums which don't convince me (laughs) but nevertheless that's what I do. (Breda, non-green)

Janice (non-green) also recognised that she played mental games with herself:

> I justify...(laughs)...that I wouldn't go on a long-haul flight, only a short flight...(laughs again)...not as bad as other people!

Walter (green) eased his compromise by making it clear he never flew for pleasure:

> The way that I live my home life is completely different from what I do for work. For example, I have not been abroad on holiday for the last fifteen, twenty years so similarly I use the car very little, I cycle into work but...one long haul trip and a couple of European trips just completely blows everything out of the water with 13000 kilos of CO2 emissions! But as an academic, you have to engage internationally...basically, I've done one long haul trip a year for the last few years but no more than one and some colleagues would have done five or six times that. That's the kind of interesting thing because I could also probably make a justification for that in view of what I do and the impact I have when I go.

Malcolm's (non-green) justification was that his work gave him no choice:

> Ninety per cent (of the rationale) is the opportunity to spread (the company's) ideas, if people in Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia want to put on events where we can talk to CEOs about the agenda...then doing it by video conferencing would just not 'fly', it just wouldn't work! So there's no alternative.

George made the same point speaking of his son:

> He works for a company flying all over the place all the time and yet you'd have thought what about all this video conferencing...but they don't have that because they say it's much better to be face to face...they're conscious of it theoretically...if he said to the directors well actually...I'm worried about my

> carbon footprint they'd say well, you'd better go off and work on your own. That would be their attitude...because they're a multinational thing.

It was in this context, that George referred to carbon offsets somewhat sceptically: "And yet I'm sure that if you spoke to them they would be into 'we're planting so many more trees now'" Carbon offsets are one way of offsetting guilt, a practice Walter dismissed as the "equivalent of mediaeval indulgences" coinciding with Goodin's contention (Goodin, 1998). Interestingly, even Neil, who was adamant that he felt no guilt whatsoever, exemplified what might call a carbon offset rationale of 'play now, pay later':

> I do believe that any damage I can do I can make up. I can choose not to travel for five years which can undo five years of previous travel. I don't know if I want to do that but I can and I take for granted I have a long life ahead of me and so if I make any huge blunders or any impact now, I can claw that back, I can make that up.

Offsetting 'guilt' implies an underlying assumption that there is an ethical dimension to PEB even if this is not explicitly acknowledged. The decision to drive or fly, regardless of the reasons given, involves a prioritisation of one set of values over another; deliberation involves a movement along the polarities between convenience and inconvenience, between pleasure and sacrifice. The concept of sacrifice implies doing without for a greater cause: it entails the capacity to tolerate inconvenience, discomfort and less than the full or instant satisfaction of one's needs for a greater purpose.

I was interested to observe that rationalisation did not help green respondents avoid the moral implications of their actions. Jeremy made his moral dilemma explicit when he said "my conscience prevents me from doing stuff which would be good for me"; having booked a flight to Gambia for work thought meant he had taken "the decision to live with that", in other words, he had to live with a moral compromise. Tom lived with compromise about flying to California to see his wife's family. The awareness of moral

compromise meant that rationalisations had little effect as there was no way of avoiding the implications of one's actions, as Trudie exemplified:

> The pleasure seeking of travel does seem like a guilty pleasure. And of course when you see everybody else doing it it's easy to fall into that trap, well if everyone else is going, oh sod it I'm going to go too...I can't think of another word for it, yes, it's selfish...to put my pleasure before what I know is going to be a deleterious activity in terms of climate change, to put my pleasures and satisfactions first, that's selfish.

What would persuade respondents to *stop* flying? For non-greens, it was some kind of external catalyst:

> More destruction of the earth for me to say, that's it, I'm not flying any more and I would have to see it, you see it on the news, it would have to be visual. It would have to really concern me...(Janice)

Expense was a factor:

> You feel guilty...I'm flying and I shouldn't be and I have got this battle in my mind where I'm thinking, part of me thinks oh well, it's still going to fly whether I'm on it or not...because it's not going to make a difference...planes are still going to fly, people are still going to drive their cars and I suppose that's the attitude you're up against, isn't it. People have got this- and I'm included in that mindset where unless they stop planes flying altogether and make you go on the train, that would force you into it but because they don't...they make it too easy for you to say well, it's cheaper to go on a plane rather than spend £300 to go on the train... (Sally)

Simon also believed that the cost would be the only deterrent for him:

> Everybody has a price don't they, if suddenly to say it were to cost me instead of £1000 to do a week's ski-ing, it would be £10,000, that's probably about the level at which it becomes too expensive...but if I was completely convinced about the immorality of the carbon footprint associated with ski-ing, I'd go by train. Until then...there is absolutely no point in me depriving myself of pleasure if other people aren't also doing that, because it won't have any impact.

Three respondents in the green sample had made a definitive commitment not to fly: Sophia, Ellie and Carrie. Sophia did not mention any conflict. Ellie had decided:

> never to fly again, a decision that few people come to. I absolutely love travelling, I've spent half my life travelling but the thing I was ignoring was how much Europe has to offer like there's so much that can be explored...without getting on an aeroplane.

However, there may be future concessions:

> I'm thinking of going to work in the Far East at some point in my life which would involve an aeroplane or two. If I ever had to work out there or if any of my family moved to Australia or something, then I'd definitely make a concession for that but when it comes to pure tourism, I feel like making up for my past errors perhaps...when I was 18, I went on a big trip and I went to something ridiculous like about fifteen different airports on that journey, it was a stupid amount of flights because when I was 18, I wasn't as conscious of it as I am now.

Carrie's green principles had brought her into conflict:

> I suppose one of the difficult things is I noticed it said on my academic contract that I must be willing to attend international conferences. There have been some ...project meetings, that I've been expected to attend that have been in southern Italy – quite difficult to get to without flying...I said sorry, I'm not going and

tried to set up a video conference which hasn't worked too well. There's been that kind of compromise.

Conclusion

This chapter has compared the data between both samples concerning perceptions of the environmental agenda and behavioural response. Little difference was found in perception of the environmental agenda, apart from a tendency among the greens to view the environmental crisis with more urgency. A comparison of the specifics of PEB and the calculator scores showed a consistency of PEB (over a range including ethical consumption and activism) and lower scores among the green sample and that PEB was more or less confined to recycling in the non-green sample whose scores were generally higher.

The data from my samples related to the dilemmas of travel suggest that in terms of driving, it would appear that a major difference exists not in the actual use of the car but in the consciousness of compromise, a reality that underlines the concrete difficulties faced by UK citizens in trying to reduce their car use. Extrinsic factors mean that even highly motivated individuals with a commitment to green behaviour (and none of whom were interested in cars for any reason other than function), find it possible only to *reduce* car use rather than rely totally on public transport. (This is one argument for increasing the availability and popularity of car clubs).

Although a minority of green respondents had made a commitment not to travel by car or plane, the data on both car use and flying showed less dissimilarity between the two groups in actual practice than in the premise for deliberation: green respondents, unlike their counterparts, adopted a green ethical perspective even if they had to compromise. The evident capacity of the green respondents to deliberate without either questioning the validity of climate change agenda or needing an external catalyst to persuade them to take stronger action appears to be intrinsic to a green self-concept.

How are the green respondents able to voluntarily impose behavioural restrictions on themselves in favour of a common environmental good? What characteristics can be identified within green lifestyles or in the meaning behind the practice of PEB in the accounts of these respondents' lives which might afford some insight into this anomaly?

CHAPTER FOUR BEING GREEN: AN EXPLORATION OF MEANING AND GREEN STEREOTYPES

What accounts for the motivation and commitment among the green individuals and how does the reality of their praxis compare to the theoretical proposals of environmental citizenship? These lines of enquiry are interlinked in the presentation of data in the following section.

One of my criteria for selecting the green sample was that apart from actual practice, they would demonstrate the existence of a 'strong green ethic'. This phrase corresponds to Berglund and Matti's description of 'an ethical compass' centred on altruistic values that citizens use to guide them through everyday decisions directed towards the good of the environment (Berglund and Matti, 2006). In order to understand the subjective experience of a life revolving around a strong green ethic, I was interested to know from each interviewee what being 'green' meant to them personally.

IV:I What does it mean to be green?

Tessa referred to being green as a quality of "mindfulness" and explained "the whole idea of being mindful is that it happens all the time, watching everything you do." She spoke of it as "a constant – if it's not, then it's not really a way of life..."

She went on to describe this quality as an ongoing awareness of the environmental consequences of everyday decisions especially related to choice of goods:

> It's a mindfulness of the future in everything that we do ...of what sort of mess you're creating, everything we buy, every time we get in our car , every time we choose to not have something that we can do without, something that's made in China or shipped here or made of plastic. I'm not saying I don't have those things when I want them but if instead of just being a consumer in an almost religious sense – it's our right and what we should do, consume, what keeps the country

> going, the economy going, instead of feeling it's our right and something we should be doing – I think it's something we should think of, really put some thought into every purchase we make about whether there are greener...for example, if you want to go and buy yourself a new pair of jeans at M&S, they're fairly good...or you could go to Primark, they're going to be cheap or you can choose to buy yourself a pair of bamboo jeans, one of the fastest growing plants on the planet, and use a lot less water than, say, cotton. So putting that sort of thought into buying a new pair of jeans, into buying everything, a washer, a kettle, your car, you will lessen your impact.

Trudie extended mindfulness to other activities:

> I suppose in the way you think about your daily actions, what you do, how you live is always against a background of how is it affecting the environment. I mean sometimes you think about that and you don't actually *do* anything about it, but there's always an awareness, you know, I'm driving into the local town and back, I am releasing whatever it is...and then all the impact of transport, what we eat, being a vegetarian having less impact on the environment than being a meat eater, using Ecover products in the house...it's always been there to some extent.

A strong green ethic entails an interface of green values and green *identity* – who one is as well as what one does – revealed through constant mindfulness and ongoing relationships (Szerszynski, 2006 p.95) – reflecting the requirements of Barry's Sustainability Citizen in the cultivation sustainable lifestyle habits through integrating identity and practice (Barry, 2006).

Mindfulness is directly related to virtue-based notions of green citizenship. In this context, the inculcation of virtues can reinvigorate the ethical as a challenge to the dominance of the material, providing a framework of inspiration to citizens to counteract the culture of individualism and self-serving behaviour (Barry, 1999; de Geus, 2003).

'Mindfulness' closely approximates to the specific 'eco-virtue' that Connelly describes as "an internally motivated thoughtfulness leading to action" (Connelly, 2006, p.66). 'Thoughtfulness leading to action' is a quality evident in Mel's explanation of why he identified himself as green:

> I'm aware of the environment and I'm aware of the implication that my actions have...for example, one of the reasons I'm vegan is because I know you can support more people on a vegan or vegetarian diet than you can on a meat based diet...I try and recycle everything I can, I cycle instead of driving, partly because of the health benefits and also because lower carbon emission than driving and if I'm ever in a position where I do have to travel long distances where cycling isn't an option, then I try and take the train or public transport...recycle at home, have a compost bin. I'd love to grow my own fruit and vegetables but I can't at the moment because I'm in a student house and we don't have a garden, so things like that.

The virtue of justice has been described as a central motivation, "serving as an important reference point for establishing the core values of a moral community" around which a moral contract can be established (Smith, 1998, p.22; Szerszynski, 2006; Barry, 2006; Dobson, 2003; Connelly, 2006). Both Dobson and Connelly suggest that motivation arises from historically determined obligations which provide grounds for taking moral responsibility in the present (Dobson, 2003; Connelly, 2006)

Although none of these respondents specifically mentioned justice in the context of an obligation to right *historical* wrongs, it was implicit as a *sine qua non* of achieving the goals of sustainability. Tessa, for example, expressed concern about the "inequality in the world...a rich and poor divide". Ellie believed that awareness of this divide would discourage people from consumer behaviour: seeing extreme poverty of other countries "made me realise about waste: I don't think anyone could see real poverty and then go on spending or wasting. It would change anyone."

Ken referred to people's motivation as 'switches': "My switch is the ecological one but it is equally about fairness, equity of humanity as well. Those two things for me." Equality was linked to interdependence for Carol, as intrinsic to ecological principles: "we are all part of it, depend on each other..." Values of equality and justice appeared to be central to a green ethical stance as in Sophie's description of her green friends:

> (they) tend to very politically aware, know that if they buy certain kinds of things that have been manufactured in a country where the workers' conditions are really poor...they have values about equality and justice. Living a way that meant they were buying things and using things that were unethical would set up a conflict within *them*...

Awareness of global inequities was intrinsic to Tom's motivation:

> We are ripping off the world in order that we can have a good standard of living. It leads me to being a bit conflicted, I suppose...not just climate change terms, but being able to live a sustainable life...if you divide up (resources) among the world population, we might be able to sustain the environment but...there's no particular reason for thinking I'm the lucky westerner and I earn lots of money and therefore I should be able to use much more than my share of the cake.

Complaining about the cultural phenomenon of 'charity', Tori revealed a consciousness about global inequities: "It's not real, heartfelt charity. A way of paying off your guilt at people starving in Africa...the reason they're starving is we're pumping in CO2." Her reference to asymmetrical relations between nations in the present, if not in the past, and the link between charity and inequality echoed the emphasis on the virtue of justice in the theoretical profile of Dobson's post-cosmopolitan citizen in which he argues that charity is weak basis for obligation as it can be easily withdrawn, that "the structure of giving contained within it cements and reproduces the vulnerability of the recipient" (Dobson, 2003, p.27). Acknowledging responsibility, on the other hand, diminishes the hierarchical dynamic since "relations of justice are between putative equals" (ibid.).

If, in the context of green citizenship, virtues are understood to transcend the private domain and become social virtues through a commitment to sustainability and a conception of the common good (Connelly, 2006, p.51), it would be reasonable to suggest that, without referring to the precise phrase, all fifteen respondents recognised that PEB was grounded in a strong sense of the common good. As current mainstream practices were perceived as harmful to the environment (damage to resources and/or other species) and also to society (increasing inequities and injustice between nations) both currently and in the future, PEB, in my green sample, appeared embedded within a wider personal critique of existing environmental and social practices.

In the table, the final column 'activism' indicates how far green praxis included challenging mainstream structures. Activism was, for Carrie, the most important feature of being green. Describing herself as "pretty deep green in what I believe in, in terms of my lifestyle", she expressed particular admiration for those who were radical activists:

> I've done a tiny bit of direct action but nothing like a lot of people that go to climate camps. There are people who live it and act it, then there are people who just do the direct action part, probably the best people, the 'angels' we should be looking at, are the people who live it and do the action as well. That makes me feel right down at the bottom of the pile.

Carrie's "angels" chime with Barry's demands for Sustainability Citizenship, in which he stresses the active role of a green (republican) citizen in terms of obligations to engage in political and other forms of resistance to injustice (Barry, 2006, p.32). Tom had been involved in the Green Party and Trudie had stood for election as a Green Party candidate twenty years previously. Joseph's green ideal was personified in a friend who joined climate change protests, was a Green Party member and intending to stand as a local candidate. This meant that only Ellie, in this sample, currently engaged in the kind of direct political activism that so inspired Carrie: Ellie frequently joined demonstrations

and political protests against climate change or at Heathrow against the building of Terminal 5.

If, as Barry writes, "Green citizenship requires engaging with the underlying global capitalist political economy", in terms of *direct* action, few respondents would fulfil conditions for membership (Barry, 2006, p.35). However, if one extends activism to embrace other kinds of initiatives within the community that challenge dominant belief or behavioural structures, then there is evidence of how a strong green ethic evolves from being an abstract ethical principle or rule into ongoing roles and relationships in all parts of life (Szersynski, 2006).

The following activities may not merit inclusion as 'forms of resistance to injustice' as Barry requires of his sustainability citizen but perhaps there are more subtle, yet equally subversive, ways of 'protesting' or 'resisting' the very structures that embody such inequality and injustice. Pro-environmental praxis plus ideological commitment was integrated not only into life 'style' but life 'path'. Tessa and her family planned to move back to South Africa to establish a permaculture project; Carol and family had already established a self sufficient small holding in south-west France; Tori worked as manager of a local Sustainability Centre; Ken worked as Environmental Officer for the local district council; Walter worked as a University professor specialising in waste management. Mel was studying environmental sciences and intended to seek an apprenticeship with a woodsman in Sussex; Simone was working to bring alternative ecological values into the corporate sector. Trudie and her husband lived in an eco home: her husband manufactures solar panels and she was spearheading community projects to get members of the local communities engaged in PEB; Jeremy directed a therapeutic community committed to self-sufficiency in Dorset. Carrie was not so much of an activist as she had been but had researched climate camp activism for her doctoral thesis. Sophia had introduced a Green Faith course at her college.

All of these individuals therefore express some degree of integrating green ethics within their very sense of identity. This compares with the non-green sample, where PEB was

understood in terms of abstract rules and consumer decisions, it was clear that in the green sample, PEB was integral to a chosen way of life: for these individuals a green ethic was normative.

Frugality

Alongside equality and justice as necessary virtues for a sustainable ethic, so the "cardinal" virtue of frugality could be said to epitomise the green lifestyle, both in the actuality of the interviewees' own lives and the green ideals to which they aspired (Connelly, 2006, p.70).

Frugality – defined as a careful, sparing, economical use of resources – emerged in the following contexts: as a counter-ethic to prevailing consumer wasteful practices and attitudes; born of financial necessity; as a quality of temperament; as representative of 'past' values; as quintessentially 'green' i.e. the more frugal, the deeper the shade of green. Several green respondents found extreme frugality inspiring.

Carol's ideal green life was "very natural, very earthy, very in contact with, very immediate, you know..." This was inspired to some degree by a visit to a man:

> a year or so ago who lives in the mountains in a house, I presume he built himself with no electricity, streams for running water I think, grows all his own food, he ploughs the land with a horse – no motors, he lives a very natural life though I noticed he does do his washing in a washing machine in the village below but you have to walk up to his house, half an hour on foot, he uses horses and mules, and I just thought that was fantastic and I felt a wimp, you know. It's someone who has really lived out his beliefs...who hasn't compromised...but I couldn't do it!

Trudie expressed the similar ideal of:

> a really really dark green person living in a really frugal way, frugal, simple... somebody living probably in a tepee or something all the year around on a Welsh hillside, I have met people like that. Having no car obviously, literally tending their own garden and having their animals living a self-sufficient life, no television, maybe have a radio, compost toilets and everything that goes with them, having hardly any impact...

Like Carol, she felt such hardship for her personally now would be out of the question.

Just as Mel had been inspired by the self-sufficiency and minimal impact of a Welsh community he'd visited, Jeremy's green ideal was:

> the people living at Tinker's Bubble, people living in 40 acres of woodland, south Somerset, won't allow any petrol driven things on to their site, they grow some vegetables, keep a couple of Jersey cows, they live in benders or wood buildings they built themselves, they get an income by selling timber...live very simply, drink a lot of cider, apples from their own orchards...their own power comes from a small windmill – solar power – yeah, they're really living it out.

The frugality described by all four – i.e. living on a hillside or in a teepee or in a self sufficient community was considered the only means by which one could achieve the ultimate low-carbon lifestyle. For these individuals, frugality as a way of life was a 'given': only the degree was in question.

For Tessa and Carrie, frugality was linked to a conscious counter-cultural statement against consumerism:

> People don't see...having second hand clothes is not a status issue – it's about protecting resources, my kids have worn second hand clothes since the day they

> were born and always have – we have a good system – with friends and my sisters and things and pass clothes round and get to wear them over and again. (Tessa)

> Just look at my clothes, right, as an example, these shoes I've had about ten years...and they're vegan and they're made out of environmentally friendly stuff and when they wear out, I send them back, the company offer this service and for thirty quid, and they send them back as new. They're my main pair of shoes all the time so I haven't gone out and bought another pair to go with a particular outfit because I don't think you need them and these (trousers) are from a charity shop and my friend gave me this (top). (Carrie)

Ken associated his frugality with an innate temperamental unsuitability to a consumer lifestyle:

> It's just the way I am, my partner as well – lived with her for twenty odd years, both people who aren't materialistic. I've got a television and so on but there's not the pressure to continually update or continually spend money on things that aren't essential...when I completed my carbon footprint thing, my actual spend per month on anything other than food is incredibly small...there's so many things for free out there, all that nature and gardening and composting.

> I think it's about character, a person develops in a certain sort of way and is switched on or switched off by certain things – with me it just happens that I'm totally a switched on by all the things that this agenda delivers. It's just a way of life.

Frugality was also part of habit:

> We're really fanatical switcher-offers and we try not to use not too much, don't have too many showers and really concentrate, you know, if we go on a trip out

> with the car, we'll think how much can we do on that trip to save doing another one" (Carol)

Kate's explanation of why she considered herself to be green also reveals a lifelong habit: frugal practices were simply "*normal* activities for me...a continuation of the way I've always been." She explained:

> I am very conscious of lights, I don't have lights on unless I need to read. In fact I don't like bright lights, I prefer candles to electric lights. If I'm cooking I will cook in batches, I won't just put an oven on and off all the time, I don't put the heating on if I can put on another layer of clothes. Washing I keep to the minimum, it's always a full load and I get angry with him (her husband) if he doesn't! Going back to childhood, I consider to this day, I consider a hot bath to be a luxury...every time I get into a bath, I think I'm lucky. If you didn't have money, it was a luxury.

Like Kate, Tori's frugality was born out of necessity: never having had much money and not having money now. Joseph also cited current economic necessity as well as the broader framework of:

> my values...partly upbringing, partly Quaker – living frugally, carefully – not wastefully. I'm sure having parents and grandparents who would never throw any food away, would recycle it in soup the next day, who will get the majority of their clothes from charity shops...I certainly haven't bought a new pair of shoes for a good few years and that's become a way of doing things to save money.

Upbringing was significant in this respect for both for Ellie (22) and Walter (48):

> My Mum brought me up with an ethos of you should re-use as much as possible...My Mum's like the opposite of a consumer, my mum doesn't consume anything so I've been brought up with that. (Ellie)

> I think it's actually we're perhaps old enough to have it in our upbringing, the idea of leaving food on your plate is just not something that is acceptable, basically you should eat it and there is this kind of ingrained thing, I suppose, that waste is not good. And extravagance is not good, I suppose that's been reinforced over the years...(Walter)

For Jeremy, frugality was central to his Christian beliefs:

> Living more simply is good for you. All the great spiritual traditions teach you that...letting go, giving up attachments to material things. The greatest model ever invented for living is, you know, the model of St. Benedict...people learning to live together...low impact way of living and based around order to life, discipline, not just do your own thing, go shopping at three in the morning, these so-called freedoms bind people.

Clearly, the virtue of frugality is nuanced – from a narrow focus on economic necessity to the wider context of a non-materialist lifestyle – and it is difficult to know to what extent each facet acts as a primary motivation. It was evident, though, that in *all* respondents, frugality was a given: in other words, the virtue of frugality entailed no personal or radical change of heart, as if they were already predisposed – whether through temperament, upbringing, economic necessity or even habit – to focus these personal preferences towards specific goals of environmental sustainability.

So far, the data has revealed a fair degree of overlap between ideal aspirations of green citizenship and the lifestyles of these green respondents. This overlap has been revealed in terms of manifesting virtues of justice, equality, frugality and mindfulness; the ability to deliberate on the ethical consequences of their behaviour regarding the environment; the strength of character to forego personal material desires in favour of behaviour that prioritises the common good and finally, a commitment to challenge cultural norms and practices. Not all respondents have demonstrated all of these qualities but I believe there

are grounds for believing that these individuals might be considered to approximate living exemplars of environmental citizenship theory.

IV:II Green narratives

I now want to turn to one of the problems with green citizenship theory that I suggested at the end of the literature review: the lack of attention given to the process of personal transformation from materially oriented consumer to environmentally sensitive citizen. I was interested in understanding how these particular respondents had come to acquire these virtues and become green citizens? How did they explain the origins and process of establishing their own green commitment? The following data addresses the answers to these questions.

While there is little account in the literature of environmental citizenship of the actual transition from consumer-driven to sustainable lifestyles, it is assumed that the acquisition of environmental virtues can be achieved through of a rational and deliberative process (Dobson, 2003; de Geus, 2003). The concept of the common good which is essential to environmental citizenship is not "natural or pregiven: it has to be defined, shaped and brought into being" (Connelly, 2006, p.52). This is why Connelly argues that "Environmentally sensitive dispositions (i.e. virtues) need to be developed and encouraged" through the process of deliberating on what exactly constitutes the common environmental good (ibid.).

The 'composite' environmental citizen is understood to be formed through a moral and rational process, in which ecological virtue enables a repudiation of values of materialism, a reduction of personal consumption and a commitment to live a genuinely sustainable life.

Out of my fifteen respondents, Tom's circumstances most closely match the assumption of a rational and deliberative change of mind and heart from self seeking and materialistic consumer through moral reconsideration to altruism on behalf of the common planetary

good. He described how his lifestyle had changed in the fifteen years since he had been a "successful computer nerd", making regular visits to California, earning a high income and enjoying the good life. Looking back he said:

> ...it might have been a very good thing to go off around California – gave me high status, going exciting places, doing exciting things...but an *ecological* view of some of that, you might think, actually, the world can't sustain that sort of thing...the people who have high status, high spending, and they've got all these material possessions, you now might think, those people are some of the main contributors to the actual problem.

He did his own very thorough research:

> I've had spreadsheets for running my finances, how you spend your time, I do maps and computing, and now I have another interest. I started working less and reading more...a lot more science and politics and things and did less work and I looked for something to contradict it to keep me in my happy existing life...and then I thought the weight of the evidence is that these things are going to happen - climate change, depletion of resources. I don't know if I'd do it necessarily *just* for climate change – it was the weight of a number of different potential crises for the planet – wild life, what we're doing to the species, how much we're using resources, fish in the sea, what we're doing to the land use, a number of different things which all add up to making it worth doing something about it.

> ...you talk about it and it's all you mustn't do this, you mustn't do that or that's good for the environment but then you do the calculations on plastic bags or light bulbs and it hardly makes any difference so I decided that if I was going to make any changes in my life, I wanted to make changes that would make some difference. I found that if I do *that*, it saves a tonne, something else might save next to nothing so I haven't concentrated on those bits at all yet.

Being genuinely 'green' for Tom was understandably defined by figures: "Some people have the best intentions but if you can't put it in numbers for me, then for me, you really don't know whether they are living the life or not."

He did not describe any Damascean moment of revelation so there is no way of knowing exactly how or when this process of change started or what specific catalysts contributed to him becoming, at the point of interview, the clearest textbook exemplar in my sample of a 'remoralised' green citizen. So what of the other fourteen?

As discussed earlier, the ideology of ecologism has been theoretically criticised on a number of grounds including practical impossibility either because non-human members of the planetary community cannot debate rational issues of justice (Dobson, 2003) or because its metaphysical emphasis impedes mainstream political acceptance (Barry, 1999). Nevertheless, regardless of these academic philosophical objections, a sense of relatedness to nature has been found to impact on pro-environmental motivation. In researching sources of environmental commitment, Louise Chawla found that important formative experiences in the lives of professional environmentalists included experience of natural areas, family, organisations, negative experiences and education (Chawla, 1999). Out of this combination of factors, she divided significance into life stages: experience of natural areas and family during childhood; peer groups and education during student years and pro-environmental organisations in adulthood (Chawla, 1999, p.21; Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002, pp.251-252).

Chawla's research showed that formal education was less significant than childhood experiences of natural surroundings which dominated the list of influences, confirming her conclusions after reviewing previous studies in this area (Chawla, 1999; 1998). Although Chawla's research does not necessarily shed light on pro-environmental practice, in that a commitment to indirect activism does not automatically translate into direct PEB (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002, pp.251-2), her findings highlight the importance of an emotional connection to nature in fostering environmental concern.

The motivational importance of a relationship with nature as a factor determining PEB has also been highlighted in empirical research. Emotional affinity with nature has been found to engender a protective stance toward the natural environment (Kals *et al.*,1999) and interconnection with nature – how far one defines oneself as part of nature – is intrinsic to biospheric attitudes (Schultz, 2000). A relatively new measure of emotional connection to nature – connectedness to nature (CNS) – has been used to predict ecological behaviour (Mayer and McPherson Frantz, 2004), overlapping with a report of significant correlation between the factor of inclusion of nature in self (INS) and subsequent pro-environmental concern and behaviour (Schultz *et al.*, 2004).

These various facets of what one might broadly call a sense of connectedness to nature are reminiscent of ecological perceptions of interrelatedness and interdependence of humans within the environment described by writers such as Arne Naess and Warren Fox (Naess, 1973 ; Fox, 1990). For this reason I was interested to explore any account of an 'ecological consciousness' among these green respondents, to see if their own narratives revealed an element of ecological citizenship, as defined by Mark Smith, which describes human obligations to living and non-living entities from a basic sense of oneness with the environment (Smith, 1998, p.99).

It transpired that the majority – ten of the fifteen interviewees – expressed a strong relationship to nature. Instead of an experience, like Tom's, which led to a considerable change of perspective, most interviewees revealed more of a 'green narrative' in describing their 'greenness' as something inevitable or natural to who they were as individuals, a core they have always been aware of, from which an ongoing thread had developed through the various stages of their lives. The "combination of continuity and chance" Chawla describes as characterising the 'life paths' of her sample of environmental activists (Chawla, 1999, p.17) closely resembles my own, as will be seen from the following analysis.

Sophia developed an interest as a teenager in saving the whales, which evolved into concern about the ethics of farming and a decision to become vegetarian. She recalled:

> I was also very upset about spoiling the natural environment. I lived in an area that was being built on and I always felt really sad every time a field went, I mean I know you needed houses but you could see the changes happening around you...I remember in English lessons reading poetry about the countryside and then poems about the industrial revolution and just feeling really upset about the impact of human activity on landscape...I wasn't thinking through the whole economic scenario but *instinctively* I didn't want things to be killed, I suppose...landscapes being destroyed in that way.

She could not explain this approach in terms of being taught or inheriting it because there was no direct parental influence: "I can't remember a time when I was different – there was no kind of conversion experience." Crucial to Sophia's rationale for being green was her belief that "we are a part of nature and do have a relationship with the environment and with each other and when that works well there's a kind of rhythm and a pattern to it, a relating in there which can be healthy and then that can be disrupted and that relationship can be damaged."

For her, this "kind of orientation is always the same...different ways I've had of thinking about it politically and spiritually are ways of trying to articulate what that sense of relationship is."

Carrie expressed a similar ecological awareness: "We're all part of this planet and surely every other species has the right to a decent life as we do." Passionate conviction did not interfere with her capacity for logical argument: "I could probably cry about some of it, for sure. I am quite an emotional person but then I think my emotions are based on my interpretation of facts."

Her antipathy to cars began as a child: she was always car-sick and hated the smell from the exhaust. Like Sophia, she became vegetarian in her teens in response to Animal Rights literature, appalled by:

> the whole idea of death, of inflicting death on other creatures who had thoughts and feelings, not exactly like humans do but they definitely have thoughts and feelings, they can be happy, they can be sad, they can feel fear and so on. It doesn't feel right.

Also identifying herself as "an emotional sort of person", Trudie described a relationship with nature that was lifelong:

> I was brought up in the country, love the country, gardening's always been a passion so feeling physically close to the environment all the time. Childhood as well, definitely , being an only child and having strong memories of just going for walks by myself in the woods and the fields, noticing the flowers noticing what's going on around me.

Again she was not influenced by her parents: she walked alone. As she explained:

> I've always been close to nature, my favourite books were the Flower Fairy books which gave the idea that all the flowers were alive, you know, so in some way, I've always felt close to nature.

She describes a metaphysical connection to nature:

> ... when I go for a walk, I am aware perhaps of where the rivers are, how the trees are growing, what's going on in the hedgerows around me, underneath my feet, so perhaps that's more of a romantic thing. Like the Romantic poets, identifying with trees having their own kind of spirits and the rocks of the earth being alive – it is something I feel, yes, sure whereas my husband who is equally or even more committed to the environment than me doesn't have that kind of emotional sort of almost wanting to be a tree or a rock or a waterfall, you know, get into it and become one with it, he doesn't experience that in the same way. More rational,

> for him...definitely. For him it is all in the head, you know, 'I must leave this planet in a better state than I found it for the sake of my grandchildren etc.'

Simone also articulated a lifelong ecological awareness and sensitivity:

> When I was very young, I had a very strong relationship with nature. My curiosity was entirely about nature and I was always watching everything in great detail and wondering how does it work? I wanted to know what creatures were doing. I wanted to know what the wind was doing at the top of the trees that was different from when it was in the grass and I also had a very strong sense of Nature speaking for itself so when there were nature projects at school, I didn't want to be drawing it, I wanted to be bringing it into the classroom because I couldn't distort it really, it could speak for itself. So that was very very strong...

Her metaphysical appreciation of nature provided the initial impetus to take practical steps to reduce her environmental impact:

> Carbon footprint is a very recent word. The link was...the kind of person I am...it happened in my imagination or in my body before it happened in my cognitive functioning. I was much more involved in thinking about petrol fumes polluting the air if I drove to breathe fresh air so it made me appreciate that I was still involved in a taking relationship from the earth and not wondering enough about a reciprocal transaction. I became aware that I was doing nothing about the ways in which my life does have an impact on the rest of life on this planet. That's been more important to me first of all than the human impact of environmental pollution. It started there. But I have given up my car now.

Carol's relationship with nature was also central to her green lifestyle. She describes a numinous quality:

> It has to come down to thinking that the planet or the natural world – it's like a manifestation of God or something that's difficult to name but it's not just they're nice flowers or something like that but it's somehow something incredibly precious, not to be lost, not to be destroyed and so, you know, destroying it, it's losing something valuable beyond words and the more we're disconnected and separated from the natural world, the more we're...not whole or able to function properly. Somehow being close to the natural world is fundamentally important.

Her green 'path' reflected a variety of influences:

> I don't remember being particularly switched on to environmental things but I became more aware of it and knew about Greenpeace. I heard a programme on the radio which made a lot of reference to permaculture and found out more about it and *that* was a complete sort of breakthrough because it was so positive. There were all these real things you could do. I was just away, you know, I just *loved* it...that was how I started off having an allotment. I wasn't into gardening *at all* before but it was because, you know, I could see it made sense...I eventually sold my car, I got a job part-time nearer home...it was the beginning of a lot of things that were all connected to living...with a smaller footprint. I was well into my thirties by then.

Childhood experience of nature had been a very significant factor for Ken, leading a lifelong appreciation:

> It's been natural to me over the years, all to do with an appreciation of your surroundings, an appreciation of natural history, life in general I think, of wonderment, very special in a way. I can get so much pleasure out of the simple

> things in life, a walk in the countryside, just seeing something happening, a bird's nest with a cuckoo in it, just looking at it, really exciting stuff for me.

After years of "rabbiting on about the environment", he suddenly found himself in a position of influence at work because of the shift in political interest towards the environmental agenda.

Mel also recalled that as a child: "I'd be out in the woods, running around collecting fir cones, climbing trees..." He believed a relationship to nature was important to him:

> ...seeing how it has an influence on your own life, getting back from a stressful day at work and you walk the dogs over the farm and you feel better for having an awareness of how it impacts in that you need plants to produce oxygen so you can breathe and maintain hydrological cycles and things like that...I see myself as a very small part of the system.

The seed was sown:

> The first thing for me was vegetarianism, we've always had dogs and cats and that alerted me early on to the arguments of animal rights and I think that was the first time I was really aware of having a moral conscious (sic) about certain issues, but it wasn't until about 18 or19 that I *really* started taking an interest in environmental issues.

A long trip to Australia meant "I actually had some time to sit down and think about it. I realised those issues were really close to my heart although I couldn't really tell you when that first started."

The accounts of these seven respondents, with different personal variations of emphasis, strongly suggest the presence of precisely that ecological consciousness proposed by deep-green ecologists in direct challenge to the dominant anthropocentric human-nature

dynamic (Naess, 1973; Fox, 1990). For these individuals, an ethical framework is based on an eco-centric assumption of the interrelatedness of all living and non-living entities. Their behaviour is an extension and outcome of this green ethic combining who you 'are' with what you 'do' or, in Dobson's words, with an ethics as "state of being" underlying an ethics as "a code of conduct" (Dobson, 2000, p.46 and p.40).

For four other respondents, childhood experience of nature had also been a formative influence in establishing a pro-environmental commitment:

> Pollution is something I've always felt strongly about...my Dad was involved in conservation, we learned a lot about that as children...we were spending our time with conservationists and looking after baby animals...and habitat. That gave us a grounding in, I think, loving nature...having grown up in such a vast environment. (Tessa)

Tessa went on to describe her own 'green' life path:

> I left home and went to college, hadn't really thought about it very much, just something very much part of our lives and when it came to when I had to go down to the supermarket and buy washing powder to wash my own clothes, it was *right*, where's the stuff that isn't full of nasty chemicals? It was a natural progression, that we need...to recycle the stuff, we can't just chuck it in the bin. My sister's three years younger than I am, we lived together in Cape Town for a few years while we were studying and we were quite green even then in the sense that we preferred to take the train and walk, because of pollution, we weren't really thinking of global warming then...it's just always been a theme.

Tori had also been brought up in the countryside:

> I think that makes a difference. A large percentage of my time was spent farming, that sort of life, you're very close to death all the time, brings you to a different level of thinking, seeing things born, dying regularly.

Kate explicitly linked a relationship with nature as constitutive of values alternative to current consumer preoccupations:

> We're becoming so far removed from nature, everything has got so ridiculous, you can't have mud on vegetables and stuff like that, it's just totally false. The world that people live in is so removed from nature and anything that is normal, as I see it as normal in my upbringing...falling over, being able to go out when I wanted to without any fear, apprehension, discipline, rules and I don't ever recall *wanting*, this is strange phenomenon, I often think back to my childhood...you had other things to occupy you, stuck in muddy clay pits, paddling in rivers, rode bikes, went down to the beach, messed about with animals and horses...as a child, there was too much else to do, never this emptiness or wanting.

While not related to personal childhood experience, Jeremy expressed a similar belief that experience of 'nature' was essential in itself and to counteract demands of consumer culture. He felt we have lost a sense of kinship with nature, experience of the highs and lows of natural cycles:

> We experience some of that here...what a wonderful thing to come in this morning, a freezing cold day, get out in the field, dig and just feel the blood coursing through my veins and piling up this great pile of food for the winter, to get us through, it's energy for the winter, that's the *primary* energy, people talk about oil but the primary energy is food...

His consciousness of the global predicament was reflected in local experience:

> We've got this wonderful meadow outside this church which is an old graveyard, full of in January snowdrops, wild daffodils, wild flowers in summer, but it's getting full of marsh grass because it's getting wetter and wetter and eventually it's going to be taken over, it's going to lose all its biodiversity, but it's just...a wonderful parable of global warming...I mean it's *nothing* to us... a bit wetter, our potatoes get blight...two weeks earlier than they did ten years ago but if you were in Africa...it's getting so hot...it's death.

What again emerges in these descriptions is the existence of a lifelong narrative thread as opposed to a sudden change of heart: a lifelong predisposition in the sense of an ecological consciousness in which virtues and later rational 'dispositions' can flourish and a connecting thread of a sense of relationship with, or at least a deep appreciation through direct experience of, nature.

Of the remaining four, only Ellie and Walter mentioned no specific connection with nature: Ellie's primary influence had been her mother; Walter's commitment to PEB was again embedded in lifelong interests and values, but, similar to Tom, was intrinsically less emotional and more rational in practice. Even Joseph who felt he was 'coincidentally' green because his values happened to be aligned with green values rather than evincing a strong green ethic, he, nevertheless, like Kate and Jeremy, regarded childhood experience of nature as an enduring antidote to consumer culture:

> What saddens me...things which I get a huge amount of pleasure, like getting lost in the forest...(if) people had the imagination or encouragement or someone in their life like a parent who'd take them out into the forest. When you've done something as simple as that, you can never go back surely and see as significant the kind of clothes George Clooney was wearing that particular evening...

Finally, Tom contrasted his enjoyment of playing outdoors as a child to children's more sheltered experience today, suggesting that he too had had some direct experience of nature although he attributed little significance to it himself.

In summary, then, for Trudie, Sophia, Carrie, Simone, Ken and Mel, ecological consciousness could be described as 'innate'. There is little evidence to suggest that they were 'taught' explicitly, that their parents actively instilled in them ecological values: it would be more accurate to say that these individuals showed an independence from their immediate cultural context early on in their lives. For Carol, the principles of 'permaculture' were a catalyst in developing a crucial relationship with nature which she described as central to her green lifestyle.

For four others – Tori, Kate, Tessa and Joseph – experiences of nature as children had been highly significant as formative influences in pro-environmental commitment and praxis. Arguably, Jeremy's Christian beliefs have been most influential in establishing his pro-environmental commitment and for Ellie, Walter and Tom, experience of nature did not appear to be a specific factor.

The data from my own sample strongly reflect both the range of influences and the overall significance of childhood experience of nature found in Chawla's own research among professional environmentalists suggesting a similar connection between childhood experiences of nature as formative of a green ethic and a direct personal commitment to PEB. For some, a pro-environmental disposition is ascribed to informal educational encouragement from parents or other sources but for six respondents, a sense of connection to nature appears to be independent of immediate childhood influences including, by implication, education: how else does one interpret phrases such as "the way I have always been" or "it's always been there"?

Obviously 'ecological consciousness', as a variable, cannot be measured precisely but the value of a relationship to nature has been identified in empirical literature as a factor impacting on PEB: perceived separateness from nature, for example, is recognized as a

factor that reduces an individual's biospheric concern (Schultz, 2000; 2002). In addition, Dutcher *et al.* have reported on the significance to pro-environmental commitment of interdependence and use the term 'connectivity' with nature. Connectivity is defined as "an intuitive sense of sameness with the world around (and within us)" suggesting a community of life to which we belong (Dutcher *et al.*, 2007, p.479). Connectivity with nature emphasises the subjective experience of a shared kinship reflecting a sense of empathy, not simply concern.

Connectivity adds the possibility of affective as well as cognitive influences in motivating pro-environmental behaviour through establishing a relationship which builds the possibility of commitment (Dutcher *et al.*, 2007). In the previous chapter, I noted the more strongly affective tone of the women in the non-green sample: in these green narratives it has again been possible to detect a similar affective emphasis in the female interviewees in contrast to the more rational and cognitive approach of either Tom, Jeremy or Walter.

Interestingly, high levels of commitment – based on perceptions of interdependence with the natural environment – have been recently found to predict greater levels of PEB (Davis *et al.*, 2008). My own green respondents would appear to substantiate these findings.

IV: III Pro-environmental behaviour or pro-environmental orientation

In summary, then, for most of the green respondents, it appears that PEB is central to a lifestyle, to identity, one ongoing chapter in a lifelong narrative. I would like to suggest that by distinguishing PEB as a set of behaviours from pro-environmental orientation (PEO) which *incorporates* PEB within what Rohan terms a larger value "worldview" (Rohan, 2000, pp.267-8), it is possible to build a composite value picture from these green respondents in which PEB is, for them, embedded.

A green ethic underlies a whole system of values. Values seen by the green respondents as alternative to the current cultural norm are congruent with green practice and principles which had evolved from within the framework of their own worldview: environmental 'rights' and 'wrongs' are extensions of wider personal, political and social 'rights' and 'wrongs'. Apart from general virtues of equality, justice and frugality, the following examples indicate their value priorities.

Carol imagined an alternative way of life without competition:

> ...in which people are equal and collaborating and working together to do things rather than competing with each other to see who can have the most or...working collaboratively and sharing, a little eco-village, say, somebody making the bread and somebody doing the jam and, you know, doing different things and exchanging rather than all trying to do better than each other. I suppose the eco-village would be the little unit of society.

Other green respondents revealed their own preferred values:

> There is something about living simply that essentially generates values of sharing and generosity. Definitely, you can see it, you can feel it, *inter*dependence, interdependence which is how nature works. (Jeremy)

> I've got a vision, built on something that would feel very safe. I've never put it into words...you'd have that sense of community. There's friendship, but real friendship, not this 'what can I get out of you' friendship. And also valuing of age...I do have different values but those values aren't recognised as values in today's society. (Tori)

> (A life that is)...much more meaningful and deep about caring, loving and cherishing rather than throwing money at someone. I think it's just an appreciation of what the world is about, of this fabulous world of ours... A sense

> of wonderment, I really mean that. I'm not a religious person (but) it's still amazing to think someone's conjured up some sort of formula to make sure there's a male and a female to make sure the whole system works and I suppose that's why I think that's so precious, you can't throw it away. (Ken)

Echoing Ken, Jeremy quoted a phrase, the 'loss of sense of ecstatic kinship' with the earth which is part of the ethos he enjoys in living in the community.

For Carrie, love was key:

> I suppose it's like the idea of trying to be good and if you're good to the world and good to people, the world and the people will be good back to you. Coupled I suppose with a respect for the earth a respect for the fellow peoples. I suppose you could say love...love for fellow beings and creatures and plants and everything, the planet as a whole really. I guess the idea is that if you care and if you love, there wouldn't be injustice.

What is striking about these statements is how much a pro-environmental orientation resonates with the virtues of environmental citizenship, as Connelly writes:

> The eco-virtues are not about accommodation to an already existing society but rather about bringing about a different form of society. This is a sine qua non: our starting point is that our society, our present way of living, is not sustainable. (Connelly, 2006, p.62)

There are other identifiable features to PEO. First, the focus of an ecological approach to the environment is above all on *relationship* with the natural world in the form of interdependence and connection emanating from feelings of care and compassion for fellow creatures. This embraces an awareness of human 'others': other people suffering from repercussions of climate change both now and in the future. Some respondents have identified a spiritual or transcendent dimension to this awareness. There is evidence of a

clear emotional component – alongside the rational – demonstrated by a strong sense of passion and conviction as well as expression of sorrow, anger and fear about what is currently happening and our failure as a society to address it.

The ethos of living in harmony with nature is reflected in the principles of permaculture and organic farming: throughout there is an underlying respect for nature, and for many, a sense of reciprocity and mutuality with the natural environment. PEB is integrated within this ethically congruent framework and the discourse of the green sample appears to express this.

Roughly following the distinctions between ecologism and environmentalism (Dobson, 2000) and between deep and shallow green ecology (Naess, 1973), the central relational axis of PEO contrasts with the dominant techno-centric discourse, framed by the principles of ecological modernisation, which favours scientific and technological accounts of both environmental problems and solutions. A techno-centric approach is more strategic than relational in focus, prioritising rationality (over emotional concerns), the individual (over the collective), single issues (over integration) and independence (over interdependence); it promotes specific energy-reducing behaviours (PEB) incorporated into a more or less unchanged consumer lifestyle. On the other hand, a relational account emphasises a whole green 'package', where these behaviours (PEB) are integrated into a lifestyle congruent with a PEO.

The green respondents were well aware of the difference between PEB and PEO. Sophia described the mainstream approach as "a short-term mindset: they just think they're going to run out of oil, can't have a carbon based economy so we need nuclear. Environmental problems don't lead to value change at all."

She didn't believe government policy was capable of shifting values because what was needed was more internal reflection about what constituted real happiness: "When people really are miserable and a lot of people are unhappy, they start asking themselves 'why'?" She concluded this was:

> a question of conversion – a change of heart – I don't think it's government policy. For a lot of people it's meeting somebody who's right, they actually see it, come into contact in someway...(it's) relational, seeing possibilities of relating differently.

The contrast between PEO and PEB is especially clarified by the three interviewees who were engaged in the day-to-day business of educating the general public towards more sustainable practices. Though conscious of the difference between their own PEO and cultural norms, these respondents were still committed to enabling people to take whatever steps to reduce energy use that were possible, in other words using the narrower remit of PEB. Conceding that his own ideology was completely at odds with the dominant economic impetus, Ken insisted it was better "to start the ball rolling" on reducing emissions, introducing an employee pledge in the local council offices, remaining "very confident we can change attitudes."

Tori believed in the 'gently, gently' approach: values would only change by "giving people achievable steps, not portraying it as green and non-green. They think they're going to lose the way of life they have but they don't know what it is they're turning to." Her own method was to specify five small energy saving changes:

> not frightening, not alarming, nothing dramatic. You can gradually step it up. People hate big change – you need to do it in little steps as a community...(you) can't tell people 'don't'...can't make things less fashionable...values will change eventually, can't change people's entire consciousness overnight.

Their pragmatism embraces the need to change behaviour incrementally and either shelve the issue of values or hope that behaviour would eventually lead to acquisition of greener principles. Like Tori, Trudie's hope was that praxis could eventually lead to a change of heart, echoing Connelly's words: "(v)irtue cannot be theorized into being: one must participate in a practice to discover its internal goods and goals"(Connelly, 2006 p.67):

> Even...if they do come in through the economy route, it may mean they are going to start walking to work, cycling to work, doing more composting etc...that will create a feel good factor that will actually make them think a bit more about the way they live and perhaps they will get those satisfactions that will lead them to see there is a better way...to live more harmoniously with nature. I do see that trickling down...

Trudie believed that contact with the natural environment would automatically open up the possibility of relationship:

> I can't believe that anybody who started to engage with growing vegetables, for instance, or got on their bike to go to work wouldn't soon feel – I don't know what it is – but what I feel, that sense that this is right, this is good, this makes me feel good – they will be touched by that mystical thing, they'll feel something indefinable that gives them a good feeling and reinforces their desire to do more of it...that's what I believe, definitely.

One final observation in reviewing the data from the green respondents concerns the theoretical limitations of an ethics of being. Dobson, for example, assumes a relationship with nature and non-human species has no relevance to urban lifestyle, that "self-identification with the non-human world...is restricted – in advanced industrial countries at least – to isolated pockets of well-meaning radicals" (Dobson, 2000, p.50). In reality, the metaphysics of deep ecology was evident in the experience of some of these interviewees whose lives did not belong to the extreme of the spectrum of green lifestyles, for example, living in isolated communities or up remote mountainsides. Both Trudie and Carol actually dismissed these extremes as too impractical and too harsh an existence. Carrie's husband would have preferred to live in such a community but she was now working, not without self-questioning, as an academic and living in a house, which, for her, felt like a 'soft option 'after living for three years in a small van. Tori,

Trudie, Tessa, Simone, Sophia were all living in an urban or suburban context. Ken, Kate and Jeremy lived in rural but not remote settings.

I believe it's important to acknowledge that they hadn't 'dropped out' of society but found it possible to espouse deep green values within their own fairly ordinary living and working contexts, directly or indirectly educating and encouraging others to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. There is evidence of a strong personal conviction that their choices are right for them and this certainty helps to withstand living in a manner that is contrary to social norms.

In this respect, green respondents were also conscious that their own personal commitment was counter-cultural. It is relevant to add here, however, that these individuals were not totally isolated: most had to some extent created personal networks which supported and affirmed their values and norms within an alternative 'micro-culture', a finding which supports Horton's study (Horton, 2006). Either partners (Carrie, Carol, Ken, Walter, Sophia, Joseph, Trudie, Tessa) or work colleagues (Tori) or parents (Ellie) provided ongoing reinforcement. Jeremy's values were reinforced by his religious faith, Simone's by her Jungian background. Kate's frugal lifestyle has always part of her identity so she was accustomed to being 'different'; Tom's wife was also very supportive of his commitment, even if not actively involved.

Although these real green lifestyles are subject to many compromises, at heart there seems to exist an ethics of being which, for most, pivots upon an experienced relationship with nature from which an ethics of conduct has evolved. Strongly in evidence is a green self-concept or green identity among all respondents apart from one, Joseph, who shared many of the ethical principles but felt unwilling to commit to the degree of green political activism that fitted with his personal stereotype of what it meant to be 'green'.

Although the findings of such a tiny sample can only be descriptive, it is nevertheless interesting to note that for eleven out of fifteen respondents who exemplify many of the

characteristics of green citizenship, a relationship with nature appears fundamental to their ethical framework.

The narratives of the seven 'eco-centric' respondents appear to endorse the deep ecology assertion that ecological consciousness is a foundation out of which ecological ethics and ecological behaviour develop (Dobson, 2000, p.47). Transpersonal ecologism proposes that once an initial sense of identification with the environment is established, the only ethic that can follow is one in favour of protection (Warren Fox, quoted in Dobson, 2000).

Dobson takes great issue with the deep ecology proposition that environmental ethics arise from a metaphysics of being. Not only does this beg the question of where the metaphysics comes from, but an exclusive focus on being risks ignoring not only the need for action to address material consequences of environmental problems but also the necessity of articulating a critique of the current societal issues that are a direct consequence of the ethic of consumerism (Dobson, 2000, p.50). Dobson's philosophical objections obscure perhaps the actual possibility of a lived experience of combining an ethics of being and doing, as witnessed in the data from this sample.

IV: IV Green stereotypes

After this detailed analysis of the data from the green respondents – their narratives, meanings, self-concept and ethical framework – I now turn to the non-green sample. I was interested to compare the green stereotype among the non-green sample with the reality just described. How closely did the lives of the real green sample match their stereotypes? Did an imagined green lifestyle encourage or discourage ordinary citizens from doing more than recycling?

A conclusion that emerged from my earlier MSc thesis into the value-action gap, again based on data from interviews with non-green respondents, was that one of the inhibiting factors in terms of extending pro-environmental practice was the perception of

'weirdness' or fringe status of their green stereotypes. It was evident from the data of the current non-green sample that PEB had become, in principle, acceptably mainstream. I assume this development – within three years – is due to widespread media exposure regarding climate change, helping to divest the stereotype of its more eccentric features to a point where it has become quite "fashionable and trendy" (Charlie).

As a consequence, being 'green' was seen as a serious option by nearly all interviewees even if they didn't consider it a practical or viable personal option for *themselves*. Two main themes emerged: a green lifestyle was both consistent but still counter-cultural, not because it was seen as weird but totally unrealistic.

Consistency linked the green stereotypes of six non-green respondents:

> I'd imagine that almost every aspect of your life, everything you do, you'd do with one mind on what impact it's going to have on the environment – that would be your home, your shopping, habits, clothing, even possibly your career. It would have to enter into almost every aspect of your life...(Nigel)

> ...somebody who cares and does as much as they possible can...somebody who's aware of it all. They can be laughed at though, can't they...quite a joke. And it's difficult to do and to be, it requires a lot of thought...*all* the time. (Mary)

Awareness of their own inconsistencies and piecemeal approach can be seen in contrasting green 'alter egos':

"I'd see it as someone who...would actually look to model their life as far as possible to minimise the impact of the environment in *all* areas rather than making compromises." (Jim)

"First and foremost, they'd be absolutely consistent, so they'd be much more principled than me. They would *not* eat meat and would not *ever* take a flight, for example." (Ingrid)

Janet described someone 'totally' green as owning:

> ...no fridge, no fridge freezer, they'd have to look at what they're buying and they have to value what they're buying...would recycle *everything*, and you know, really not throwing things away but making use of everything...organic I think.

For Malcolm, being green meant a consistency of priorities:

> I guess my image would be somebody who didn't have a car, in terms of the house, they've sorted the insulation and energy uses, they've taken a pretty comprehensive approach to it...to me the green person is the person who actually makes it a conscious priority in each of those headings. I'd be planned about it, like I'd be planned about my holiday – I can do this much as opposed to at the end of the list, if there's time, I'll do a bit. (Malcolm)

For some, the counter-cultural aspect held great personal appeal:

Judy's own 'dream' of living a green life when the children had left school, of a lifestyle "...living in harmony with what there is", was inspired by a TV series which had followed the experience of a man building a self-sufficient existence for his family in Devon.

Martin, whose stereotype was bound up with his own desire for self-sufficiency, was inspired by:

> the ultimate chap...on Grand Designs who built his house out of all these different woods, a *beautiful* house, marvellous, but lived in the caravan for 12 years and slept in a tent on the roof to achieve his dream. He's being seen as an eco-hippy and not contributing necessarily to society...not actually consuming, useless to the government isn't he?

The 'back-to-basics' theme evoked a life that was simpler and less stressful. Eileen associated the green lifestyle with times past:

> ...going back to the Victorian era, living in a natural home, wood furniture, leather shoes, eating natural foods, not sprayed and fertilised, bringing your shopping home in paper parcels wrapped up in string.

Self-sufficiency was linked to low consumption. George imagined green people having organic produce and "living frugally": Jed as "someone who grows their own vegetables and doesn't have a car." A green life was also a privileged life: you would have to be "quite well off...to be self sufficient, to choose where you want to live, where you want to work...if you want to buy organic goods..." (Eddie)

Most respondents, like Sally, envisaged a green lifestyle as essentially rural and quite attractive even if impractical:

> Someone who lives in the country that can produce their own food who lives a less hectic sort of lifestyle I suppose. I've got friends in Gillingham, they live out in the rurals and they've got a wood-burner and they've only got one radiator in their entire house.

Neil (21), on the other hand, was very much deterred by the idea of a rural existence and saw people becoming green:

> probably after having some sort of mid-life crisis, (they'd) move to the country and they'd decide they no longer wished to commute, no desire to visit any cities, I would see them as having lived in a city and moved out, having done so after children, after a long prolonged burnout period.

The features of the composite picture of the green (among the non-greens) therefore favoured consistency of behaviour and values emanating from a concern for nature and counter-posed to contemporary consumer culture. From the profiles of the green sample, I was interested to compare these assumptions. The imagined feature of consistency closely matches the reality: the very quality of 'mindfulness' evokes a consistency of values and PEB as part of a PEO.

Imagined consistency could deter as well as inspire. George, for example, found the prospect of going green very daunting:

> It's difficult...because you're so much in a routine, it's quite an upheaval actually to start...cars are one thing...appliances are difficult as well, you know, because you've already got them set up. I'd have to think it through very carefully.

The perception that going green entails a big leap from 'here' to 'there' is not uncommon: the prospect of a huge upheaval impedes motivation to change and is a barrier that has been recognised. It underlies many educational approaches, including those used by Tori, Ken and Trudie in the green sample, which deliberately target such anxieties by introducing PEB in small, incremental and easily manageable steps into people's lives. In other words, these approaches are based in a realistic evaluation about the pace and acceptability of social change.

What struck me about the views of the non-green sample was their lack of realism: although the green stereotype was no longer subject to ridicule, it had become somewhat idealised and constructed as a fixed status: once you're green, you're green entirely and forever, an assumption bound to increase anxiety, threatening as it does one's very sense of identity. Although many features of a green lifestyle were considered attractive, they were deemed ultimately unrealistic by Neil, Malcolm, George, Simon, Jed and Jim who felt their current lifestyles were completely incompatible. Judy, Martin and Eddie implied that any possibility of a greener lifestyle – which was not without appeal – was a prospect that had to be deferred in view of immediate family and work responsibilities. This

indicated a perceived conflict between a green lifestyle and current self-concept, in other words, the presence of a green identity was missing from the accounts of the non-green sample, reinforcing previous research which has shown self-concept to be one factor in determining consistency of PEB (Thogersen, 2004).

A second deterrent can be seen in a contrasting view of frugality which moves from being a pivotal virtue within a green lifestyle among the green sample to the antithesis of pleasure. Simon, for instance, whose stereotype was based primarily on his own brother, summed up the green approach as "a kind of hairshirtedness – 'I'm going to deprive myself of pleasure'...a puritanism that I find a little bit offensive", for which he suggested greens needed an antidote in the form of "a Jeremy Clarkson to shout about green issues": in other words, the concept of green should be made much more upbeat and entertaining.

Jim also associated green with personal deprivation:

> I'd guess that if I wanted to be really true to the green camp, then I'd have to minimise my use of hydrocarbons...I'd reduce the vehicles we've got to a bare minimum, I wouldn't actually use the motor vehicle for *pleasure*. I'd just use it for essential needs only.

Breda couldn't *imagine* giving up driving or flying because these, emphatically, were her 'pleasures'. Giving up pleasure represents a curtailment of personal freedom, clearly not an option for Neil:

> If I were truly to embrace living more sustainably, I would have to surrender my desire to see other places, I'd have to do without air travel or even train or car... there'd be need to turn my heating down and travel less and work locally and acquire my food locally and I would see those as...restrictive measures.

How does this compare with actual green experience? Green respondents were aware how off-putting puritanical associations could be. Tessa described the impossibility for most people of understanding that "you can have a comfortable life but take care of the planet too"; Tori believed a green lifestyle was often seen as "a pain in the backside (we'll have to) live in mud huts...change the lifestyle we're used to."

Green could be aesthetically 'unattractive' as well. Sophia described her conflict:

> around vegan shoes, I think they're ugly but I struggle with aesthetics...I would look at the *Ethical Consumer* from time to time and see which High St shop is better than others then I would try and buy organic cotton, but still I know I will go into a shop and buy something just because I *like* it – once I got over the guilt, I'd wear it.

Apart from the occasional yearning (Jeremy longed to fly to Greece for some sunshine; Carol longed for a little more comfort in the form of a warmer bathroom), there was no evidence of any real suffering or martyrdom among the green respondents:

> People...say but what if all this is wrong, you'll miss out on the opportunity to fly out to Thailand or Malaysia or something, but I don't think I'm missing out on a lot because I can have a good time travelling about on my bicycle. I don't feel I've lost out on things. (Tom)

Carrie was the only respondent who articulated graphically the 'hassle' incurred sometimes by the daily resolve to live a committed green lifestyle:

> Last weekend it was raining...so I just had to battle the elements, get on my bicycle and get all the shopping, fill up the panniers and I thought look at me, struggling with all this weight, going to like three different places to get my food ...it would be *so* much easier, it would take about a *fifth* of the time to jump in the car and just go to Tesco's.

Carrie's own observation is relevant in this context: "For me it's worth it. But no, it's not easy, otherwise I guess more people would do it."

This highlights a definite tension between environmental and consumer values. From the non-green perspective, it was clear that frugality epitomised those elements of imagined green lifestyles which depict renunciation of the convenience, ease and comfort of contemporary modernity for an existence which entails physical suffering, loss of personal pleasure, hardship and harshness associated with a way of life that is normatively counter-cultural. Carol made this explicit:

> My mother quite often makes me feel like I'm being difficult on purpose...she thinks that it's *mad* not to be as comfortable as you possibly can, she just basically lives a life of complete luxury. She can't imagine anybody being able to put up with anything less.

The analysis of the green sample demonstrated that the virtue of frugality was central to praxis. This same virtue however appears to act as a deterrent when contemplated from the position of someone who fears being made to trade a relatively comfortable lifestyle for one of presumed hardship. The downside of traditional virtues such as duty and sacrifice which epitomise a green lifestyle is that they lack visceral appeal to the majority.

There is an undeniable reality that a lack of material comfort stands in a widely experienced contrast to modernity and to the level of convenience to which many people (in the West) have become accustomed, reinforcing the incongruence of the chosen inconvenience of a green lifestyle. This impacts on consideration of sacrifice as explained in the earlier comparative analysis of the data on car usage and flying. Faced with the same extrinsic factors, such as the lack of alternative forms of transport, respondents showed similar behavioural outcomes but green respondents demonstrated a capacity to

deliberate without either questioning the validity of climate change agenda or needing an external catalyst to persuade them to take stronger action.

The green citizens in this sample match the theoretical requirements of being more concerned with responsibilities than rights and are able to act altruistically through a self-imposed sense of obligation (Connelly, 2006) embedded in personal value systems which include co-operation and the importance of community, as well as responsibility for those who are vulnerable and in need of protection. On the other hand, from the words of the non-green respondents, it is possible to detect the following rationale: if it is convenient for me to take this action and does not impinge on pleasure, I agree to PEB; if it is inconvenient and causes me expense, upheaval, inconvenience, lack of pleasure or comfort, it is unlikely I will agree to PEB.

This difference also highlights, I believe, an important psychological difference between PEB and PEO. I have established that, for the green respondents, PEB was part of a PEO which represented a central value-system within their lives and upon which, their ethical motivation was based. In the lives of their non-green counterparts, PEB held only a peripheral status. I believe Jim spoke for many others when he said: "The environment (is) just one factor in my perception of life, shall we say, I wouldn't say I'm passionate at all."

The non-green respondents appeared to be more influenced by the techno-centric approach described earlier than ecological principles; without a personal and relational perspective, their perception of environmental issues is more likely to be influenced by the dominant cultural construction of nature. Environmental philosopher, Neil Evernden, details the historical trajectory of this construction from the polarity of empathy during the pre-Renaissance world to that of abstraction which has been our enduring legacy ever since.

In the absence of ecological consciousness, environmentalism – understood to be resource management – adopts an approach of abstraction: our institutional structures are

based on the assumption that there is a "law-bound nature", needing control through applied science in order to be helped (along with humanity) to survive (Evernden, 1992, p.100). The continuing dominance of abstraction – objective, scientific explanations based on a fundamental human-nature dualism – excludes any cultural and human-relational tensions from the picture (Grove-White and Szeryszynski, 1992). The discourse of environmentalism isolates PEB as a practice that can be strategically targeted and measured, a method which has been effective up to a point, as seen with the increase in recycling.

Is it possible to link the absence of a PEO with the risk that the underlying ethical concerns of PEB are relegated to a marginal rather than central role? Is an empathic understanding necessary to care enough to make personal sacrifices? Certainly Evernden's description of the empathic response as "an intuition of shared properties or of meanings beyond appearances" resonates closely with some of my green respondents' own articulations (Evernden, 1992, p.56). The emphasis on relationship moves away from objectifying nature: Evernden suggests we need to encounter and see the wild 'otherness' of nature (Evernden, 1992, p.102).

John Shotter's argument endorses this suggestion: 'otherness' implies a move from a subject-object dynamic to one of interdependence, a shift which would have profound implications on our relationship to the natural world. He poses the question: "What if we were to view ourselves as living, embodied participant parts of a larger, ongoing, predominantly living whole" (Shotter, 2006, p.110)? We could then live, he responds, "in communicative relationship with our surroundings" which would have significant repercussions on how we chose to address environmental degradation (Shotter, 2006, p.111).

It is relevant here to determine any contrast in significance of nature to the non-green sample: were their views dominated by conceptualising nature as resource or relationship? As it transpired, although there was no evidence of the same 'connectivity' with nature, expressed by many of the green interviewees, nature did emerge

spontaneously as a specific value in the data from eleven out of the seventeen respondents, either in relation to living a simpler (and more natural) life – back to basics, growing your own food – or with more emotional import. Janice's phrase, for example, "we're wearing the planet out" eloquently captures the sadness of environmental degradation. In fact, her own green stereotype intuitively depicts a PEO:

> ...probably they value everything, they'd value the earth, they'd value themselves, their body, they'd value other people...

Judy's words also evoke the importance of nature as a counter-point to modern life:

> We've got this horse and I'm out early in the morning and I'm out in the dark at strange times in the night and I've even got to the point of ...watching the phases of the moon go by and things like that which have passed me by until now so it's retaining, hanging on to (something), everything is moving at such a fast pace and we're not developing at the same speed...this is all sort of building towards some sort of meltdown.

Although Mary couldn't take the issue of climate change seriously, like Judy, the natural environment in which she lived was literally and symbolically important for her as an alternative to what had become an alien society and certainly evoked passion: "It's possible to know right from wrong...apart from that it's having a love of beauty and what's clean and good...isn't it?"

Breda also felt impassioned about a Gulf Stream documentary because she lives on water (in a house boat); her experience of this element is immediate and constant, in other words she 'related' to it. Ingrid's ire (and fears) were roused by her encounter with the *un*natural, embodied in both literal and symbolic form by the display of frankfurters:

> ...the idea that actually it was related to a pig in a field...being fed on feed which is coming off a field which has been pumped with fertilizer and the earth has been

> squeezed until the pips squeak, it can't produce any more. I actually believe this takes away from our complete feelings with Mother Earth...that's the most scary thing we witness today...our behaviours are becoming more unnatural all the time and we can't see it.

Without being able to articulate a relationship to nature as clearly as some of the green interviewees, it was clear nevertheless that 'nature' was an important value. Direct and firsthand experience of nature has been shown to give more meaning and thereby facilitate more personal engagement with environmental issues than passive exposure to details of remote global environmental crises (Macnaghten, 2003). However, despite an evident deep appreciation of nature in my non-green sample, there was no automatic translation of pro-environmental concern into pro-environmental *practice.*

This suggests that the deeper relational and ethical commitment embodied in the PEO, evident among the green sample, is a stronger motivational factor when it comes to a commitment to sustained PEB because a relational commitment is somehow linked to generating a capacity to both deliberate on the possibility of sacrifice and psychologically to contain the discomfort of moral compromise between individual and collective priorities.

By way of conclusion, *Table III* below summarises some of the distinctions between the two sets of respondents. The world view column represents an extension of my observation that a repudiation of materialism – among both samples – was often associated with religious principles. As religion seemed too narrow a definition, I then extended it to 'world-view' which is understood as a system of values (Rohan, 2000) whether religious, spiritual or ecological principles that, in this context, offer an alternative to materialist and consumerist values.

Name	Score	Worldview: religion/ NA/ ecological (nature)	Strong 'green' ethic	Deliberation
Jeremy	3,860	C of E	Yes	Yes
Tessa	3,925.5	permaculture	Yes	Yes
Carrie	4,025	ecological	Yes	Yes
Mel	4,094	ecological	Yes	Yes
Carol	4,309	Buddhism	Yes	Yes
Sophia	5,325	Quaker	Yes	Yes
Tori	5,805	nature	Yes	Yes
Ellie	7,036.8		Yes	Yes
Simone	7,227	Jungian	Yes	Yes
Joseph	7,380	Quaker		Yes
Tom	8,237		Yes	Yes
Sally	8,410	Jehovah's Witness		Yes
Martin	8,609			Yes
Kate	9,170	nature		Yes
Eddie	10,199.5			Yes
Eileen	10,257.5	RC		
Breda	10,580			
Charlie	11,080			Yes
Neil	11,600			
Mary	11,920	Methodist + nature		
Ken	12,050 (6050)	ecological	Yes	Yes
Judy	12,130	nature		Yes
Nigel	12,169.5			Yes
Jed	12,613			
Janice	14,328	C of E		
Trudie	14,429	ecological	Yes	Yes
Malcolm	15,150			
Ingrid	16,100	nature		Yes
Jim	16,240			Yes
Walter	20,070 (7,070)		Yes	Yes
Simon	20,151	C of E		Yes
George	45,781 (14981)			

Table III: An overview of value-orientations of both green and non-green samples

I have again italicised the green respondents: most of them were influenced by a different system of values; a strong green ethic was evident as a unifying influence in all but two

respondents' practice. This orientation contrasts with the non-green interviewees who, even when nature was an important value to them, did not evince a green ethic: the value had not motivated an ethical response.

Finally, the column headed 'deliberation' indicates whether or not a respondent could be said to have seriously deliberated about certain behaviours in favour of the environment, regardless of their final decision. All of the green respondents had deliberated and half the non-green respondents.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the data relating to intrinsic factors understood to motivate PEB – personal values, self-concept, habit, childhood experience – in an attempt to find further explanatory differences between the green and non-green individuals in the research sample.

A comparison was made between the actuality of the green respondents' lives and the theoretical requirements of environmental citizenship literature, the conclusion being that their current status largely fulfilled these conditions, in terms of demonstrating requisite virtues of justice, equality, frugality and an ethical commitment to put aside personal needs for the common environmental good as exemplified in their day-to-day practice.

Further analysis of the data regarding self-concept and green identity among the green respondents demonstrated the various 'green paths' their lives had taken. Of significance were three findings: green identity was frequently either described as lifelong or certainly long-established; childhood experiences of nature were found to be more important formative influences than formal education in this regard and thirdly, the experiences of connection to nature among seven respondents were closely aligned to deep green ecological concepts.

A review of the data on frugality demonstrated a tension between environmental and consumerist values. Among the green sample, frugality was a 'given', the essence of a green lifestyle; among the non-green sample, frugality represented the prospect of inconvenience or a loss of comfort that was unacceptable to modern standards and expectations.

This finding seems to underline the gap that exists between internalising information about environmental problems and creating a sense of personal responsibility through ethical reflection as environmental citizens. Consciously reconditioning oneself to undergo a degree of self-restraint, as de Geus has suggested (de Geus, 2003), seems too tall an order according to the responses of the non-green interviewees and suggests that for many citizens, the transition from materialistic cultural norms to more virtue-based attitudes and behaviour faces many hurdles.

It also substantiates the argument that values are not easily changed precisely because they are not always explicit but part of the invisible fabric of everyday life (Nash and Lewis, 2006): deliberately chosen personal inconvenience or sacrifice of the right to personal pleasure run counter to deep-rooted, even if unarticulated, consumerist norms.

Stereotypic representations of greens appeared to both inspire and deter non-green respondents. While, the theme of consistency matched the reality of the lives of the green sample, little account was given of the reality of moral deliberation and compromise in the face of cultural expectations.

This led me to suggest that a helpful distinction might be made between pro-environmental behaviour and pro-environmental orientation (PEO). A PEO embraces the various differences between the two samples. For the greens, a PEO represents a green self-concept in which a sense of relationship to nature is a foundation for a green ethic from which evolves a congruent system of values: environmental 'rights' and 'wrongs' are integral to wider personal, political and social 'rights' and 'wrongs'. In contrast, a very different psychological framework exists in the data from the non-green sample:

without a PEO, PEB remains on the periphery of everyday life, confined to easy, manageable tasks evaluated along polarities of convenience/inconvenience and pleasure/sacrifice. While a PEO appears to be linked with inner motivational resources to live sustainably and make personal sacrifices, PEB on its own seems to be both more contingent on external factors and lacks a clear ethical frame of reference.

At this stage in the analysis, while having more understanding of the psychological factors, as this is a psycho-social enquiry, that is, focused on the interface between the personal, social and political, I now want to address social and political influences to explore further what accounts for the greens' ability to stand apart from the surrounding cultural norms. What is it that motivates the greens to impose voluntary constraints on their behaviour?

CHAPTER FIVE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ORIENTATION

As seen in the last chapter, consumerist norms and values were found to be implicated to some degree in making the prospect of personal sacrifice unattractive for ordinary citizens who do not see themselves as having a green identity. If most of the green sample could be described as green citizens, is there evidence of a stronger *consumer* identity among the non-green respondents? Does it follow that green respondents have a weak consumer identity that affords some immunity to the demands and persuasions of consumerism? In short, is there any discernible difference between the two samples in their responses to and perceptions of contemporary consumer culture?

The following analysis is divided into four sections of data. The first analyses respondents' perceptions of conflict between the ideologies of consumerism and ecologism which had been one of my original research suppositions; this is followed by perceptions of these citizens to the role of government in achieving sustainable goals as this is fundamental to the theoretical realisation of green citizenship. The third section considers views of the impact of the evolution of a market society on wider social values in the last three decades and their implications for the environmental agenda: implications for the future of this same agenda are then examined through respondents' observations of the current younger generation. The final section looks at the impact of the last three decades on social and collective norms.

Environmental versus economic values

At the end of Chapter One, I suggested the theoretical aspirations of the individual transition from materialistic consumer to virtuous environmental citizen did not fully take into account the power of the ideological opposition of consumerism. This power exists not only through organizational and institutional infrastructures and the advertising industry but also as a consequence of the evidence that values of contemporary consumerism had infiltrated into mainstream values, some of which were antithetical to virtues required of green citizens.

Respondents were familiar with the effects of economic policies over the last thirty years. Three interviewees (Malcolm, Neil and Simon) – all non-green – believed them to have been highly successful. Simon, for example, observed that:

> people are more commercially driven, a good thing, I'm a great believer in the private sector and as a result of that, the quality of public services and private services have gone up dramatically. We're not willing to accept crummy hospitals and crummy trains, crummy schools any more.

The majority of respondents across both samples were conscious of the conflict between fulfilling the needs of capitalism and the environmental agenda, confirming empirical research findings that:

> ...consumers are still very much wedded to the belief that financial and environmental/ethical objectives are diametrically opposed. Financial objectives are couched in rational, pragmatic, individualistic and capitalistic terms, whereas green behaviour still tends to be seen as idealistic, collectivist and involving self-sacrifice (Downing and Ballantyne, 2007, p.29).

The conflict between capitalism and the environment was generally acknowledged by both non-green respondents:

> ...there's damaging effects mainly due to economic requirements but over and above that, the guys who want to make profits and who make an awful *lot* of profits and are prepared to do whatever they think necessary to make the profit. And that's damaging as well because they don't put anything back...(George)

> It's the fact that our whole lifestyle depends on a system which is environmentally negative and cannot be changed quickly enough. In the case of my Mum, she agrees with me (about the environment) and then she goes to Walmart and gets a

> new BBQ because she hasn't bought one this year and she is completely unaware of the fact that she's doing that, which brings home the idea of subconscious elements of this behaviour. We don't even know it's there...the problems are so deeply embedded within our lifestyles...politically, economically, culturally and socially. It's to do with a very complex set of things that are interrelated and consumerism is at the heart of it, capitalism is at the heart of it. (Charlie)

And also in the green sample:

> We give the same sort of traits we give the living planet to an economy – we're treating it like something alive that we should be nurturing and care for. So important, go out there and buy stuff...keep it all going. (Tessa)

> I do think that the way capitalism is structured is deeply unhelpful...we've created a form of capitalism that feeds our woundedness. Capitalism is almost...like an organism which wants to survive and grow like every organism does so it has learned to fuel our sense of inadequacy so that we continue to want more and so the economic system is based on a growth model. (Simone)

> ...certainly this unregulated capitalism destroys everything. The *whole* thing about continual growth is actually shot to bits now...What are we going to do? Keep on with free market capitalism till, you know, everything just falls apart...? (Jeremy)

> (There's) the idea you can have continual economic growth forever and forever regardless of the finite resources we have on our planet. (Carrie)

Simone saw the belief in continuous economic growth as a powerful psychological template:

> Life changes, there are ups and downs and we need to compensate for those times and we need to expect them. Now we are in a mindset that to be successful we have to make sure that there are no lean times and if there are lean times, it means we have failed and we can't contemplate that, it's too painful for us. So we're on a trajectory now that's simply going up...That's changed in my life time and it's very dangerous...I experience life in this country as being able to tolerate less and less and less discomfort and that's *not* a position of psychological strength, (it's a) a position of great weakness.

Other individuals across both samples experienced the impossibility of reconciling the demands of consumerism and ecologism, not at an abstract level, but as a result of how social practices have been shaped as a consequence of postmodern capitalism (Barber, 2007): many of these are at variance with reducing consumption:

> I was thinking the other day, what we're being encouraged to do at the moment is to spend your way out of the recession, let your money flow freely...you need to be out there in the high street spending, it's kind of strange to hold that command against trying to be frugal or careful. (Joseph)

The system of planned obsolescence ensures that:

> Everything lasts a short while...you need to keep buying. The new Apple phones...the casings...can't be opened, nobody can fix them, even Apple have to break them to fix the phone, that's an example of how stuff is made to go wrong. It's just outrageous. I think it's shocking that's allowed. Where things are allowed to be made in that way, such an immoral thing to do...It's almost mad, it's the opposite of common sense and logic. (Tessa)

> Manufacturers...have to do something to persuade people to change their old mobile phone for a new mobile phone... it's a very, very vicious circle. (Eddie)

Awareness of systemic factors inevitably leads to consideration of the role of government in encouraging or discouraging sustainable practices at a wider institutional level.

The government role

What is the likely prospect of a state-citizen partnership? The environmental citizen is not only required to adopt less materialistic values (i.e. consume less) and act in ways consistent with sustainability, but is crucially engaged in a co-operative venture (Dobson and Bell, 2006; de Geus, 2003; Jackson 2003). The achievement of sustainable goals demands a combination of individual and governmental responsibility, each fulfilling the requirements of their particular role. How was the government's role perceived in relation to the environmental agenda?

The significance of the government role as monitor, legislator and enforcer of environmental safeguards was widely acknowledged in the data across both samples; at the same time, it was generally believed that the government failed in its role on all counts. In their own words and less dramatically, the respondents expressed in different ways the plight that Beck describes: "The overwhelming feature of the age is not physical – the threat of annihilation – but social; the fundamental and scandalous way in which the institutions, almost without exception, fail it" (Beck, 1995, p.69).

Failure *vis a vis* environmental concerns constituted just one aspect of the more general political disengagement described in the broader literature regarding the contemporary malaise and disillusion with political elites and institutions (Dalton, 2004; Stoker, 2006).

> If you've got that loss of hope, if you haven't got individual responsibility, which was the only thing probably holding the country together, when you've got basically corrupt and lying leadership, where's that going to go? You're not going to get global positive impacts, are you, you're going to get consumerism and decline and waste because no one is going to care. (Martin)

Nigel described himself as feeling:

> ...a bit disenchanted...it's quite easy to become a little bit disillusioned with the politicians and the goings on in parliament, there always seem be so many hidden agendas and one-upmanship in terms of debates...

Economic and production interests were seen as obstacles to sustainability:

> You used to buy whatever it was in isolation but nowadays you need to buy white goods or electronics, it all ties in with everything else...it's the way they're telling you, you need that as well. (Judy)

> The government have relative ability to introduce laws, to adopt a certain policy but have very, very limited power. Commercial interests – without a shadow of doubt – have more power. (Eddie)

> ...there are technologies already developed but aren't in the market because of interests not allowing them to come to market. (Neil)

George believed this to be true of the motor industry and also that the big supermarkets reigned supreme: "I suspect you'll only change them with pressure on the government (but)...because they're in such a powerful position...it's probably too late..."

Only Malcolm disputed this view:

> If (the major car manufacturers) were round the table here, they'd be saying to you, look we *want* to do this stuff, we *want* to do it, the only way we can do it, is a) the government creates a fiscal framework where the consumer has no choice so the consumer's pushing it or b) we make voluntary agreements amongst ourselves and nobody rats on them and or c) we have a hybrid of a and b where we do our bit and the government does its bit...

alluding once again to this ideal partnership of sometime in the future. He was adamant that commercial interests were not to blame for unsustainable practices:

> I *absolutely resist* the idea that the classic motivation of business is 'we just want to go on making money'. Business people are much more human and intelligent and sophisticated than that and they are crying out for the frameworks to be created and the consumer pressure to support that.

There is no clear pattern in the data which distinguishes between beliefs that the government either has *no* power in the face of economic interests or that it simply lacks political will to exercise that power. In reality, they appeared to merge. The majority of respondents certainly cited lack of political as an adverse impact on the achievability of green citizenship. Government inadequacy was a consistent theme among the green sample:

Walter expressed frustration at recent EU legislation regarding waste and disposal of vehicles and electronic equipment:

> (T)hey will *not* make it happen if you've got manufacturers in other parts of the world who can just opt out...that's something that government should be a bit tougher with.

Tori, who worked with an independently funded sustainability centre, felt frustrated by lack of commitment:

> The government spends an absolute bloody fortune on nothing, ridiculous campaigns that come to nothing. (It) is not supportive of campaigns it hasn't initiated, so it's not about stopping climate change, it's about the government promoting itself.

Regulation was considered as essential as it was improbable:

> We've all become used to being comfortable, we don't want to be uncomfortable and it's aeroplanes as well, we've just got Terminal Five, targets for green levels etc and yet the flip side is that we need more airports – surely that's a conflict, how can we have the two? Need, profit, convenience. It's always going to be those things. (Kate)

Repercussions of the acknowledged dilemma between the need to enforce PEB through fiscal or policy instruments and the wish to avoid restriction of choice were voiced among several non-green respondents. It is worth noting that government failure to address environmental issues in a coherent manner appeared as a considerable barrier to individual motivation to sustainable living.

Without regulation, Mary was adamant nobody would be bothered as "you'd never get anything done otherwise." Judy believed government action was necessary but unpalatable since "it would be taking people's choice away or reducing their choice. It's like being told what to do." This impasse lessened her hope for a solution because "nobody's in complete command...I suppose that I'm at the despair stage, I don't know that we can actually build a model where we can foresee what will happen..."

While Sally felt legislation would "force people to change...then it would have an effect on the environment if we all had to do the same thing", like Judy, she understood the dilemma:

> ...but then it's a bit like a communist state, isn't it? I suppose in this part of the world...people have to have the freedom of choice to do what they want to do...and because this country in particular, everything's got to be politically correct and free and you can't tell anybody what to do, it is impossible really.

It is important not to underestimate the effect of this sense of powerlessness on motivation to individual action:

> I feel like an ant, with all the worker ants, not going to make any odds really to the whole thing...I don't *believe* it's the level that stuff will get done, rattling governments and rattling international business will get things done. (Breda)

Working in local government, Jim tried to remain optimistic: "I think there is a genuine desire to try and tackle these issues...through pricing mechanisms...in terms of our own energy consumption, in terms of sustainable energy and resources..." but was not without doubt about the bigger picture: "We've probably nationally got the wherewithal to do it. I think the threat is the international issue."

In his promotional role, Ken also maintained an optimistic stance about the effect of accumulated individual change; for this reason, he objected strongly to the government 'add-on' at the end of the personal calculation exercise:

> I personally believe the focus needs to be on those areas where people *do* really have...choices about, the energy in your home, the food you buy and all things you make daily decisions about.

In other words, he was well aware that the inclusion of the government contribution would potentially act as a psychological barrier to motivation to change behaviour. "We just have to do our best to start the ball rolling, to get the 27% of UK's carbon emissions reduced to 15% or 12% ...", his words betraying his compromise: "Even a 10 per cent improvement is better than nothing at all." In other words, he chose to ignore government failure and simply do the best he could to get others to change even within limited circumstances.

Cultural and social values

It is significant that all respondents – across both samples – were clear that it is *only* the government that has the requisite bureaucratic, financial, administrative and legal power to establish any real or long-term solutions to environmental problems. Of equal

significance was the widespread expression, to various degrees, of disappointment, disillusion and lack of conviction that this would ever constitute reality. Kate summed up the impasse experienced by many others: "I'd say stop building bypasses...invest money in public transport, the car is not the future..." but "ultimately the government is governed by the votes so authoritarian measures wouldn't go down too well...it would need something of that nature and you're not going to get a government to do that."

The data so far concerns respondents' views of the role of the state as it functions through the Dominant Social Paradigm, in other words, our technological, economic and political institutions (Nash and Lewis, 2006). In addition, the government has a broader educative role in promoting and nurturing the virtuous behaviour of its citizens through the shaping of social norms, cultural practices and also the cultural values of society (Connelly, 2006; Jackson and Michaelis, 2003; Nash and Lewis, 2006). The following analysis reveals the interviewees' response to the perceived inherent mismatch between the needs for sustainability and current social norms.

Contemporary consumer values were generally seen as an impediment to motivation to PEB:

> It doesn't sit very well with the society that we live in, to be honest, does it? We're in a materialistic and status driven time and how does that sit with going out and being environmentally conscious. It's all about fast cars and big houses and jet-set lifestyle. The two of them are in complete contradiction really. (Nigel)

Personal power to change is limited:

> You can work within a very limited framework because our lifestyle is based on a whole system that is fundamentally environmentally unfriendly. (Charlie)

> There are an awful lot of things outside the individual's control in terms of a carbon footprint. You're actively being discouraged... (Eddie)

Into the vacuum left by the absence of a strong government role, the advertising industry finds ample room to diminish the green agenda and reinforce materialism while citizens passively wait for their government to take a clear stand:

> ...all the signals we're getting from above...seem to be suggesting that's OK to carry on as normal...if you watch the telly and you watch the adverts, you'd think there was nothing wrong in having a 4x4 or flying away on holiday...people think it's not that serious, maybe they think the government will step in and sort something out on their behalf... (Carrie, green)

> ...more choices and people have got more money to spend and they're enjoying that luxury of buying whatever they want to buy. It's a superficial view of the importance of things. I'd put the survival of the earth at the top of the agenda, many people would value a new TV over a biodiversity issue...(Ken, green)

Eileen and Judy (both non-green) believed that advertising had become more aggressive and more subtle:"(N)ow it's marketing, it's much more manipulative and they're clever ads, far more appealing..." (Judy)

Advertising kept the aspirational treadmill in motion:

> People have built up some security around them whereby their look or car gives them a certain status in this society...if you removed the car, people would see that as their status being removed instead of improved...a false world, they can't risk it being important, because they interested in *now*, aren't they? (Tori, green)

Eddie (non-green) felt:

> "bombarded with images of what your life could be, holidaying in the Caribbean, skinning in the Alps, having a sauna in the basement, these things that used to be for the super rich, these people saying you can have this. Just take out a loan, you

> can afford it ...constantly subjected whether explicitly or implicitly to these messages."

Sophia (green) also felt "bombarded" by demands of identity and image:

> ...by all the advertising and all the messages you get from mainstream TV shows now not just commercials, lots of TV about what's important. Strong messages that it matters a lot what you look like and how you dress and what car you drive and where you live and how much money you've got, all those kinds of signals about identifying yourself through what you own and what you consume is very strong.

Joseph (green) described his own experience of constant subjection to the media:

> If I think of my journey to work, I walk with my *i*Pod and have this music playing into my ears and passing numerous billboards, advertising various things, the Metro paper is half news and half advertising and product placement, more adverts inside the tube, inside the station, every corner of your life it feels, someone will shove something in there which will be telling you something...

Incitement to material fulfillment is constant:

> The general acceptance of what we need to make us happy...advertising is so prevalent. We fall prey to it, I fall prey to it. I would like to have a new widescreen, wouldn't I? It would be lovely! (Trudie, green)

And specifically contradicts reducing consumption:

> ...if the art of advertising is to make you slightly dissatisfied with what you've got so you can buy the next one, the whole way it works is a problem. (Tom)

In an attempt to uncover respondents' underlying and less conscious associations, I asked each interviewee to describe his or her consumer stereotype and since 'consumerist' and 'materialist' values would have individual meanings, I asked all respondents to score themselves on an imaginary line between 1 and 100 according to how materialistic they believed themselves to be. The actual scores were less relevant than revealing the rationale behind the process of self-scoring: i.e. what materialism represented to them personally.

The subsequent data revealed certain shared themes. The characteristics of a 'disposable' or 'throwaway' society were central to many respondents' perceptions of living in contemporary consumer culture, overwhelmingly experienced as negative and frequently contrasted with the past:

> A lot of the things we take for granted...like there used to be a dry cleaners on every corner, because we used to have our clothes a lot longer, they'd be repaired...re-heeling shoes...it's that process of making new products that we buy and throw away, buy and throw away that underlines the economy. (Eddie)

> ... my grandmother's generation, especially going through the war years, they had to make do, now they don't make do, they just chuck it away and buy something else...every time something bigger and better comes along, 'I've got to have that as well'. (Sally)

Green respondents made similar observations:

> ...people are much more likely to just chuck something out because they've got fed up with it or because they think they need a new one because they've had it for two years...you can get clothes which are very, very cheap – when you look at what you're getting for the money that you pay, it's not sustainable...but I think there is a tendency to change things partly because you can and partly because everyone else does...that has definitely been a social change. (Walter)

> That's...more evident now, the short-termism about consumerism...seems to be something new on the market every month...that seems to diverts attention from a lot of things we take for granted...(Ken)

> ...having lots of the latest and the best. (Joseph)

> ...the biggest change seems to be a constant need to change and improve rather than discover anything new. We have to go on improving, wanting more and needing more and changing everything. (Kate)

> I guess it's typified by the nuclear family, that don't know their neighbours...when I think of my family, it just seems like they've got a new car every time...and then the way that money gets spent and the amount of *things*, it's just incredible...(Carol)

Ellie (green) was provided with a particular contrast within her own personal circumstances:

> I've got two sides of my family because they split up and my Dad's side is probably what you call an average suburban family as in they always cook far too much and throw most of it away, they've got enormous appliances which they leave on standby all night, they've got two cars they drive everywhere and it's quite depressing when I go and see them...because they're pretty much the average of people in Britain. I don't think there's anything unusual about the amount of waste they're producing and the amount of money they just spend on stuff.

Across both samples, a theme of deeper social concern also appeared in the data. Changes in our attitudes to commodities, for example, were linked to profound repercussions on

social values, recalling the arguments of Manno and Kasser in the literature on consumer culture (Manno, 2002; Kasser, 2002):

> I think it's accelerated. I feel the world when I was young wasn't quite like that, things were very precious...if you got something new as a present, it was a special thing but it seems to me that children now are getting things all the time, so easy to buy another little thing, wasn't like that when we were children...our home was clean and tidy but it was years before my parents could buy a new sofa and then the buying of a new sofa was a major event, you know, incredibly exciting, it was in the family history whereas it couldn't be like that now...it seems that more and more it's just more possible, it's easier, it's just things escalating. (Carol, green)

> Somehow we stopped valuing what we have, simply because we can replace it with something bigger and better. (Eddie)

Undervaluing people's labour was linked to undervaluing people in general, again recalling the literature on effects of consumer ideology on social values and relationships (for example, Sennett, 2006; Kasser, 2002; Long, 2008):

> ...people don't want to spend money on good things that will last so they buy cheap and throw it away and start again...they don't treasure anything any more, it is just a means to an end, really, isn't it?...it's an awful idea, I think...one thing leads on to the other, I guess. If you don't value what you're buying you're not valuing the people who make it. That's where the self comes in, doesn't it, 'I live for myself', it doesn't matter any more about anybody else. (Mary)

Others expressed their belief that contemporary consumer culture was a breeding ground for unwelcome social 'viruses':

> ...there's more pressure brought about by greater choice, or peer pressure, quality of life, more competition amongst neighbours, amongst families to maintain standards. Twenty five years ago...people were more content with their lot... (Ken, green)

Eddie felt the system pandered to "basic human greed really, wanting the latest gadget, labour saving devices that by definition enable us to have more leisure time..."

> A degree of jealousy, a degree of keeping up with other things you see whereas...without that choice then that avenue of behaviour would have been curtailed...the intrinsic value of greed hasn't changed. But...the fact that the markets and other areas have changed has enabled that to flourish and enabled it to be manifest. (Jim)

Tim Kasser's research showed how materialist values brought not happiness, but further discrepancies between ideal and real lifestyles, evoking more cycles of dissatisfaction (Kasser, 2002; also Schor, 1999; Barber, 2007; James, 2007).

These same themes emerged in the data, first from the green sample:

> We've learned how to give ourselves images of perfection or desirability that kind of scratch the wounds that we've got inside about and the worries...about not being desirable and not being perfect and in an either/or mind set, perfection is the objective rather than wholeness so we're in a vicious circle...(Simone)

> Values set by the industry, everybody's trying to reach this dream, which is exactly what it is...a dream. It doesn't matter how you kit your house out, or your clothes or the biggest car you've got, it's not going to bring a different you..., you'll still be you, with all your fears, your uncertainties, you can't change that by spending money – they give the perception you can...bloody clever, we fall for it,

> every single one falls for it in some way...quite frightening, if you're entrenched into it. (Tori)

> This is going to sound very scathing and snobby – people don't have lives any more. They have TVs, they have computers, computer games, discussing soaps but there isn't actually a life. (Kate)

Tom believed consumer values were linked with low self esteem, also echoed in Tessa's words:

> ...the immediate instant gratification thing, a lot of fear people have about...not being as good as everyone else and that the way we're looked upon by other people, you're not so cool, you're not so successful if you don't have the big cars, the trappings, to look like you've done something.

Jeremy believed consumer culture provoked competition and the message that:

> ...consumption is good for you, you won't be happy unless you have *this*...you're not happy so you need to buy something else, just things, causes all sorts of cycles of addiction...

As one might have anticipated, it was evident that the green respondents maintained a personal distance from such a powerful influence: how did they explain this?

Self-concept was an important factor: there was a lack of congruence between intrinsic sense of identity and a materialistic orientation, expressed as a lack of *interest* in 'things':

> I absolutely *loathe* shopping, even if it's to buy clothes. I just find it incredibly boring. People seem to get so much pleasure from just spending money, obsessed with wanting. If I had to put my finger on one specific point it would be that, I don't go around *wanting* all the time and consumerism is based on empty lives

> and people just wanting – it seems like the only pleasure is to want. I'm a doer rather than a wanter, I suppose. (Kate)

Walter hated shopping too:

> I don't think I am particularly materialistic. On the other hand, I would prefer to have less of something but have it a better quality than to have a lot of something. I don't feel the need to have the latest model of phone. I tend to stick with things until they break. I dislike having to throw something away because one small component is broken.

Carrie described her acute sense of alienation during a recent shopping expedition:

> I feel *strange* sometimes...I ended up going to the shopping centre, all these pointless things being sold, I thought 'Oh my God, I wish I wasn't in here, this doesn't suit me', then me thinking this is real *life*, this is what happens, I suppose I do find it shocking, I find it greedy, I find it pointless, I can't really see how it's going to end because people being constantly pumped with adverts that tell they *need* all this pointless stuff.

Shopping in charity shops had been part of Joseph's upbringing. He carried on the family tradition but his self-concept still affected his purchases:

> ...clothes...even what am I wearing today...a brown corduroy jacket, from Oxfam, with rather ragged corduroy trousers of which I have many pairs which all came from a charity shop...I imagine people see it and probably come up with a fairly accurate picture of the person I am...someone who ostensibly doesn't care too much about what he wears but is actually happy with the image of what he wears.

For Trudie, a pointless preoccupation with spending money had little appeal when her own pleasures simply took a different form from those of committed consumers:

> ...they are just spending an awful lot of time thinking about how to redesign the kitchen and what new appliances they need, where to go on holiday next, where to send the children to school, the best private school (obviously I'm talking middle class here) when to make the next visit to the hairdresser or have their next manicure and just loads of stuff about how to keep up their own appearances, the appearances of their house and their garden, their children...

She believed they were missing out on "doing real things like cooking, reading to the children, going for walks, all the things that sort of reinforce your harmony, living in harmony with nature and the environment."

Carol described a similar antipathy to materialism and a personal preference for pleasure unassociated with commodities:

> Defining yourself by what you have rather than what you are and always wanting more things, you know, having to have all the latest technology...two cars, mobile phones, big computer...TV screens, dishwasher, drier, tumble drier, two bathrooms...having to have all these things and have more and more for comfort and convenience without stopping to think well, what will actually make me happy? Whereas for me, I'd say a walk down the road makes me more happy than any of those things...being out in the mountains, being close to nature...is more deeply fulfilling than anything you could find within indoors.

Ken also spoke of being naturally "far more content doing my compost heap than buying an expensive watch".

My working assumption was that the respondents in the non-green sample would be more attracted by the pursuits of consumerism and that this attraction might constitute a

motivational barrier to PEB. However this assumption was generally unsubstantiated. On the contrary, even without a chosen green lifestyle as an alternative reference point, nearly all non-green respondents, like their green counterparts, also expressed a clear distaste for and discomfort with the prevailing consumer ethos: none of them expressed any inclination to a self-concept as a consumer which implied an even more puzzling complexity to the problem of lack of motivation to PEB.

The arguments in the literature on consumer culture regarding the relative agency (Douglas, 1976; Frank, 1999) or passivity (Lasch, 1979; Schor, 1999; Kasser, 2002; Kilbourne, 1999; Barber, 2007; Bauman, 2007) of consumer behaviour in relation to advertising and consumer ideology seem curiously one-dimensional in comparison to the multi-faceted profiles emerging from the data. Several respondents were quite vehement in their repudiation of contemporary consumer behaviour and attitudes.

Ingrid's disparaging image of a consummate consumer, for example, was modelled on an ex-colleague:

> Someone who's absolutely addicted to shopping...just her whole style, the handbag, the shoes, the outfit and everyday that changed...you think Gosh, that must cost a fortune but I'm not sure what you gain from it...'look at me' image...we're obsessed by designer brands and people think they must be a huge support because they think it's says something about them and it's encouraged by the media and the system.

Adult obsession with image was deemed immature:

> People buy things because they say something about them, a lifestyle thing. You could always see it in kids, our kids had to have the right jeans, but I think consumerism is that that adolescent need carries on in general, you absolutely *have* to designate who you are by what you've bought. (Breda)

Simon dismissed concern with image as a phase he'd been through when younger but now, aged 53, he was:

> ...much more interested in life experiences, in spiritual and emotional growth... experiencing new and interesting things, than in owning the latest car or latest washing machine...owning *things*.

Similarly, Jed was:

> probably more worried about stuff like that when I was at school, kind of fitting in with the crowd...but not now. The lads I work with...as soon as the latest games console comes out, they rush out and buy it and buy all the games for it... media pressure again...I work in the opposite way...

He attributed this to his upbringing, as did Nigel and Sally who, like their green counterparts, also described a temperamental lack of interest in conspicuous consumption:

> I don't think I am materialistic...based on the importance that I give to material items such as flash cars or expensive watches. I'm not interested in the status of things. I would spend money on a quality item, I would. Because I want it and it's generally something I'd have for a long period of time. (Nigel)

> They do whatever they want to do, no matter what the cost and no matter the effect on others, a showy kind of attitude, 'look what I've got'...The desire is so strong and they work so hard to become like the ones they aspire to but at the end of the day, I see people in debt and I see people who are struggling and I think...you could have a simpler life and be much *happier*. (Sally)

Like Sally, Eileen was discomfited by the tendency to accumulate debt:

> so easy to put things on a plastic card, much easier to spend. I think the young people are going to find it very difficult...they've got lots of debts, even get a holiday now on a plastic card.

Neil described himself as materialistic because he liked luxury but he, too, expressed the need to distance himself from the compulsive stereotype:

> I'm not obsessed with the latest anything...I like comfort zone, home environment, vehicular access, international travel...but I don't consider myself to be too extravagant at all – I'm happy to wait for things. I don't purchase things as soon as they come out. I don't pay that premium.

The influence of formative experiences has been shown to shape materialistic orientations (Ahuvia and Wong, 2002). One non-green respondent in particular illustrated the complexities underlying consumer behaviour. Janice was an ardent shopper and I knew before the interview that she reputedly owned one hundred and ten pairs of trousers. When I asked her about this, she admitted: "I do buy a lot of clothes. I like clothes...they make me feel good." However, if I had expected to gain some insight into high-end consumer mentality, I would be disappointed as her narrative revealed a much more complicated portrait:

> ...growing up when I was young, I *never* had clothes...I had an older sister and I had to have everything she had first and it affected me, it really did, because everybody knew, well you *thought* everybody knew, that's how you felt and no matter where we were going, I could never be myself, I was never allowed to pick anything or buy anything.

Interestingly, even Janice distanced herself from the 'mindless' consumer, differentiating herself as healthy rather than addictive:

> I don't spend money I haven't got, I don't run debts, I've never had a debt or done credit cards or anything, you know, if I haven't got the money, I'll go without. You adapt.

The absence of conspicuous consumption in the behaviour and attitudes across *both* samples appears to be rooted in a degree of emotional discomfort with associated 'consumerist' behaviour. Responses ranged from personal disinterest in materialism to open disapproval of the perceived excess materialism of *others*. These others were specifically mentioned by both samples as friends/peers/flat-sharers (Sally, Tori, Tessa, Nigel, Jed, Neil, Mel), family members (Carol, Ellie, Kate, Charlie, Martin, Walter, Malcolm, Judy, Eileen, George, Simon, Carrie), the wider population (Mary, Ken, Walter, Tori, Janice, Carrie, Tom) and celebrities (Nigel, Breda, Joseph).

A consistent means of distancing across both samples was reference to a self-concept characterized as non-materialistic and therefore, by comparison, out of step with current consumer culture. Eddie's words are representative of other respondents:

> My wife...always has to have the new gadget as soon as it comes on the market but I'm not like that. I remember getting my first record player, a big box thing...that took pride of place in my room, I kept it for years...nowadays, if you have a CD player that no longer shuffle the CDs for you, then it's old hat, you must get the up to date one...

Twelve men (including Eddie) across both samples expressed a similar attitude to commodities. The younger men (currently with no disposable income) wore clothes or trainers until they fell apart (Jed, Neil, Mel). Martin, Ken, Jim, Nigel, Walter, Joseph, Simon and George eschewed material consumption for its own sake (i.e. for image or status) but would spend money on something to last, often selecting brand names

associated with superior quality. Spending money was justified by using the object until the end of its life: the range of 'quality' commodities included cars, irons, washing machines, lawn mowers, pens, watches, trainers, shoes, music systems and clothes.

This suggests the possibility of an unconscious concern about status, while rejecting any parallel with stereotypical mindless or conspicuous consumerism and raises an interesting point: why does it feel necessary to repudiate the ethos of consumerism? This may have been an example of the 'interviewer effect', that is, an assumption that I would disapprove, but it may also reflect a deeper and moral rejection for the excesses of materialism based on a longstanding puritanical tradition within social mores (Richins and Dawson,1992).

Despite the repudiation, the scores of eleven non-green respondents still indicated that they were well above the average of 11,500 for UK citizens, according to the particular calculator used. Perhaps this is connected to a phenomenon observed by Joseph:

> Although...the dominant culture (is)...about spending and choice...buying things to be replaced quite quickly, I don't know how many people would be prepared to admit to those values. I think in society there is a double take...probably most people would say being careful, frugal budgeting was a good thing...yet on the other side, the consumer side is...keep spending, undeniably a *part* of culture and society but I wonder if *any*body is happy with that or comfortable to admit and say I think that's a good thing.

Despite possible ambivalence about consumer values, the intense dislike of waste expressed by non-green respondents was quite unambiguous. Janice, for instance, objected strongly to her daughters allowing their children to waste food:

> When we were growing up there wasn't the money or the resources so you had to have what was cooked and to be more aware because there wasn't an alternative. Now, 'do you want this?', 'no', 'oh well, what do you want then?' and I just get

> so cross, I really do...what's on the table is what you get and I still do that, I don't mess about. I just think, no, it's wrong.

Judy had trained her own children:

> I'm just horrified about the amount of rubbish that we, that everybody throws away just mindlessly so it's a case even the children, I don't think they would dream of willy-nilly throwing things in the bin now...

Ingrid hated having to throw food away: "I really *loathe* it, loathe wasting things."

Speaking of young couples setting up home, Mary was appalled at the waste of:

> ...beautiful antique furniture I've seen at the tip...but they won't have it, you see, it's got to be new, it's got to be posh, they won't have old furniture any more. That's just one instance but it's everything really.

The hatred of waste is not confined to the older generation. Charlie had been conditioned from an early age to segregate types of waste but never wondered why:

> ...(but now) when I see a bag of rubbish, I imagine millions of people getting their bags of rubbish out so I just think how bad it is. When I buy things I'm always thinking about the amount of packaging there is. I work in a café at weekends and the mount of waste is truly, truly monumental. It's terrible and this stuff goes somewhere and doesn't biodegrade for thousands of years or hundreds of years. I *hate* rubbish.

References to waste were framed in comparison to the mores of previous generations and were part of a tendency among the respondents generally to articulate a tension and divergence between contemporary and old-fashioned values. In view of this and also since the era of postmodern capitalism has seen highly effective targeting of children as

consumers on an unprecedented scale (Barber, 2007), I was interested to explore how the respondents viewed the future.

Having expressed concerns about the impact of consumer values on current society, how did they see anticipate the future, both in specific regard to their own children and by implication, what this younger generation represented to their hopes and fears for the environmental agenda in the future?

Influence of consumer culture on the future generation

Children – one's own and others – act as a weathervane for prevailing consumer values and also indications of trends for the future. Martin and Breda both expressed concerns for the effects on the younger generation of changes which, for them, were directly related to postmodern consumer culture:

> *We're* driven by an element of consumerism but then our children, coming behind us, are driven by the same things that they can't have...when you look at the average salary in this country, you couldn't even buy a caravan! The kids are losing hope, so there's a lack of ability to achieve or to gain an opportunity in life. A loss of hope...mixed with drink and drugs (leads to) abandonment of social principles. (Martin)

> ...competition and being nasty to people and all those things, I've seen that come in with horror – the box leads it and schools and the business of the sats, that tremendous push towards competing and for most people they'll never be able to get it even if they won...I think it is evil really. Lots of kids who are pushed will be so disappointed when they turn into horrible jobs. (Breda)

At the same time, the ecological premise of an obligation to others underlying the moral basis of a green lifestyle implies that children also embody the theoretical 'future

generations' for whom we are encouraged to be saving the planet. Many respondents were conscious of this imperative, for example, Trudie:

> ...there is a thing about your children and your grandchildren, the moral duty to pass on something to them and not selfishly destroy what you've got.

However, consciousness did not appear to translate into action. Two green respondents (neither of whom had children), spent their professional lives trying to educate and persuade the general public to adopt eco-friendly practices and both expressed surprise at the inefficacy of this argument.

Ken divided people into two camps: "there are people who are concerned about what happens when they've gone...or those that couldn't give a damn to be honest." He could not understand why people with children were not concerned enough to *act.* In an attempt to shock them into action when addressing these issues, he would compare the probability of climate change to a plane crash: "'Would you put your grandchildren on a plane if there was a ninety per cent chance of an accident?' There cannot be any argument about that, you just wouldn't do it, would you?"

Tori was equally incredulous:

> The planet is very abstract – I think they need to care about their children but some people will gamble on their children's lives. I tell them this will change in your children's lifetimes and they say 'well, we'll see'...I mean what sort of a response is that?! Knocks me sideways. They need 'proof' – what sort of *proof* do they want? How can they gamble with their child's future?

Among the non-green respondents, there was specifically expressed concern among those with young children or grandchildren (Judy, Janice, Breda, Martin, Eileen, Eddie). Explicit moral implications were referred to by Simon:

> I see (it) as being absolutely part of climate change, the problem that our grandchildren are going to have is going to be caused by our massive carbon footprints at the moment. What will make me green, now we know about it (is) what am I going to say to my grandchildren...(it's)...hugely motivating to look my grandchildren in the eye in thirty years' time and say yes, I changed the way that I behaved. I think for a lot of people that is a really big issue.

However, Simon's words did not motivate him to pro-environmental practice, confirming Ken and Tori's experience.

Breda spoke with more candour:

> I'm not able to identify with this world for our grandchildren in any respect – I say those words and everybody says them but they don't mean anything to me. They should...but somehow they don't. Perhaps all one can do is wonder what will happen next.

Wondering what will happen next – in other words, anticipating the future – is inevitably affected by perceptions of how current trends will influence future generations. Two main themes emerged in the data: changes of the experience of childhood in the last thirty years (particularly the loss of contact with nature) and the impact on a generation that has been targeted as intrinsic consumers from an early age of the inculcation of values that their parents do not share.

The comments of both samples are combined in the following section, including those who are not parents because, even without one's own children, it is still possible to be aware of and concerned about characteristics of the next generation and their effect on the future outcome of current environmental and social problems.

Of her own grown-up children, Trudie (green) observed:

> This generation is dazzled by all the stuff around. They certainly do go shopping a lot and buy a lot of things. They always say well, you're a role model, we would like to live like you when we're a bit older, we've still got a bit of living and spending to do...but we would like to end up living the simple life in the country, growing our vegetables etc but not just yet!

Like Joseph, she had already voiced concern that contemporary parents were too preoccupied with material preoccupations to spend quality time with their children sharing natural pleasures. Tom (green) looked back on his own childhood as:

> ...probably a lot less advertising when I was growing up and the whole kind of ethos that you are what your possession is...a big change...I was allowed to mess around...now a parent would say you mustn't do that, you might get hurt.

Kate (green) similarly believed children today were:

> ...wrapped up in cotton wool...you've got to accept life is about balance, for everything that's good there is something bad, you have to take the knocks...and I think when we're allowed to fall down occasionally, we have a better appreciation and a greater value of the good things. Kids that can't climb a tree in case they fall off, that can't ride a bike in case they fall off, that's not a life. They'll grow up even *more* dependent upon things all their lives.

Simon (non-green) described his children, who were in their twenties, as far more concerned with things than ideas based:

> ...on the fact they're much more interested in discussing the latest car, camera, boat, set of skis...rather than having intellectual discussions about the meaning of life, the universe and everything. I have had this conversation with a number of

> people of my age, background, social class and they make exactly the same observations.

The commercial targeting of children as consumers has clearly been hugely successful and influential in producing a current younger generation indisputably committed to the ethos of consumerism:

> With children you see it the whole time: there's constant peer pressure, in terms of brand identification and the like...(Jim, non-green)

> Kids come out with an expectation that they're going to have the latest iPod, the latest this, the latest that and then they're upset when they can't have it. (Martin, non-green)

> My daughter's on her third phone since I've had that *one* and then she said 'I need a new phone' – what's wrong with the old one?...they will moan and complain, they'll want this and want that. Gradually we give way to them so they've got a PS2 but not a PS3 and they have got a Wii and one of them's got an Xbox but they don't get it easily. They have to struggle for it. That sounds terrible, doesn't it? (Walter, green)

Speaking of his daughter, an undergraduate, Malcolm (non-green) said "she absolutely loves spending time shopping and keeps on wanting to get a different mobile phone." He was aware that:

> ...children are targeted more as consumers and therefore the shift is more in the opposite direction to that which we might want...there is this instantaneity thing, instant access, 'I can have it instantly', 'why shouldn't I?'...she's got a student loan but it would be unthinkable that in each summer she shouldn't fly off somewhere like Thailand with her boyfriend and that's just there: 'it's available so I can have it'.

A further influence was the ubiquity of computers which posed a potential to relationships. Judy (non-green), for example, was extremely worried about her son:

> In my day, my brother would be in his room or reading his book or doing something practical...at least reading a book, you are gaining something but computer games which normally tend to be quite violent, he can be sat up there five hours of the day – three hours on the trot and then a break and another two hours or even longer, and he's not speaking to anybody...the whole skill of social interaction is being lost.

Eddie (non-green) complained that his wife had bought their children, aged 9 and 2, an Xbox which meant they were completely preoccupied when he arrived home from work. He had decided to institute a rule that they stopped when he came home. Although they obeyed the rule, he was obviously saddened:

> Ever since I introduced that rule just after Christmas, as soon as I go home...whereas before they'd come running to the door, I can hear as I walk past the lounge door...our household's gone from 'Hooray Daddy is home' to 'Oh Daddy's home, we've got to stop playing now'.

It is possible to interpret from the views of some respondents that encouragement to adopt a consumer self-concept from a very young age has had an adverse impact on interest in public and political issues.

Mary (non-green) believed that preoccupation with individualism paradoxically worked against the moral capacity to stand up in a minority when it mattered: "People haven't got the strength to be different and to be strong...certainly children haven't."

Ellie (22) and Mel (23), both green, described most of their peers as lacking in political interest.

> ...after a lecture on climate change and a film, I stood up and said to two hundred students, we've got a march next weekend and here are some leaflets, and not *one* person showed any interest.

Ellie attributed this to "indifference, the effort of getting up to London, not wanting to get out of the comfort zone."

Mel described himself as belonging to:

> ...the last dying phase of student activism. Maybe people are more apathetic. I suppose, in my generation, we've come from a time where we haven't really had any great struggles...especially everyone at uni...people don't see things as affecting them or see the need to sort of change whereas people before...or students who've really had to struggle for things and had a difficult life feel the need to campaign for change.

Returning to the interviews of Neil (22) and Jed (23) in the non-green sample, it was clear that Jed regarded environmental issues as a waste of time while Neil was adamant that life was there for the living: any suggestion of restricting travel, for instance, represented a completely unacceptable limitation to his personal (and youthful) freedom. In the overall context of the indirect references from adults across both samples, it appears that Ellie and Mel are probably not representative of their generation.

It is relevant to add here that this data is specifically related to consumer culture and social change as experienced in the UK. Both Carol and Tessa (both green) had elected to bring up their children in other countries; Martin (non-green) would have emigrated with his family to Canada had his wife been willing to go and an important motivation for Jeremy(green) in living in community was to provide a *counter*-cultural milieu, in other words, based on alternatives to consumer values.

Despite the fact that some of these respondents did challenge their children (Judy, Malcolm, Eddie, Walter, Martin) or grandchildren (Breda, Eileen), there was a very real sense that it was a lost cause because parents were no match for the power of technological, commercial and media institutions. Jeremy, for example, accepted that although his children were "all non- ambitious, not interested in money, all non judgmental people" – which had been his prime motivation for moving into a community – they were still "hopeless urbanites...most children are urban even if they live in the countryside, through TV, their schools."

Such was the power of consumer ideology that Carol revealed the most important thing in life she believed she could teach her young son would be the ability to withstand the pervasive psychological messages of consumerism. Her hopes lay within her own Buddhist practice:

> It's to do with observing what happens in your head...what your thoughts are doing, then you're less likely to be dominated by them. If people are going to be different...if people learn not to be dominated by their thoughts...it would be a huge change for humanity and for me...and for Rowan, that would be the thing that I'd want him to learn, that single thing and then everything else would follow on.

The themes which emerge in the data concerning children overlap with those related to consumer culture in general: the conflict between a commodity culture and the experience of nature; a commercial persuasion to maintain high levels of consumer spending plus the habit of a throwaway culture; an expectation of gratification of need and the potential for disappointment; conflict between technology and relationship. In addition, though, there is evidence of conflict between parental values and those of their children as well as an acknowledgement of the limits of parental power to alter the inevitable course of cultural and social change.

In the absence of strong consumer identity in the non-green sample, my supposition that personal conflict between consumer and environmental values would act as a barrier to motivation to PEB was not corroborated, a finding which serves only to increase the sense of puzzlement about what makes greens *green*! Non-green and green respondents alike experienced a comprehensive tension between the incongruities of the broader social context: conflict between environmental and economic values which in turn reflected a wider divergence within mainstream consumer culture; perceptions of government ineptitude; experience in everyday life of consumer values and norms that are antithetical to environmental values; and, finally, similar perceptions of the current generation of growing consumers.

A psycho-social perceptive makes a case for a combination of *all* these factors contributing to a barrier to individual motivation because of an overall perception of the improbability of any real change or the likelihood of substantively addressing environmental crises in the near future, in other words, before it is too late. These combined factors present little opportunity for challenge or control at an individual level, thus constituting a powerful barrier between pro-environmental values and PEB (Stern, 2000).

Changes in social norms and collective values

There is one final dimension to the barrier to motivation that I wish to investigate. I have so far looked at the incongruities related specifically to the environmental agenda.I now want to widen the psycho-social perspective to include perceptions of wider social change in collective values over the last three decades. This is based on my observation that respondents themselves spontaneously contextualised environmental problems within a wider social and cultural framework.

Kersty Hobson reports that, in similar qualitative research into the relevance of sustainable consumption messages, interviewees expressed less concern or interest in rationalising their lifestyles than in the social fabric of these lifestyles: lack of

community, interaction and mutual respect were far more important to them (Hobson, 2002, p.110). The data from my own interviewees revealed that they too believed that pro-environmental discourse overlapped with the social and moral problems they witnessed in everyday life: social norms were understood to have changed and the overall consensus was that this was a development for the worse.

Lack of care for the global environment was symptomatic of a lack of care in the local community. Mary (non-green), for example, saw lack of care as endemic:

> ...in the streets and the attitudes and the rubbish in the street we get here, I mean, I've never seen our streets in such a mess, it's awful. You wouldn't walk along the street, and throw down your sweet papers when you were children, we didn't, but they do now. We've even got a rubbish committee in the village...because it gets in such a state...well what a dreadful thing!

She had lived all her life in a small Dorset village and described the change from walking down the village street and greeting people she met to an indifference that she put down to being part of a society where:

> ...it's the *things* that matter, the status that matters, not the people...you've got the shop and you queue up and nobody's talking to anybody, it's awful, you used to go down the shop and you'd all stand and chat and you all knew one another... now it's vastly different.

In contrast, Janice (non-green) had spent all her life in a Northern city but also noted disturbing changes:

> Everybody's aggressive, everybody *wants*...and all this fighting...it really doesn't feel pleasant any more and that bothers me. It might not have been pleasant for me (the past) but for society it was...you were safe, you didn't feel I've got to lock my door, put locks on the window, you didn't *feel* like that then and I just

> think today you're not safe. You can't speak to people the way you used to, you really can't...if somebody does anything, you can't challenge that...because of the repercussions...there is no respect around any more.

Judy (non-green) tried to come to terms with loss of values she personally felt were important:

> Some of the sort of old-fashioned values like courteousness – it all sounds really silly (laughs), sitting here saying this, because the world has moved on...some of those things have had to...change but I do think that again, sometimes, we've lost too much of it...in terms of ordinary civility.

For those who did not grow up in the 'information age', the rapidity of technological change and subsequent speed to which many aspects of life are subjected can be unsettling:

> We've got technology...it's all snowballing but us as individuals...our social structure, isn't developing that quickly and I think we're out of control or soon will be... It's taken us millenniums to develop to where we are now and we're trying to change things faster than we can actually cope with them. (Judy)

> We don't allow ourselves time to do nothing. The whole culture is geared to fast turnover. (Sophia, green)

Ingrid (non-green) believed:

> The biggest social change is the effect of technology and in particular the internet. Personal computers, the way that they drive us to behave in certain ways...I see it nearly as the Sorcerer's Apprentice, where we've lost control actually letting the machine take control of us.

A further adverse effect of technology was its substitution for real contact:

> Everything is man-made, whatever we do, communication, the way we grow things, nothing is natural anymore, it's all rushed. You don't even walk down the street to knock on somebody's door and say hello, how you doing? It's pick up the phone, send an email, everything we do is unnatural. Nothing we do now is of our own making. (Janice, non-green)

> People don't talk, they text, email but don't actually talk or write, there is no real basis of communication and debate anymore...they don't think or reason, common sense is diminishing, even exams are tick boxes rather than actually *think*...practical skills, dexterity all that's going ,it's almost as if we're in a retrograde phase dependent on machines and technology. (Kate, green)

The impact of technology on communication was linked to wider social and ethical concerns about the impact of consumerism on relationships, very much in line with the theoretical literature already reviewed (for example, Long 2008; Kasser 2002; Hoggett, 2009).

The data revealed first hand observation of the wider repercussions of lives dominated by commodities and image:

> Things have changed...and I hate it. My life probably was less different to my parents' life than my kids' (lives) are to mine. It was a Cranford thing, everyone might be catty but they were really neighbours. Of course I mind that people aren't any longer able to relate to one another and support one another and be bonded with each other. (Breda, non-green)

> I guess from the point of view of the family, the actual value of that family unit, the value they place in being together, going together, eating together...when you look at the families you see at the moment...there's less of that now. (Jim, non-green)

> I think it's just horrible. We only consider objects rather than other people, that's what worries me. We're more concerned about the objects we own than the people that are around us, people are forgetting how to be sociable...even grown ups will go and sit and play some sort of computer game or go and sit on the internet and go looking for things whereas before you might have spent an hour talking to somebody, standing doing the washing up or something...all that's gone, because people don't talk in their families, people don't talk to other people...(Judy, non-green)

> ...what you feel when you see someone else in trouble or needing help...I get the impression that for a complex of reasons, it might even include fear, some people would think is that genuine or is this somebody who's just pretending and I'm going to get jumped...possibly we do interact better with *things* now or feel more about *things*, care more about *things* than we care about relationships, certainly other people outside our immediate family. (Walter, green)

The dominance of self-concern, for Eileen (non-green), had led to a general lowering of standards leading to corruption of "honesty and truth" exemplified by dishonest commercial practices and also a diminishment of the virtues of commitment and loyalty. For Eddie (non-green), too, self-gratification entailed a corresponding loss of commitment:

> If someone says they've been married over fifty years, then that's a big event, someone been working for the same company for thirty years, that's a big event, these days people change jobs every five years or so...there such a difference in our attitudes.

He reflected on the tendency to prioritise things over people:

> In a way I'm very sad when I look around me...alot of things around us are so temporal...there's not much worth holding on to, it's a bit like trying to catch a handful of smoke...it's *experiences* that are important...if you have a good relationship with your partner, your children...those are the things you'll remember when they're not there.

A culture of commodities was essentially a culture where money mattered. George(non-green) disliked its social significance:

> Money's become a big thing. That really has changed. You have to *show* you've got money...and social structures are now changed to depend on money...people have used money much more than in the past. Now if they've used it for good, then fine, but...I'm not very comfortable about it.

The aspirational culture was fuelled by the "worship of personalities". Breda (non-green) endured her intolerance in private because, at 75, she felt at odds with the rest of the world: "It's quite hard to say it doesn't mean anything to me, you'd feel you were a bit of a has-been if you were to do that." In fact, she was not alone in her views:

> There's a fairly hideous pop culture we live with from day to day which in the media, particularly TV but also press and radio and...the free newspapers you get on the tube full of very, very little news so there's fashion, culture of celebrities, minutiae of the relationships of a couple of people in a jungle somewhere and that is the culture which is being expounded there and being encouraged, clearly having lots of things, image is important...you can't deny the power of it, partly because it is something we all have in common and it's so all pervasive and fills...all the interstices, the small corners in your life are filled up with this popular culture. (Joseph, green)

Nigel also linked money to the aspirational culture:

> You look at the media icons out there, they're all about how much money they've got, what their house is like, it's all about what car they're driving, what they're wearing, it's not about them as individuals, whether they'd be a sports person or a great actor, it's inevitable that kids are going to grow up and aspire to that. I believe that's changed a lot even since I was a kid and that's not that long ago. It's pretty sad really.

The negative impact of individualism on the value of community, recalling the words of Bauman, Barber and Sennett, was articulated by several interviewees:

> I don't think it's very conducive to a community based society – it's all about who's at the top, seems to be a lot more competitive, I guess. All about who's top dog. (Nigel, non-green)

Mary and Janice (both non-green) remembered a much stronger community spirit in their own neighbourhoods. Joseph (green) observed that people were not encouraged:

> ...to live in a deliberate fashion, (or to) think that there are particular consequences to their actions either at an individual or collective level...to think about higher collective values, something as a community you work towards...as opposed to things we achieve in our own life.

Martin (non-green) felt angry and alienated by the new values in the UK in comparison to what he saw in Canada:

> ...it's probably more like I *imagine* what life would have been when I was a kid. The impression is it was much more simple, things didn't run so fast, there was a sort of respect for your common man...there is a spirit of community and working towards something which there isn't here.

There was no evidence that these new values had made our lives more positive:

> ...very, very sad and I think how empty lives are because of it...I really do, very sad. I mean they don't know what they're missing...they really can't see or understand what they're missing. (Mary, non-green)

> Nothing is natural any more. It's been an ongoing process but I think is getting more and more like that...for want of a better term, we're doing away with human beings, we don't need them any more...where is it all going to end? (Janice, non-green)

Echoing Janice's fears, Simone (green) concluded:

> At this moment in our history...it has become increasingly inconvenient to be human, to be frail and unpredictable...

Conclusion

The analysis of the data has revealed little difference in terms of orientation to consumer culture, the same broad political disengagement and disillusion with the government as well as a similar view of children and subsequent anticipation of trends for the future. In addition, no evidence points to the existence of a strong consumer self-concept among the non-green respondents. The majority of non-green as well as green respondents expressed a distaste for waste and wish to distance themselves from material extravagance: 'mindless consumerism' was variously elaborated with qualities of stupidity and superficiality; to be pitied for a lack of will power or common sense (alarming levels of debt), absence of life purpose and a lack of 'moral fibre'.

The data also revealed a common perception that pro-environmental discourse overlaps with the social and moral problems witnessed in everyday life, both in the nature of the

problems and their solutions as well as a consciousness of a major shift and reprioritisation of cultural values as detailed in the literature on consumer culture. Consumerism – especially postmodern consumerism – was associated, for instance, with a lack of respect or care (indifference, competition, aggression); obsession with money and conspicuous wealth; a lifestyle that is unnatural and too fast because of over-reliance on technology; impairment of relationships (lack of time and communication with neighbours, friends and family) and finally, institutional dishonesty and subsequent mistrust.

The implications of these findings lead to a significant question: what explains the motivation of green respondents to maintain pro-environmental practice? If both samples are *experientially* exposed to the oppositional discourse, what accounts for facility to deliberate and make lifestyle decisions in favour of the environment, regardless of a generally acknowledged hopelessness of the situation as a whole?

The answer, I suggest, lies less with the data that demonstrates an absence, across both samples, of a strong consumer self-concept and more with the data that has revealed the presence in the green respondents of a strong *green* self concept discussed in the previous chapter. In the following chapter, I discuss the links between a green identity and motivation to maintain a counter-cultural stance in continuing individual pro-environmental practice despite the lack of overt political or cultural endorsement.

CHAPTER SIX A MORAL IMPERATIVE

From the early analysis of data regarding the dilemma of travel, respondents from both samples revealed a moral dimension to their deliberation. Although I had not expected this, morality has subsequently evolved into a key theme in my analysis both in relation to the PEO of the green respondents and to the ethical reflections of the non-green sample.

The analysis in the previous chapter revealed little disparity between the two samples in terms of their orientation to consumerist values and to consumer culture: in fact, respondents in both samples indicated that the 'mindless consumer' stereotype was somehow morally repugnant to their own self-concepts. A major difference, however, is that among the green respondents, a green identity existed as an *alternative* self-concept, congruent with the existence of a PEO: among the non-green respondents no such alternative was apparent. Whereas a PEO offers the opportunity for more consistency of PEB, precisely because the actions are themselves consistent with an already established self-concept, disidentification from consumerism alone appears to be insufficient motivation to maintain consistency.

John Thogersen discusses consistency and inconsistency of environmentally responsible behaviour (ERB) in the light of Lionel Festinger's classical psychological theory of cognitive dissonance (Thogersen, 2004; Festinger, 1957). Festinger's theory suggests that an individual is driven both to hold consistent beliefs about oneself and, by extension, behave in a consistent manner, because the experience of *in*consistent attitudes or perceptions is emotionally disturbing and uncomfortable (Festinger, 1957).

Thogersen applies this psychological dynamic to understanding consistency of PEB, in other words, individuals are likely to be motivated to avoid dissonance by behaving in a pro-environmentally consistent manner. Dissonance varies in the level of discomfort it produces. A major factor shown to cause high levels of dissonance is the perceived threat to one's self-concept or identity, a key concern being the desire to see oneself as a moral person (Thogersen, 2004, p.95).

This is confirmed to a large extent by the green respondents in my own sample whose PEO could be said to be integral to their self-concept, thereby motivating them to consistent PEB. Thogersen's research confirmed that desire to avoid cognitive dissonance was driving the process of behavioural consistency, the level being dependent on perceived similarity of behaviours within a coherent framework and the moral importance of PEB, the latter factor determining the influence of the former. His results support the thesis that inconsistency of environmentally responsible behaviour is explained by a failure of individuals to see the relevant similarity of or attribute moral importance to these behaviours, allowing for high levels of cognitive dissonance to be endured (ibid., p.101).

The green respondents in my sample demonstrated a capacity for moral compromise and pragmatism – in other words, to endure high levels of dissonance – which would appear at first to contradict Thogersen's argument. However, a mitigating factor, according to Festinger's theory, is that dissonance is not produced if inconsistency can be attributed to external forces (Festinger, 1957). Lack of perceived volitional control could help to explain evidence of managing high levels of dissonance that appears in the data from some of the green respondents.

Jeremy was able to withstand his desire for Greek sunshine because of his conscience about damaging the environment but lived with his compromise to fly to Gambia for work. Walter also flew for work and Ken used the car for work; similarly Tom acknowledged a compromise about flying, between his pro-environmental commitment and his relationship to his wife. The choice between one's work or marriage and morally consistent behaviour makes the choice far more complex than deciding simply between individual sacrifice or self-gratification and could be understood to diminish perceptions of volitional control over the decision.

Trudie's deliberation about her current compromise of occasionally flying for pleasure offers a different perspective:

> It's selfish...to put what I know is going to be a deleterious activity in terms of climate change, to put my pleasures and satisfactions first...

When I asked her whether it made any difference that the flight would go anyway, her response was:

> Well, it's the easy way out, isn't it? Sometimes one uses that excuse but it's still not right to do it...it's a wrong action itself regardless of whether other people do it...because my being on that flight is contributing to the flight going at all and it's releasing all the CO2 into the atmosphere. By going, I'm saying it's an acceptable thing to do, to myself and to other people, so all of us who are sitting in that plane are all kind of engaged in this conspiracy that it's alright to do this. When it plainly is *not*.

In this instance, she did exercise volitional control but, like the other respondents, both avoided rationalizations to excuse the inconsistency of her behaviour and also demonstrated the ability to psychologically contain the ongoing discomfort of acknowledged compromise, in other words, the capacity to live with high levels of dissonance.

This capacity seems to be sustained by the pre-existence of a green self-concept embedded within a PEO or framework of moral coherence and deeply integrated personal norms which Thogersen has suggested are a major factor in motivating consistent pro-environmental commitment and practice, including behaviour that requires some kind of personal cost and sacrifice in favour of the greater environmental good (Thogersen 2004; 2007). These green citizens are not immune to the seductions of consumer culture – as they have themselves have admitted – but their strong alternative self-concept seems to be a source of determination and strength to resist its persuasions, helping them to achieve and demonstrate the 'virtuous character' necessary for environmental citizenship.

What interests me is the provenance of this moral coherence in these individuals. Recalling the theoretical literature of environmental citizenship, a citizen-state partnership is emphasised as integral to achieving the goals of sustainability through a commitment to the common good by addressing not only environmental problems but also social and political injustice and inequities. However, the perception of the government's role and its perceived inadequacy in fulfilling this role that have appeared in the data suggest that none of the respondents felt particularly supported or encouraged in their environmental commitment by any external authority: in fact it was more the reverse. What has not yet been considered is how these 'real' as opposed to theoretical green citizens have come to attach moral importance to PEB in the midst of the general "unresolved (and often suppressed) value conflicts and moral ambivalence of society"(Hoggett, 2009, p.5)?

The dominant discourse of environmentalism (Dobson, 2000) leaves moral questions unaddressed: its sole focus is on technocentric solutions. Using cost-benefit analysis applied to environmental goods reduces solutions to a question of monetary values which "being unambiguous, unitary preferences, ignore more complex moral values such as a wish to co-operate with others in a shared commitment to reduce consumption" (Grove-White and Szerszynski, 1992, p.290).

A green ethic, like any other ethic, is embedded in a wider social and cultural climate which means that it cannot be conjured out of thin air; it has to emerge from existing moral frameworks (ibid, p.286)). The literature on postmodern consumer culture – and the discussion in the previous chapter – offer some indication as to the challenge of maintaining moral coherence in the midst of a culture at variance with morality in general, not only in relation to the environment..

Environmental protection is only one of other social domains in a market society – like health, education, social welfare criminal justice – where economic values have been prioritised (Sandel, 2009). The language of the market has no word for 'moral' which is why "managerial, bureaucratic and corporate language has no place in an ethical field"

(Somerville, 2006, p.74): applying market values or "making everything economically deliverable" diminishes any other kind of value (ibid.).

If we can assume, therefore, that these particular green citizens have not been guided into ethical deliberation through their partnership with the state, what accounts for the capacity for the process of moral deliberation that Mel, for example, described:

> I've always come to these decisions on my own just from thinking about them and reflecting on them and making my own judgments on what I feel is the right thing to do.

Further more, after a process of deliberation, what motivates a response which prioritises the 'other' over the 'self' in a culture of individualism? As one of the green respondents, Simone, observed:

> (T)he environmental message over the decades has had a flavour of impoverishment about it. It has never tried to address...the difficulty of sacrifice so the moral imperative that you have to give up something in order to be a good person is not attractive to the modern psychology.

Trudie also recognized that sacrifice was somewhat of an anomaly in today's society. I asked her where the requisite moral motivation could be found to make necessary lifestyle changes:

> I don't know...unless you're a committed Christian or other kind of religious body that gives you that moral precept. I don't know how you get there...I'm puzzled about it.

Several of the green interviewees had religious and/or spiritual affiliations but then again, so did some of the non-green respondents. For Mary, Sally, Janice and Simon, religion influenced their ethical objections to materialism but this did not necessarily provide the

motivation for altruism. Sally's own faith, for example, encouraged her to trust that divine intervention would prevent a cataclysm:

> I want to play my part and do something, helping the environment where I can (but) I feel ultimately it is out of our control...there is a Higher source and when He steps in, that that will be the global solution.

Simon described himself as a very committed Christian but was still quite capable of deferring what he himself acknowledged was a moral decision to stop flying, even using a religious reference to do so: "A little bit like St. Francis, make me chaste but not yet!"

Religious and spiritual affiliations among the non-green respondents seemed not to lead automatically to a consistent pro-environmental behavioural commitment. Although the expectation that religious faith would be linked with willingness to support environmental measures found some support in Jagers' research, it provides only a tenuous connection in terms of actual practice in my own data, confirming the findings of a qualitative study by Armstrong and Jackson (Jagers, 2009; Armstrong and Jackson, 2008).

VI: I Connection to nature and the capacity for moral engagement

So where does a green ethical framework come from? To weigh equivalent values, we need to be not only aware of the potential positive or negative consequences of a particular action but crucially, we have to *care* about such consequences (Lorenzoni *et al.*, 2007). Thus we come back to the psychological significance of nature that most green respondents described: a sense of their place within nature, the value they placed on nature and the awareness of their impact on the natural environment, collectively referred to as "inclusion with nature" (Schultz, 2002, p.67).

I have already discussed the significance of a relationship with nature among these respondents. Extending the analysis further, we can make some link between a

relationship with nature and the emergence of personal moral norms underlying a pro-environmental ethic.

Carrie's green commitment, for example, was rooted in:

> ...my moral life, my whole way of being. I suppose it's because I see myself as an intrinsic part of everything, part of the reason I don't want to put hair spray on because I know that's putting crap into the world for the sake of this one creature and you can't do that, it's not the right thing to do. I am part of it...whatever I do affects everybody else. And non-sentient things to an extent as well, like the mountain, I can't stand there while they chop up a mountain to use it as a dump, it's part of the earth.

Her moral conviction was a source of strength in the face of the impossibility of winning the fight against climate change:

> Why don't I just give up? I just don't think I could...it would feel morally wrong. There have been times when I've done things like hire a car because it's been really really handy, and then I think, 'oh no, look at me, what am I doing?' My morals wouldn't let me do it. Not that I've got much hope...I guess it's my own values about what's right and wrong really.

Carrie's moral framework was founded in compassion for non-human species:

> It's really the idea of having blood on your hands, a violent act of bringing about death. That was my first issue...the whole idea of inflicting death on other creatures who had thoughts and feelings, not exactly like humans do but they definitely have thoughts and feelings, they can be happy, they can be sad, they can feel fear and so on. It doesn't feel right...it's about the pain and suffering.

As ten out of the fifteen green interviewees described a strong relationship with nature, it seems more than a coincidence that the natural world is fundamental to a moral frame of reference. Ken's moral outlook was underpinned by a realization early in childhood that animals:

> ...have equal rights to us in many ways on this planet and I've tried to go through life never killing anything and always having the sort of feeling that with many of these animals, there is some sort of feeling at some level of animals...no worse image I think than someone killing a gorilla and not understanding the impact of that on the whole troupe...I'm a bit of a softie in a way, emotions I witness in a group of animals.

There is evidence elsewhere to support the idea that a relationship with nature opens up the possibility of a felt spiritual connection to the natural world which can establish a pro-environmental orientation and commitment. Writing in his eighties, the eminent eco-theologian and cultural historian, Thomas Berry, for example, recalls a moment when he was eleven years old. He describes the first time he encountered a certain meadow beyond a creek near the as yet unbuilt house he was to move into with his family. The meadow was covered with white lilies that rose above the dense grass:

> A magic moment, this experience gave to my life something that seems to explain my thinking at a more profound level than almost any other experience I can remember. It was not only the lilies. It was the singing of the crickets and the woodlands in the distance and the clouds in the near sky. It was not something conscious that happened just then. I went on about my life as any young person might do.
>
> Perhaps it was not simply that moment that made such a deep impression on me. Perhaps it was a sensitivity that was developed throughout my childhood. Yet as the years pass this moment returns to me, and whenever I think about my basic life attitudes and the whole trend of my mind and the causes to which I have given

> my efforts, I seem to come back to this moment and the impact it has had on my feeling for what is real and worthwhile in life (Berry, 1999, pp.12-13).

He goes on to explain how this early experience was a hugely formative catalyst in the trajectory of his entire adult life. In other words, a predisposition in favour of the environment was established as normative for him at an early age:

> Whatever preserves and enhances this meadow in the natural cycles of its transformation is good; whatever opposes this meadow or negates it is not good. My life orientation is that simple. It is also that pervasive. It applies in economics and political orientation as well as in education and religion (ibid., p.13).

In my own green sample, it was evident that an ethic established through a sense of relationship to nature in childhood also inspired an ethical framework for the future adult development of moral character. This offers a link to empirical evidence which supports a strong correlation between principled moral reasoning and concern for the environment with ecocentrism which reflects an emotional affinity with nature (Karpiak and Baril, 2008). For these respondents, an ethic of care for nature is a core around which later conceptual knowledge and adult reasoning (environmental statistics and scientific arguments) have coalesced, evolving into a complex moral system based on the simple (but not simplistic) equation that Berry describes.

Berry evokes the mystery in nature and its connection to religion as a catalyst in the evolution of an ethic of care for nature. Evernden also refers to these dimensions:

> The experience of radical otherness is the base of all astonishment or awe, all "numinous" experience. It is that shock of recognition that generates the acknowledgement of mystery that we can characterize as religious (Evernden, 1992, p.117).

While a sacred quality of experience is embedded for many individuals in a religious framework, ethicist Margaret Somerville proposes in addition a broader concept of the 'secular sacred' to help find a universal ethical response to pressing world issues which pivot around our relationship to nature, including environmental degradation. Experiencing the secular sacred in nature "is to be found in the complex interaction of knowing ourselves, appreciating our place in the great web of life, and seeing ourselves as part of the earth, the stars, the universe, and the cosmos" (Somerville, 2006, p.56).

The words of Ken, Trudie, Simone and Carol in the green sample very closely approximate Somerville's description of the experience of the sacred as a "primordial sense of amazement", a sense of awe at being alive and the beauty or the world and life around us (ibid., p.59). She distinguishes between an experience of the sacred which is always relational in emphasis (with others in the natural or supernatural world) from a purely aesthetic experience, which although evoking beauty and awe does not necessarily signal a sense of felt mutuality or connectedness (ibid., p.60). An interesting illustration of this point can be made between the words of two of my interviewees:

> I have what I think of as a lot of dialogue with nature. And I also spend a great deal of time just looking at its beauty and experiencing the nourishment of that...in a state of admiration and wonder and talking to what I see and saying how beautiful you are and that kind of thing, in my mind...I started to experience a lot of synchronous experiences with...plants and creatures. (Simone, green)

> Ski-ing is an almost spiritual experience. It's about being in an incredibly beautiful place, the mountains the snow the sun –nothing that you can see that displeases the eye, one of those perfect places in the world...(Simon, non-green)

While Simone's relationship with nature generated an ethic of care which allowed her to make the necessary connections to give up her car in order to avoid further pollution, Simon's aesthetic experience did not enable him to make those connections between environmental concern, flying and the landscape he admired so much. He admitted: "I

don't connect that ski experience I've just related to you with the fact that's its actually going to go, that it's not going to be available in fifty years' time."

According to Somerville, a sense of sacred generates a respect and care for nature and the natural:

> Nature is a vehicle for the sacred. Soil, soul and society are intertwined and complementary. Soil represents a reverential relationship with the natural earth, animals, and plants. Soul is the essential quality of everything – life, air, water, friendship, and so on. And society is our collective cultural reality and identity (Somerville, 2006, pp. 65-66).

The ecological template is clear as Somerville moves from a sense of nature as sacred to an ideological commitment that provides an opportunity for transcendence of individuality, thus making possible sacrifices and suffering in a common cause (ibid., pp.59-60). This suggests that a sense of relationship – or connectivity – with nature can provide the strong foundation of a moral framework, underscoring the assertion that the ideology of ecologism is "the conscience of green politics" (Connelly and Smith, 1999, p.64).

Both the significance of a green self-concept and the formative role of childhood experience of nature as moral foundation for a PEO (and subsequent consistent PEB) have clear implications for the prospects of translating the theory of environmental citizenship into practice. I intend to address these implications in the concluding chapter but there is one remaining aspect of the data analysis to be discussed, linked to a further question. Thogersen has argued that inconsistency – and lack of dissonance – is correlated with a lack of moral significance attached to environmentally responsible behaviour: does it follow that the inconsistency of behaviour among the non-green respondents in my own sample can be explained by them attributing no moral importance to PEB?

From the early analysis of data regarding the dilemma of travel, respondents from both samples revealed a moral dimension to their deliberation. Although I had not expected this, morality has subsequently evolved into a key theme in my analysis both in relation to the PEO of the green respondents and to the moral allusions of the non-green sample.

VI: II A climate of moral ambivalence

The answer is more complex. It was possible to identify the consequences of obscuring (or completely occluding) the moral dimension from mainstream environmentalist discourse: Judy and Breda found it hard to relate recycling, for example, to moral values. They were clear that issues of access to drinking water for all human beings or genetic tampering with nature respectively *were* serious moral concerns but did not connect this to climate change which for most non-green respondents had come to epitomise the environmental agenda.

Yet, I was interested to find in the data from this sample that, without an alternative green self-concept and low consumer identity, more moral *ambivalence* was evident than moral disavowal. I am defining moral ambivalence in this context as simultaneous consciousness of the underlying ethical implications combined with a resistance to acknowledging this awareness, either because of reluctance to take personal responsibility for refusal to make inconvenient lifestyle changes or as a more general reaction to the moral relativity of our postmodern culture.

Various factors led to this observation. The first was the frequent reference to 'shoulds' and 'oughts' that peppered the discourse of non-green interviewees, explicitly contextualizing PEB in a quasi-religious framework. Jim's wish, for example, to avoid too high a level of sacrifice of pleasure in his own life was reflected in his inclination to avoid too fundamentalist a stance in relation to others:

> If we want to win people's hearts and minds, we can't be too puritanical. We're far better off getting the majority of people on board with the concept but having

> a degree of tolerance rather than being so black and white about it that people would say, well, if I'm going to be in the bad camp, I'll be in the bad camp and I won't do anything.

A 'bad' camp implies the existence of a 'good' one. Assessing his own green credentials, Malcolm said "I think of myself in religious terms as fallen but trying..." For Breda to stop committing her two 'sins' of flying and short journeys in the car, she would need "a real conversion and...I can't imagine how that would happen very easily." Ingrid described the revelation of her experience in the supermarket as "epiphanal".

Another observation was the one-dimensional form of the green stereotypes in the data from the non-green sample: there was not a single allusion to the ongoing conflict and compromise that the green respondents themselves described in making ethical decisions about their behaviour. Even if this constituted a positive assumption, it was nevertheless unrealistic because it precluded the possibility of human frailty or doubt in favour of an unquestioning sense of righteousness. This may be a symptom of our desecularised society in which taking any moral stance is seen as unusual, as Simon hinted when he described greens as most likely to be:

> middle class, socially aware people who have a conscience about the way they behave...driven by an ethical commitment to doing what is right not a fashion...not a common temperament.

It was possible to detect a persistent but peripheral awareness among several respondents in this sample that debating whether or not to renounce certain personal comforts and pleasures had moral implications while, at the same time, demonstrating a reluctance to engage with an ethical framework because it would challenge them to change.

Several respondents mentioned two recent TV campaigns against the practice of rearing chickens in batteries. Jim's description of the process of moral ambivalence in himself and others provided a useful insight:

> ...somebody who says 'I probably know about these battery chickens, I know about it but I don't want to know about it, I'm parking that...outside my normal thought process. I should say the majority if they were truthful, would say they already *knew* what the production methods were for battery chickens...but they've pushed it beyond their normal thinking zone, their normal cognisance zone.
>
> *Interviewer: Why do you think they did that?*
>
> Because it was uncomfortable. It was an uncomfortable truth. I think it was the fact that it became visual, and it was actually brought out of their subconscious into their full consciousness by that TV programme. They then found that they probably couldn't go back into denial. It's very interesting and...the impact's been enormous.

I wonder whether a similar process of 'parking' occurs with the ethical dimensions of continuing to consume in the same old ways. Renouncing comfort, convenience, ease and speed is not, after all, attractive in our consumer culture. As Barber writes, there is no false consciousness: "We do actually want what we are allowed to choose privately" (Barber, 2007, p.141).

A corollary of this uncomfortable awareness of the ethical dimension *plus* the knowledge of one's own limitations is an increased sensitivity to feeling judged and found 'guilty'. In acknowledging that a green lifestyle is simultaneously a way of life that demands some sacrifice of comfort and convenience and yet is a *chosen* way of life, it is easy to perceive either real or suspected moral 'superiority' emanating from individuals who have made this particular choice.

Close green encounters thus often provoke resentment. Simon described his brother as "absolutely *rabid* about this, you know, he's got heat pumps in his garden, got solar panels, recycles absolutely everything..." He detailed the extraordinary efforts that his

brother and sister-in-law had made to travel that summer to Finland on public transport and how it simply didn't make sense to him: "there is something holier than thou that comes with environmental issues and...I find it quite irritating." Arguably, fraternal dynamics can exacerbate such irritation but Simon was not alone.

Ingrid expressed a similar irritation. Breda concluded disparagingly that some 'green' people had been "self-righteous all their lives but now they've got a global remit" to preach "where they couldn't have got into a position to preach anything else."

Tom described his experience of being on the receiving end of this dynamic:

> I'm not a missionary, but if the conversation comes up, I start coming out with facts and figures and ways it should be and...some people are just *really* angry that you should be behaving this way...'yeah, well *I'm* not going to do that'.

Related to this phenomenon – in the data from both samples – is a third and broader aspect to moral ambivalence in the form of a perception that it was somehow inappropriate to use a 'moral language', as if morals needed to be kept closeted away from public view.

In the green sample, therefore, respondents were wary of stating that what they believed in was morally right through fear of appearing to others as judgmental. At the same time as holding a deep conviction that they *were* right, they felt unable to openly affirm their own values. Mel, for example, clearly struggled with the moral relativism of postmodern society:

> There's a fine line between doing something for yourself because you think it's the right thing to do for you and doing something because it's the right thing for humanity to do at large I suppose. I think the difference...gets really blurry sometimes. The way I try and think of it, is for me being vegan, for me it's a personal choice and I accept that other people have different beliefs or views -

> I've got no more right to turn round and say to them you shouldn't eat meat as they have to turn round to me and say well, you should.

> Then I always think of the example, if I saw someone say, beating an animal or child on the street, you'd feel inclined to take some sort of action to persuade that person to act in a different way and I suppose they'd be two ends of the spectrum: someone having a preference for something which was a completely personal choice and then someone acting in a way that affects other people...having a moral obligation to intervene...I think environmental issues...are closer to where we need to intervene because it does affect so many others.

Several green interviewees (Carol, Carrie, Ken, Walter, Trudie, Kate, Tom, Jeremy) expressed reluctance to take any position that might be seen as claiming the moral high ground and so avoided challenging others' behaviour, through fear of alienating strangers, friends or family members. An acute sense of her own 'green' shortcomings helped Trudie make a fine distinction:

> Yes, there is a profound belief...not necessarily that I am (right) but what I am doing or how I am living is, or the way I'm trying to live is the only right way...I do believe that what I'm aspiring to, what we aspire to is the only right way.

Moral relativity also affected the non-green respondents in that they too found it difficult to articulate any moral position in relation to current social norms and values. Even though, as I have discussed, a consumerist culture was readily associated with waste, selfishness, greed and lack of care or respect for others, respondents felt constrained from asserting that they believed these developments to be morally unacceptable. Similarly, although many of the social problems associated with a market society were clearly unpalatable, many struggled in the interviews to voice their deeply felt convictions that certain moral standards (or lack of them) were *wrong*.

Cultural toleration of all opinions, rights and choices and individual autonomy seemed to have the effect of making moral distinctions between right or wrong in our desecularised society seem at best old-fashioned (Breda, Nigel) and at worst, an affront to liberty (Judy, Sally, Jim).

Sally debated with herself about whether she thought selfishness was wrong because she accepted everyone had to have 'freedom to choose':

> ...this country in particular has got so everything's got to be politically correct and...you can't tell anybody what to do...we're trying to smooth the ground for everybody which is impossible really.

Breda and Janice complained about being unable to challenge any 'wrong' behaviour. Judy's own ambivalence in openly declaring 'right' from 'wrong' also reflected social changes:

> ...people have discarded...overall ethics...because with legislation there's a safety net...I think we've gone a long way down that route, to do with general standards of behaviour, they are not upheld...but you've got to stand against something to show people where the line is.

A wider dissonance?

This leads me to consider a more nuanced perception of what attributing moral importance to PEB actually entails. Thogersen contends that lack of moral importance correlates with inconsistency of behaviour, allowing high levels of individual cognitive dissonance to be endured. If moral ambivalence can be allowed as a concept, it becomes possible to discern a more complex picture.

Despite the fact that mainstream discourse isolates PEB from its social or ethical context and despite the fact, as Thogersen himself writes, that most research and attempts to

change consumer behaviour focus on isolated habits or groups of habits rather than targeting lifestyle changes, what appears in this descriptive data suggests a different reality. Many non-green respondents did not subscribe to this fragmented version but spontaneously showed more inclination towards the wider, comprehensive approach demanded of the theoretical environmental citizen in that they spontaneously contextualised environmental 'bads' within other social 'bads'.

Lack of care for the environment (nature) was associated with proliferation of litter, vandalism, waste and a generalised lack of respect for common places. Indifference to environmental concern was not seen as an isolated problem but symptomatic of a systemic indifference to suffering, one of the many casualties of what was seen as the prevailing social ethos of selfishness and greed, the lure of instant gratification and obsession with external image. The discourse of these respondents, as in Hobson's research, reflected perennial moral questions of "equality, privilege and justice" (Hobson, 2002, p.115).

Environmental problems were inextricably linked to social problems that raise questions about how, if at all, can positive social change be achieved? Who is responsible? PEB, in ethical isolation, appeared to have little relevance and therefore offered no solution to wider pressing social and political issues that respondents witnessed around them on a national and global scale. The point has been made that perceptions of climate change are defined by "conceptualizations of agency, responsibility and trust" and that action is likely to be taken only when individuals feel they can and should make a difference (Lorenzoni and Pidgeon, 2006 p.88). The additional point I wish to make here is that helplessness in relation to a single phenomenon is amplified even further if considered within a wider social context.

Feelings of sadness, loss, fear, confusion and even hopelessness were evident in many respondents. Most expressed a sense of alienation (non-green as well as green) from contemporary culture, expressing a preference for 'traditional' values associated with simplicity; buying what you need, not what you want; doing without; making do;

repairing; valuing craftsmanship and valuing things; valuing depth, honesty and unselfishness; valuing respect for others and a sense of community; valuing relationship and living in harmony with nature.

Whereas academic discussion and debate may point to overall trends of contemporary consumer culture, the implications – on the ground, so to speak – in the minutiae of daily life are overlooked in their effect. One small instance, described by Mary, was a connection between a preference for ready-made meals and longer working long with lack of interest and participation in community events: all this has contributed to what she called "a total change in the way of life."

Conclusion

In the face of profound and widespread change and in the absence of an overt moral imperative in relation to environmental problems in general and climate change in particular, it seems that citizens are left to negotiate their own unresolved value conflicts and moral dilemmas around many personal choices, including those related to PEB. The non-greens appear to have no inner resources to deal with wider dissonance in the face of a general mistrust in external authorities, basic unwillingness to make sacrifices and a sense of futility of individual action.

Green respondents, in contrast, have demonstrated a capacity for voluntarily self-imposed duty linked essentially with an internally coherent moral framework – or PEO – in which PEB is but one part of a wider moral perspective embracing not only environmental, but social and political problems in the world today. The ethical framework among the green respondents appears inextricably linked to a morally consonant green self-concept that, for the majority, was inspired by formative childhood experiences of nature.

Perceived volitional control affects the level of internal dissonance and this could help explain how green respondents could contain moral dilemmas: faced with a situation they had no control over, any dissonance caused by inconsistent behaviour was mitigated.

Perhaps the interaction of psycho-social factors also impacts on perceived volitional control. The cumulative pressure of government inadequacy, the dominance of economic values, the power of consumer culture, the detrimental effect of individualism and the knowledge that the consumer self-concept of the future generation is already well-established may also have a considerable impact on individual motivation. Certainly, feelings of helplessness and futility were expressed by non-green respondents in terms of their own efforts in relation to both the enormity of the environmental agenda and the lack of institutional and political support and incentives.

Although Festinger's theory is related to cognitive dissonance within individuals, perhaps there are grounds for considering the existence of a wider experiential dissonance between official encouragement to sustainable goals on one hand and the many layers of discouragement and contradiction on the other. Bluhdorn and Welsh have challenged fellow academics to explain the "pathological" refusal to acknowledge that neo-liberal capitalist principles are ecologically, socially, politically and culturally unsustainable and destructive (Bluhdorn and Welsh, 2007, p.186), suggesting an irreconcilable divide between the two discourses. The level of this wider dissonance could outweigh or certainly impact on any individual dissonance caused by personal behavioural inconsistencies, in other words, weakening motivation to adopt PEB.

In this sense cumulative dissonance constitutes a barrier to PEB, evoking again the distinction between PEB and PEO. Targeting PEB – as an ethically, socially, ecologically and politically decontextualised strategy – could risk eliciting a moral dissonance which actually lowers motivation. The PEO, on the other hand, demonstrated among the green respondents in this sample, provided a framework for personally consistent behaviour and a moral mainstay to help manage any dissonance. The experience of moral dissonance in the absence of moral fortitude is likely to act as a barrier to motivation.

CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSIONS

My own research questions arose initially out of the value-action gap between pro-environmental concern and actual practice with a view to determining to what extent consumerist culture could be said to undermine attempts to encourage individuals to more consistent sustainable behavioural practices. How are individual attitudes and beliefs about environmental problems and the need for a more sustainable lifestyle influenced by consumer culture? Do individuals experience any tensions between pro-environmental and consumerist values and if so, how do they respond?

In summary, my study aimed to investigate whether and to what extent contemporary consumerism constitutes a psycho-social barrier to PEB: how does the interaction between personal, social and political factors contribute to the value-action gap described in the empirical literature? A key aspect of this study has been a comparative line of enquiry: if a conflict between consumer and environmental values constitutes any kind of barrier to pro-environmental practice, how does one explain the existence and motivation of individuals who already live a sustainable lifestyle? Linked to this has been an underlying interrogation of the theory of environmental citizenship: do the green individuals in the sample match the requirements of green citizenship and if so, what accounts for their evolution into green citizens?

The previous four chapters have presented the data from two comparative samples – green and non-green interviewees – in relation to evaluating the role of consumerism as a barrier to motivation towards PEB as well as identifying factors which could account for the motivation of existing green citizens within contemporary consumer culture.

In the first of these chapters, consistency of pro-environmental practice was found to differ between the non-green and green samples: while the non-greens recycled, they baulked at behaviours which they felt would entail more personal inconvenience or discomfort, such as foregoing the use of cars or planes as means of transport. The green respondents, in contrast, believed reducing flying and driving were key strategies to combat the effects of climate change: even if they did drive or fly, it was only after

serious moral deliberation. These individuals demonstrated an awareness of the existence of ongoing personal conflict between the demands of family, work and pleasure on one hand and the common environmental good on the other. In addition, they accepted that contingent on their chosen pro-environmental commitment would be the ever-present need to consider a measure of sacrifice or personal cost.

These respondents were capable of voluntary, self-imposed restriction, a restriction that, across both samples, was recognised as clearly divergent from mainstream cultural norms which endorse the expectation of comfort and convenience as a *sine qua non* of modern living. For all but one green respondent, a link between the capacity for sacrifice and green identity was consonant with a self-concept which was established early on in life and, for the majority, had been intrinsically connected to the experience of nature as children.

Analysis of their narratives in Chapter Four led to a distinction between pro-environmental behaviour (PEB) and pro-environmental orientation (PEO), the latter describing a general worldview or value orientation whereas the former refers more narrowly to recycling and specific energy saving measures. For the green respondents, PEB was one consistent manifestation of a wider value framework or pro-environmental orientation (PEO) centered on ecological principles which were extended, by implication, to social and political problems: in contrast, PEB was confined to a peripheral status of potential energy saving measures within the lifestyles of the non-green interviewees.

In the following chapter, I then evaluated the impact of social, cultural influences and found little difference between the two samples in terms of orientation to consumer culture, identifying a commonly expressed wish to create personal distance from a self-concept as a consumer. Respondents in both samples indicated that the 'mindless consumer' stereotype was somehow morally repugnant to their own self-concepts.

Similarly, both samples demonstrated a high degree of reflexivity about the tensions between the incongruities of the broader social context. These included the divergence between environmental and economic values within mainstream consumer culture and

also experience in everyday life of prevalent consumer values and norms which are antithetical to environmental values. A sense of political disengagement emerged in both samples in response to perceived lack of genuine leadership in general and to the environmental agenda in particular. Respondents also expressed similar concerns about the effects of the values of consumer culture on the younger generation of growing consumers; finally, sadness at the loss of traditional values and a sense of personal alienation from cultural norms came to light in both groups.

The implicit social, political and ethical dimensions which emerged in the discourse of the non-green sample, despite the tendency of the mainstream discourse of environmentalism to marginalize such dimensions of the environmental agenda, led me to return in Chapter Six to the psycho-social domain. I wanted to understand the function of a PEO in relation to the existence of a green self-concept, with particular reference to its role in maintaining a sense of moral coherence.

From the analysis of the green respondents, only one individual closely matched the rational framework of environmental citizenship in that he had consciously deliberated about his consumerist lifestyle and decided to make a radical change in favour of a more sustainable way of living. For the majority, the seeds of a green identity were sown in childhood, the key factor being a sense of relationship or at least a deep valuing of the natural environment, confirming other research (Chawla, 1999; Schultz, 2002; Dutcher *et al.*, 2007). From an early stage in life, these seeds had been nourished by a variety of additional influences – formal and informal education, chance encounters, indirect and direct experiences of harm to natural resources or animals – and had subsequently evolved into a green self-concept and holistic life-orientation.

Applying the principles of cognitive dissonance theory, a PEO appeared to be fundamental to a framework of moral coherence into which pro-environmental practice was integrated, allowing for behavioural consistency among the green sample. Where dissonance occurred in response to individuals' own actions, perceived lack of volitional control appeared to be a mitigating factor. Where volitional control did exist, I suggested

that a capacity to withstand dissonance was founded in the PEO which was integral to a green self-concept, strong enough to withstand behavioural discrepancies.

I also suggested that perceived volitional control, as a concept, be extended beyond individual actions to include a wider framework: environmental problems were perceived and experienced by both samples within a wider social, political and ethical context. Whereas the non-green individuals had no alternative self-concept or clear moral framework to help maintain consistency in their own PEB, the greens were able to draw on a PEO to impose voluntary restraints on their own desires in favour of the common environmental good, in other words, to fulfil the obligations demanded of being an environmental citizen. What then are the implications for realising environmental citizenship in the wider population?

Nature and environmental citizenship

Among my own respondents, the emergence of a green ethic appeared to be linked to a sense of relationship to nature which underpinned their social and political outlook, very much aligned to ecology, an ideology that has been theoretically sidelined in the literature as impractical on account of its radical eco-centric purview and objectives (Dobson, 2000; Barry, 1999). A relationship with nature is impractical in other ways: current circumstances of childhood militate against the kinds of experiences of nature referred to by my (now-adult) green respondents. It is generally acknowledged that children today do not have the same access to the natural environment as previous generations of children through fear for their safety, over-zealous precautions against mishap and also the simple lack of green spaces – certainly in the UK – which are already at a premium as a consequence of spreading urbanization.

Recognition that exposure to the natural environment is necessary for children has led to recent initiatives such as Landscapes for Learning (www.ltl.org.uk), designed to foster and promote fresh air and exercise in the learning environment. However, it is hard to

imagine this might lead to an encounter with a 'wild otherness' or mystical experience of nature described by my green respondents.

It is perhaps necessary to recall here the potential relevance of a relationship with nature to environmental citizenship. Its significance goes beyond mere *contact* with nature although this is certainly an important factor. Macnaghten's research, for example, indicated that framing the environmental agenda within the context of personal hobbies and an already-established connection to 'nature' – in that instance, beekeepers, anglers and outdoor sports enthusiasts – increased the relevance of the environmental agenda by bringing the issues closer to home (Macnaghten, 2002).

I have already detailed empirical findings that perceptions of separateness from nature reduce biospheric concern (Schultz, 2000; 2002) which is fundamental to pro-environmental motivation (de Groot and Steg, 2008). A crucial factor in motivation to PEB has also been established as care: such care is elicited by a relationship with nature (Geller, 1995; Maio and Olson, 1998; Kals *et al.*, 1999; Dobson, 2003; Barry, 2006; Lorenzoni *et al.*, 2007; Karpiak and Baril, 2008). In my own study, connectedness to nature has been shown to be key to the formation of a green ethic in many of the green respondents, underlying their commitment, not only to address environmental unsustainability but to the achievement of a more sustainable society: in other words, to becoming a fully fledged green citizen.

Even if the formative significance of childhood experience of nature is no longer feasible, how can obligations of citizenship be rekindled in adults who are politically disengaged? "Just as citizenship can be learned and therefore needs to be taught or encouraged, it can also be forgotten" (Barry, 2006, p.27). Barry acknowledges that for the majority of individuals in the Western world (as consumers) "it is the private not the public/political sphere where their energies are spent" (ibid., p.37) and argues for compulsory sustainability service which would oblige every citizen to engage in some sustainability activity, ranging from cleaning up polluted areas to working on allotments to labouring on a community farm (ibid., pp.29-32).

The goal of sustainability service is to help the would-be green citizen locate ecological problems within wider social and political issues, fulfilling the principles of resistance citizenship. Sustainability service would certainly enable contact with nature which, from my sample, appears to be a necessary condition for green citizenship. But is this a sufficient condition? Although it is possible that direct contact with the earth can increase familiarity and awareness of what the environment (and consequently environmental degradation) actually means, along the lines of Macnaghten's research, there is no automatic link to the ethic of care necessary for the establishment of a PEO which was identified as functioning as a moral mainstay in resolving conflicts about commitment to PEB in favour of the greater good.

How to establish a PEO poses a separate question from how do we increase consistency of PEB? Solutions to environmental problems can be addressed to some extent by individual lifestyle changes but social change remains obscured. While the Global Action Plan (GAP), for example, which is predicated on principles of both sustainability and addressing inequality may successfully increase PEB within a community context for low-income families, it falls short of challenging social structures (Hargreaves et al., 2008).

Similarly, various voluntary lifestyle changes such as living in sustainable communities, setting up self-sufficient homes or establishing transition towns all share an approach which addresses the need to live with fewer resources and less dependency on external factors with the overall aim of reducing one's carbon footprint but without demanding a critical awareness of the non-environmental causes and effects of unsustainable development. Even though a life of voluntary simplicity can lead to less identification with material possessions and a more spiritual dimension to existence (Elgin,1981), again, the political dimension of citizenship is missing.

Compliance v. conscience

A second problem is that for a scheme like sustainability service to work effectively – as Barry acknowledges – there is a need for the presence of a viable government administrative infrastructure. This leads to what appears to be an insurmountable barrier to the theory of environmental citizenship in current circumstances. A citizen-state partnership was a key aspect of the pragmatic turn in green political theory, from which the concept of environmental citizenship emerged. The government's role is acknowledged as necessary both from a practical, legal and financial infrastructural perspective (de Geus, 2003; Dobson, 2003) and, by implication, through its vital educative role "in shaping the institutional, social, cultural and ethical context within which individual behaviour is negotiated" (Jackson and Michaelis, 2003, p.10; Connelly, 2006).

How far, though, is it possible to maintain the legitimacy of the assumption of a collaborative partnership between citizen and government in the quest to achieve sustainable goals as *ethical* goals? In a market 'society' which privileges monetary value over any other kind of value, there appears to be little fertile ground for nurturing moral deliberation about any public good, let alone the environment. In addition, given the dominant politico-economic conception of sustainability, it is extremely unlikely that individuals will be encouraged to actually reduce consumption or engage in protest directed towards changing unequal structures of political and economic power.

The current policy paradigm is social marketing (McKenzie-Mohr and Smith, 1999) which aims to achieve sustainable consumption by marketing the concept as a more desirable lifestyle choice, not by raising awareness of the common good. Social marketing strategies entail segmentation of consumers with specific targeting of different socio-economic groups as outlined in detail, for example, in a recent Defra report, *A Framework for Pro-Environmental Behaviours* (DEFRA, 2008 pp.41-46).

This paradigm exemplifies the divergence between the actual government-citizen relationship and the theoretical partnership in the academic green political literature. It is illustrated by the following extract from an Ipsos-MORI report which provides data for public policy makers. After identifying the need to reduce flying as a particular point of tension between citizen and consumer "personas" (Downing and Ballantyne, 2007, p.43), the ideal resolution of the conflict is portrayed as the citizen who can 'have it all', in other words, who can continue to fulfil individual desires for personal mobility and foreign travel while simultaneously 'acknowledging' the negative environmental impacts (ibid.). Recommendations to this end include:

> a combination of supply side measures – including technological advances in the efficiency of aircraft – along side social marketing and behaviour change tools to encourage the development of either "eco-chic" or "eco conscious" behaviours. Here, the behaviour itself remains *intact* but efforts are made to mitigate negative impacts such as voluntary carbon offsets or choosing an environmentally conscious travel company or airline..." (ibid., italics added)

Even if "an environmentally conscious airline" turns out not to be an oxymoron, it would appear that ethical issues in relation to sustainable lifestyles have not so much been marginalised, as completely airbrushed out of the picture. Whereas policy inclination to achieve problematic behavioural change may currently favour the compliance of 'the citizen who can have it all', both theoretical environmental citizens and, interestingly, the real green citizens in my sample, respond from a perspective of conscience.

Does the distinction between PEB and PEO reflect the distinction between the respective roles of consumer and citizen? If so, what is the likelihood of encouraging the individual to reflect on the requisite ethical implications of consumer behaviour in order to prioritise voluntarily the collective good over self-interest, when mainstream environmental discourse excludes any reference to ethics and in the face of the general decline in citizenship?

We have seen that privileging individualisation means a corresponding undervaluing or even an eclipsing of values of collective action, concern for the public good, community building and the needs of current or future 'others', all essentially associated with democratic citizenship. What are the prospects for green citizenship if these very values are ceded to the personal concerns and responsibility of individuals with the reassurance that consumer choice will save the planet *without* experiencing a conflict of conscience (Bauman, 2007; Maniates, 2002)?

Without a sense of relationship to nature that appears to have been significant for many of my own respondents, how can 'conscience' be encouraged? How are the virtues necessary to make sacrifices to be inculcated in the absence of a citizen-state partnership? Before addressing these last two questions, I would like to reiterate my observation from the data that in the absence of a public moral imperative, and without an established green *alternative* self-concept, non-green respondents did not demonstrate moral disavowal but moral ambivalence in relation to PEB.

This is similar to a phenomenon that Evans observed among the discourse of green participants: he describes the spontaneous emergence of a 'moral economy' of sustainable consumption in which respondents positioned themselves individually between self-interest and personal hedonism at one end and ideas of sacrifice and ethical obligations at the other (Evans, 2008, p.12). Although my own green respondents evinced a similar framework, this phenomenon appeared in the interviews with nearly all the non-green sample as well.

This study has revealed a more complex consumer profile than the "self-interested utility maximiser assumed in the rational choice literature" (Connelly, 2006, p.69), the innately competitive aspirer to status goods (Frank, 1999), the constantly dissatisfied and discontented consumer (Kasser, 1999; Schor, 1999) or even the unreflexive compulsive victim of neo-liberal consumerism (Barber, 2007, Bauman, 2007). Among my non-green respondents, I interpreted the existence of a peripheral awareness of an ethical dimension

to PEB, despite the apparent reluctance to bring it to the forefront for fear of having to take responsibility for making actual lifestyle changes as a consequence.

Taking responsibility means facing a conflict and there is little account in any of literature of the personal conflict that a citizen might experience in the consideration of giving up his or her perceived "self-dictated collective right to pursue material well-being"(de Geus, 2003, p.175). This is not simply a conflict between 'right' and wrong' or between 'self' and others' but made more complex by what is actually at stake. However, without a sense of relationship to nature, we have no 'greenprint': no moral framework with which to weigh up what we do or do not value in regard to the natural environment. In truth, we are increasingly detached from anything approximating a 'natural' environment. As Schultz writes:

> We are all part of nature. We are born in nature; our bodies are formed of nature; we live by the rules of nature. As individuals, we are citizens of the natural world; as societies, we are bound by the resources of the environment; as a species, our survival depends on an ecological balance with nature. Yet, as individuals, societies, and as a species, we spend our lives trying to escape from nature (Schultz, 2002, p.61).

In circumstances of decreasing contact with nature, finding a new ethical commitment or greenprint at least demands a forum in which to formulate it together.

The need for deliberation

Apart from the assumption of a citizen-state partnership, a further consensus in the theoretical literature is that one essential facilitative component in raising consciousness about the rights and responsibilities of green citizenship and achieving the requisite moral transformation is the opportunity to deliberate and exchange opposing viewpoints. Such opportunities are believed necessary for individuals to develop the capacity for critical

reflection of the issues involved and thereby arrive at a place of personal commitment (Smith, 2003).

Szerszynski calls this process 'wayfinding' and proposes participation in an ongoing process of deliberation to raise awareness about what it actually means to sustain the common environmental good (Szerszynski, 2006, p.91). Dobson's consideration of the asymmetrical relations of justice and Barry's insistence on actively challenging inequities also imply the need for a deliberative space to facilitate reflection on such issues. Connelly adds that such spaces would encourage people "to progress from internally motivated ecological thoughtfulness to action", arguing that "the virtue of rational deliberation...is essential to the proper formulation and understanding of our eco-duties" (Connelly, 2006, p.66).

The plea for public deliberation in relation to environmental issues is not a new one. John O'Neill writes that deliberation introduces a further virtue of 'publicness' which ensures one can escape "not just the narrowness of partial judgment but also of private interests" and is therefore crucial to democratic practice (O'Neill, 2006, p.272). We need to bring conflicts of interest into the open and need "'dissensus' conferences as much as consensus conferences" in order to debate contesting claims and find authentic resolution (O'Neill, 2006, p.276).

Spaces for deliberation would provide for consciousness-raising about sustainability issues as a preparatory process: aspiring environmental citizens would be given the opportunity to reflect, to learn and to listen to others as they evaluated their responses and conflicting values in relation to the threats posed by environmental degradation and unsustainable consumption. In reality, however, such opportunities for deliberation remain, at best, extremely limited.

In its own small way, my own research appears to affirm the significance of deliberation: simply erasing ethics from the public discourse does not mean that they have been erased from the awareness of citizens themselves. A ninety-minute interview provided each of

my interviewees with a unique opportunity to deliberate on their attitudes and feelings to PEB and the environmental agenda. Several respondents were able to make connections they had not made before: between specific behavioural tasks, environmental resources, nature, value change in wider society and a broader ethical framework. New insights allowed for the articulation of previously implicit values which is precisely what deliberation could offer as a function of democratic engagement:

> ...the formation and articulation of values, and in policy formulation and implementation – moving beyond prescribed responses to predefined problems and far removed from the quest for passive compliance with technological imperatives (Owens, 2000, pp.1144-5).

In addition, although the green respondents may have been already aware of these connections, they were able through their interviews to make more sense of their own motivation by articulating their personal green narratives and affirming the strength of their moral commitment.

The literature on environmental citizenship is inspirational in pinpointing the ethical foundation of PEB and in recognizing the *potential* for change in citizenship to address the ethical dimensions of a wide range of social and political problems, including the environment, currently missing from the wider forum on sustainable consumption. However, citizens need to become familiar with the dimensions of the conflict and especially, the social and economic disbenefits of past, continuing and future unsustainable development, if they are to find a new environmental ethic. Connelly suggests that we all have our "velleities" which he defines as desires to behave in environmentally sensitive ways which are just "too small to be acted on" (Connelly, 2006, p.68): perhaps spaces and opportunities for deliberation could help transform such velleities into virtues.

I have tried to show that commercial imperatives together with the erosion of democratic citizenship constitute a formidable but generally under-acknowledged barrier to finding

an environmental ethic. Bluhdorn and Welsh have argued that the time for academic debates about sustainability is over and instead, we should be researching the politics of *un*sustainability and be asking ourselves "by what mechanisms are advanced consumer democracies sustaining simultaneous discourses of radical change and uncompromising defence? Why are both discourses being sustained at the same time and who benefits" (Bluhdorn and Welsh, 2007, p.191)? They challenge fellow academics to answer a fundamental and crucial question: how is it that we stay in denial?

It is likely that aspects of this denial are part of the surrounding dissonance to which ordinary citizens are exposed every day of their lives. Denial assumes prior knowledge that is then suppressed and applies at institutional as well as personal levels compounded by public distrust of the competence or impartiality of regulatory frameworks (Owens, 2000, p.1142) and expert institutions (Macnaghten, 2003, p.68). Unsurprisingly citizens continue to muddle along the best they can: without an ethical imperative, their own denial can continue, and with it an abiding sense of powerlessness (ibid., p.80) .

On the other hand, within a deliberative forum, citizens would have an opportunity "to question the institutional context in which people's preferences are formed" (Owens, 2000, p.1146) and also to challenge the unconscious nature of consumerist ideology. We have seen in the literature how this ideology is constantly reinforced at a sub-conscious level by advertising strategies which adds another argument for deliberation: only in this way can these elements be brought into a level of consciousness that can then be addressed in the light of day.

A final argument for deliberation is that the emotional dimensions could be included. An ethic of care shifts the focus from rights to responsibilities and also allows for a different way of knowing. Although reason is not irrelevant, we need other, non-rational ways of knowing as well if we are to find a language of conscience (Somerville, 2007). In reality, we are engaged in far more than a rational or political discourse: it is no exaggeration to assume that whether or not we can achieve sustainable goals raises ultimate issues of life or death.

The danger and risk to such fundamental elements as earth, water and air and to living creatures and plants and spaces that represent a whole lifetime of meaning understandably evoke sadness, fear and loss. In 1972, psychoanalyst Harold Searles wrote, concerning the global ecological crisis, that:

> man is hampered in his meeting of this environmental crisis by a severe and pervasive apathy which is largely based upon feelings and attitudes of which he is unconscious (Searles, quoted in Weber Nicholsen, 2002, p.134).

This reference to the deepest layer of what might intervene between interest and action offers a glimpse of the complexity of our relationship to nature. Environmental destruction represents "a trauma...that will last an indeterminate period, potentially a life time, a trauma that raises the possibility of the end of ordinary life as such", potentially the end of the world as we know it (ibid., p.133).

Fears and threats of imminent catastrophe fuel much of the sensationalist media on climate change but in this instance, emotions are elicited without giving individuals a chance to assimilate or distinguish between virtual reality and genuine possibilities, making it easier to switch off in pessimism or even cynicism. Pessimism in a risk society, as Beck writes, is more difficult because it is more uncomfortable:

> Cynicism about progress allows one to live comfortably once again. It lays down the burden of defending a now unstoppable naïve industrialism, or of taking up arms against it. One can recline at one's ease, or dance on the rim of the volcano; cynicism lends the post-modern consumerist rush that touch of absurdity, the frisson of panic (Beck, 1995, p.66).

The destruction and pollution of the natural world is in itself sufficient to evoke strong feeling and all the while, despite the rhetoric, business is going on as usual. It is hard to disagree with Teresa Brennan that:

> to talk vaguely of "preserving the environment" while abetting globalization is to foster the very insanity at issue...destroying the conditions under which homo sapiens can reproduce is even more so (Brennan, 2003, p.17).

What is even more significant is that despite the existence of ecological fear, empirical findings repeatedly confirm that self-centered fear is less influential in terms of PEB than might be expected (Kals and Maes, 2002, p.108) A far more powerful influence is moral motivation, defined as moral emotions and cognitions which applies to behaviours directed towards protecting as well as endangering the environment. Endangering behaviour is often justified using moral arguments, for example, resentment at loss of individual freedoms, economic welfare or the neglect of competing ideological interests (ibid., p.115). Attributions of responsibility for this phenomenon also elicit strong emotions of injustice and indignation which are all part of a moral perspective. Alongside affinity with nature, such emotions have been found to be powerful predictors of sustainable behaviour (Kals and Maes, 2002; Degenhardt, 2002). Deliberation would not only facilitate the articulation of these feelings and release the emotional momentum required for personal commitment: it would give voice to those citizens whose intuitive sense of an ethical framework for these issues currently has no means of expression.

I find it of significance that the green citizens in my sample were able to act independently of the state: despite the contradictions of values, the inadequacy of the government and the lack of public moral imperative, their voluntary commitment was rooted in care. The environmental crisis, as Grove-White and Szerszynski remind us, is a deeply human crisis and cannot be reduced to a set of technical issues: an environmental ethic must "involve people at the level of their deepest personal commitments" (Grove-White and Szerszynski, 1992, p.286). I believe these respondents demonstrated this quality of commitment.

If connectivity with nature is not feasible in the formation of future green citizens, the relevance and importance of environmental citizenship as a theoretical framework for

finding this new ethic remains. The research interviews provided an opportunity for just the kind of soul-searching and questioning and exploration of the ethical and thereby socio-political dimension of PEB that the theory of environmental citizenship proposes.

Clearly, this does *not* fit the needs of the current political and economic leadership which represents an impasse for which I have no answer. Looking beyond this impasse, one can look to current strategies of professional organisations within the environmental movement and how they might reconsider their approach. Instead of engaging primarily with government through lobbying and confining citizen activity to 'cheque-book participation' (Maloney,1999), these groups might direct their energies and funds towards more counter-cultural strategies of opening up opportunities and spaces for deliberation among the general public.

This research study has been clearly limited by sample size. Although my data is only descriptive in character, it need not be less valuable than quantitative data. One can assume that the respondents in my sample were not unique: they did not reflect the extremes of either radical green or consumer lifestyles and some of my concepts and the interrelationships between variables could well be applied more generally to the wider population.

These individuals represented groups who were both towards the middle of the spectrum – 'on the cusp'– whose actual carbon calculation scores were not hugely disparate. The relatively slight disparity of PEB contrasts with the much larger psycho-social distance, reflecting the differences between PEB and a PEO.

Despite the acknowledged limitations of qualitative research, I believe that this psycho-social focus has revealed a more nuanced portrait of the motivational influences of both green and ordinary citizens than would have been possible in quantitative research. Concepts such as dissonance, love of nature, alienation, congruence, integrity or powerlessness cannot be measured numerically but are nevertheless real and can be both specifically discerned and recorded. This study has also underlined the significance of a

generally overlooked dimension: the interactive role of personal, social and political factors affecting motivation to pro-environmental practice.

Without the opportunity for deliberation, I wonder if the wider dissonance will not continue to instill a sense of helplessness and hopelessness which inevitably mediate between concern, intention and behaviour. If the theory of environmental citizenship is to be more than an interesting contribution to the environmental debate, opportunities must be provided in practice for citizens to make their own connections, to contextualise environmental issues within "everyday life and struggles as a starting point for collective action"(Macnaghten, 2003. p.68).

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview schedule guide A (Greens)

Reasons for change

Can you describe some of the key factors in your decision to change your way of life
When did it begin? Gradual? Epiphany? Decisive moments?

Gathering information

Did you read or research any environmental issues?
Did you talk to others? With whom? Informal discussion or consultation? Did you actively seek information? What format?
Did you attend meetings/conferences?
Do you think you have enough actual information or was/is your decision based on other factors?

Making the decision

Was there a period when you experienced any internal conflict?
Did you experience conflict with others?
Was it difficult to break certain habits?
Do you think certain personal characteristics are more suited to this kind of commitment?
Are you sometimes surprised by your current lifestyle or does this fit with the kind of person you see yourself to be? Is there anything in the past you can connect to your current commitment and beliefs?
Was there a period when you felt a discrepancy between what you believed or felt and wanted to do and your actual behaviour? Is there now?

Difficulties

Do you still experience conflicts or doubts?
What has been the most dispiriting/difficult aspect of changing your way of life?
What is currently the most difficult aspect?
Are there trade-offs?
How do you feel about your way of life being seen as eccentric/abnormal?
Have you felt isolated?
Do you ever feel isolated? Superior?
Is there competition among 'greens'? Rivalry?
What are the disadvantages/advantages of your chosen lifestyle?
Do you think your lifestyle has a moral /ethical dimension?
Does your own choice of lifestyle give you have a sense of personal fulfilment?
Do you ever 'splurge'/break out?

Values

Which values are important to you?
What are your priorities in life?
What values are you expressing when you consciously choose to go against the norm?
Is equality important? Community?
What does 'quality of life' mean to you?
Is being green a political/ social/economic/ or personal commitment?

The bigger picture

What do you believe to be pressing issues/environmental concerns?
Did the wider implications affect your decision to change? i.e. health/pollution/global warming Or was/is it more a personal thing?
Are you aware of wider political implications of your actions?
Do you sometimes feel powerless/hopeless about the wider situation?
How do you believe your own commitment fits into the bigger picture?
Do you feel more powerful/empowered living in the way you do?
Do you believe your behaviour makes a difference?
Does this matter? If so why?

Consumer ideology

Are you aware of the dictates /values of consumerism?
How do you deal with them?
How important is image to you?
Are you aware of pressures to consume? Ads? Media? Status?
If so, how do you manage this?
What do you buy? Not buy?
Do you go without? Sacrifice? Choose inconvenience?
Are you aware of social pressure to conform?
Political pressures?
How do you deal with these?

Others

Why do you think others aren't doing the same as you?
What qualities do you believe are needed for someone to change entrenched consumption habits?
How would you suggest changing people's behaviour?
Is it only a matter of sticks and carrots?
Can you think of any aspects of your life that make it easier for you to adopt a 'greener' lifestyle than it might be for others?
Do you have children?
(If no) Do you imagine you would find it harder to maintain your lifestyle if you did?

Appendix II: Interview schedule guide B (Non-greens)

Response to calculation of footprint

Are you surprised/shocked/indifferent/encouraged?
Is it likely you would consider changing your behaviour in any way to reduce your footprint after this exercise? Are you aware of any barriers to making changes?

Environmental problems

Are you aware of the need for nations to adopt a more sustainable life style?
Is climate change something you take seriously?
Do you believe that reducing our carbon footprint is important?
What do you consider to be environmental or ecological values?
What qualities/personal characteristics do you associate with being 'green'?
What do you think enables some people to be more green than others?
Do you think being a 'green consumer' – eg hybrid car/eco-light bulbs etc. is the solution?

Awareness of consumer ideology/pressures

Are you conscious of pressure to consume?
Do you consider yourself materialistic – (1-100?)
Do you ever make a purchase because of what it will 'say' about you?
Are you aware of having to maintain an image? How do you feel about this?
Do you ever go out to shop for the sake of it?
Do you buy things you don't really want/can't really afford?
When you buy something, do you consider the labour conditions under which the item was manufactured/ air miles involved in freight? If not, why not?

Consumer values
How do you feel about waste? The so-called 'throw-away'society?
Are you aware of social changes in the past twenty or so years? If so, in what contexts?
Do you think individual rights matter more than the community?
Do you live in the kind of society that you like?
Are you aware of social inequality around you?
Why do you believe poverty exists in this country/ other parts of the world?
Does the affluence of some countries make others poorer?
Would you/do you ever consider consuming less/ doing without a car/shopping less frequently?
How does the image of 'making-do' strike you?
Who do you trust?
Do you think it's safe to be vulnerable in this society?
What behaviour is encouraged by society today? What behaviour is discouraged?
What does quality of life mean to you?

Appendix III: Individual Carbon Footprint Calculation

Your contribution to climate change

What is the climate impact of your lifestyle?
How could you reduce your greenhouse gas emissions?
This sheet is divided into parts looking at:
1) transport; 2) energy in your home; 3) food;
4) materials and waste; 5) everything else.
We will calculate emissions in kg of CO2-equivalent gases.
Some activities emit gases (e.g. methane, nitrous oxide)
which have much higher impact per kg than CO2.
The sheet is not precise but a calculator would help!
It may not fit your lifestyle perfectly so please do be creative and make guesses – but be honest with yourself!

1. TRANSPORT
Accounts for energy use, non-CO2 exhaust emissions, emissions in car manufacture.

a) If you are a regular car driver please start with an annual score of:
For typical drivers (8,500 miles/year in a petrol car with average fuel consumption of 8.5 litres/100 km)..... 3500kg
For high mileage drivers (15,000 miles)..... 6200kg
For very low mileage drivers (2,000 miles/year)..... 830kg
If most of your trips are below 3 miles **add 25%** (extra fuel for cold starts).
If you drive a 4x4 or large people mover **add 50%** (100% for biggest engines) to your figure so far but for a small car (e.g. Clio or new Mini), **subtract a third.**
Divide by the number of people in the car (but don't include those just coming along for the ride) to get your car score for the year:

b) If you use public transport:
A weekly 150 miles return trip by rail or bus, or a daily return commute of 30 miles adds up to an annual..... 700kg

c) For **each hour** you spent flying, short or long haul, in the last year, add.. 350kg
Your transport score (a+b+c) in kg CO2-equivalent

Just a thought if you want to be really honest with yourself: if you walk 2 miles/day or cycle 5 miles you need to eat more, adding about 8% to your food score (section 3). This also applies if you get ½ hour/day of exercise some other way. Or if you simply eat a lot!

2. ENERGY IN YOUR HOME

Accounts for greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel use.
If you have central heating start with a base household score of: 4800kg for a detached house; 3200kg (semi); 2200kg (terraced); 1600kg (flat).

If you don't have central heating and just heat the room you're in, start with 800kg
How warm is your home? For each degree above 17oC **add 10%** to your base figure; for each degree below, **subtract 10%**.
If your home is well-insulated (e.g. a modern house with 200mm loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and double glazing), **subtract 30% from your score so far**.
If you have a new condensing-flue boiler subtract **another 20%** but if your boiler is over 15 years old **add 15%**.
These figures are for gas. Otherwise: if you use oil add 40% to your score so far; for coal, add 80%; for wood, divide by 8. If you use electric heating, multiply your score by 2.5* unless you use a heat pump (which scores the same as gas).

Now **divide by the number of people living in your home to get your personal heating score:**

Next estimate your personal score for hot water.
If you have a bath or long shower every day, start with..... 300kg
If you mostly have quick showers (not a power shower), start with.....200kg
But if you live alone and have a hot water cylinder (not combi boiler) add 100kg
If you have solar panels, subtract one third from your score.
This assumes you mostly heat your water with gas. If you use oil add 40%; for coal, add 80%; for electricity multiply by 2.5*; for wood divide by 8.

Your personal hot water score

And now, your score for **appliances.** Start with a household figure of.....1600kg
If you have only "A"-rated appliances and efficient light bulbs, subtract.....400kg
If you use electricity frugally (switching off lights, only using the washing machine when full, no dishwasher or clothes drier) subtract..... 200kg
If you have a house full of energy-hungry people, with TVs on all the time and daily use of a washing machine and dryer, add.....1400kg
If you have an oil-fired Aga or similar range cooker, add..... 5000kg

Divide by the number of people in the house for your personal appliances score*:

Now add up your score for heating, hot water and appliances to get your personal home energy score

**Previous versions of this sheet gave a much lower score for green electricity. This no longer seems justified. Renewable generation in the UK is currently constrained by supply and green tariff schemes are not adding anything. The best thing you can do is encourage a local renewable generation scheme, or generate your own. See article at* www.quakergreenaction.org.uk.

3. FOOD

Accounts for energy use in agriculture, fertilisers, food transport, processing, storage, retail and catering. Also includes methane and nitrous oxide from animals, animal wastes and agricultural soil, and notional credit for soil carbon take-up in organic farms.
Start with a base annual score of 2000kg (typical British diet, 2400kcal/day, 38% animal-based); 2250kg (serious meat eaters, 50% animal diet); 1400kg (lacto-vegetarians) or 1000kg (vegans)
If you only eat organically produced food subtract 50% from this score.
About 75% of UK food is imported and/or processed (including frozen & canned). If **nearly all** your food is processed and/or imported add 100kg to your figure so far. But if **very little** of your food is processed and/or imported subtract 400kg
About 25% of meals in the UK are eaten away from home. If you **hardly ever** eat in restaurants or canteens subtract 100kg from your figure so far. But if you eat **half your meals** in restaurants or canteens add 100kg

Your food score

4. MATERIALS AND WASTE

Accounts for energy and material use in manufacturing and construction, as well as greenhouse gas emissions in waste disposal.

If **your household** produces the UK average of 23kg/week of waste including recycling (one dustbin full or two black bags) start with a figure of 1400kg. If you produce half this (one black bag/week), start with 700kg.

This initial figure assumes all your waste goes in the standard refuse collection, usually for landfill so if you:
□compost all kitchen and garden waste (typically 7.5kg/week), subtract 20% of your initial figure
□recycle all paper, glass and metal (typically total 7.5kg/week) subtract 10% of your initial figure
□recycle all plastic your council accepts (typically 1.5kg/week) subtract 20% of your initial figure
About 50,000kg of CO2 are emitted providing materials to build a typical family house. **If your home is under 50 years old** add to your score so far:
4 bed detached 1500kg, 3 bed semi 1000kg, 2 bed terr. 750kg, 1 bed flat 500kg
For a one-room extension or loft conversion in the last 50 years, add 250kg.
If you filled a skip this year with building or DIY waste, add..... 1000kg

Divide the total by the number of people in your house to get your materials and waste score

The items included above account for 70% of national GHG emissions. We can make a very rough estimate of your share of the rest, based on your household spending on other goods and services.

Estimate your monthly spending in £ on items such as clothing, furniture and electrical appliances, and on services such as entertainment, telephone and healthcare. The UK average is £420/person. Remember to include your share of spending on items for your household. Don't include food, restaurants, travel, home energy, or your mortgage, rent, tax, pension, savings and investments.

Multiply by 4 to get the contribution of your spending to emissions in kg CO2-equivalent.
To allow for government activities on our behalf (hospitals, schools, road building, emergency services, the military etc.) add a further 1600kg

Your "everything else" score

6. AT LAST – ADDING IT ALL UP

Accounts for greenhouse gas emissions linked to providing other goods and services.

Add up your score for:
Transport
Energy in your home
Food
Materials and waste
Everything else
To get your total:

How do you compare?

UK total emissions (including international aviation) amount to 11,500kg per person of CO2-equivalent greenhouse gases.

USA national emissions (including international aviation) average about 21,000kg per person

India's national emissions average about 1,300 kg per person.

The global average is about 5,800kg/person If the world is to avoid the worst effects of climate change, global emissions will need to be reduced by 60% or more, to below 1,500kg/person, over the next 40 years

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