Sustainability in Practice: A study of how reflexive agents negotiate multiple domains of consumption, enact change, and articulate visions of the 'good life'

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Abstract

A small proportion of people claim to live and consume in ways they consider more sustainable in social and environmental terms. As yet, we do not know how many exactly, but possibly no more than 5-10% of the population. The thesis intentionally focuses on this minority finding there are at least three reasons why it is interesting to do so. First because they are all but ignored in sociologies of practice in the context of sustainable consumption which considers this minority an insignificance and focuses almost exclusively on a 'mainstream' majority which more closely maps onto the stereotype of 'consumer society'. Second because we think we can learn much from juxtapositioning this group empirically against the spectrum of theories of practice to devise more robust and appropriate theoretical explanation of how these subjects, in the context of everyday practice, negotiate the many interpretations and contradictions involved in trying to put 'sustainability' into practice. Third because by understanding them better we can reflect on theoretical, empirical and policy implications for nudging this minority of the population to a higher percentage.

The thesis sits at one end of a spectrum of positions in theories of practice applied to consumption, and in particular with a normative interest in sustainable consumption. It aligns with those who seek to re-insert the reflexive agent into accounts of practice, with particular reference to the conceptual construct of the 'citizen-consumer' and the context of political consumption (Spaargaren & Oosterveer 2010). Referring to theories of consumption, the thesis adds perspectives on how people negotiate multiple domains of consumption simultaneously since everyday practice involves interactions across multiple domains (such as eating, mobility, householding); and yet typically in theories of practice these are artificially separated into single domains. The study therefore considers the implications which domains have on how particular practices are carried out, first separately (per domain) and then as they come together (in a cross-cutting domain perspective). The study then takes theories of practice as a springboard to develop a theoretical position and framework which better fits the narrated accounts of the 37 subjects who participated in this study. In iteratively co-developing a theoretical framework and multiple 'stages' of empirical research (using grounded theory methodology) the study seeks to explain theoretically how subjects justify their 'doings' (drawing on 'conventions' and 'orders of worth' (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006)); how they appear to muddle through as best they can (introducing 'bricolage' (Lévi-Strauss 1972)); and how subjects appear to devise decision short-cuts when approaching decisions characterised by the multiple contradictions of sustainable consumption and incomplete or 'too much' information (introducing heuristics (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011)).

In joining calls to re-insert the reflexive agent to account for how, when and why subjects enact changes towards trajectories which they consider 'more sustainable' in their own terms, the study takes inspiration from Margaret Archer's morphogenesis approach (1998) and explores her model of multiple modes of reflexivity, announcing certain modes as 'better fitting' conditions of late modernity. The study finally finds that contrary to a notion of the un-reflexive agent, the citizen-consumer is able to articulate visions of the 'good life'. In addition she is able to fold these visions back onto everyday practices performed in the past, present and future, laying out normative guidelines and positive accounts of how to achieve personal or societal well-being and happiness. The overarching positioning of the study is much inspired by Andrew Sayer's (2011; 2000) 'normative turn' calling upon social sciences to re-instate research into the things about which people care. The study is therefore guided by the overarching question of how people translate their environmental and/or social concerns into the ways in which they live and consume.

PART 1

Chapter 1. Introduction

This study has been inspired by my own experience of living with, and observing people who consciously do not consume in ways that could be characterised primarily as conspicuous, or ostentatious. These experiences and observations made me reflect upon the question that although Bourdieu's theory of Distinction (Bourdieu & Nice 1984) may apply to many people in affluent Western consumer society – there is a small minority of people to whom consuming in order to 'make a difference' applies in a different way, and, to my observation, not in ways of demarcating conspicuousness, and symbolic display of social position.[1] My motivation to undertake this study was at first inspired by a desire to understand better those people who claim to be concerned, and care about the environmental and social impacts of the ways they consume and live, and who have pro-actively and consciously tried to change the ways they consume and live in accordance with these alternative cares and concerns. The overarching question for this study deriving from this objective, and inspired by Sayer (2000; 2011) is:

> *How do people translate the things about which they care into the ways in which they consume?*

This is what I want to investigate with this study. And it was a puzzle to me from early on that current dominant theories of consumption were not helping me greatly with this endeavour. The objective of this study then is to understand better people who 'practice sustainability' in daily life, and also to offer some reflections on the societal

[1] Of course it is plausible (and there are hints in the study findings which would support this assertion) that the subjects on whom the study focuses are in fact consuming conspicuously, but that the displays in which they are engaged are less oriented to Bourdieu's thesis of consumption as an arena of social distinction

implications of their consumption practices. In other words: What can we learn from those who actually do make an attempt to live and consume in ways that may be more sustainable in social and/or environmental terms?

In the context of sustainability in practice of everyday life, the above overarching question can be qualified as follows:

> *How do people translate their environmental and/or social cares and concerns into the ways in which they live and consume?*

This line of enquiry resonates also with quite old and yet re-awakening debates and movements in civil society about the 'other than economic' values which people 'should' incorporate into the ways they live and consume in the name of societal responsibility. This links to, and incorporates, alternative patterns of consumption and collective ways of organising daily life which 'normalise' these concerns into daily practice – for example to reduce the environmental impact of individual and household consumption; or to materialise into daily life care for the conditions of production of food (in particular meat and animal husbandry), transport and mobility; and intentionally to invest time and effort into reducing fossil-fuel powered energy consumption to express and display, at the household or collective level means and methods to reduce emissions of green-house gas as a response to climate change concerns. Thus collectively these heterogeneous 'moves' can be seen as ways to variously embed 'alternative' values into the organisation of daily life and practice. This includes a variety of ways of understanding and living what may be collectively termed the 'good-life' but which as shown in this study, is in fact highly differentiated. Significantly, despite this heterogeneity interpretations of the 'good-life' hold in common, resistance and opposition to what is considered collectively excessive and 'irresponsible' modes of consumption, captured in the phrase 'consumer society'.

For long, 'values' have gained a marginal level of esteem in social science – and even critical social science. Andrew Sayer (2000), among many authors, has critiqued social science for this, referring both to social scientists refusing to take and to make explicit

normative positions in their research[2], and also to scientists underestimating the role of individual values in social action:

> If values - regarding rights, ethics and more generally the nature of the good - are seen as purely subjective, emotive, a-rational responses, and hence beyond justification through argument, then the critiques which they inform might be dismissed on the same grounds. If they are not to be dismissed in this manner, values need to be subjected to scrutiny and justified as carefully as would any explanation. Without such scrutiny, critical social scientists could be accused of basing their critiques on values which are no more than the product of unmonitored peer pressure: 'We're against such-and-such because people like us generally are'. (Sayer 2000, p 172)

Yet, as Sayer points out, it has shown 'that all criticism presupposes the possibility of a better life' (Sayer 2000, p 172), which is why it is astonishing that critical social scientists have been rejecting talk about values for so long. However, Sayer notes a turn towards normativity within recent critical social science, and a '(re-)awakening of interest in normative theory', which in the past has been subject to other disciplines such as politics and philosophy (Sayer 2000, p 172). But for the last decade, according to Sayer (2000), this normative turn has already gained a foothold in green or environmentalist critical social sciences, which he attributes as due to wider social change. In particular, Sayer sees the roots of the normative turn in critical social science in the rise of political movements around environmental and social issues, and in the growth of reflexivity. All these have brought to the fore a range of ethical and political concerns (ibid.).

The turn towards normativity in mundane practice as much in academic reflection, in this study, is seen to be rooted within the specific contextual conditions of late modernity, thereby differentiating the current era from previous epochs, and their associated debates about what constitutes responsibility and citizenship. Briefly, three conditions of late-modernity are of relevance to the contemporary placement of this study. The first is globalisation, where in particular the phenomenon of extended supply chains and networks are relevant in the sense that they create distance between the place and conditions of production (the worker rights and environmental harm implications of production for example) and the place of consumption. This connects to

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[2] The discussion of whether social science ought operate from within normative positions, or be value-free and descriptive in its statements was subject to a debate initially raised by Max Weber in 1908 Weber (1968) (see also Ciaffa (1998); and Allen (1975)). Weber argues for social science, and science in general, to be descriptive, and must not take any normative position which could be taken directly or indirectly as a recommendation for action.

contemporary literature on the emergence and rise of the citizen-consumer (e.g. Spaargaren & Oosterveer 2010). In the current study I conceptualise the citizen-consumer as someone who expresses their values, and concerns: the things about which they care, through their purchase decisions and other 'doings' in terms of mundane practices and actions in everyday life. The former relate to a third phenomenon, the rise of political-consumption, where consuming becomes a ways of expressing political preferences and bringing about transformations (in terms of 'making a difference') to the ways in which goods are brought into being and marketed around the globe. While representational democracy rests on voting procedures aligned to geographically bounded public administration spaces, consumption decisions become a way of expressing political preferences, arguably, that representative (voter) democracy cannot influence, or does not influence affectively.

Altogether, in this study, consumption becomes a way of expressing different normativities and values. Normativity and consumption, in this thesis, further connects to the overarching question of how people translate their cares and concerns into the ways in which they live, thereby embedding various interpretations of sustainability into everyday practice. The focus is therefore directed to what people actually care about, and how they accordingly enact their concerns through consumption.

In the following, PART 2 outlines the methodological approach of this study. Based on an adapted grounded theory methodology (as proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1998)) the methodological approach rests upon the iteration between empirical work and its findings; and theory development throughout the course of the process. Literature, theory, research hypotheses, and empirical findings have been mutually re-informing, changing, and shaping each other. Chapter 2 briefly re-caps the basic features of the grounded theory methodology, and guides the reader step by step through how this methodological approach has been mobilized within the current research process. Thirty-seven in-depth interviews have been conducted in two samples for this study with individuals and groups of individuals who claim to carry out particular practices, or perform particular actions in ways they consider more sustainable. The first sample, and the first open interview questions provided the interview material from 17

interviews for the preliminarily analysis. This material was analysed in order to interrogate it for recurrent themes, to explore the field; to develop a preliminary conceptual framework; and finally to re-shape and fine-tune the set of open questions (that I will thereafter refer to as research 'tool') for the second sample; and iterated through a stage of revisiting the literatures that provided potential theory candidates to inform and underpin this study. Based on the preliminary findings the second sample was selected and analysed in a process of fine-tuning.

Creating a thesis structure which captures these iterative empirics-theory-empirics-theory development stages was no easy task. After several attempts the final structure for the thesis was settled upon as follows. The findings of both stages of interviews, data analyses[3] and literature review were split into three different themes which are presented as three 'couplets' each couplet comprising two chapters: a literature and theoretical development chapter, and an empirical chapter reporting the aligned interview findings within the couplet. The first couplet (presented in the couplet chapters 3 and 4) investigates the theme of the relation of subject's values (conceptualised as 'order of worth') and actions in three different practice domains of eating and food provisioning; mobility and transportation; and householding. It seeks to systematically disentangle the variety of practices in order to understand how practices relate to values (subject's normative perceptions) and domains of practice. The analysis attempts to understand the articulation between values and action and gather insights into how normativities translate into daily life from a subject-centred point of view. The theoretical significance of this couplet is to guard against the assumption that practices are purely habitual and routinized, and therefore not approachable to individual normativity and reflection.

The second couplet (chapters 5 & 6) focuses on how practitioners of 'sustainability' reflect upon their personal transformations with regard to what they think has triggered changes in their life, leading to the view that the subjects' own view of their own consumption practice is now more 'sustainable' than it was at an earlier stage in their 'consumption life' or consumption 'career'. This couplet establishes what changes were made, when, and what factors subjects attribute the change to, in their

[3] (using data of both samples)

consumption 'careers', shifting to a trajectory they consider to be more sustainable in their own terms. The main empirical contribution of this couplet is to understand both the accounts of reflexivity; and the accounts of change that relate to ways of life which subjects consider more sustainable in social and/or environmental terms, than identified earlier patterns of consumption.

The third couplet (chapters 7 & 8) investigates how individuals articulate their visions of a 'good life' in a way that brings together sustainability (in their terms) with notions of happiness and well-being. The couplet aligns theories of the 'good life' and recent scholarly accounts of happiness and well-being with sustainable consumption in practice from the point of view of practitioners of 'sustainability' in order to elaborate a sociologic approach to the 'good life' in the context of sustainable practice. The main empirical contribution of this chapter is to provide insight into the variety of visions of a 'good life' that link to sustainable living, and to demonstrate (that and) how subjects frame their visions of a 'good life' within their attempts (or projections) of living more sustainably.

Finally, chapter 9 (PART 4), re-prises the findings and presents the final conclusions. Also, it discusses the empirical and theoretical contributions, opening up to recent academic debates, and providing a brief outlook on potential future research topics and questions which flow from this PhD research.

A schematic overview of the thesis is provided below in Figure 1, showing how chapters, parts and content relate to each other. It shows how the 9 chapters combine into the 4-part study. The numbered circles (1-9) indicate the order of the chapters. Part 3 is illustrated in two columns, showing each the literature review chapters and their corresponding empirical chapter in order they are presented (as couplets). The mutual relations across different chapters are indicated by arrows.

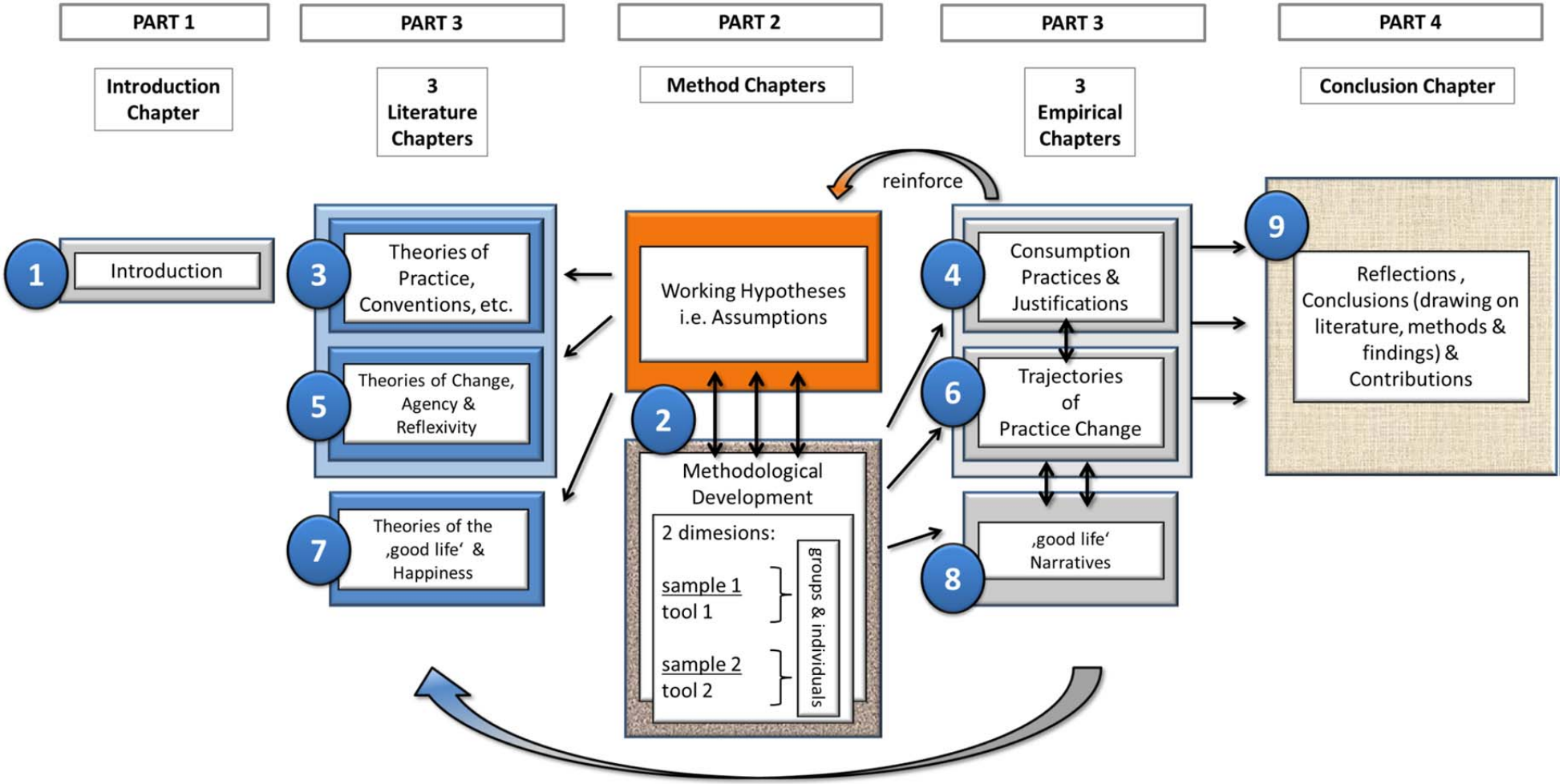

Figure 1: Thesis Schematic Overview

PART 2

Chapter 2. Methodology

2.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach of the present study, and explains the central role of this approach in shaping and mutually integrating the process of empirical work, shaping the research questions, and building a theoretical framework to provide theoretical explanations to support and be consistent with the empirical research.

The empirical work process starts from loose assumptions, and with the identification of gaps or identifying questions raised at the frontier of the literature. The initial assumptions, in this study, were that some individuals might be changing particular routines or carrying out particular practices in their everyday life in ways they think are environmentally friendly, or not, or less harmful to other people. This assumption broadly refers to literature on 'green' consumerism, and ethical consumption. Further, it was assumed that those individuals might, at some point in life, have started to change some of their 'doings' accordingly. This raises the question of triggers of change, or, in other words: What makes individuals change their practices? For individuals 'doing' all this, it was assumed, they may have particular reasons, or refer to particular normativities of how they would like to live their life, or how they would envision the world to be a better place as compared to their current experience of the world. This assumption broadly refers to literature of the 'good life', and happiness research.

In summary, the insights this study gains refer to (1) the fabric, and underlying relations of how 'sustainability' aspirations and individual commitments articulate into practices from a subject-centred point of view; (2) how individuals reflect upon their current,

past, and future with regard to consumption practices from the point of view of what they think triggers the change of practices; and (3) the way individuals articulate visions of a 'good life' and are able to describe present and future implications for consumption practices aligned to the 'good life' visions.

In order to gather data which would allow the development of a conjoined empirical and theoretical understanding of the above, an inductive and qualitative research method was selected which draws on components of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) *grounded theory* approach, as outlined below. The subjects for this study were 37 individuals who were interviewed in-depth, and the empirical material analysed are individual's 'utterances', captured in the interviews supported in the collective experiment of an eco-living project in Cornwall, UK, by observing their daily practices and routines, and the ways the organise their daily live; and participating in open-ended discussions undertaken whilst living with this group (of which 10 subjects were also interviewed to capture their values, normativities and reflexive argumentation explaining and justifying their daily practices) over a period of 3 weeks.

This chapter outlines Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory methodology, in its core components (section 2.2.). It then explains how this methodological approach has been mobilized for, and adapted to the purpose of this study; but also, how the grounded theory approach, as a methodology, has shaped the actual research process of this study. Section 2.3. shows how the fieldwork 'tool' has been designed according to the assumptions and research hypothesis (as mentioned above). Section 2.4. explains how the 1st interview sample was selected, including the selection criteria for inclusion in this study. The main experiences from the 1st sample, and the main outcomes of the 1st preliminary analysis are summed up in section 2.5., and presented with regard to their implications for the further research process. Drawing on this, section 2.6. provides the rationale for the 2nd sample, and explains the process of sample selection, opening up into the actual findings presented in PART 3.

2.2. Glaser and Strauss' Grounded Theory

The following passages provide a brief overview of grounded theory in its outline by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Grounded theory is a methodological approach which – in its

original outline by Glaser and Strauss – generates theory in a creative process. This process synchronously tests and refines empirical findings, and the data that refer to the findings (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Theories which are generated and developed this way are often positively attributed as closely related to practice, or object-related (Wiedemann 1995). A characteristic feature of grounded theory is the circularity of the process of data gathering; and data analysis, according to the basis of the '*theoretical sampling*' strategy (Glaser, Strauss & Paul 2008). In contrast to statistical sampling – which aims for representativity of a population as the basis of sample selection – theoretical sampling focuses on the theoretic relevance which the sample has to the research objectives (Flick, 2000). The basic principle for the selection is whether the next sample is to provide either minimal or maximal contrast in terms of similarity or difference. This decision depends on (the researcher's) previous knowledge and findings (e.g. from previous samples), which is why data gathering and theory development mutually add to each other. The circle of sample selection; data gathering; data analysis and theory development can be repeated several times in the course of the research process, until a state of '*saturation*' sets in, where new and more data demonstrably cannot deepen, or add new insights (Flick 2000).

Other than linear research methods, the process of theoretical sampling is circular, which is illustrated in Figure 2. Each interview sample[4], containing e.g. 10, 20, or 30 interviews, is followed (or paralleled) by the data analysis, which feeds into the development of the instrument (e.g. the tool, or questionnaire), and re-shapes the instrument for further data gathering. The repetition of this circle in order to enrich the data and saturate the findings, or theory development, is also referred to as '*iteration*', or 'iterative circle'. According to Strauss (1998) theoretical sampling requires to continuously develop the sample throughout the course of data collection and analysis. Different from most other research methods there is no pre-set plan of how to collect and analyse the data. Theoretical sampling requires to permanently compare the findings in terms of phenomena, concepts, and categories; and consider and negotiate alternative explanations.

[4] Each interview within a sample is conducted using an identical instrument. The next sample may then be conducted with a new or adapted instrument.

To Wiedemann (1995), a theory is saturated if any new cases i.e. new empirical findings can be covered by the theory development at the present state of research, so that new findings would no longer change, but confirm the theory. At this point new data will no longer effectively contribute to enrich or validate the findings.

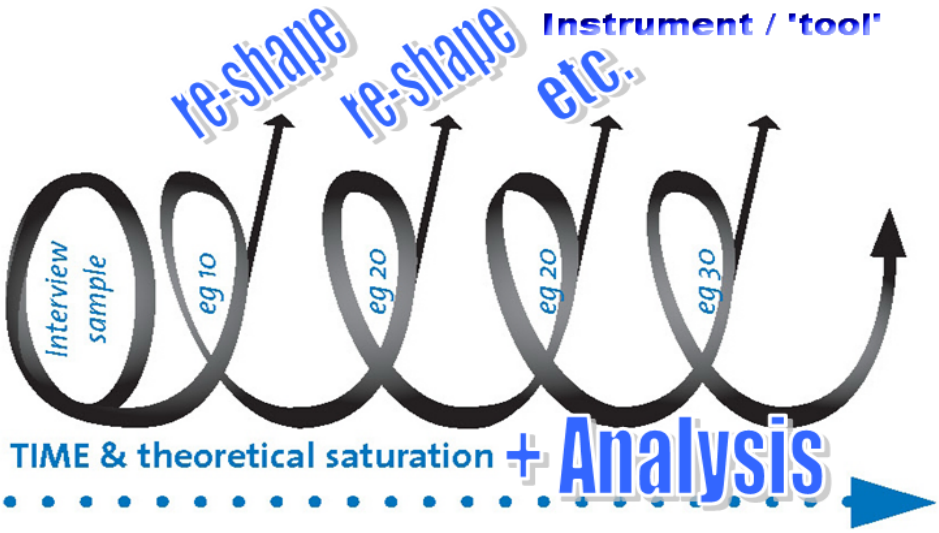

Figure 2: Theoretical Sampling after Glaser & Strauss (1967) (authors own image)

In order to deal with the data, Glaser and Strauss suggest three corresponding coding schemes, *open coding*; *axial coding*; and *selective coding* (Glaser & Strauss 1967; see also Strauss 1998; Glaser, Strauss & Paul 2008). The process of *open coding* is closely connected to the original data, and serves to prise the data open. Glaser and Straus have conceptualized the *open coding* in a way that is completely open, thus matching their methodological idea of generating theory form scratch i.e. without little or any preliminary assumption. The *axial coding* serves to identify the phenomena 'behind' the data, and to determine their dimensions. Codes which appear to be saturated by several examples are taken as entrance points for further coding. This phase of coding – usually succeeding the open coding – refers to questions regarding conditions, interactions, strategies, or consequences (Strauss 1998), such as: What causes the phenomenon? (conditions); How do actors handle the phenomenon? (interactions); What are the conditions for the actors' strategy and in which context do they take place? (strategies); and: What do the strategies and actions result in, referring to the

phenomenon? (consequences). Finally, Glaser and Strauss introduce theoretical or *selective coding* which connects and interrelates the previous codes with each other step by step. This covers the relations of, and within single elements or dimensions of the phenomena, and enables the researcher to create abstract categories. As Flick (Flick 2000) points out, the different coding procedures are not meant to be clearly separated from each other, neither in terms of content nor in their chronological order, although, the process of data interpretation always begins with the open coding while selective coding dominates towards the end.

The previous passages have described grounded theory as a method which – in its original form – intends to generate and develop theory from no or little previous knowledge. This study however, does not use grounded theory in the way it was originally intended. Instead, it adapts and mobilizes various elements and principles from the grounded theory approach, and adds other methodological elements as well, as shown in the following. The intention with this study is not to develop a new theory; though, it seeks to develop a theoretical framework for 'sustainability in practice'. Iteration, in this study, is used in a double sense. On the one hand, within the empirical work, there is an iterative process between the 'prompting' tool; sample selection/rationale; and data analysis, where findings of the first will inform and shape the next sample. On the other hand, in terms of an overall methodological practice, there is an iterative process between the empirical work; research questions; and the development of the theoretical framework, underpinned by literature reviews (as illustrated in Figure 3).

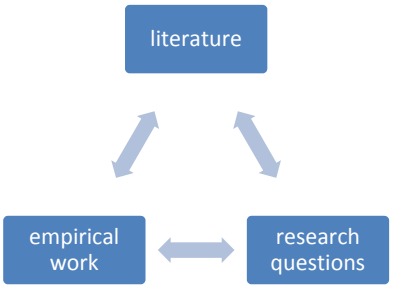

Figure 3: Iteration across the entire Research Process (authors own image)

2.3. 'Prompting' Tool

The first step to enter into fieldwork was to design a questionnaire, based on the assumptions outlined in section 2.1.. In order to direct, canalize and limit the interview topic(s), the questionnaire was designed according to Friebertshäuser's depiction of guideline-based interviews[5] (Friebertshäuser 2003, p 375). To Friebertshäuser, directing and canalizing the topic(s) implies the presence of previous knowledge of the field of research (which is not consistent with 'pure' grounded theory). The interest is directed towards topics and areas that have previously been identified or assumed as relevant according to literature studies, or the researcher's background knowledge (ibid.). Guideline-based interviews can range from containing precisely articulated sets of questions that require a specific order; pre-defined sets of questions that can be used flexibly according to need while conducting the interview; to complete loose guidelines which only contain widely framed groups of themes or topics (ibid.). However, guideline-based interviews allow using open 'prompts' in order to inspire the interviewee to talk openly with regard to what she had been asked about. (ibid.). In this sense, guideline-based interviews combine the capacities to capture complex and multi layered structure and relations in a narrative[6] way, but also to gather data with regard to specific theme complexes, or topics. Also, they ensure a commensurability among the data.

For the first interview sample, a semi-structured questionnaire (according to King 2006a) has been designed which prompts the interviewee to speak freely and open ended about a topic or an issue raised with the prompt. The questionnaire is semi-structured in the sense that it contains a set of open-ended questions which can be raises in variable order. In the sense that the questions are open, and inviting the interviewee to speak freely, they are considered as 'prompts'. Hereinafter, the questionnaire will also be referred to as 'prompting tool'.

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[5] Guideline-based interviews are also used with the intention to increase the commensurability of single interviews Friebertshäuser (2003).

[6] According to Alheit & Dausien (1985), narration is a form of data gathering that qualifies particularly for gathering complex proceedings of, and reciprocities in between different influencing factors.

2.4. 1st Sample Rationale and Selection

The prompting tool (as shown in appendix A.1.1.1.) was designed with the rationale to apply to individuals who self-claim to be consuming and acting in ways they think are sustainable in environmental or social terms.[7] Further, as a selection criterion, potential interviewees or subjects would have to be able to underpin their claims by demonstrable actions in daily life. Also, interview partners were to be members of society in the wider sense that they participate in 'normal', or 'ordinary' life. The sample selection technique to match this purpose has been identified as non-probability i.e. judgemental sampling in accordance to Saunders et al. (2007). The purposive strategy was oriented towards 'homogenous' and 'typical' cases (ibid.) with regard to the outlined scenario.[8] The 1st sample was of explanatory nature which is why a self-selection strategy (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2007) has been considered appropriate.

For the first sample, individuals were selected and contacted mobilizing the author's wider personal network[9], and using snowball effects, where interviewees were asked to suggest further interviewees from within their personal network. The 1st – exploratory – sample consists of 17 interviews, up to 2 hours , that were conducted between January and March 2010, producing rich in-depth data. 8 interviews have been conducted with members of groups of which 5 are from a climate change research centre in the Northwest of England; the other 3 are members of the 'Manchester 100-Month-Club'.[10] An additional rationale for including these two groups in the 1st sample was to examine whether there are differences between groups and individuals in terms of how 'sustainable' actions and practices are performed, carried out, and justified. The other 9 individuals have been chosen carefully from out of the author's wider personal network. So finally the remainder of the first sample consists of: A sound engineer, male, 38,

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[7] The extent to which subjects may be practicing 'sustainability' remains undefined on purpose, and depends on the interviewee's self-description and self-assessment. 'Sustainable' actions and practices basically have to match the requirement of being reflected as such by the subject.

[8] The sampling strategy does not intend to seek socio-demographic representativity. Though there has been an attempt to balance gender throughout the sample selection process. However, conducting a qualitative study with rich in-depth data implies to spare generalizability. In this respect there is a lack of strong argument to configure the sample due to criteria of representativity.

[9] with the consideration – if possible – not to choose direct contacts but rather 'contacts of contacts' to prevent the known effects of acquaintance Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2007)

[10] The 100-Month-Club is a high level network of influential leaders that aims to take action to tackle carbon emissions in the city region of Manchester.

from Frankfurt (GER); an editor of the *forum CSR international* magazine[11], male, 30, from Munich/Berlin (GER); a freelance editor, female, 29, from Darmstadt (GER); a family supporter, female, 60, from Berlin (GER); a research assistant sociologist, female, 34, from Vienna (AT); a self-employed permaculture[12] farmer, male, 29, from near Hannover (GER); a freelance sociologist, male, 45 from Göttingen (GER); a consultant couple, male and female, 44 and 41, from Frankfurt (GER). Some of the interviews have taken place in the UK, some in Germany; some have been conducted by telephone or *Skype.*[13] All other interviews have been conducted in face-to-face settings. All interviews were voice recorded.

Subjects were prompted to articulate a current life description from the point of view of their perceived difference to i.e. differentiation from the so called 'mainstream' of consumers. Finally, the individual consumer 'careers' from the point of view of moments of change, and personal transformations towards different, 'sustainable' ways of living were asked for. Further, individuals were prompted to reflect upon their interpretation of the 'good life' with regard to how they think a sustainable present and future will look, either to them in private life terms, or in broader societal terms. Other prompts referred to topics such as the interviewee's social situation i.e. living environment; sociability and socialization; networks; political attitude; family background; and religious background. The final prompt was provisionally titled 'real-utopian exercise'. Though pulling 'real' and 'utopia' together is contradictory in itself by definition, this prompt was designed based on the idea to inspire the 'narrator' (the subject) to unfold an idealised vision of the 'good life' under conditions that can be seen as realistic in the sense that they might possibly be feasible in the world 'as it is'.[14] It was assumed that interviewees would combine their 'good life' visions with descriptions of potential actions, or paths of action. In other words: The interviewee

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[11] See http://www.nachhaltigwirtschaften.net (visited: June 2012)

[12] Permaculture is the praxis of sustainable land use design based on ecological and biological principles, often using patterns that occur in nature to maximise effect and minimise work. Permaculture aims to create stable, productive systems that provide for human needs, harmoniously integrating the land with its inhabitants. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Permaculture (visited: June 2010)

[13] Software for internet based (voice-over-IP) communication and chat. Calls over *Skype* can easily be recorded on the computer, which is why *Skype* is well suitable for interviews.

[14] See also Sayer's discourse on 'betterment' in section 3.3. further details on how 'utopian' and 'real' are meant to be mobilized together.

was prompted to describe a personal vision of the 'good' life in a future perspective including the path of its realization.[15] The main difference between this prompt and the previous 'good life' prompt was the projected scenario, where the latter would allow the interviewee to articulate an idealised vision.

In addition to the 'prompting tool', interviewees in the 1st sample were asked to fill in a socio-demographic questionnaire (see appendix A.1.1.2.) in order to collect information on how the subjects are situated in social and economic terms (including educational background, origin, job, approximate income group), but also to gather other person-related facts such as age, religious belief etc..[16]

2.5. Outcomes of Preliminary Analysis and Implications for 2nd Sample

Which experiences have been made with the 1st 'prompting tool', and which implications does this have for the second tool, and the selection of the 2nd sample?

The 1st sample was conducted between January and March 2010. All in all, the interviewees conducted with the 1st research tool went without complication, and feedbacks from the interviewees were positive. However, many interviewees appeared to be unprepared to reply to the first 'good life' prompt (see appendix A.1.1.1.). The intention with this prompt was to contrast the previous prompts (where interviewees had mainly described what they are doing) with an abstract reflection, assuming the interviewees were prepared for this for what they had previously said. However, in practice, this prompt often interrupted the 'flow' of the interview and made interviewee's ask for clarification. Consequently, while developing the 2nd prompting tool, it has been shifted and positioned towards the end of the interview, prior to 'real-utopian exercise'.

Overall, when conducting the 1st interview sample, the prompting tool showed to be too wide in its range of inquiries. Especially the prompts regarding social group(s), social environment(s), current living environment and networks did not show to be overly useful in terms of contributing to the scope of the analysis. Consequentially,

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[15] For detailed information see prompting tool in appendix A.1.1.1.

[16] Again, the character of the 1st sample was exploratory, so it was not exactly predictable beforehand which data would be needed for the analysis.

those prompts were taken out in the 2nd tool; serving to narrow the questions asked and hone the 2nd tool (as shown in appendix A.1.1.5.).

2.5.1. Data analysis

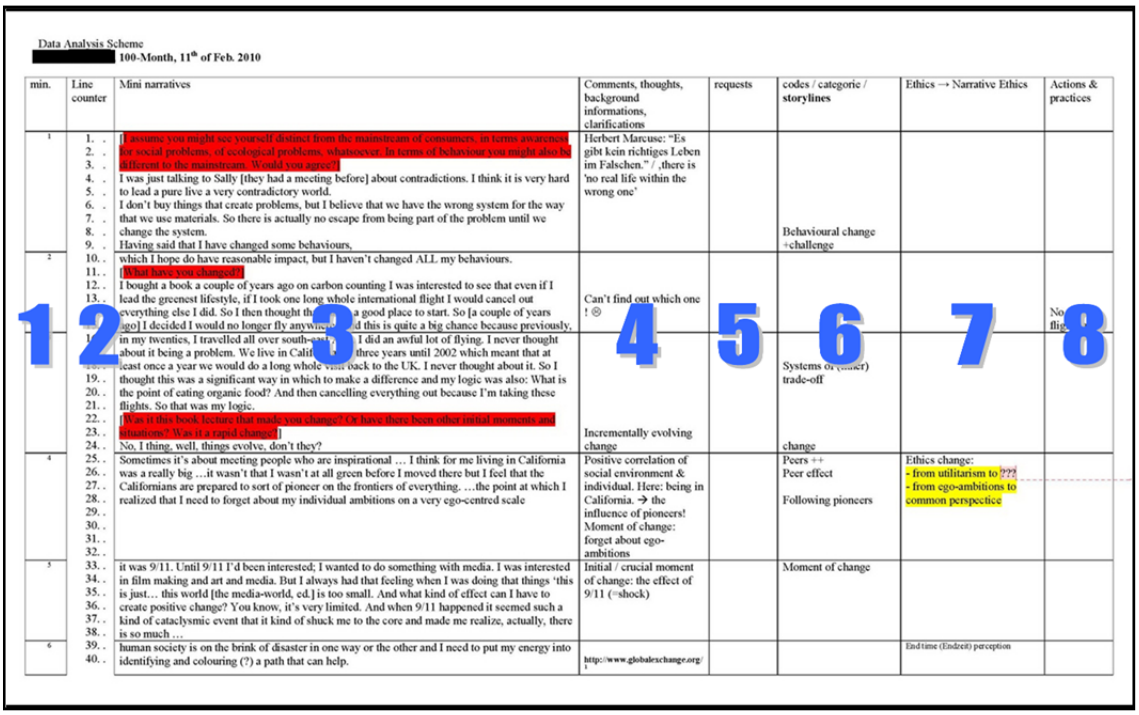
The following passages highlight the outcomes of the 1st, preliminary analysis, and its implications for both the adaption and development of the 'prompting tool', and the selection of the 2nd interview sample. The purpose of the 1st preliminary analysis was to identify key themes, to refine the research objectives, and to draft a theoretical framework of 'sustainability in practice' from a subject-centred point of view of actual practitioners. For the preliminary analysis of the 1st interview sample, key passages have been identified with regard to their relevance for the research objectives, and transcribed (and in some cases been translated into English). A data sheet has been set up that captures the raw data and provides several columns for notes, codings and categorisations (see Figure 4 for illustration, and appendix A.2.1.1. transcribed and coded data[17]). The open coding has been done slightly different from Glaser and Strauss' original idea. Unlike Glaser and Strauss' idea of a widely unrestricted associative process, the process of open coding followed some of the researchers' assumptions which had been theoretically informed beforehand.[18] However, the initial coding was done in an 'open' process, in the sense that the codes had not been previously ('top-down') determined but were created in the process of analysing the data. The open coding was followed by an axial coding procedure in order to create categories,[19] which was followed (and sometimes paralleled) by a process of selective coding, in order to finally compare single items with each other and to draw a storyline

[17] Many of the codings within in the 1st however have been done on paper print offs, and were not added to the digital files post hoc in order to save time.

[18] Glaser and Strauss criterion of approaching the field without any previous assumptions has been subject to critique. Arguing from the point of view of a critical realist ontology, Modell points of that '[c]ritical realists insist that there is no such thing as 'theory-free' observations and explanation' Modell (2009, p 213). However, King concludes that grounded theory has been 'developed and utilized largely as a realist methodology' King (2006b, p 257) (see also Oliver (2012) and Madill, Jordan & Shirley (2000))

[19] As mentioned, the purpose of axial coding is to identify the phenomena 'behind' concepts and to determine their dimensions, referring to conditions, interactions, strategies, and consequences (Strauss 1998) – a process where more abstract categories are created step by step.

through the entire data material. In this phase, core- or key-categories were developed on a more abstract level.



Data Analysis Scheme
[redacted] 100-Month, 11th of Feb. 2010

min.	Line counter	Mini narratives	Comments, thoughts, background informations, clarifications	requests	codes / categorie / **storylines**	Ethics → Narrative Ethics	Actions & practices
1	1. .	I assume you might see yourself distinct from the mainstream of consumers, in terms awareness	Herbert Marcuse: "Es				
	2. .	for social problems, of ecological problems, whatsoever. In terms of behaviour you might also be	gibt kein richtiges Leben				
	3. .	different to the mainstream. Would you agree?]	im Falschen." / ‚there is				
	4. .	I was just talking to Sally [they had a meeting before] about contradictions. I think it is very hard	'no real life within the				
	5. .	to lead a pure live a very contradictory world.	wrong one'				
	6. .	I don't buy things that create problems, but I believe that we have the wrong system for the way					
	7. .	that we use materials. So there is actually no escape from being part of the problem until we					
	8. .	change the system.			Behavioural change		
	9. .	Having said that I have changed some behaviours,			+challenge		
2	10. .	which I hope do have reasonable impact, but I haven't changed ALL my behaviours.					
	11. .	[What have you changed?]					
	12. .	I bought a book a couple of years ago on carbon counting I was interested to see that even if I					
	13. .	lead the greenest lifestyle, if I took one long whole international flight I would cancel out	Can't find out which one				
		everything else I did. So I then thought th[illegible] a good place to start. So [a couple of years	! ☹				No
		ago] I decided I would no longer fly anywh[illegible] this is quite a big chance because previously,					fli[illegible]
	1[illegible]	in my twenties, I travelled all over south-[illegible] I did an awful lot of flying. I never thought					
		about it being a problem. We live in Calif[illegible] three years until 2002 which meant that at			Systems o[illegible]		
	[illegible]	least once a year we would do a long whole [illegible] back to the UK. I never thought about it. So I			trade-off		
	19. .	thought this was a significant way in which to make a difference and my logic was also: What is					
	20. .	the point of eating organic food? And then cancelling everything out because I'm taking these					
	21. .	flights. So that was my logic.					
	22. .	[Was it this book lecture that made you change? Or have there been other initial moments and					
	23. .	situations? Was it a rapid change?]					
	24. .	No, I thing, well, things evolve, don't they?	Incrementally evolving change		change		
4	25. .	Sometimes it's about meeting people who are inspirational … I think for me living in California	Positive correlation of		Peers ++	Ethics change:	
	26. .	was a really big …it wasn't that I wasn't at all green before I moved there but I feel that the	social environment &		Peer effect	- from utilitarism to ???	
	27. .	Californians are prepared to sort of pioneer on the frontiers of everything. …the point at which I	individual. Here: being in			- from ego-ambitions to	
	28. .	realized that I need to forget about my individual ambitions on a very ego-centred scale	California. → the		Following pioneers	common perspective	
	29. .		influence of pioneers!				
	30. .		Moment of change:				
	31. .		forget about ego-				
	32. .		ambitions				
5	33. .	it was 9/11. Until 9/11 I'd been interested; I wanted to do something with media. I was interested	Initial / crucial moment		Moment of change		
	34. .	in film making and art and media. But I always had that feeling when I was doing that things 'this	of change: the effect of				
	35. .	is just… this world [the media-world, ed.] is too small. And what kind of effect can I have to	9/11 (=shock)				
	36. .	create positive change? You know, it's very limited. And when 9/11 happened it seemed such a					
	37. .	kind of cataclysmic event that it kind of shuck me to the core and made me realize, actually, there					
	38. .	is so much …					
6	39. .	human society is on the brink of disaster in one way or the other and I need to put my energy into				End time (Endzeit) perception	
	40. .	identifying and colouring (?) a path that can help.	http://www.globalexchange.org/				

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Figure 4: 1st Sample Data Analysis Scheme Example Excerpt[20]

The preliminary data analysis has shown individuals carrying out different practices[21]; perform various actions[22]; and participate in a variety of activities in order to enact and live out what they think is 'sustainable'. Also, individuals are facing various limitations and constraints to what they would like to do in order to aspire to become 'more sustainable'. The analysis has also shown that in order to explain why they do what they do (in terms of carrying out certain 'sustainable' practices and performing certain

[20] This figure is a visualisation of an early version of the data analysis scheme for the 1st interview sample, and serves illustrative purpose. The single columns are (1) a time counter (minutes within the audio record file) in order to quickly go back an access the rata data; (2) a line counter for precise quoting (which later on was decided not to use); (3) the actual transcripts (here provisionally called 'Mini Narratives'); (4) the open coding column (comments and thoughts etc.); (5) a request column to note questions which to be clarified retrospectively with the interviewee; (6; 7; and 8) categorisations (from a very early stage of research of which only some were followed up later on).

[21] A practice is understood as an activity which is carried out in a routine manner. For example if someone is routinely taking the bus to commute instead of driving in a car – this would then be considered a 'practice' of commuting.

[22] An action is understood as an activity which takes place once at a particular point in time and space. For example if someone would sell a car (in order to take the bus from then on) – this would be considered an 'action' of selling the car.

actions), individuals refer to what in this study is referred to as 'values', or 'normativities'. However, the attempt to make sense of the relations of values and actions, or values and practices did not provide any fruitful outcomes, which in itself was taken as an outcome. Yet, it had shown that there are differences in how individuals articulate their 'values'[23], and transform their value claims into practice. These differences apparently exist in between individuals, which was seen as less surprising[24]; but also they exist in between various areas of individual's daily life practices. Following the first iteration of empirical material and theory development the focus of the analysis shifted towards 'practices', and the literature branch of 'theories of practice'. In a next step, domains of practice[25] were defined and selected according to the literature – and also with regard to particularities of the findings. Three domains commended themselves, and were defined as follows: The practice domain of eating and food provisioning, which covers actions and practices around growing, purchasing, handling, preparing, eating, storing and disposing food[26]. The

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[23] in terms of what they think would be the right thing to do

[24] Though interesting in itself, the individual as such was not intended to be the unit of analysis, and may remain subject to psychological investigation. However, it may be seen as a marginal outcome that three ideal-typical links have come up throughout the analysis in how individuals articulate their value claims into practice: (1) A weak link between values and actions wherein individuals hold their values but consequential actions vary strongly. (2) A strong link between values and actions where individuals still feel comfortable to move away from their claims if surrounding infrastructures or other constraining factors make the maintaining of 'sustainable' practices impractical or difficult. (3) A very strong link between stated values and the commitment to act in a particular 'sustainable' way, where some individuals keep their actions and practices as consistent as possible – in their terms and to the 'best they can' – with their value claim. (A similar configuration of types of 'sustainable practitioners' has lately been described in rich detail by Conill et al. (2012).)

[25] in the following also referred to as 'domains of consumption', or 'consumption domains'

[26] In order to define relevant practice domains, literature on (theories of) practice were reviewed. The spectrum was set to include the domains of food (eating and food provisioning), mobility and transportation, and householding. The domain division has broadly been inspired by Spaargaren (2004); Spaargaren (2003)). This spectrum is thought to approximate a wide range of everyday life. The single domains have been defined based on authors as follows:

Eating and food provisioning in approximation of Warde & Martens (2000a); Warde (1997) and Evans (2012). An inspiring point with food was taken over from Kline (2011, p 387), who provides the rationale that

> 'for food is interesting to study precisely because it is the focal point for competing normative discourses about health, pleasure and self-restraint, as well as what it means to be a member of an ethnic or national culture, what it means to be a good mother (or a woman burdened with the responsibility for provisioning the family), how to stay healthy, slim and attractive, how to be civilized and, recently, what it means to be a socially aware consumer.'

The domains of mobility and transportation have been widely adapted from Cass, Shove & Urry (2004); Randles & Mander (2009); Urry (2012); Urry (2006); Urry (2002). The domain of householding has been adapted with references to Doyle & Davies (2012) and Shove (2003b).

practice domain of mobility and transportation, which covers daily commuting (e.g. for work purposes); daily individual transport and logistics (e.g. shopping), and also occasional travel such as travel for holidays and vacation. The domain of householding, which covers house insulation; use of electric light; use of energy (in general) and energy supply; use of water and water supply; and other household related services as much as technical utilities – and their use. In addition, the reflection on the primary research data has brought about the need to include social and geographic features of the household in a wider sense into the domain of householding. These two aspects – alongside with the actual material aspect of the household – have been included in order to cover particularities of collective living and the collaborative organisation of consumption (as discussed in section 4.2.4.). 'Social features' are seen as reflected in the social organisation of the household, so for example in the implications of collective living in terms of sharing a household with a group of like-minded but not necessarily kindred people on certain aspects of consumption – as compared to single households, or family households. 'Geographic features' of a household are understood, and relevant, in the sense that particular geographic settings of a household (e.g. rural area, or métropole) have shown to have implications on the ways subjects carry our practices and perform actions.

So, an implication of this outcome was the introduction of a third element in order to analyse to relation of values and actions/practices. The third element makes possible to establish a systematic perspective throughout the analysis.[27] The values-actions-domain triangular focus (Figure 5) has not been anticipated or seen as a logical order prior to the preliminary analysis, and is considered an inductive finding, as well as an analytical framework.

[27] The rationale for applying triangular framework (preliminarily here: values-actions-domains) traces back to Callon's considerations of the role of a third element for the analysis of relations (Callon 2011), highlighting that '[O]ne need simply add a third party, C, and adopt its point of view, for the relationship between A and B to become analysable and comprehensible.' (2011: 9) The third party can be mobilized against the strategic backdrop of (1) creating a mediator to intermediate or negotiate a conflict between A and B; (2) creating an element (in the means of *tertius gaudens*) where C takes advantages in balancing out the conflict between A and B; or, (3) creating a source of conflict where C causes conflict to rules out coalition of A and B. (2011: 9-10)

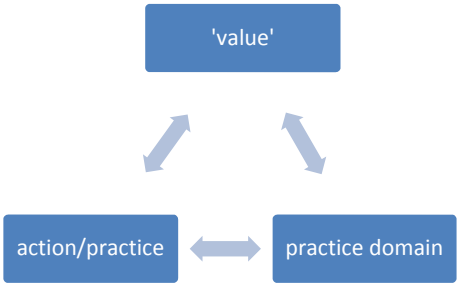

Figure 5: Triangular Analytical Framework of Value, Practice/Action and Practice Domain (authors own image)

Another outcome is to direct the analytical focus on how interviewees manage to establish consistency between their values and actions, i.e. manage to cope with contradictions, and navigate through a contradictory world in their attempt to live life sustainably in their own terms. Further, as an outcome, the focus for further investigation has been directed towards the dynamics of practice change from the point of agent's reflexive accounts. Practice changes were identified as expressions of how individuals reflect upon 'turning points' or 'crucial moments' and happenings in their life, but also articulations of how individuals incrementally – step by step – adapt and adjust to what they think is 'best' to do in order to live more sustainably. The preliminary analysis has further shown that subjects who 'engage' in sustainability in practice often hold visions of how they see their 'good life' enacted through particular 'sustainable' practices and actions. Further, the analysis of the 1st sample hints towards implications for individuals who participate in particular groups, and engage in collaborative consumption practices – a topic that was not intentionally included in the first analysis. The effect of participating in particular groups both has fed into the 'prompting' tool development and into the selection rationale for the 2nd interview sample.

In summary, the preliminary analysis has brought up a range of interconnected themes, and refined a range of questions. In content terms three major themes, or complexes of themes have come up which feed into; shape; and refine the research questions as follows:

i) How does sustainability articulate in everyday life practice and actions from the point of view of 'committed' individual practitioners, and how do

individuals negotiate and justify particular sustainable practices and actions throughout different consumption domains?

ii) How do 'sustainability' agents enact, and reflect upon their individual practice changes, and how do they account for the changes they enact?

iii) How do subject-centred visions of the 'good life' reflect subjects' understanding of what it means to live life in sustainable terms.[28]

In technical terms the above questions imply re-adjusting, and re-shaping the research tool (both in terms of how it is designed but also how it is handled in the field). They also have implications for the sample rationale, as shown in the next section.

The socio-demographic questionnaire has turned out to provide little additional benefit to the analysis since most of the facts it provides have either shown to be un-needed, or have roughly come up throughout the in-depth interviews anyway. Also, it seemed to rather confuse interviewees to both fill in a questionnaire and do oral interviewees. Accordingly, the socio-demographical questionnaire was not continued in the 2nd sample.

2.6. 2nd Sample Rationale and Selection

The main rationale for the 2nd sample remained the same as for the 1st sample (see section 2.4.). Potential interviewees would be individuals who claim to be carrying out practices and performing actions in ways they think are sustainable in environmental or social terms, and enact such practices or actions in demonstrable ways (in the sense that they could talk about what they are doing). In addition, the aspect of whether membership or participation in particular groups makes a difference to individuals – in terms of how they carry out 'sustainable' practices, enact change, and articulate or live out their 'good life' visions – was a subordinate criterion for the sample selection.

For the selection of the 2nd interview sample, different groups were selected and contacted. On the one hand, various so called 'co-housing communities' were

[28] The selection of literature has been informed according to these themes i.e. research questions, as shown in in chapters 3 & 4; 5 & 6; and 7 & 8.

contacted for they seemed to match the criteria of demonstrable sustainable practices and action. Those communities were found on the internet where the UK co-housing network lists all facilities in the country.[29] A number of communities[30] were contacted via email with requests for interviews among the individual members.[31]

At first, the representative of a newly set up community in North-West England took the request to a formal internal board meeting where members decided by vote they would not appreciate any further researchers investigating their community, since they said they were 'overrun' by researchers already to an extent that threatened to slow their progress in setting up the community.[32] The second request was also rejected after some weeks of internal negotiation, saying that some of the members would not appreciate being subject to research. This community was established already and had been set up in an old renovated hospital building near Leeds. The third community accepted the request, inviting me for a three week stay with them at their premises – a time during which it was possible to do an intense film documentation; take notes and pictures; write memos; share meals; exchange and interact with members in various everyday practices and, of course, to conduct the interviews.

During this time I lived in an old camper van on the premises of the community. The premises measures about 30 acres including several farm houses, a barn, fields, gardens, greenhouses etc.. By the time of the interviews, the community counted about 20 residential members of all age groups (from 2 to about 70 years old). The

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[29] see www.cohousing.org.uk/ (last check: November 2012)

[30] 'Community' was defined in a wider sense in terms of criteria outlined by Sayer (2000):

> For normative purposes we may want to define community in abstract terms as involving shared beliefs and common identities, but we need to know what would count as an instance of it. [...] Community then, is not merely an intersubjective (hence liberal) decision to be made willy-nilly. It has to involve at least two things: real, that is, pragmatic bonds between people that can stand up to external tests, and do not fall away at the merest challenge. Communities cannot be self-indulgent identity wishes. Communities can define themselves over and against their others, and purely in terms of their own interests.[...] If this seems superorogatory, it needs to remembered that communities are not discrete but are invariably embedded in wider social systems, participating in wider divisions of labour and exchange, sharing infrastructure, often language and a host of wider economic and cultural phenomena. (Sayer 2000, p 179)

[31] see document 'Interview Request and Consent Form' in appendix A.1.1.4.

[32] By the time of the request, the community according to their statement, was in an intense planning and building phase, dealing also with legal issues with the local authorities. They had bought some land near a river, and were about to build an entire village to their ecological standards, with communal rooms and residential houses for the members.

community puts forward their motto 'We aim to live lightly on the Earth' on their website[33].

The next group of interviewees for the 2nd sample was accessed with support of a major UK based retail company who offered to put me in touch with some their employees who volunteer in an internal scheme called 'green champions'. This scheme engages volunteers to work on a range of different issues and activities linked to sustainability. Volunteers organise and participate in workshops on various sustainability (and sustainable business) related topics, inviting external speakers from academia, business, and policy making. Company internal, the 'green champions' volunteer by suggesting ideas to make daily business life and practices more sustainable (e.g. ideas on how to reduce the use for printing paper, or how to save energy or reduce waste). In addition, many of the green champions work in fields related to the company's environmental footprint. So the green champions bring the knowledge they gain from their volunteering activities both into daily practices in business life, as well as into their actual work. Eight green champions participated in the interviews.

The rationale for selecting the green champions as a group of interviewees is that – next to demonstrable 'sustainability' practices – they would assumably be contrastive to the co-housing group in various ways. On the one hand, the green champions are a group of professionals who 'practice', on the other hand they are a group of loosely – or not at all – connected individuals. They are all volunteering in the same scheme, but they would not necessarily know each other unless they meet for example at a workshop or other. In contrast, the co-housing members are a group in a communal sense; they all know each other, and interact on daily bases, calling themselves a community.

The interviews for the second sample were conducted between October and November 2011 in the wider area of London and in Cornwall. In total, the sample contains 20 interviews of which 12 were conducted with co-housing members, and 8 with 'green champions' . Some interviews were conducted via phone. All were audio recorded and fully transcribed. The data were coded in the way that particular quotes were sorted

[33] See http://trelay.org/ (last check: March 2013)

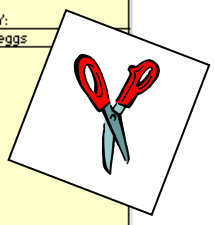
and allocated according to topics that had come up from the previous analysis.[34] New topics and themes were added. In addition, some of interviewees from the 1st sample were also coded in this way.[35] The 2nd sample coding was done less 'open', though some new codes and categories were added. Mostly however, the 2nd sample was coded according to the categories, and the (preliminary) framework that had come out of the first data analysis. In doing so, the framework was re-shaped, and – towards the end of the coding process – re-confirmed in the sense of Glaser and Strauss' saturation technique. The data were transferred into an extensive spread sheet (see Figure 6 for illustration and appendix A.2.2). As part of this process, findings of the 2nd analysis re-enforced the theoretical basis, and encouraged investigating further literature, as explained in the following chapters.

With the 2nd sample, the richness of data had come to a point, where more and further data would assumably not be adding sufficiently new details i.e. insights, so that arguably no further sample appeared to be needed. Especially with regard to interviewees' actual practices, and justifications of particular practices and actions, a certain repetitiveness throughout the interviews indicated a robustness within the findings, which rather required elaboration on the theoretical framework than further empirical data. This is why, apart from time restrictions, no further interview samples were taken.

In the following chapters (4, 6, and 8) the findings are presented and discussed against, and along the most illustrative quotes, in the way that quotes are critically discussed with reference to, or against the theory as laid out in each of the corresponding literature review chapters (3, 5, and 7). The review chapters rationalize the selection of particular literatures in detail.

[34] See appendix A.1.1.5.
[35] Not all of them – especially not the very early ones – were suitable for this.

	A	B	C	D
134	**Person**	**Domain**	**Value /order of worth**	**Action**
135	EVE	food		Eve runs sharing scheme for left overs with her flatmates: 'we tent to cook as a house, we have quite a good system going in that is in a certain part of the fridge is for anybody to take. And there is a clear-area so when something is running out of date you'll put it there and then someone is going to eat it. We share milk and fruit juices. So it's not that there is six individual bits of milk. And bread and things and fruit. Some fruits we just keep in one place so that everyone can share. Equally there is quite a lot of cooking together, we're just pulling resources. [...] So that I think reduces food wastage. [...] there is an extend of an email at five o'clock saying that someone is cooking and 'just bring the wine' or whatever it is. [laughs] Living in this house is pretty good at this sort of thing. But at the top of that the leftovers do get put together and even to an extend to where there are label for who gets to take it to work on the next day. [...] We got little stickers and I think, they are very foodie and they'd be horrified of food waste. And I the social peer pressure of moving into the house is that you wouldn't want to waste any food. [...] Some of the other guys are a bit more keen on farmers market and especially on checking out the ethics of the fish and how sustainably sources that is. So there is quite a regular conversation 'I bought this because it is XYZ [...] it would be either locally sourced or, you know, happy chickens and sustainable fish, this is quite a big
136	comments: lives in a shared flat with other young professionals	food	1. loyalty to her employer; 2. cost (UK RETAIL COMPANY staff discount)	Eve prefers local markets but buys from UK RETAIL COMPANY:
137		food	animal welfare	if you look at social contexts of eggs I'd say I'd ever buy battery eggs
138	Eve is in her later 20s, works at UK RETAIL COMPANY and shares a house in London with other young professionals.	food	cost	I would buy from UK RETAIL COMPANY because it is convenient for me and I have discount. And I think I do spend more time looking at the packaging to think about the country of origin



	F	G	I	J	K
	restriction and limitation	**compromises & 'un-green sin'**	**trigger of change**	**influences**	**good life vision**
	I know there's more we could be doing but it doesn't, it just doesn't feel achievable in where I am at the moment [...] if I was going to be green then I'll move out of London because I won't care [...] it's a balance and I'm not prepared to shift it in order to be environmentally friendly		If it says 'sustainably sourced' most people just think 'brilliant, I'll trust that' without necessarily looking behind it. But I think having watched the TV shows and I bit knowing more about it, it is (???) line fishing other than trawling ...and which types of fish. I have a basic knowledge of that based on what is filtered through from recent press. But certainly my flatmate is much more educated on it and specifically picks out the best prawns because they have been fished in a certain way.		
		prefers local markets but buys from UK RETAIL COMPANY			So I think there are, if you had the money and the time you could live your life entirely by buying direct from small retailer and you could have an allotment and grow everything yourself.
		EVE: I think there are people who could do this 10 times more effectively then this, I mean, we're still shopping in a supermarket. INTERVIEWER: What would you think would be more sustainable? What would you do then? EVE: There are some people who would be only buying in the farm shops. Now, well, I work for UK RETAIL COMPANY, I have a lot of respect for farm shops. I think you can delicious, but I also have certain amount of loyalty to my business and I also think that we [UK RETAIL COMPANY] have a good record on the environment as well.	And I think I've been more educated over the last years since I've been working here in this business because I've closer to some of the facts and some of the things we do as a company. It inspired me to do that. INTERVIEWER: So your knowledge comes mostly from your professional background? EVE: Yeah, I would say so. I mean, I think there is a low level of seeing it in the press. And several years ago, well, 12 years ago I left school. So certainly it was on the curriculum. But I don't think I took it particularly serious then. Not that I was hugely wasteful, but I think I have certainly grown much more increasingly aware of and aware of my role.	[at home (family)] ... heating is never on, and food is never wasted even if it is four years out-of-date [...] [there where] items [...] thinks that have been used and electrical equipment that is older than I am and older than my sibling. So it is definitely a real believe you should not waste thinks that have had a lot of energy to make.	[solar panels] ... I've been convinced it's a good thing to do. It makes sense for the environment and it does pay back in the end. So yeah as long as it wasn't damaging sort of the local feel of the area. [...] I don't think you should damage a really beautiful house. But if you can get away with it without ruining the look.

Figure 6: 2nd Sample Data Analysis Scheme Example Excerpt[36]

[36] This is an excerpt of the data analysis scheme for the 2st interview sample. Columns A-K show the categories within the data spread sheet according to which the data were sorted. For the analysis, the spread sheet was re-sorted temporarily (with the 'sort-by-column' function in MS Excel©) according to

each the analytical perspective (e.g. sorted by domains (B); by triggers of change (I); or by 'good life' visions (K) etc.).

PART 3

Another sociological argument which is sometimes used against normative theory is that behaviour is overwhelmingly habitual rather than guided by rational assessment according to normative principles.
This is almost certainly correct in relation to a great deal of everyday behaviour.
However, there are plenty of common situations [...]
which are less routine but pose considerable moral dilemmas.
(Sayer 2000, p 175)

Chapter 3. Theories of Practice, Convention Theory, Bricolage, Heuristics

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines a conceptual framework in order to investigate multiple aspects of sustainability in practice in terms of how individuals carry out practices and perform actions in everyday life which they see as sustainable in environmental or social terms. Four different theory branches have been reviewed for the first part of the analysis – sociological theories of practice; the French conventions theory; the theory of bricolage; and theories of heuristics. The selection of literatures has been inspired and informed by the empirical data, according to the iterative methodological approach as laid out in chapter 2.

The framework laid out in this chapter serves to systematically explore subjects practices and actions. Also, it provides theoretical explanations of how subjects, according to their utterances, enact their values i.e. value claims in practice and practical action. According to the preliminary analysis (outlined in section 2.5.) a triangular analytical framework was created (figure 5), consisting of 'values'; 'practices/actions'; and 'domains of practice' . Further, the theoretical work of this chapter intends to frame how subjects navigate their way 'as best they can' through a world of multiple options and multiple constraints; (b) justify their 'doings' in terms of providing value statements; and (c) negotiate their 'doings' against their values and multiple contradictions in order to make decisions about how to carry out practices in their everyday life.

In order to conceptualize subjects 'doings' as practices and actions in terms of mundane and ordinary consumption, section 3.2. mobilizes sociological theories of practice. Theories of practice are taken as a theoretical entry point, and platform on which practices and actions are understood and discussed as subject's 'sayings and doings'. 'Practices' are combined with a framework that accounts for subject's values i.e. value claims – in terms of explanations of why they do what they do. The theory of conventions is drawn upon in section 3.4. to conceptualize the problematic notion of 'values', as explained in section 3.3., in a way that accounts for subject's justifications as references to established – and therein 'conventionalized' – orders of worth. The empirical work has brought up cases in which orders of worth, according to individual statements, compete with, or contradict each other. With the intention to deepen the understanding of how subjects solve the problem of articulating their values – seen as 'orders of worth' – into practice, theories of heuristics are mobilized in section 3.6. which account for decision making strategies from a subject-centred point of view. Further reflection on the empirical data, has brought up the requirement to frame how individuals actually handle issues of sustainability in practice in as 'best they can'. Section 3.5. therefore introduces the theory of bricolage which frames the understanding of how subjects handle these issues in a wider sense, providing accounts of how agents mobilize limited resources to navigate towards their ends and objectives, using the best 'at hand' to their judgment at times given.

3.2. Theories of Practice in Sociology of Consumption

This section draws on an emerging body of literature on sociological theories of practice which aims to develop understandings of sustainable consumption practices from an everyday perspective. In its rather short history the sociology of consumption has been strongly influenced by the re-discovery of practice theory, especially over the last decade. Theories of practice in itself are diversified and heterogeneous (Halkier, Katz-Gerro & Martens 2011). Having recently emerged within consumer studies, theories of practice however broaden the perspective beyond the individual while shifting focus towards the collective aspects of consumption (Gram-Hanssen 2011). This includes a shift from spectacular and conspicuous dimensions of consumption

towards routine and mundane aspects of daily life (Gram-Hanssen 2011; Hobson 2002). Starting from understanding the actual practice in its history and development, practice theories go further and might also focus on practitioner's roles and social positions within practices, and the consequences these have for people when actually conducting practices (Randles & Warde 2006). In his work on theories of practice in the context of 'ordinary' consumption Warde defines consumption

> 'as a process whereby agents engage in appropriation and appreciation, whether for utilitarian, expressive or contemplative purposes, of goods, services, performances, information or ambience, whether purchased or not, over which the agent has some degree of discretion' (Warde 2005, p 137).[37]

A 'practice' (singular) in this sense is understood as a routinized form of these elements an interconnected manner, and refers to 'things and their use'. Whereas 'practice' in general describes the whole of humans action (Reckwitz 2002).[38] Theories of practice have in common that they apprehend social structures to be sustained by routines i.e. routinized actions, and trace the change of structures to crisis of routines, accounting to knowledge inadequacy on the part of agent carrying out practices (Reckwitz 2002). The agent's knowledge includes cognition (understanding), know-how (knowledge and experience), and emotional or motivational states (Reckwitz 2002). Agents, in this comprehension, neither are fully autonomous nor conform norm followers. Far more, emphasis is put on the reciprocity of structure and agency, as to actors understanding

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[37] Halkier illustrates four general analytical approaches to consumption; these are: 'consumption as a function of economy, consumption as a function of culture, consumption as creativity, and consumption as everyday practices' (Halkier 2010, p 19).

[38] Practice, in the way it is laid out theoretically in the literature, implies distinction from 'action'. Practice contains a dimension of time as it describes the 'thing and their use', and the carrying out of recurring activities, over time. By contrast, the understanding of 'action' in this study refers to singular activities. An action in the sense of a singular activity e.g. might be the renewal of structural elements of a residential house such as insulation, or the renewal of other utilities (such as fridges, freezers, washing machines or other stationary devices), or the sale of the car (in order to start using public transport only) etc.. So, insulating the house, buying a new fridge, or selling the car etc. are considered as actions, but not as practices; while the ways of heating the house, of using the fridge, or of commuting are considered as practices (of heating, food conservation, commuting etc.). The character of an action, in contrast to practice, is that it is tendentially singular in its nature and particular in time and place. However, an action can be repeated in a different place at a different time. But in contrast to practice it does not include the element of routine and ordinariness i.e. everyday occurrence. Practices however, by definition can be transferred spatially and sustained over time. If someone e.g. decides to lower the overall water temperature for showering or laundry washing in order to save energy, this person could carry out this practice in different places at different times. Or if somebody cycles to work this will be considered a practice while buying a bike to do so will be considered an action. An action in this sense may include practices, or lead to particular practices or sets of practices. A practice may consist of many different actions. Yet, not every action is necessarily a practice, for it may be lacking an element of routinized repetition.

the world and themselves, and utilizing knowledge in accordance to carrying out practice (Reckwitz 2002).

Where conventional approaches focus on the change of individual cognitive states[39], a practice based approach rather considers individual's 'doings' in contrast with 'sayings'[40] (Warde 2004b), with the focus on what is understood as routinized behaviours constituted by the interplay of cognitive elements and physical activities (Reckwitz 2002, Schatzki 1996,Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina & Savigny 2001,Schatzki 2002). In comparison, conventional approaches exclusively focus on (the change of) individual's attitudes, values, or on contextual limitations to pro-environmental behaviours (Hargreaves 2011, p 89). As such, orthodox models of individual action such as *homo economicus, homo sociologicus* or *homo aestheticus* tend to focus on explanations of individuals volunteering (or resisting) to act in particular ways in the face of various constraints (Randles & Warde 2006).

3.2.1. The Individual and Agency within the Sociology of Practice

This passage highlights the spectrum of sociological theories of practice and their accounts of change and agency. Though the intention is not to provide a comprehensive overview of existing practice approaches, this section focuses on the role different theories of practice allocate to human agency and reflexivity in determining action and shaping social practice – with regard to the requirements of, and as being informed by the empirical analysis of this study. As shown in the following, the positions of different authors on this spectrum differ. Broadly speaking, there are those positions that allow agency in no way at all on the one side – such as Shove (Shove 2003a; Shove 2003b; Shove 2004; Shove 2007; Shove & Chappells 2001; Shove, Pantzar & Watson 2012; Shove, Trentmann & Wilk 2009b), Warde (Warde 1997; Warde 2002; Warde 2004a; Warde 2004b; Warde 2005; Warde 2010; Warde & Martens 2000a; Warde & Southerton 2012), Southerton (Southerton 2001; Southerton, van Vliet

[39] With regard to policy approaches, Shove (2010a) labels this the 'ABC' framework, as focus has been on attitudes, behaviours and individual choices.

[40] Hargreaves criticizes conventional approaches though stating that the 'close examination of behaviour change processes as they occur in situ reveals many more aspects and complexities of daily life than existing approaches capture' (Hargreaves 2011, p 80).

& Chappells 2004); intermediary positions – such as Reckwitz (Reckwitz 2002) and Hargreaves (Hargreaves 2011); and on the other end of the spectrum there are those that attribute a role to individual agency – such as Oosterveer (Oosterveer & Spaargaren 2007; Oosterveer & Spaargaren 2011), Spaargaren (Spaargaren & Mol 2008; Spaargaren 2003; Spaargaren 2004; Spaargaren 2011; Spaargaren & Oosterveer 2010) and Schatzki (Schatzki 1996; Schatzki 2002; Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina & Savigny 2001). This study is prone towards the latter.

Despite many similarities between various authors, the spectrum of theories of practice is still in a vivid and evolving state of development, far off being considered a commonly recognized theory in its own right. As Gram-Hanssen (2011: 61) puts it:

> Practice theory is, however, not a commonly agreed upon theory, but more like an approach, or a turn within contemporary social theory.

To Warde (2005, 140) there are 'considerable inertia' to practices (see also Randles & Warde 2006, p 230). A series of features of everyday life is described by Randles & Warde (ibid.) which sustain such inertia: With regard to Bourdieu, habits and habitual behaviours are seen as prevailing the individual practitioner[41]. Skills and know-how are likely to have both symbolic and material (e.g. monetary) value to practitioners which is why practitioners might resist to abandon, and adapt to new forms of behaviours. Also, as a matter of convenience, new practices might be difficult to learn. Adapting to new practices might also mean losing sources of support by other practitioner who operate within the same community of practice[42]. As a matter of fact, infrastructures may constrain, or simply not support behaviours, especially in cases where new forms of behaviour require investments in infrastructures. As Randles & Warde (2006, p 230) conclude, '[P]eople are not 'available' for change for those reasons'. However, practices are also in continual evolution, usually as part of a process of incremental, step-wise, path-dependant development.

Ontologically, the sociology of practice according to Warde (2005), and Randles & Warde (2006) puts practice as the key unit of analysis; hence, the agent, or the individual is not attributed a role in the point of view of this theoretical branch.

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[41] Referring to Bourdieusian forms of capital. Bourdieu (1982 /// 2010); Bourdieu & Nice (1984)
[42] As for example discussed by Southerton (2009).

Practitioners, from this point of view, are constructed and understood neither to be reflexive, voluntaristic, individual actors nor the easily led and easily manipulated 'dupe' consumers (Randles & Warde 2006, p 235). Hence, constituting social practices (e.g. eating, cleaning, and commuting) as a basic unit of analysis, social practice approaches have in common that they oppose the individual as an autonomous decision maker and reflexive agent (Warde 2005). In other words: theories of practice do not intend to provide theoretical accounts to the possibility of explaining social change from the point of view of the individual actor. As Warde (2005: 141) points out, change occurs as practitioners start to 'adapt, improvise and experiment'.[43]

Reckwitz understands and conceptualizes accounts of change from the point of view of routinization of practice (Reckwitz 2002). The 'breaking' and 'shifting' of structures, as Reckwitz (2002, p 255) recalls, occurs in crises of everyday routines. In that, to Reckwitz, it is the 'inadequacy of knowledge' with which the agent, carrying out a practice, is confronted in a critical 'situation' (ibid.). The individual is merely understood as a carrier of (routinized) practices, enacting behavioural routines (Reckwitz 2002), by which Reckwitz reject any role of individual actors as key drivers of social change. The individual as such is not a focal point when considering explanations of social change. Reckwitz however, defines a clear position of the individual (Reckwitz 2002, p 256):

> [t]here is a very precise place for the 'individual' – as distinguished from the agent – in practice theory [...]: As there are diverse social practices, and as every agent carries out a multitude of different social practices, the individual is the unique crossing point of practices, of bodily-mental routines.

Though the individual is attributed a role in Reckwitz' definition, reflexivity is not given a role this understanding of change at all. To Hargreaves (2011, pp 83f) (referring to Warde (2005)), 'change in practices emerges both from the inside – as practitioners contest and resist routines and conventions and as they improvise new doings and sayings in new situations – and also from the outside, as different practices come into contact with each other'. Hence, change is inherently positioned in the intermediary of practitioner's carrying out practices and structural contexts such as socio-technical systems of provision.

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[43] By this, Warde implicitly provides a link to Lévi-Strauss concept of the 'bricoleur', as shown in the following.

As Hargreaves points out, theories of practice raise different questions about how sustainable consumption patterns can be created, focusing 'no longer on individuals` attitudes, behaviours and choices, but instead on how practices form, how they are reproduced, maintained, stabilized, [and] challenged' (Hargreaves 2011, p 84). Considering that changing practices implies changing the social order, to Hargreaves, the logical implication then is of political nature in the sense that there may well be both winners and losers in a process of social changes. As a result, Hargreaves concludes that current arrangements of practice might be 'strongly protected, leaving relatively little room for manoeuvre for those who wish to introduce changes' (Hargreaves 2011, pp 92f).

Schatzki (Schatzki 2002) is one of the key promoters of contemporary practice theory who puts emphasis on agency, allocating purposeful intention and agency to actors, through the 'teleoaffective' element of the nexus of practices. With this, Schatzki offers an account which allows to a larger extent than most other theorists of practice purposeful agency. Schatzki provides an avenue to give a practice theoretical account of individual commitment to ends and higher purposes. As compared to Warde (Warde 2005) whose distinctive feature is not to allow values to be causes, Schatzki considers teleoaffective features to be properties of the practice rather than of the individual.[44] As Halkier puts it,

> Teleoaffective structures are a kind of open emotional and normative orientations for activities. (Halkier 2010, p 27)

However, according to Halkier et al. (2011; see also Halkier 2010), Schatzki's elaborations on social theories of practice to some greater extent may be considered rather of philosophical nature, meanwhile leaving the ontological features of practice subject to distinct sociological discourses (see also Kline 2011).

3.3. The Problem with Moral Values

It has been shown already that theories' of practice vary in their tendencies to involve individual notions and perceptions of the individual in order to explain how practices

[44] Unlike most other theorists of practice, Schatzki explicitly refers to 'individuals' and 'people' when outlining his concept of agency.

emerge and develop. Highlighting this aspect, Halkier points out (with regard to food practices) that

> [b]y using a practice theoretical perspective in relation to challenged food practices, the researcher is able to analyse the processes of normativity - the practical morality - in everyday practices, rather than mapping expressions of individual mental moral values and lifestyle attitudes as the cognitivist 'steering consumers' position [...]. (Halkier 2010, p 37)

Though not directed towards theories of practice, Sayer (2000) (referring to (Soper, 1991, and Benhabib, 1992) implicitly critiques theoretical approaches which tend to deny to the role of the subject, thus highlighting the theoretical relevance of this role within the investigation of 'value' and thus moral statements:

> 'the 'death of the subject'- the reduction of the subject to a position in discourse - is not only incoherent (since it denies what the act of asserting it presupposes), but utterly incompatible with critical social science since it kills off any normative vision of politics and ethics [...]. The subject need not be unitary, transparent to itself and perfectly centred to be a moral actor. Moral action is precisely about grappling with the diverse demands of different social relations. (Sayer 2000, p 177)

The operationalization of 'values' is a challenge to this research project, as 'value' appears to be a neglected and polarizing topic in sociological research. However, there are a few useful definitions that make possible within this study to refer to 'values' without entering into extended moral debates.

Hitlin and Piliavin (2004, p 360) (referring to Hechter Hechter, Nadel & Michod 1993) point out four impediments which the study of values contains:

> '(a) Values are unobservable, (b) current theories give little guidance for understanding how values shape behavior, (c) behavioral explanations are unconvincing when the process that generates values is unknown, and (d) there are difficult problems with measuring values.'

Further, they add, that (e) values may often be 'conflated with other social psychological phenomena' (ibid.) and that (f) values, in their content, are historically and culturally variable. However, this study draws upon on an understanding of 'values' that refers to Kluckhohn (1967, p 395), seeing a value as 'a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable, which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action.'[45] Defining values as desirables, allows to include – but not exclusively reduce - the focus on moral statements. In this vein, anything that is possibly desirable can be seen as a 'value',

[45] According to Kluckhohn (1967, p 395), this definition entails the potential for both action and reward and covers individuals as much as groups.

which allows focusing on a wider range of potential justifications for actions and practices. The conceptual understanding of 'values' however, requires a mode of operationalization to be applied analytically in the following empirical analysis.

The argument that values and norms are purely internal and therefore not commensurable has been put forward be many authors, according to the review of literature conducted for this study. Sayer however, suggests a way out of lacking commensurability, and, in doing so, implicitly lays out a bridge to the French theory of conventions, as discussed in the following section (3.4.):

> If different values are in contention with one another, then that assumes some common referent or principle over which they contend rather than total incommensurability. (Sayer 2000, p 176)

Sayer states poignantly, that with postmodernism, 'rejections of normative discourse on relativist grounds have grown popular' (Sayer 2000, p 176), which has been underpinned mostly arguing that

> values and norms are not merely situated or embedded in particular contexts but that the justifications for them are purely internal to the discourses associated with them and are therefore immune to evaluation from outside, on the grounds that this will always be from an incommensurable standpoint. (Sayer 2000, p 176)

There are, however, as Sayer points out, some risks in engaging in normative theorisations, which are allocated within questions of whether its ends are feasible or not. According to Sayer, the risks persists

> not only of empty moralizing, but of assuming that whatever is agreed to be good, will therefore come into being. We need to question whether normative goals are feasible, that is, not only in terms of whether we can get from A to B but whether B would be feasible anyway. Normative thinking is frequently associated with 'utopianism'. Too often 'utopia' is used to mean not merely an imagined better future state but a clearly infeasible one at that. Just as it is absurd to reduce morality to power play, so it is naive to imagine the former displaces the latter. (Sayer 2000, p 178)

The above can be interpreted in the sense that ends include the notion of progress and betterment, while what is 'feasible' is to be distinguished from what is utopian (and thus not feasible).[46] Sayer (2000) lines out his interpretation of utopianism as a normative perspective on what is feasible in terms of desirable (social) alternatives, and thus implicitly links to Kluckhohn's definition of values as desirables (see above):

> But we should not dismiss a different kind of utopianism that attempts to think about the feasibility of desirable alternatives in terms of how the recommended social processes would

[46] See also section 2.4., as Sayer's discourse on 'betterment' within a 'feasible' utopian scenario has been mobilized in order to shape the 'real-utopian exercise' within the 'prompting tool' for the empirical work.

> work, asking counterfactual questions, conducting thought experiments and scrutinising critical standpoints. (Sayer 2000, p 178)

Among the crucial questions in this study is the question of how subjects translate values and normativities – understood as concerns and the things they care about – into everyday 'sustainable' practices. As previously shown, sociological theories of practice are mostly hesitant in theorising this role. Yet, in compliance with the normative turn as discussed by Sayer (2000), this study investigates the role of values and norms in shaping individual's 'doings'. Sayer (though drawing on behaviours, not practices) articulates this position in the following quote, implicitly referring to the difficulty of conceptualizing values and norms in order to research them.

> Almost all situations of everyday interaction involve uncertainty, which is 'resolved' for the actor by routines and conventions. But there is [...] the implicit notions of the appropriate, fair and just which are contained in every set of routines and conventions [...]. These conventions, routines, containers for the fair and the just, display very considerable social and spatial variation. They are highly situated, but essential to all action. Actors are unlikely to think about such issues systematically and in general terms, in the manner of ethical theory, and there are many practices which they may strongly believe to be right or wrong without being able to articulate fully the reasons for such beliefs, although theorists might have done so. But this is not the same as merely acting according to habit. Thus, though they often become matters of habit, norms still figure in behaviour and hence help to explain it. (Sayer 2000, p 175)

Referring to 'conventions', Sayer opens up a potential path out of the problematic terrain of conceptualizing values and norms, within individual action. Evans (2011b) has followed up this path, presenting a theory based and empirically underpinned attempt to attribute the role of norms and values in shaping and – more crucially – changing individual's practices. Evans suggests complementing social practice approaches to sustainable consumption with conventions theory, 'considering the cultural conventions through which practices are contextualized and either reproduced or changed' (2011b, p 110).[47, 48] This theory is introduced and discussed in the next section.

3.4. French Conventions Theory

The French convention theory as outlined by Boltanski and Thévenot in the early 1990ies (Barnett et al. 2005; Boltanski & Thévenot 2000) provides a bridge to

[47] Evans applies this approach in the context of an 'in-depth qualitative study of persons who identified themselves as attempting to live and consume in ways that are more environmentally friendly' Evans (2011b, p 110).

[48] To the best of my knowledge, only two empirical attempts have been made to adapt the French convention approach to consumption studies: Truninger (2005) being one, and Evans (2011) the other, as shown further below.

operationalize the vague concept of value[49]. Convention theory considers frameworks of evaluation and focuses on the variety of forms of justification that exists for action.

Originally developed with the idea to conceptually bridge sociologic and economic accounts and to minimize the dichotomy of structure and agency, convention theory (in its interpretative branch) argues that everyday action takes place on the basis of a great variety of interconnected and circumstantial practices and rationales (Truninger 2005). Neither norms nor rules are seen as prior to action. Thus, conventions are understood to be commonly shared templates for interpreting situations and paths of actions through referring to social accountability, in a way that they provide a basis for judging the appropriateness of action by self and others (Truninger 2005). As Truninger puts it

> Convention theorists reject the notion of a rational and self-interest actor that optimizes a strategy to attain a goal [...]. Instead they claim the existence of different and multiple rationalities. There are diverse ways of reasoning and justifying actions, which are anchored in different but coherent 'orders of worth'. In this sense, they refuse to understand action as anchored in apriori structures such as norms, rules, habitus [...]. Action is thus, constructed by actants in situation or persons-in-acts [...]. (Truninger 2005, p 86)

Convention scholars deny the notion of universal sets of conventions, suggesting the existence of a limited 'plurality of orders of worth that can be drawn upon to justify stances and actions' (Evans 2011b, p 110). Truninger (2005) has adapted Boltanski and Thévenot's original sets of conventions (A-F, see table 1) by defining and adding 'green' conventions (G).

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[49] This is made explicit by Truninger (2005, p 86):

> Convention theorists sought to overcome the action-structure problem presenting a reformulated account of the notion of agency, action and practice through the concept of 'pragmatic regime of engagement' [...]. 'Pragmatic regimes' are an attempt to intertwine and conceptualize 'morality' and 'reality' together. A link between the notion of 'real' and the notion of 'good' is the venture brought about through this pragmatic stance. It is part of Thévenot and Boltanski's project, to reform sociological theories by bringing morality and justice (from political philosophy terrain) to the understanding of action. In this sense, [...] [they] seek[...] to re-moralize Sociology, contributing to recover it from its 'illusional' state [...].

	'Orders of worth' or Conventions	Definition or location of worth
A	Market or commercial	Price and economic value
B	Industrial	Efficiency, Productivity and competency
C	Domestic	Trust, social ties and relationships, interpersonal dependencies and personal reputation
D	Civic	Collective interests such as fairness, solidarity, respect, civic rights protection
E	Opinion	Public opinion and public recognition, reputation
F	Inspirational	Emotions, spiritual or intellectual inspiration, creativity, originality, aesthetics and grace
G	Green	Principles of environmentalism, harmonisation with nature, animal welfare and care for future generations

Table 2: Orders of Worth (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006; Boltanski & Thevenot 1999) adapted by Truninger (Truninger 2005)

The way theories of conventions are actually used, is thought to be in loose terms and open application. In Truninger's terms (2005) 'the general empirical uses of conventions theory are not thorough and in depth applications, using it instead in a rather elastic, flexible and evocative way' so that 'applications can easily circumvent the various inconsistencies and imprecise notions along with the lack of clarification and overlaps that lie underneath' (Truninger 2005, p 87).

The theoretical alignment of consumption, practice and the French conventions theory has been undertaken previously by David Evans (2011b) and Monika Truninger (2011; 2005). Truninger however, has been focussing on the consumption domain of food solely. Meanwhile, Evans (2011) uses conventions theory as a lever in order to criticize behaviourist perspectives that, as he finds, currently dominate the field of sustainable consumption in public and policy discourse. This involves different consumption domains, though Evans does not explicitly draw on them. With his study, Evans mobilizes conventions theory in order to explore 'the ways in which sustainable consumption intersects and overlaps with other practices and imperatives' (Evans 2011b, p 109), taking conventions theory simply as framework through which to analyse the empirical material and explore how interviewees ground their practices in notions of commonly legitimate worth. Working from the 'possibility that a green order of worth - underpinned by environmental conventions - might be emerging through

which practices of sustainable consumption may be justified' (Evans 2011b, p 111), Evans concludes that

> whilst a green order of worth is emerging from the accounts and experiences of the interviewees encountered here; it does not appear to be sufficiently developed to contextualize and legitimate practices of sustainable consumption. (Evans 2011b, p 114)

In her study, Truninger (2005) asks interviewees to justify their meanings and motivations for purchasing organic food[50]. Truninger concludes that 'even during an interview people may shift between regimes of action, without necessarily giving rationalised or deliberately reflected answers to the questions posed' (Truninger 2005, p 91), which raises the expectation that some justifications for particular behaviours may be given by interviewees without referring to a convention at all; instead interviewees may be framing their behaviour 'according to non-conventionalised regimes of action' (Truninger 2005, p 91).

The mobilisation of the French theory of conventions allows to conceptualise, and also to systematise subjects' value statements i.e. value claims as to justify why they do what they actually do. Subjects' actual 'doings' in mundane everyday life however, as informed by the empirical data, are often improvised, and conducted making use of the best 'at hand' solutions under conditions of limited resources (e.g. incomplete information, lacking materials, lacking skills etc.). In order to understand and conceptualise how subjects in mundane life 'muddle through' and approximate 'best they can' sustainable practices, the following section draws on the theory of bricolage.

3.5. Lévi-Strauss' Bricolage

In his work 'The Savage Mind', structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1972) elaborates his ideas about the nature 'untamed' human thought, which he understands

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[50] Truninger further frames this question:

> [C]an convention theory, and namely the regime of justification, shed light on processes of consumption? Are consumers always in tension in their daily routines when purchasing food? The regime of justification may be difficult to capture in routinely made shopping and eating situations. Probably in everyday situations of shopping people engage more often with the regime of familiarity (a personal attachment to food experiences) and with the regime of regular planned action [...]. However, in a context of an interview consumers are confined to a particular regime of action justification. (Truninger 2005, p 91)

not as the discrete mind of any particular ethnic or other group of humans. 'Savage' in Lévi-Strauss terms does not refer to 'the mind of savages nor that of primitive or archaic humanity, but rather [to] mind in its untamed state as distinct from mind cultivated or domesticated for the purpose of yielding a return.' (1972: 219) Lévi-Strauss argues that savage thought continually gathers structures, and applies them wherever they can be used. Savage thought is opposed scientific thought which is represented by the engineer. In Lévi-Strauss' terms 'the engineer questions the universe, while the 'bricoleur' addresses himself to a collection of oddments left over from human endeavours (Lévi-Strauss 1972, p 19). While the engineer seeks to find optimal or complete solutions, savage thought constitutes the bricoleur, who uses 'the means at hand' (ibid.). Lévi-Strauss put this theoretical opposition in as follows:

> The 'bricoleur' is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project. His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions. (Lévi-Strauss 1972, p 17)

With this, the bricoleur acts under constrained conditions, other than the engineer, whose opportunities are theoretically unlimited. To Lévi-Strauss, this has an impact in shaping the bricoleur's relation with the surrounding environment, understood as the materiality of 'things':

> the 'bricoleur' [...] 'speaks' [...] through the medium of things, giving an account of his personality and life by the choices he makes between the limited possibilities. (Lévi-Strauss 1972, p 21)

The choices – or decisions – the bricoleur makes, reach back to the bricoleur's own life and personality. To Lévi-Strauss further, the scientist is distinguished from the bricoleur 'by the inverse functions which they assign to events and structures as ends and means' (Lévi-Strauss 1972, p 22). While the scientist creates 'events (changing the world) by means of structures' (ibid.), the bricoleur creates 'structures by means of events' (ibid.).[51]

Jacque Derrida (2005) critiques Lévi-Strauss' idea of the engineer (as opposed to the bricoleur) as being purely of theoretical nature, and inconsistent – if put in any

[51] Lévi-Strauss admits this is somewhat 'imprecise in this crude form' Lévi-Strauss (1972, p 22), but does not substantiate further.

historical context – for it is evident that the engineer or the scientist actually also is a bricoleur[52]:

> The engineer [...] is a myth. A subject who supposedly would be the absolute origin of his own discourse [...] The notion of the engineer who supposedly breaks with all forms of bricolage is therefore a theological idea; and since Lévi-Strauss tells us elsewhere that bricolage is mythopoetic, the odds are that the engineer is a myth produced by the bricoleur. As soon as we cease to believe in such an engineer [...], and as soon as we admit that every finite discourse is bound by a certain bricolage and that the engineer and the scientist are also species of bricoleurs, then the very idea of bricolage is menaced and the difference in which it took on its meaning breaks down. (Derrida & Bass 2005, p 360 italics in the original)

Sherry Turkle and Seymour Papert have investigated ways in which people solve computer programming problems in terms of the variety of ways that people approach computers. The authors distinguish two different approaches to problem solving: the 'planner's' approach, where people using computers 'work within a rule-driven system that can be mastered in a top-down, divide-and-conquer way'. (Turkle & Papert 1990, p 136) The planners, the authors find, resembles Lévi-Strauss' engineers. To planners, 'the right way to solve a programming problem is to dissect it into separate parts and design a set of modular solutions that will fit the parts into an intended whole' (ibid.). Another group of people, the bricoleurs, in Turkle and Papert's empirical study follow a different approach. They are 'not drawn to structured programming' (ibid.), following completely different approaches in the sense that

> their work at the computer is marked by a desire to play with the elements of the program, to move them around almost as though they were material elements [like] the elements of a collage. (Turkle & Papert 1990, p 136)

The difference between planners and bricoleurs, is best presented in the author's own words:

> For planners, mistakes are missteps; for bricoleurs they are the essence of a navigation by mid-course corrections. For planners, a program is an instrument for premeditated control; bricoleurs have goals, but set out to realize them in the spirit of a collaborative venture with the machine. For planners, getting a program to work is like 'saying one's piece'; for bricoleurs it is more like a conversation than a monologue. In cooking, this would be the style of those who do not follow recipes and instead make a series of decisions according to taste. While hierarchy and abstraction are valued by the structured programmers' planner's aesthetic, bricoleur programmers prefer negotiation and rearrangement of their materials. (Turkle & Papert 1990, p 136)

Even though Turkle and Papert in their study focus particularly on how computer programmers approach and solve problems[53], there is a substantial element of

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[52] In his essay 'Structure, Sign and Play' Derrida & Bass (2005) Derrida discusses the application of Lévi-Strauss concept of bricolage to social structure

transferability of their case to other, broader social contexts, especially with regard to the authors characterisation of the bricoleur.

In summary, the bricoleur has been shown as somebody who acts under the conditions of constraint of access, materials, and/or knowledge, to make use of whatever options are at hand in order to reach the targets. Derrida's critique of the engineer being just a species of bricoleur, and therefore not consistent and suitable as the theoretical (inverse) counterpart of the bricoleur provided an argument that is undoubtedly plausible and valid if one were to prove the two approaches historically. However, in order to specify the characteristic features of the bricoleur, the theoretical construct of the engineer gains its right to exist. With this, the bricoleur has also shown to be a problem-solver, in a practical as much as in a conceptual sense. The matter of problem-solving is picked up in more detail in the next section of this chapter which focuses why and how problem-solving shortcuts – heuristics – are applied.

In the context of the empirical research of this study, the theory of bricolage provides a framing of how subjects' actual 'doings' are carried out or performed making use of the best 'at hand' solutions under mundane – 'real life' – conditions of limited resources. The theory bricolage helps understanding how subjects in everyday life solve problems practically, 'muddle through' and approximate 'best they can' sustainable practices and actions. However, reflections on the empirical data suggest to draw on theories of heuristics in order to mobilise an application-oriented approach in addition which focuses on the actual making of decisions from the point of view of agents' negotiations of options and constraints in everyday life.

3.6. Heuristics

The empirical analysis suggests that subject's, in order to make decisions with regard to changing or adapting their practices, regularly draw on shortcuts which help them in making decisions. This has led to draw on theories of heuristics.

[53] Later on in their paper, the authors transfer their findings to moral reasoning in the epistemic context of 'formal' knowledge understanding in Western philosophy.

In its broadest understanding, heuristics represent 'rules of thumb' that can be useful in solving problems, as Mellers (2008) points out. Hence, in psychology, heuristic reasoning has become a 'central component of the effort to simulate human thinking' (Mellers 2008, p 13). Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier (2011) provide a comprehensive overview of literatures on heuristic decision making. The authors point out (2011, referring to Simon Simon 1979), that classical models of rational decision making require the assumption of all relevant alternatives (of a decision), 'their consequences and probabilities, and a predictable world without surprises.' (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011, pp 452–453) . Such conditions, however, are rarely available for the problems that individuals face. Further, they argue that such perfect knowledge only exists in what Savage (1972) has called 'small worlds'[54], which are to be distinguished from 'large worlds'[55]. In order to test how heuristics perform in a 'large worlds' (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011, p 453), formal heuristic models have been established, which have brought about surprising findings, stating that

> [i]n a number of large worlds, simple heuristics were more accurate than standard statistical methods that have the same or more information. These results became known as less-is-more effects [...]. In other words, there is a point where more is not better, but harmful. (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011, p 453)

Drawing on this, the authors suggest a definition of heuristics, which refers to how the decision maker handle information – by partially ignoring it:

> A heuristic is a strategy that ignores part of the information, with the goal of making decisions more quickly, frugally, and/or accurately than more complex methods. (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011, pp 454–455)

With regard to the information ignored, the authors add, that there is no strict dichotomy between what is considered as heuristic and nonheuristic, simply as strategies can ignore more or less information.

Despite the general definition, the authors introduce and discuss a range of acknowledged formalized classes of heuristics of which in the following only the most

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[54] A small world, according to Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier (2011, p 453) is 'a situation in which all relevant alternatives, their consequences, and probabilities are known, and where the future is certain, so that the optimal solution to a problem can be determined'.

[55] A large world, according to Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier (2011, p 453) is 'a situation in which some relevant information is unknown or must be estimated from samples, and the future is uncertain, violating the conditions for rational decision theory [...] In a large world, as emphasized by both Savage and Simon, one can no longer assume that 'rational' models automatically provide the correct answer.'.

fruitful are introduced with regard to this study. Those are classes of heuristics, namely recognition heuristic (often called familiarity heuristic); one-reason decision heuristics[56]; and trade-off heuristics. Recognition heuristics are considered in cases where one of two alternatives is recognized and the other is not. In such cases the recognized alternative – the one that is more familiar to the decision maker – has higher value with regard to the decision criterion. One-reason decisions are a 'class of heuristics that bases judgments on one good reason only' (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011, p 463), and by that ignores all other cues. The class of trade-off heuristics differs from recognition-based and one-reason decisions in the sense that it weights alternatives or cues equally and makes trade-offs in terms of compensatory strategies. One of those strategies is the accuracy-effort trade-off, which assumes that effort is traded against accuracy. According to the authors

> The classical explanation is that people save effort with heuristics, but at the cost of accuracy . In this view, humans [...] rely on heuristics because information search and computation cost time and effort; heuristics trade-off some loss in accuracy for faster and more frugal cognition. (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011, pp 456–457)

Such trade-offs are usually interpreted in two ways: Either as rational - where not every decision is sufficiently important to spend time in order to find the best course of action; and thus people create shortcuts that save effort – or in terms of cognitive limitations – where capacity limitations prevent the decision maker from acting rational, and force her to rely on heuristics. The authors add, that accuracy-effort trade-off heuristics are often 'touted as a potentially universal law of cognition' (2011: 457).

With regard to the (above mentioned) less-is-more effect, the authors argue that a new conception is required in order to explain why people rely on heuristics. While the classical explanation is that people apply heuristics to save effort, the study of ecological rationality (heuristics) intends to understand 'in which environments a given strategy is better than other strategies' whereas the authors put emphasis on 'better – not best –because in large worlds the optimal strategy is unknown' (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011, p 456). With this,

[56] a subcategory being so called 'one-good-reason' heuristics Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier (2011, p 455)

> '[a] heuristic is ecologically rational to the degree that it is adapted to the structure of the environment.' (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011, p 457 quoting Gigerenzer & Todd 2001, p 13)

However, the authors (2011) stress on the fact that in order to build a science of heuristics a systematic theory of the building blocks of heuristics does not exist and is yet to be completed, calling for 'further progress [that] requires a theoretical framework that reaches beyond a list of heuristics' (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier 2011, p 456). As yet, as a first step, three building blocks of heuristics have been proposed, in order to theorize the construction of heuristics from the point of view of organizing principles. According to Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier 'many but not all' (2011: 456) heuristics contain of three elements:

> 1. Search rules specify in what direction the search extends in the search space.
> 2. Stopping rules specify when the search is stopped.
> 3. Decision rules specify how the final decision is reached.[57] (Gigerenzer and Gaissmaier 2011: 456)

The authors add that '[t]he collection of heuristics and building blocks an individual [...] has at its disposal for constructing heuristics, together with the core mental capacities that building blocks exploit, has been called the adaptive toolbox' (ibid.).

In summary, in psychological term, heuristics are simplifying, efficient rules, learned by the individual, that have been proposed to explain how decisions or judgements are made, and problems solved. These rules are typically applied when individuals are facing complex problems or situations with incomplete information.

Within the context of this chapter, this section has drawn on theories of heuristics in order to provide theoretical elaborations which are consistently adding to the development of a framework that mobilizes 'conventions' and 'bricolage' (section 3.4. and 3.5.), explaining how agents – internally – negotiate multiple options and constraints of practice and action in everyday life. 'Heuristics' adds to this framework the understanding of shortcuts and the role of shortcuts in decision making processes and processes of problem-solving.

[57] According to the authors, this list of building blocks is incomplete and requires further elaboration.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter brings together practice sociology and the French conventions theory. The 'standard' point of view of contemporary sociology of practice tends to focus at 'single' domains of practice (such as eating, travelling, householding etc.). However, this does not sufficiently theoretically account for the empirical findings. The unit of analysis of theories' of practice is the practice. With regard to the empirical work, theories of practice inform the understanding of practices as such but also the interrelation between practices and various constraints such as surrounding socio-technical infrastructures.

However, in my primary research the empirics have shown it is very much the individuals wanting to change their practices or perform particular actions across a whole range of different consumption domains in order to act in a way that they think is more sustainable. Considering this, reflections on the primary research have called for a way to combine a 'practice' point of view across different consumption domains with an account that helps shed light on how subjects (e.g. individual actors or groups of actors) justify the changes or adaptions of their practices and actions, or – their 'doings'. The French theory of conventions has been used to embed subjects' values i.e. value claims – as expressed in their justifications – into practice and action, by highlighting subjects' references to 'orders of worth'. Also, theoretical reflections on the primary research have suggested the need for theoretical explanations of how practitioners 'muddle through' everyday decision making by negotiating socio-technical constraints, uncertainties and non-trivial contradictions 'as best they can' in order to carry on making decisions and living lives which approximate to the 'best they can' in terms of putting sustainability into practice across multiple domains. This has brought in theories of bricolage and heuristics.

Theories of practice provide a conceptual framework for this study to take into account the nexus of how doings and sayings relate to each other in terms of mental activities, bodily activities, knowledge (in the form of practitioner's understanding), and know-how. Further, 'practices' in this study are understood as routinized behaviours that are constituted by the interplay of different elements and activities: Mental and bodily activities' interplay with objects – all together in terms of 'things and their use'. In other

words, 'practice' is taken as the dimension of analysing daily life in this study. The shortcomings of theories of practice in regard to the purposes of this study are best allocated in their missing intention to account for the individual as an agent of change (though some attempts have been undertaken lately e.g. by Spaargaren & Oosterveer (2010)). As practice is the unit of analysis, there is no requirement within theories of practice to account for agency as a theoretical source of changing practices. With this however, theories of practices did not sufficiently theoretically account for what the empirical analysis has found.

The empirical findings suggest that practices and actions are considered by the individual agent with regard to notions of worth – conceptualized as 'conventions' from the point of view of conventions theories. Such notions appear to shape practices and evoke actions in everyday life. This finding contradicts the predominant assumption of theories of practice which denies a link between individual values and action i.e. values and practice. Yet, the review of the French conventions theory in its recent stage of development raises the question of whether Truninger's 'green' orders of worth – as a category – bring in and add new qualities, or just entangle the existing spectrum of conventions rather than unpacking them. Both questions, as it seems, can be answered with 'yes'. 'Green' orders of worth on the one hand entangle and consist of other orders of worth. On the other hand, this reflects the complexity and entanglement of justifications for 'green' or sustainable practices which agents are facing.

Mobilizing 'conventions' in order to shed light on how individual decisions are justified (in terms of orders of worth), then raises questions for theoretical accounts to explain how people actually do what they think they ought do – in the face of a world that is constrained in multiple ways. Lévi-Strauss' theory of bricolage provides an account of how agents 'muddle through' towards their objectives under the conditions of limited resources such as knowledge, time, access, materials, skills, or other capacities, in order to make the best of what is at hand at the circumstance given. The empirical analysis shows that finding 'the best' solution at times can be a demanding endeavour to the individual, which itself requires investment (of resources such as time, intellectual capacities, money etc.). It has shown that individuals, in order to navigate their way through multiplex options, in some cases use decision making shortcuts. This

has brought in the concept of heuristics, which theorizes experience-based techniques for problem solving, learning, and discovery; showing that – where an exhaustive search, for whatever reasons, is impractical – heuristic methods are used to shortcut the processes of finding satisfactory solutions. In other words, heuristics are seen as strategies using readily accessible, though loosely applicable, information in order to solve problems. However, within this study the concept of heuristics is not taken to question psychological processes, but rather fitted into a sociological understanding of how decisions are made in a complex and often contradictory environment.

Chapter 4. Sustainable Consumption Practices and Justifications

[I'm] striving to be a sustainable consumer
even though I think that´s an oxymoron as a term
within the context of a Western economy
that makes being sustainable virtually impossible.
(John, Interviewee (see appendix))

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on how people who claim to be committed to living sustainably work through the difficulties, contradictions and problems of sustainable consumption 'in practice'. With the attempt to get beneath the surface of how people 'do' sustainable consumption interviewees were asked to discuss their values, actions and practices in the three domain areas of (1) food provisioning and consumption; (2) mobility, travelling and commuting; and (3) householding. It therefore investigates the intersect of individuals values – understood as 'conventions' in the sense of Boltanski and Thévenot (2000) – and actions in three different domains of consumption. It seeks to systematically disentangle the variety of practices and practical limitations to understand how these practices relate to domains of consumption and conventions. Doing so it provides an analytical overview of how orders of worth, actions and domains of consumption relate to each other at a specific point in time in the life of 37 individuals[58]. In this sense the analysis operates from a snapshot point of view. The analysis attempts to understand the articulation between conventions and action and how this translates into daily life of individuals in terms of variety, consistency and coherence, but also tensions between action options and the ways people manage them. In particular, this refers to questions such as: How do individuals and groups navigate their way through pro-environmental stances and its related action? What and where are the conflicts and how are compromises negotiated and justified? How do values and actions relate to different domains of consumption? Both interview samples 1 and 2 have been included in the analysis. The main empirical contribution of this chapter is to show the wide variety of ways in which people – who consider themselves to be consciously aiming to live more sustainable – live out their sustainability claims;

[58] 37 individuals have been interviewed for this study.

and how they manage, enact, and justify their decisions as consistent with what they think is more sustainable than other .

Consumption domains provide the analytical structure for this chapter. The findings have been structured starting from analysing cases which involve only one domain of consumption ('Single Domains' sections 4.2.1.; 4.2.2.; 4.2.3.), moving on to analyse where two or more domains interact ('Crosscutting Domains' section 4.2.4.) in terms of how their implications influence and shape particular practices and actions at the intersect of the domains. The interview material has been analysed and organised with regard to the three consumption domains eating and food provisioning (section 4.2.1.); householding (section 4.2.2); and mobility and transportation (section 4.2.3.). These domains constitute differentiated ordering devices for understanding how conventions (in the sense of orders of worth) are translated into practice.[59] Each of the domain areas contains descriptions of how interviewees establish and sustain consistencies between their claims and consequential practical actions[60], and how interviewees handle and justify their contradictions, demonstrating how heuristics (in the sense of decision making shortcuts) mediate between normativities, conventions and action.

4.2. Findings

This section is structured around different practices of eating, food provisioning, and also wider practices and actions around food, for example preparing food, storing food, and handling food waste. Section 4.2.1.1. picks up on the 'organic' aspect of food in general, as this topic has been mentioned frequently throughout the interviews. Section 4.2.1.2. pulls together findings on the topic of dairy, meat and other animal product, as this topic has shown to feature some particular aspects throughout the interviews. Section 4.2.1.3. draws on food waste in general, and the reduction of waste that is associated with food, such as for example food packaging.

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[59] This helps reflecting and understanding subject's efforts to translate normativities (multiple preferred visions of how they would like the world to be) and their role as citizen-consumers within it, and therein refers to the following chapters.

[60] In fact, since the fieldwork is largely based on non-observant fieldwork, the actual actions have not been observed, with exception of the Cornish co-housing community I was able to observe practical actions. I lived with the community for 3 weeks to conduct my interviews and so I had the chance to do some 'thick' ethnographic observation as well. Anyway, the majority of interviews for this study contains action claims only, in the sense that I have to rely on what interviewees claim to do.

4.2.1. Single Domains 1: Eating and Food Provisioning

4.2.1.1. Organic Food in General

There are some typical actions in the domain of eating and food provisioning that tend to be carried out rather commonly by the interviewees. As might be expected, all of the interviewees discussed purchasing organic food. However, the extent to which someone would be willing to consider non-organic alternatives varies. It varies between rather radical stances where organic food would be the only possible option to buy (e.g. 'I only buy organic or fair trade' (Maggi); 'I restrict myself to the organic-section [in a supermarket] indeed. This is almost fascistic' (Elias)), and more intermediate and differentiated positions where 'organic' is considered preferable but not considered the one and only choice possible (e.g. 'I make an effort where I can but I haven't totally renounced everything that is not green cause I don't think you can' (Lorelai)). In cases where interviewees claim to be rather radical in purchasing organic food the most common justification is that 'organic' to them stands for the triad of health concerns, environmental concerns and the perceived taste i.e. the perceived quality. In most cases interviewees do not give clear preferences, or slightly shift their preferences depending on different products, so that overall there is an intentional effort made to balance out the three elements within the triad. The three elements of health, environmental concerns and perceived quality can be said to weight equal. The interviewee Mary for example gives evidence of this balance. When asked whether her purchasing decision would be a matter of health, taste or any kind of ecological footprint, she responds that '[i]t's probably a mixture of all. I don´t think one of them individually would make me change my purchasing but a combination'.

When Kathryn saw the 2005 movie *We Feed The World* (see also chapter 6) which criticizes the practices of globalized industrial food production she became aware that there is not only an environmental but also a social dimension of food production that runs up and down all along the supply chain into the supermarket. She finds the social conditions of migrant workers in many parts of the world totally unacceptable, and has

drawn the conclusion to limit her own purchase options to certain principles. So for example she would not buy Spanish strawberries any longer.[61] In general, now she tries to limit her fruit and vegetable choices to seasonal produce. Her second decision is to give preference to local, regional, or national produce. An apple that has been shipped from New Zealand to Europe is 'scandalous' for her. When buying organic bread from a local bakery Kathryn has the impression of doing something reasonable even though it is much more expensive than bread from the supermarket, as the following quote illustrates:

> 'I buy organic bread because I have the feeling to do something reasonable even if it's more expensive [...] reasonable because it is healthy, and it consists of better ingredients, [...] and because it helps support the local organic bakery' (Kathryn)

She finds it reasonable firstly because she considers organic bread as healthier, secondly because she thinks it has a better flavour and thirdly because she can support a local business. Kathryn's case is an interesting example of how different conventions interact and compete with each other. Civic conventions apply within her concern about social conditions of workers. At the same time she considers environmental (green) conventions when it comes to ecological implication of Mediterranean greenhouse fruit production or carbon footprints of overseas fruit. Both opinion and domestic conventions come into play when Kathryn is considering the health effect of organic produce and effect on local businesses. Finally she applies inspirational conventions referring to the (better) taste of organic bread. However, Kathryn does not draw any final conclusion in this example.

Elias considers himself 'almost fascistic' when it comes to buying organic food and other products such as cosmetics. At the same time he would also purchase conventional products if there was no provision of other. Overall, for his everyday ordinary purchases he combines green orders of worth with opinion orders of worth (which can also be interpreted as a pro-environmental heuristic in the sense of 'good is what ecologically beneficial' with a heuristic of health benefits).

> 'For the rest, I restrict myself to the organic-section [in a supermarket] indeed. This is almost fascistic, and it is nerve racking sometimes because they only provide five different sorts of cheese.

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[61] In addition to her concerns about African guest workers' working conditions Kathryn thinks that the way fruit are commercially grown in Andalusia uses up too much of the local water resources which endangers local and regional eco systems.

> If there are no organic products available I will purchase from a conventional supermarket. [...] Anyway, we're suffering on a high level. Actually, we spend an insane amount of money on food and we really buy every nick-nack from the organic shop, be it spices, sauces, tofu or cheese.' (Elias)

In general, interviewees do not particularly relate concerns about climate change and carbon emissions with organic food as such. Yet, they do closely relate carbon emissions with the provenance[62] of any kind of food[63]. However, they do worry about other environmental issues in the chain of food production such as the use of pesticides, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity, soil, and pollution of water or air. Those concerns fall into the overlapping grounds of both civic and green conventions. Obviously, in the given cases market conventions - where worth is located in price – rank somewhere behind the triad of organic food conventions (health referring to opinion, environment referring to green, and flavour i.e. quality referring to inspirational). For just a few interviewees the strongest limitations to purchasing organic food are of economic nature. Interviewees with relatively lower income, for example young families with children, point out money being an issue ('We don't always eat organic food because it's expensive' (Benjamin)) while those who are financially well off frequently mention that they are able and willing to pay an extra amount of money to get what they consider healthier, better tasting, or better for the environment ('For me, it is not necessarily a financial barrier, I don't mind to pay an extra 10 pence or something like this on a product' (Natalie)).

As shown in Christopher's example, a possible approach to deal with the issue of higher prices for organic food is to buy less in total. In this case interviewees still refer to market conventions yet at the same time they implicitly undermine market conventions by giving preference to the conglomerate of conventions of (a.) opinion

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[62] 'Provenance, from the French *provenir*, 'to come from', refers to the chronology of the ownership or location of a historical object. The term was originally mostly used for works of art, but is now used in similar senses in a wide range of fields, including science and computing. [...] In most fields, the primary purpose of provenance is to confirm or gather evidence as to the time, place, and—when appropriate—the person responsible for the creation, production, or discovery of the object. This will typically be accomplished by tracing the whole history of the object up to the present. Comparative techniques, expert opinions, and the results of scientific tests may also be used to these ends, but establishing provenance is essentially a matter of documentation.' (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Provenance (visited: June 16th 2012)

[63] (see section 4.2.4.)

('less is better'), (b.) inspiration ('better taste' / aesthetic experience), and (c.) green orders of worth (less consumption equals less carbon emissions)[64].

Throughout the interviews it seems that all interviewees are aware of the limited impacts of their personal purchases on changing the structures of market provision as much as on the environment. Hence, interviewees in most cases buy organic food, on the conscious base of doing something that to them has a good, but very limited impact.

4.2.1.2. Dairy, Meat & Other Animal Products

As mentioned, interviewees do not generally associate organic products with carbon. However, in some cases they do. Five interviewees draw a connecting line between dairy products and carbon, whereas 17 interviewees directly refer to the issue of meat production and carbon emissions. Out of the five, two interviewees (Marc and William) have directly cut down their consumption of dairy products while referring primarily to carbon emissions caused by dairy production. Two others (Anna and Emily) have cut down on dairy for health reasons such as lactose intolerance primarily but draw on reduced carbon emissions as a positive side effect of their diet. One interviewee (Gerald) avoids eating pasteurized dairy for he thinks it's healthier for him, mentioning that he appreciates the fact of un-pasteurized products having a smaller carbon footprint than pasteurized. So overall, the combination of civic and green orders of worth with conventions of opinion can be said to be prevalent in the case of meat and dairy products.

The topic of meat polarizes interviewee's opinions in the sense that interviewees are either vegetarian, or provide quite specific justifications of why and under which conditions they eat meat. Throughout the interviews nineteen interviewees explicitly speak about this topic. Among them one lives on vegetarian, and one on vegan diet.

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[64] While some interviewees mention having had difficulty to find appropriate organic food products in the past years when organic food was not so commonly spread, there does not seem to be much of a barrier recently to the access and availability of organic choices so that the argument of lacking provision through the market runs out of evidence. At least in the cities it does. The only interviewees living in a rural area are the co-housing community. Their solutions to limited access will be discussed separately under the transport and travel section (see section 4.2.4.).

The major concerns with meat are carbon emissions that result from meat production, and animal welfare, followed by personal health concerns[65]. William provides a clear account of his way to deal with the topic:

> 'I really just learned about meat having a high-carbon footprint - a meat meal having that and I'm a big meat-eater. So, we try to be vegetarians three or four nights a week. [...] It definitely impacts my decisions, but it doesn't dictate my decisions.' (William)

Carbon emission is a dominating topic with meat, remarkably much more among those interviewees who purchase their meat (which excludes the co-housing members to some extent who keep animals for meat supply). So interviewees elaborate ways to reduce their meat consumption without having to fully exclude it. Marc sums up his view of the problematic of meat and dairy products and carbon emissions in the following way:

> 'Now what I consume has a big impact on my footprint so, red meat and dairy is part of my diet, a small part of my diet but it represents the biggest climate change impact. There are things I can do in my diet that will reduce the impact, but I won't be able to continue to increase the footprint of the consumption of my food' (Marc)

However, Marc's account is not fully clear. Natalie provides a clearer account, allocating her dominant attention on carbon emissions which can be interpreted as a reference to civic/green conventions. She backs up her civic/green order of worth by referring to the local sourcing of her meat supply, and the positive effect for the local community (both domestic conventions), when buying meat from the local butcher. In addition, the local butcher provides a surplus of convenience to her (inspirational conventions) since she gets exactly the amount of meat she wants:

> 'So I am thinking about carbon ahead of other environmental considerations but I do consider it wider sustainability for about water use for example [...] animal welfare is quite a long way down the list for me because [...] certainly in our country that we already very well managed and under control. [...] So we like to buy our meat from the local butcher rather than the supermarket partly because it supports the local community business and partly [...] because right on the counter they can always cut the exact amount that you need. And you don't have to buy a big pack. So, that's a nice service as well.' (Natalie)

In another example, Natalie draws upon a different association, highlighting a connection between lower carbon emissions and positive health effects due to the reduction of meat consumption. Again, this is an example of how different conventions are being mobilized together to manifest in specific actions. In the following example,

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[65] This is not approved to be a hierarchical order in quantitative terms.

the consequential action is to reduce meat consumption. The orders of worth that Natalie draws upon are civic/green orders (carbon emissions) and orders of opinion (meat not being healthy).

> 'I'm very conscious particularly on the food side (what we're eating). Not from a low-calorie diet point of view but overall I recognize that we eat too much protein today in our society and too much dairy. So that is affecting, from a health point of view, as well as sustainability point of view I recognized that is closely tied in with carbon emissions. [...] it is starting to affect our purchasing decisions and I think health and carbon have some relationship there. So carbon is important to me as well' (Natalie)

Elias refers to different conventions to justify his way of handling meat consumption. He emphasizes on animal welfare and animal husbandry and combines this with the notion of luxury, in a way that he would allow himself a treat when buying organic meat. This to him trumps other pro-environmental (i.e. civic and green) conventions, as he mentions that organic animal breeding is likely to use up more resources than industrial breeding.

> 'And from time to time, I buy myself a nice piece of organic meat. Actually, this is the biggest luxury we indulge on ourselves. In this case it is clearly a preference. [...] Paradoxically, with meat it was an ethical decision, I mean, you still have to kill the animals [...] So with meat I am still very very picky, and usually I would reject it [if it was not organic] if I am invited or in a restaurant. [...] what I don't want is that these things [the animals] have lived their lives under terrible circumstances.' (Elias)

Being very knowledgeable about this topic, Marc sees himself confronted directly between competing notions so that in the following quote we see the interviewee applying various heuristic rules of thumbs:

> '[B]attery chicken has a lower carbon footprint than a free-range chicken, and yet most people would agree, and I personally believe, that the animal welfare issue there is more important. It's a personal view derived from a set of values that are very personal to me, and not everyone will agree with that. Some people will think climate trumps animal welfare others won't care and will only think about price.' (Marc)

In this example, concerns about carbon emissions - associated with both, civic or green conventions – work against concerns of animal welfare, which, with reference to Truninger (2005), falls into the array of green conventions. Marc for himself comes down with the conclusion that

> 'the evidence with organic is that in some areas organic is better than conventional farming from a climate perspective, while in others its worse, but it's quite close and there are good reasons for favouring organic methods of production, but climate change mitigation is probably not a good reason for it' (Marc).

This in itself can most likely be understood as a vague reference to opinion conventions, to solve the dilemmatic situation.

In face of competing conventions the importance of heuristics (in terms of decision making shortcuts) grows. Samantha for example points out that her purchasing decisions depend on the availability of time which varies between working days and weekends:

> 'Meat and things I am sort of wondering. I am on a sort of line between of buying standard and buy something organic or free range. It depends if it is on the weekend and it is a proper meal I might buy organic. If it is just sort of during the week I'm trying to quickly make something. I don't care too much actually. But I would never buy the cheapest.' (Samantha)

Her decision making shortcut simply is 'not-buy-the-cheapest' by which she merely refers to criterion of quality. Doing so she most likely applies conventions of opinion (e.g. branded food to be more reliable) and inspiration (e.g. assuming certain aesthetic features of food such as smell, taste etc.). Meanwhile, Mia uses 'organic' labelling as a decision making shortcut for her meat purchasing activities, even though, her statement does not provide clear accounts of what she refers to, e.g. trust, local communities (domestic conventions), short ways of transport and hence fewer carbon emissions, or ecological standards of production (civic/green conventions). Likely to assume it is a mixture of all:

> 'Where meat comes from, I think the organic label is very useful when you go to the supermarkets because you know the provenance. Although, you don't know the farm, you know a certain set of standards are working (Mia)

In contrast, Benjamin argues for holding up aesthetic values (inspirational conventions) against other potential concerns. He argues that '[t]he way that farming is done in this country sustains the landscape that [...][he] love[s]'. He prefers to sustain the aesthetic of the Cornish countryside over concerns with meat and meat production, or vegetarism. In his words this reads as follows:

> 'Our diet, we eat meat... not sustainable as far as I'm concerned. We should all be eating lentils and things...so, but I like meat. The way that farming is done in this country sustains the landscape that I love so... it would change dramatically if we didn't eat meat' (Benjamin)

Finally, two interviewees claim to be either vegetarian or vegan. Kathryn mobilizes a set of different conventions to explain her decisions to be vegetarian. On the one hand she refers to her social environment in saying that by a certain time many of her friends were vegetarian which created a supportive situation for her to also be vegetarian. In addition Kathryn draws on energy and records or carbon emissions of meat production, and finds that it is simply too much energy required to produce meat. Further, she sees

a problem in how animals are bred and treated with hormones and other medication on an industrial scale of meat production. Interpreting Kathryn's statement from the point of view of conventions looks as follows: Following her friend's advice to become vegetarian (or maybe simply adapting to the majority of her friends), Kathryn implicitly highlights the role of interpersonal relationships, and so refers to domestic orders of worth. Then civic or green conventions (expressed in the concern about carbon emissions) add to this consideration as Kathryn reflects about the energy requirement of meat production. Finally, a combination possibly of green conventions (animal welfare) and opinion conventions (health) complete her decision to being vegetarian. In Kathryn's own word, this reads as follows:

> 'I'm vegetarian, because by a certain time I knew many people who were vegetarian too. And then it just suggests itself. [...] Also I didn't like the taste anymore, especially pork. [...]and the most crucial argument I found not to eat any meat is the incredible amount of energy it requires to produce meat [...] so on a perspective of energy record I find it impossible to justify eating meat. The amount of energy needed it extremely high [...] and then you have the problematic of hormone treatment, medication and antibiotics. With organic meat it is different, of course. But there on the other hand I find its too much of an effort. [...] first of all it is expensive and then you have to look out to get it. So in terms of a practical decision I find it easier to say in principle 'I don't eat meat!' (Kathryn)

Kathryn holds an explicit hierarchy of values to justify her decision to being vegetarian. If she would eat meat she would prefer organic produce. According to a statement she makes in the interview, the weakest arguments to being vegetarian is that she thinks (1) it is too exhausting to find good quality of meat from reliable sources that has been grown under conditions she would accept. She just finds it is too much of a hassle to permanently look out for access to these sources, even though they are available here and there. But even if available she thinks (2) that the meat she would like to buy is too expensive. Kathryn has also figured (3) that meat, especially pork, smells when it is being fried or cooked. She doesn't find this very appealing at all. Some stronger reasons to her are (4) that most of her friends are vegetarians and since she often cooks and eats together with her friends she simply finds it easier and more convenient to also be vegetarian. It is also easier and more convenient (5) to stick to her vegetarian policy when she is being invited for meals rather than asking whether the hosts would mind to serve organic meat. In this sense Kathryn finds strong reasons to justify her vegetarianism. Another strong reason to her is (6) that animals, especially if they originate from conventional breeding, have usually been treated overly with hormones

and other drugs such as antibiotics. Explicitly, the strongest argument for Kathryn's vegetarianism is that she finds it requires far too much energy to produce meat both in relative terms of output and inputs as in absolute terms of total energy usage per unit of meat. In relation to the carbon emissions she finds this simply irresponsible and unjustifiable. Given that she has to consider this variety of weaker and stronger reasons Kathryn has created a simplifying heuristic in saying that in terms of daily life practice it is much easier for her to say there are many good reasons to be vegetarian rather than having to decide each time anew whether to eat meat or not.

4.2.1.3. Food Waste & Waste Reduction

Food waste and the reduction of waste is an important topic throughout the interviews. Some of the interviewees take the topic of waste very seriously and try to change or adapt their daily practices and actions in order to reduce waste, i.e. to waste less. Waste in this sense is either understood in terms of materials (e.g. packaging) that can be wasted, or broadly in terms of resources such as energy or water. Throughout the interviews, interviewees hold different approaches to being less wasteful.

Many interviewees describe how they have adjusted the ways they are *planning meals and buying food* in order to be what they consider more environmentally friendly. They claim to be planning more thoroughly than before and buy less in total or buy more purposeful than before. William, Christopher and Natalie have consciously changed the way they handle food, either in purchasing, or preparing their food. Before he had developed an awareness of the problematic of food waste, William used to buy more food than the family actually needed, and so, according to his own statement, a lot was wasted on a regular base:

> '[W]e actually did have so much food waste. You'd buy a 12-pack of yogurts for example, I don't eat yogurts anymore. You'd buy a 12-pack of yogurts because they were 'buy two for one', and then five would go off and you'd throw them out because you don't want eat dairy when it's off really. It's just been that slight change in behaviour. So now it's planned out before our shopping trip' (William)

William and his wife have changed their wasteful shopping practices. They are now 'planning the meals thoroughly instead of just buying randomly' (William). Consequentially, they have stopped buying food on offer such as 'buy two get one free'

offers. Likewise, Christopher finds that in the past he used to buy more then he and his family actually needed. He reports having reduced the frequency of shopping now from weekly to every three weeks:

> '[W]e used to over-buy as a family, and throw stuff away. Probably as a result of the economy being what it is, but also I think where I'm coming from an environmental perspective, thinking about eating what we've got in the fridge. We probably used to do a shop every week, we probably now do a shop every three weeks. '[...] It balances itself out in that way.' (Christopher)

Christopher is convinced of the idea of eating food with 'organic' labelling, even though it is slightly more expensive. With his idea of 'balancing out' Christopher applies a heuristic shortcut. In the sense that to him stopping to over-buy and waste is considerably a bad thing to do. It also implies that to him 'organic' food is worth buying less food for a price of what he would have to pay for a larger amount of conventional food.

Natalie considers herself 'conscious of food waste' (Natalie) and so limits her purchases to 'buy[ing] what we need'. Meanwhile she reports having adapted her cooking activities so now rather than using recipes from cookbooks she and her family would 'try to cook what we've got' in order to 'try to avoid throwing anything away' (Natalie).

Throughout the interviews it shows that almost all subjects attempt to *reduce the amount of energy they use* (and be more energy efficient) by adjusting their practices of food preparation. Trying to save energy is a common aspiration amongst the interviewees. In terms of energy-use, linked with food in particular it turns out that some interviewees, even though they are aware of the limited impact, seek to count even the smallest amounts of energy saving as victories in their attempt to reduce their carbon footprint. To William 'It's all these little things. [...] [like] putting the lid on the pan when you're boiling [...] [or] [u]sing the right amount of water in the kettle' that make a difference. Similarly, Lorelai points out these are relatively new activities to her that have obviously come along with her attempt to reduce energy use where possible:

> '[B]oiling enough water that you need, putting the lids on, that sort of pittance, they're things that I wouldn't [have done] necessarily before' (Lorelai)

The picture that is drawn here by the interviewees shows how incremental change becomes incorporated in routinely practice.

The aim to *waste less* also applies to *food packaging and other material waste*. Lorelai for example would always prefer to bring in her own lunch box rather than buy packaged sandwiches to work. In addition, she highlights the fruitful combination of reducing costs (market orders of worth) and reducing waste (civic/green orders of worth) by using her own cup for coffee at work:

> 'So in work here we have disposable cups, if you buy a cup of tea you get a disposable cup that you throw away. I'd bring my mug in and make my own cups of tea...and that's a cost saver as well but I prefer it. It means I'm not chucking four cups away a day.' (Lorelai)

Meanwhile, Natalie focuses on her opportunities to reduce packaging while shopping in the supermarket, stating that she is 'particularly focused on waste and landfill':

> 'I try to minimize packaging. So, if I can buy fruit and vegetable loose and I take my bags to pack them in I can avoid trays and packaging and things.' (Natalie)

Mary gives an example of how she combines and utilizes both the claims of healthy living and carbon footprint reduction to justify her sustainable practices. She would always have her own bottle with her to drink tap water which has a much lower carbon footprint than bottled water. Also she doesn't appreciate processed food for she thinks fresh food is both healthier and less carbon intensive.

> 'MARY: Normally I have a water bottle with me. Today's not very good. I forgot it. My everyday consumption...I think the biggest thing is that we eat out quite a bit. But all about food I attempt to buy products which have been made not necessarily with sustainability in mind but with lower, you know, organic or [?] fair trade or ethical products. I'm trying to avoid tinned and processed food. INTERVIEWER: And would that be a matter of health or taste or footprints? MARY: It's probably a mixture of all [...]. I don´t think one of them individually would make me change my purchasing but a combination of I see that it's healthier to [...] to eat un-processed food but also that I see there is a great carbon footprint associated already with things that are [...] highly processed.' (Mary)

In this example, environmental conventions are working alongside domestic conventions to support food practices which have been constituted as sustainable. Again, these are examples of how interviewees make an effort to figure out how to almost incrementally achieve tiny reductions, and so have little influence within the given system of provision.

Not only the waste caused by food packaging but also, and even more, the actual *waste of food (leftovers)* is very much a matter of concern and attention among some of the interviewees. Three interviewees say they are actively handling left-over food in

particular ways.[66] Lorelai for example keeps left-overs and brings them in for lunch to work next day 'rather than throwing them away'(Lorelai), or she would freeze left-overs to keep it for later. To her it is almost self-explaining now to 'bring a lunch box in rather than buy sandwiches that I'm always throwing the packages away' (Lorelai). Likewise, James mentions to be 'quite good with leftovers' so that, speaking for the co-housing community, he feels 'sure that we eat quite a proportion of what comes in'. Also, James tries to slightly adapt his way of cooking in order to make use of left-overs, even when he cooks a fresh meal:

> '[A]part from the food side, I try to live simply. I try to not waste stuff. For instance when I'm cooking here I tend to, as much as possible, try to use what's been used before, whereas other people try to just cook fresh all the time. And that's good, but I think if there's stuff that needs to be used up, use it up' (James)

Left-over food obviously is seen as a useful resource by some of the interviewees that is worth being made use of rather than just thrown away.

4.2.2. Single Domains 2: Householding

Within and around the household interviewees have found various ways to change or adapt and perform actions sustainability in practice. Further, is seems from the interviews that energy consumption is at the centre of gravity of concern which, is encircled by different practices and actions that split up into the areas of energy provisioning; the use of electric light; washing and cleaning; personal hygiene; and heating and house insulation. Other topics of concern, and hence areas of practice and action are aesthetics; waste; followed by some general issues. Within these topics interviewees do not primarily refer to energy as their main concern. Here, energy is one among a list of issues such as resource use in general.

4.2.2.1. Energy Provisioning

Many of the interviewees' practices and actions around and within the household are related to energy, and energy saving. On the one hand, interviewees attempt to be

[66] It has to be pointed out that the analytical focus is singularly on the domain of food here, and that this topic is picked upon again in the Crosscutting Domains section.

more efficient with energy; on the other hand, many interviewees are concerned about the sourcing i.e. origin of the energy itself in terms of their suppliers.

Regarding their *energy supply* several interviewees consider switching, or have switched to various kinds of 'green' or ethical energy suppliers. Brian for example, without providing any further details, says he is 'on a green tariff with a company of that I think from what I can see is the most ethical or all of the green tariff companies'.

> But then you can still tell me that that helps but it's not a solution, that there is a lot of other environmental issues and even carbon emissions associated with it because it's not all, I don't say it's not a green tariff, but the way the system works does not allow it to be completely right there. [...] My energy bill per year, my total electricity and gas is about £300. So that relates to my total footprint. (Brian)

Marc would love to create his own energy, but finds himself limited by the fact that he lives in middle of a big city (Edinburgh) with not much space on the roof for solar panels or PV, and no chance at all for other technologies to generate energy such as wind turbines etc.. However, he receives his energy renewably sourced.

Isabella has switched her energy supplier to express her frustration with the outcomes of the 2009 Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Doing so she implicitly refers to civic and green conventions, while market conventions (price) play a subordinate role to her:

> 'I've just switched bioelectricity to a green energy supply because it was coming up to Copenhagen and I was feeling so depressed and I thought I just had to do something and I'm taking steps to do that and I just switched to a green energy electricity supply [...] I just didn't like the idea I was using stuff from coal power stations and when my supply from hydroelectric power but they weren't really actively shifting away from coal power so I felt that was one of the main things [...] it costs a bit more money but I can afford to do that' (Isabella)

A similar consideration is stated by Christopher who, by the time of the interview, was planning to switch his energy supply to a 'green energy provider'. His argument for switching is slightly different from Isabella's argument. To Christopher and his family, 'spending a bit more' balances out 'because we're spending less since we've got the temperature [in the house] at four degrees lower' which than makes it affordable again. Regarding his personal energy consumption he holds a heuristic that can be described as 'the less the better', again, using environmental conventions to justify these practices.

The co-housing community also receive their energy from renewable resources as stated by Anna and Benjamin. In addition, Anna highlights the fact that the supplier provides energy that is produced in a de-centralized way by private households[67]:

> 'we've used an electricity company that provides I think quite a lot of its energy is made by other people and fed into the grid. So they're using good energy they call it. And it is, they don't buy electricity from non-sustainable sources if they can help it, so that's important.' (Anna)

Both Christopher and Lorelai use energy monitor systems to check on their energy use. Both were given the systems by their employer, and report that these systems have helped them to raise an awareness of the actual consumption of energy for the monitors show immediately when an electric device is turned on, and how much energy it consumes.

Mary is 'a bit restricted on services' (Mary) because she lives in a rental property where she's 'not allowed to change electricity and gas suppliers'. Other interviewees also mention this to be an issue as they'd prefer to switch the supplier. Both Samantha and Eve provide an example where market conventions (in terms of costs) outweigh other potential conventions. Samantha lives in a shared house with other young professionals like herself. They try to save energy where possible. Their choice for energy supply is 'based on cost' (Samantha).

4.2.2.2. Use of Electric Light

The use of electric light[68] is a topic of concern to many interviewees. To Eve it is not all new to use low energy light bulbs and she does not consider herself 'too far off the norm' (Eve) with it, since she thinks 'the norm has shifted in [her] direction'. For her, at the core, 'it would generally be an awareness of lights and leaving things on and trying to shut things down' (Eve) that makes the difference when it comes to energy saving in the house. Both using low energy light bulbs and turning off lights when not needed are common things to do for some of the interviewees in daily life. Samantha tries to

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[67] It is worth mentioning that right by the time when the interviews were conducted the co-housing community was having planning meetings with an energy company to install wind turbines on their land.

[68] 'An electric light is a device that produces light by the flow of electric current. It is the most common form of artificial lighting and is essential to modern society, providing interior lighting for buildings and exterior light for evening and nighttime activities.' (source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electric_light (visited: January 2013))

always turn off lights as she goes around her flat to check. Likewise, William admits to be 'very passionate about turning lights off, not leaving things turned on when they're in the plugs, [and] taking out chargers' (William). To Christopher it is not only the renewal of light bulbs for the sake of saving energy. The following quote shows that his understanding of sustainable consumption is about balancing new (most likely energy efficient) devices against those that are (less efficient but) still in working order:

> '[W]e've fitted low-energy light bulbs across the house [...] I suppose what we've done is we've done it on a replacement basis. We haven't gone through, got rid of and wasted all the old ones, but wait until they run out. Again, get the balances right by creating more waste and saving and overdoing that' (Christopher)

With the above quote Christopher provides an example of how both civic/green and market conventions come together in practice. Another example is given by Grace who mentions having 'always had the energy bulbs and try and switch off and try not to use'. Grace justifies this, saying that she has 'always been conscientious of conserving because [...] not just of conserving energy but it keeps the costs down for ourselves'. It is likely to assume that by 'conserving energy' she refers to civic or green conventions.

4.2.2.3. Washing and Cleaning

With regard to *washing and cleaning*, interviewees point toward various potential actions, and adapt numerous practices within the household in the way they consider to be environmentally friendly. The practice of washing and drying laundry as well as cleaning in general provides a range of examples of this. To save energy some interviewees (e.g. Samantha and Natalie) have switched to washing their laundry at lower temperatures. Others say they are trying to be more thoughtful with how they use their washing machines and dishwashers, and make sure they only wash when the machines are completely full and so working to capacity (e.g. Natalie and William). Seven interviewees identify the tumble dryer as wasteful with energy. Therefore they try to use it as little as possible, or not at all. Instead, Samantha, Eve, Lorelai, Natalie, Grace and Joshua say they line dry their clothes whenever possible. William has chosen a different approach when buying a new machine that is more energy efficient:

> 'We bought a new tumble dryer and washing machine. So both times we looked at the energy efficiency [...] So you can really make a difference to the energy used at washing cycles over and over.' (William)

Either implicitly or explicitly, interviewees almost universally refer to orders of worth that are structured in a similar way, linking civic/green conventions with market conventions. Though in most cases, as to what interviewees claim, saving energy and reducing the carbon footprint ranks prior to saving money. In fact, saving money on energy appears to be strong motivator for most interviewees coupled to their attempt to reduce their carbon footprint. This, put in context with the fact that some interviewees, say they have switched to more expensive 'green' energy suppliers, makes it plausible from an analytic point of view that in the given cases market conventions rank subordinate or equally to other orders of worth such as civic or green orders.

Apart from the energy aspect there is the aspect of pollution caused by washing and cleaning. Natalie for example (likewise Emma) has switched to what she considers better cleaning products, stating to be 'choosing detergents and household cleaning products [from] natural brands less with heavy chemicals, less chlorine' (Natalie). Assumingly those products are more expensive than conventional cleaning products. This adds to a range of examples of where market conventions rank subordinate or equally to civic and green conventions. In fact, a distinct hierarchical order is difficult to identify, and it seen that most interviewees rather handle their 'orders' flexible.

4.2.2.4. Personal Hygiene

In the area of *personal hygiene* there are two different topics that have come up throughout the interviews. One is about body cleaning, and the other is about the use of water.

For Elias, it is explicitly the combination of ecological aspects and personal health that makes a difference when he considers products for his personal body cleaning, which makes the following quote another example of how combining orders of worth in daily life results in specific actions:

> 'What I really care for [...] is the combination of ecology and health: tooth paste without fluoride additives from the organic shop; I wash my hair with perfume-free shampoo [...] from the organic shop; I only use volcano earth to wash myself with. Actually, we are really ecological, over and over' (Elias)

The use of water for personal hygiene is another matter of consideration for some interviewees. Samantha mentions having changed her tooth brushing practice slightly: '[I] turn the tap off when I'm brushing my teeth unless I'm using it' (Samantha). This is an example of a marginal change. However, it shows that even at the micro level of everyday life interviewees make an attempt to change practices that are within their immediate range and within their comfort zone.

Noadiah from the co-housing community for example makes clear her stance on warm water, saying that she does not need a hot water system because she enjoys the refreshment of washing with cold water. In case she wants warm water for showering she would warm up a kettle.

> 'Hot water is an interesting subject, because I don't use hot water very much. I tend to always wash in cold water. I like to wash in cold water, because it is refreshing. If I am hot and sweaty and I have a hot shower, I end up feeling even more hot and sweaty. So, I quite like washing in cold water. Of course there are sometimes in the year when you can't wash in cold water, but then I am very happy just to heat a kettle or something. I don't particularly need huge tanks of hot water lying about in case I should want to wash myself.' (Noadiah)

From an analytical point of view the above quote highlights two different issues: It provides an example of how inspirational orders of worth (here: the aesthetic perception of refreshment) are put together obviously with civic/green orders of worth (in terms of saving energy). It also contains an implicit statement about *sufficiency*: Noadiah does not demand more comfort. An implicit statement about sufficiency is provided by Benjamin from the co-housing community who finds is wasteful to bath:

> 'We don't use so many baths down there. That's always a great waste of water and electricity.' (Benjamin)

Both his concerns about the wastage of water and electricity refer to civic and green orders of worth. Remarkably, the co-housing community follows a specific approach with their water supply: Along with their aspiration not to be wasteful with water they strongly favour the idea being independent from public provisioning which is why they are heading towards setting up their own water supply system including an independent sewage system. James sums it up in the following quote:

> 'One of the things that we have talked about doing, but we haven't done is improving the water supply getting our own boreholes and getting our own water rather than the main water. And, also moving . . . we have done it to an extent, but moving more towards air rating caps and all that sort

of thing so we are actually using less. Of course the whole reed bed[69] system going towards our waste getting more sustainable and the like, because we are not on main sewerage. We are off major sewerage.' (James)

The example of water supply can also be seen as an example of how groups differ from individuals in their range of potential actions: the group has set up its own infrastructures of provision which in many cases requires not just aspiration but financial capacities, technical knowledge, engineering capabilities and special skills. So in this case actions require certain practical competencies which makes the example of water an example of how groups manage to shift socio-technical limitations by setting up and establishing their own socio-technical infrastructures of provision.

4.2.2.5. Heating and Insulation

Heating and insulation is commonly known to have a big impact on household energy use. Consequentially, reducing the amount i.e. intensity of heating, and insulating the house are potential ways to save energy. Six interviewees report about their attempts and successes to save energy on heating their homes. Eve, Lorelai, and Benjamin consciously keep their heating low in the colder time of the year. They would rather wear an extra layer of cloth than turn the heater up. Benjamin and Lorelai articulate this in the most illustrative way:

'If we're cold we'll put a jumper on rather then turn the heat up, obviously we do use it when we have to.' (Lorelai)

'We certainly kept the heating to the minimum and we used a wood fire but a lot of the rooms weren't heated and we had to put a heater in the bedroom in the cold weather. We tried to insulate as much as we could.' (Benjamin)

Other than heating less or wearing an extra layer of clothing, Christopher puts emphasis on the technical i.e. energy efficiency of the heating system, which he claims he wouldn't have done in the past so much:

'we bought a boiler service every year [...] because there is some waste efficiency that comes from that. We have had a number of areas where we have had issues with our heating system. Having those fixed and looked at very quickly is something we probably wouldn't have done in the past. We would just have turned the heat up a bit to compensate, rather than have someone come in and

[69] 'Reed beds are natural habitats found in floodplains, waterlogged depressions and estuaries. [...] Artificial reed beds are used as a method of removing pollutants from grey water.' (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reed_bed (visited: March 2013))

> properly fix it [...] Yeah, simple things like that are worth it. So again, I'm not going to claim to be the most green person in the world but I think it's the little things.' (Christopher)

To Christopher it is the accumulation of many smaller impacts that are available under the given conditions which make him be a little more sustainable in his daily practices and actions. Though in his own estimation, more could be done. Considering this, he finds he could certainly be acting more 'green' but to him the accumulation of smaller action with incremental impact is what he is prepared to do.

Natalie and her husband 'have insulated our home as well as we possibly can and [installed] double glazing' (Natalie) to save energy in the house which they now heated with a wood burning stove. Home insulation however, usually requires an investment as it can be expensive. But William – providing a par excellence example of bricolage – has found an intermediate solution putting some extra insulation to his house, using scrap material that was at hand and available for free:

> 'I moved house in May and I didn't have money to relay the insulation, but what we did was took out loads of furniture and loads of old wood and laid a whole new layer of flooring in the roof. So we created our own insulation really. We literally just used scrap to build another layer of insulation. That's probably not as effective as putting proper insulation in. If that just means we can turn the thermostat down one notch cause the heat in our house is better controlled, then it's worth the energy and the investment. They were really good, because it shows you a tiny, tiny change can make a big difference on your overall footprint.' (William)

There is certainly an element of trade-off in the above example in the way that the extra insulation William installed was free of charge but might not be as efficient. Nevertheless, the example shows one of many possible actions with private residential buildings.

Alyssa for example had her home insulated with fibre glass but adds that 'that was more that we got a grant to do that from the council and that's what they did' (Alyssa). So the trigger of action here appears to be public subsidies.

Unlike interviewees who live in private residential buildings, interviewees who live in rental properties face stronger limitations to their scope of action, as the following examples demonstrates:

> 'We can't control our heating actually. We live in a big living complex and this so much annoys me.' (Samantha)

> 'I lived in a rented house so I have limited control over, you know, the fabric of the house' (Gerald)

Here, the interviewees Samantha and Gerald state that they cannot change as much as they would like to. Others also mention this limitation to be an issue, for example that they cannot choose their electricity supplier. Certainly, one of the main limitations to improving home insulation is of financial nature. Anna and Marc provide typical examples for this:

> 'we live in an old house but try to improve energy efficiency where reasonably affordable' (Marc)
> 'we haven't got the money, but we've got the plans and ideas. And we're talking about insulating on the outside rather than on the inside, but I don't like the siding because I really like the stone, the stone buildings and it would spoil all that, but if that's the best way to do it, cheapest and most efficient, then...' (Anna)

In addition, Anna's example gives evidence of an articulation between inspirational orders of worth (aesthetics) and civic/green orders of worth (cutting down on carbon emissions by saving energy) which Anna – in terms of her decision - solves by giving priority to the latter.

Some interviewees have found *other opportunities within the household* to save energy in their daily life. For example they would check thoroughly on the energy consumption when purchasing new electric devices, and base their purchasing decision on this specific feature (in case they find the energy rating of the device appropriate). Both Natalie and Benjamin state to consider the energy rating of what they buy prior to other features of a device. Many others have reported to switch off their devices completely after use and so avoid any kind of standby functionality. Benjamin provides an illustrative example for this as the following quote shows:

> 'I always look and see, I like to check what electricity consumption is of things when I buy them. I want my television because I do like watching television sometimes why not. But I was the one in the shop, I insisted on reading the electricity consumption label on the back. And you find some of the exact same size television will be using twice as much electricity. So things like that I always do take note of. [...] but I used to have to go to the shop literally look behind the television on the label to find out what the consumption was and it's amazing at the difference. [...] And avoiding standby, got all that computer stuff it's on a power socket. Socket-power is by the switch. I can turn it all off with one switch' (Benjamin)

For Brian, simply checking the energy rating is not sufficient. He holds a heuristic that enables him to simplify decisions dramatically. With his decision framework he has changed his daily life in terms of some of his ordinary consumption practices. This shows from his possession, and his way of using technical household devices. He systematically relates the energy he consumes with his personal carbon footprint. With

his professional background in climate change science[70] he has a strict judgement, and would not allow much carbon at all to be emitted on his private account. Consequentially, he does not have many electric devices at all in his household. By the time of the interview he had just recently bought a fridge, which to his statement he had not had for the last twelve years. He claims having done a proper and very accurate comparison of fridges available. He bought the one he found most energy efficient. Since he is not yet satisfied with the efficiency he is planning to insulate the fridge on his own, as the following quote shows:

> 'I have done things in my own house I suppose, like, people always bring this up as great things, but they don't seem great to me: I have not had a fridge or a television or a washing machine or loads of other electric appliances for a long time [...] having said that I bought a fridge just a few days ago. First time in 12 years. And that's because I moved house somewhere. But I ever bought, I think, it's the most efficient fridge in the whole of Europe, as far as I can tell. I did a lot of research on it. And it will burn about 100 kW hours per year and I am also trying to adjust it by doing some extra installation on the fridge to make it lower. And that´s probably, you might argue that is an unusual thing to do, but then most people in the world don't have fridges.' (Brian)

Again, Brian utilizes environmental – green – conventions to structure his decisions and limit his options, applying one-good-reason heuristics. But also, by referring to 'most other people in the world', he refers to civic conventions in the sense of what Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) have referred to as equality, fairness and solidarity.

In summary, to most interviewees energy consumption directly relates to civic/green conventions. All interviewees who have mentioned this topic state to be concerned about climate change. Market conventions (e.g. price of the device, or saving cost while running the device) appear to play a minor role in interviewees' considerations. Usually, the most energy efficient devices will be a little more expensive anyway, as producers claim to build in the latest and most advanced technologies which then most commonly will be promoted accordingly.

4.2.2.6. Aesthetics

According to Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) aesthetic perceptions translate into inspirational orders of worth. Inspirational orders of worth play a prominent role in competing against other conventions (including other inspirational orders of worth). An

[70] Brian works at a Climate Change Research Institute.

example of this is provided by Elias who gets into the following conflict: he prefers houses with old stuccoed ceilings rather than new energy efficient houses but knows that for environmental reasons he should be living in a new house.

> 'I think life consists of a million grey scales. [...] I really like old buildings. But from an energy perspective they are everything but optimal. So if I really were an eco-fascist in my thinking, I would actually have to move into a new [energy saving] house. So when we move to Berlin [...] I don't think we will move to an energy optimal new building. I would far more prefer such an old stuccoed ceiling, even though I will heat out of the windows' (Elias)

Another is provided by Eve who is 'convinced' of solar panels, but would give priority to her aesthetic perceptions and notions of 'the local feel of the [living] area' rather than the installation of panels on the roof. Again, in this example, inspirational orders of worth stand against civic/green conventions.

Two examples that almost oppose each other are provided by Joshua and Gerald. Considering actions and stances on fashion in terms of combining aesthetics and sustainability, Joshua reports to buy most of his clothes from charity shops. His statement is as follows:

> 'I don't buy things I don't need. I don't buy things because of fashion.' (Joshua)

For Joshua aesthetics (inspirational orders of worth) do not play a prominent role while (as it shows several times in the interview) civic/green and market conventions rank high for him. He mentions that he needs to have an eye on spending money because he is retired and has to pay a mortgage for the co-housings site. In contrast, Gerald[71] states that to him it is mostly a matter of aesthetic mismatch for why he can't buy organic clothes[72] at all. With regard to what he perceives as his contribution in sustainable practices, Gerald compares his practices of food purchasing with his practices of fashion purchasing. He explains his interest in organic food as both a matter of sustainability and quality or flavour. Doing so he either holds up civic/green or inspirational orders of worth. With fashion to him it a matter of limited access i.e. availability of such fashion which he considers as aesthetic. So on the one hand it would be possible to argue that inspirational orders of worth (which manifest in Gerald's aesthetic perception) put him off purchasing 'organic' fashion.

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[71] Gerald is employed at a climate change research institute.
[72] He does not mention the option of buying second hand.

> 'So, yeah, I make an effort to buy organic. I will need to buy organic, eggs, organic milk, organic butter. In fact, I don't know if this is me being sustainable or if it's me being a bit of a foodie really actually [...] it's funny that I pay much more attention to food than I do to clothing. Just because I suppose it's easier, it's easier, I mean, it's not a huge amount of effort. [...] I suppose with clothing you like the way it looks as well. Whereas, you know, a pack of butter (laughing) - it's not the same! [...] So I think a lot of eco-clothing is just tasteless beyond. So, you know, there are those thoughts or issues as well [...] I mean it would be nice if you were able to buy fair trade organic jeans that look just as nice. But perhaps in 10 years' time that will be...' (Gerald)

On the other hand it is also a simple matter of practicality in the sense that cloths he favours may be difficult to find, or are not available at all.

4.2.2.7. Waste and Wastefulness

Similar to the above section on food waste, wastefulness in the household and in general is a matter of concern for many interviewees. Consequentially, some interviewees have found ways to reduce their waste, or wastefulness in particular areas of daily life. An example that represents the way many of the interviewees think about waste and wastefulness is given by Luke:

> 'And all the waste we put into landfill. Obviously, that's not sustainable. We can't keep doing that and I think probably not that many people nowadays really actually think about where. It's in a black bin bag. It's gone in. It's out of their mind. And I guess some people don't even think about where it goes after that. That's pretty the thing I feel strongly about.' (Luke)

Luke's concern is that to his perception many people lack basic awareness of how problematic waste is from an environmental point of view (hence referring to civic and green orders of worth). Christopher has got a similar perception, and gets annoyed when his colleagues at work would not separate their waste appropriately. Consequentially he tries to make sure that the litter goes into the right recycling bin as much as possible:

> 'I am passionate about waste, I'm the type of person to make sure that everything is in the right basket and it frustrates me in this building [at work] that people are too lazy and will not put things in the right bin so you can take a look around here and see bins everywhere but if you look in them you will see that people just mix it, it's all a mishmash of stuff which is really disappointing.' (Christopher)

Similarly involved in the topic, Natalie worries about the local provision of recycling systems which in her opinion does not allow recycling as much as could be possible. To compensate the lack she has identified in the local recycling system she claims to now buy such products which have recyclable packaging:

> 'We recycle as heavily as we can. [...] I am disappointed that there are some things that we can't recycle in our local council. Sometimes that effects my purchasing decisions because if the packaging can't be recycled for me locally, then maybe I will buy a different product with more recyclable packaging' (Natalie)

In order to reduce waste, Natalie uses reusable napkins for her child and washable nappies. Doing so, she provides another example of how interviewees turn into practice the idea of accumulating actions that have a relatively low environmental impact. Another example is given by Anna on the case of using recycled toilet paper: Anna doesn't 'see any point whatsoever [...] wasting trees to use toilet paper [...] when you could get recyclables.' This again is an example of an issue with minor and certainly very limited impact, but it shows the readiness of some interviewees to go down to the very micro level of everyday life actions with their attempt to be more sustainable.

Another approach to the topic of waste is demonstrated by two members of the co-housing community, Noadiah and Sam. To Noadiah, repairing broken things in the household is an option alternative to buying things new:

> 'That is another thing about household economy. We have a strong sense about repairing things. When things break, instead of throwing them away and getting a new one, we have the idea of repairing.' (Noadiah)

The above quote alone only provides evidence for the prevalence of market conventions in the sense Noadiah refers to household economy. But there is more to the example of repairing things; something that rather originates from various conversations I have had with her alongside the interview: In Noadiah's opinion it is highly likely that the global economic system might collapse rather sooner than later. She wants (the co-housing community) to be prepared for this which might be considered as a reference to civic orders of worth. Also, Noadiah holds a strong pro-environmental stance which takes into account civic and/or green orders of worth.

Sam, also member of the co-housing community, considers repairing things as part of a sustainable lifestyle as the following quote shows:

> 'I have for a long time been slightly working on a sustainability lifestyle. I mend and repair things, whereas many people would throw it away. If I can repair it, I will, and that saves me buying another one, from an economic point of view. And for benefit of mankind, to bury something in the ground that doesn't need to be buried in the ground is expensive and unnecessary' (Sam)

The quote leaves open what Sam actually means when mentioning 'sustainability lifestyle'. But given that the interview topic was 'consuming in ways that are less or not

harmful to the environment or other people' it may be considered as certain that Sam refers to green orders of worth. Acknowledged, he refers to civic orders of worth ('benefit of mankind' (Sam)), and to market conventions ('that saves me buying another one, from an economic point of view' (Sam)). Also he refers to inspirational orders of worth in the sense of non-conformity[73], saying that 'many people would throw it away' (Sam).

In contrast, John follows a different understanding of sustainable consumption, in the way that he does not want to extend, but sustain the amount the things he owns and uses. So he and his wife 'don't buy things anymore unless something breaks' (John). Other than downsizing (see next section), this approach focuses on sustaining the status quo.

Some interviewees have found other approaches to the topic of waste and waste reduction. In order to spare or reduce waste they would (1) try to avoid buying certain material goods in general, or (2) volunteer to purchase pre-used things, or (3) use up and wear off the things they already own as much as possible. For example Anna reports not to (or seldom) buy new books. In most cases she would 'buy books from second hand shops and then when [I have] [...] read [them] [...] take them back again so that they can be resold' (Anna). Alyssa for instance states she would 'wear off' (Alyssa) her clothes to the end of their working life as a garment.

> 'I don't really buy many clothes, so maybe that's sustainable. I just wear the same things until they fall apart.' (Alyssa)

Jacob outlines his general aspiration towards material artefacts in the following way:

> 'I certainly have always gone for recycled stuff or second hand stuff whenever I can to minimize the requirements for new materials. I don't suppose it's been totally driven by economics because though I've never been rich, I also haven't had to sort of scrape a living. Most of the time I've been reasonably well off. So it has been a positive choice rather than a necessity.' (Jacob)

With this quote, Jacob gives a clear statement about his orders of worth. In saying that he has mostly in his life been financially well off and that to him buying second hand is a 'positive choice' he gives no priority to market conventions. Overall, in the interview he provides evidence to his preference for conventions of civic and green order.

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[73] See Truninger 2005

Many of the members of the co-housing community (for example Anna, Joshua, Noadiah, and Ryan) report to buy used cloths from charity. None of them brings in money as a primary reason for doing so. In contrast, other interviewees, for example young employees like Natalie and Eve, state to frequently give away clothes and other artefacts to charities for they find by doing so they can both extend the life span of the things, and support other people. Again, green and civic conventions come together in this case.

Mary reports not to own any new gadgets, claiming that all the technical items she owns are either 2nd hand or gifts from friends who found they were out-dated. To Mary, this is based mostly on her religious beliefs, as she considers herself to be a Quaker who by default seek to live life in a simple way[74]. So in this sense her example is rather exceptional.

To John, there is a chance of using up less material which lying in new and innovative technologies. His example is rather particular, but demonstrates the way he perceives what to him 'de-materialized' consumption is:

> 'I don't buy DVDs anymore. I just download. [...] It's all...consumption is... dropped off the end of a cliff. I consume more experiences then now [...] I value experiences more than products and artefacts [...] I think that would be more about experiences, more about quality time with friends and family and there would be a spiritual aspect to it in terms of contributing towards a greater societal good [...] [and I] increasingly de-materialize me. One of the fascinating things already, for us as a family is we don't buy stuff anymore. So my wife and I we buy cloth [...] once a year. But then that´s it. We don't have, we don't go shopping really. You know, books maybe, but we don't really like shopping anymore. It's kind of gone. So if we need for example our microwave has just died. So we have to buy. But it's total 'have to' because it's no longer functioning. The idea of us having things we want to buy. So when ever Christmas or birthdays come around we don't do presents anymore. [...] And we still have kids. So we got kids so there's being a lots of plastic shit everywhere. But I can see a scenario where in ten years from now particularly once everything is digitized. [...] It's all...consumption is... dropped off the end of a cliff. I consume more experiences then now [...].' (John)

With the above example John can be said to apply a 'no-more-stuff' or a 'sufficiency' heuristic. He uses this heuristic to structure his action.

In summary, interviewees have demonstrated various ways to deal with waste and wastefulness. The range of actions includes (1) using less material artefacts in general; (2) recycling more and/or more efficient; (3) using other materials (e.g. materials which are already recycled or such that are easier to recycle, or simply considered less harmful

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[74] See chapter 7 & 8

in their chemical compositing); (4) repair and make things last longer; and (5) sustain the status quo while not extending the amount of material goods they already got at use. Also some interviewees try to avoid buying certain materials or goods in general, or preferably buy used things while referring to the idea that an increased duration of goods delays new things from being produced. Again, it shows that rarely, if at all, single conventions will be referred to in order to justify a particular action or practice. In most if not all cases we first find a composition of various orders of worth that apparently strengthen each other. Also, the structural composition of how interviewees justify their actions and practices equates mostly to what has been found in the previous sections.

Some interviewees have mentioned other or more general concerns that do match the previous categories, and provide examples of how they deal with these. The following section pulls these examples together, considering they provide hints to an even broader variety of actions within the domain area of household than what has been outlined so far.

For example for renovating the house Alyssa and her husband used non-toxic paints which are 'water based and not volatile organic compound based' (Alyssa). The wood they used for renovation is either 'use[d] old doors from [...] [the] salvage yard or [...] wood that is FSC[75], so certified for sustainability' (Alyssa). Some of the interviewees have shown to be rather sceptical towards eco-labels in general, but then mostly find that labels are better than nothing. Dave for example would preferably buy a technical item with eco resource label.

In the following quote Anna discusses two different things. On the one hand she speaks about technical appliances in the household, negotiating whether she needs them or not. Doing so, she holds up a heuristic shortcut arguing that things which already exist in a household ought to be used off first of all. On the other hand she discusses whether petrol driven garden tools such as strimmers might be preferable to human powered

[75] Forest Stewardship Council. 'FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not for profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests. (source: www.fsc.org/, (visited: November 2012))

tools. Even though petrol driven machinery most obviously is less environmentally friendly Anna would prefer them due to higher efficiency.

> I've got a microwave and an electric toaster [laughter], but some things you need. It would be possible to go back to absolute basics and doing everything by hand, but I think given the appliances are there, and buying them and using them is thought through rather than just, 'oh we need this, go get one'. Why do we need this? And we've had discussions about petrol lawn mowers and electric strimmers and things but given the acreage and we've got and the number of people we've got, you really need to use those to keep the verges down and keep weeds under control. Cause you can clear a patch of nettles with a strimmer in half an hour, that would take half a day or more by hand. [...] It just has to be done thoughtfully I suppose. (Anna)

On the first sight it appears as if Anna applies two different measures here, arguing pro-environmentally with regard to the use of kitchen appliances (referring to civic/green orders of worth), and pro-efficiency with regard to gardening (referring to industrial conventions). The decision shortcut Anna uses in this example might preliminarily be called 'make-use-of-what-is-there-already' heuristic. Regarding orders of worth the above example demonstrates how industrial conventions (efficiency) outstands green conventions. Time is the key factor in Anna's argument to support petrol driven garden machinery.

4.2.3. Single Domains 3: Mobility and Transportation

Travelling and commuting both can be very energy intensive. Throughout the interviews interviewees have explained various ways in dealing with what can be described as a tension between the need for physical mobility on the one hand, and the claim for reduced energy consumption and emissions on the other hand. The interviews shed light on how some interviewees try to reduce their energy consumption and emissions through certain travelling and commuting practices, and how contradictions are being recognized, reflected, and managed in daily practices by the interviewees within various sub-domains. The sub-domains, which have structured this subsection, reflect the different mayor mediums of mobility, such as driving (car) and sharing (cars or lifts); cycling; walking; public transport; and flying.

4.2.3.1. Driving

There are some subjects within the sample who possess a car or other motorized vehicle, and some who don't. Throughout the interviews, those who own a car justify how and under which conditions they would use it. Almost every car owner among the interviewees demonstrates a more or less specific awareness considering the environmental impact of driving. The range of actions which interviewees undertake to improve their environmental performance is shown in the following examples:

Christopher for example – certainly not without irony – finds:

> 'the main sacrifice for me has been moving from petrol to diesel. [laughing] It is quite different.' (Christopher)

But other than changing the type of engine he has also changed his actual travel practices, especially in terms of business miles:

> 'I think I've been trying to limit journeys. Certainly within business miles, I've travelled quite a bit more in previous roles and been more active, but [...] Telepresence rooms, and telephone conferences, and doing things over the phone rather than traveling and doing it less frequently.' (Christopher)

So now he tries to travel less in general, and interchange business travel with virtual meetings where possible to avoid un-necessary emissions, and, as he mentions later, to reduce the cost. This practice actually is much appreciated by his employer, and supported by the company's sustainability policies.

Joshua for example expresses his attempt to reduce emissions by choosing to purchase 'cars and motorbikes [...] with a reasonable fuel consumption'. Natalie is ambitious about improving the energy efficiency of the car which to her brings together both lower costs and lower carbon emissions.

> 'Cars, we have the most high rated efficiency cars, but we have considered the fuel consumption from both the cost and carbon point of view and when we have come to change cars also thinking of practical means we have improved our efficiency on cars and fuel but we still do have two cars.' (Natalie)

In her attempt to increase the energy efficiency Natalie, according to the definition of Boltanski and Thévenot (1991), refers to industrial conventions. Is this case, Natalie's efficiency consideration is based on both cost (market orders) and carbon reduction (civic/green conventions). The quotient of apparently both feeds into the consideration of what is referred to as industrial conventions. In terms of driving practice (in the sense of actual usage of the car) Natalie drives to work every day. She finds this problematic

with regard to carbon emissions, and justifies her daily commuting practice in a way that she balances out the emission (on the negative side) against the environmental impact of her work (on the positive side)[76]. To navigate through daily life she holds a positive heuristic that can be titled as 'no-personal-restraints-but-no-unnecessary-environmental-damage'. The following quote sums up this position in Natalie's own words:

> 'In my daily life I am traveling by car a long way to get to work, to do work that is driving down carbon emissions in the supply chain so I have to rationalize that for myself. I rationalize it to myself anyway, in that the impact I am making in my work is on a much bigger scale than the fuel I am using to get to the office. I do what I can reasonably do to minimize that so I have made some choices about the car that I drive, the fuel using diesel for example. Minimizing unnecessary trips and trying to work from home on a regular basis. Also I minimize trips around the city [...] when we are at home I suppose it is a case of making choices that still enable me to live my life as though I see fit without doing anything that would unnecessarily damage the environment. So it is kind of an awareness of the choices. I believe that we should do the things that we want to do but have an awareness and make the best choices we can within that' (Natalie)

Likewise, Eve, who by the time of the interview has just bought a new car, mentions having chosen as specific model 'both for cost and environmental reasons' (Eve) which in her case led to buying 'a modern car that has good record on all the exhausted things' (Eve). When considering this topic Eve sees the following problem at the moment:

> 'It's a pity with electric cars at the moment. It's both the expense and the logistics like where to charge it up and so. And they don't have such a good range so far. And on the car front, I guess, I'm slightly more aware of revving the engine and just being aware of how quickly you get through the petrol you put in.' (Eve)

Apart from the consideration that led to purchasing a car, Eve has now changed her driving practice. Having had a specific training she now drives differently in the way that her driving style is less exhaustive. To her, '[i]t really hit home that, obvious that [...] does make a difference and that's something you can change fairly easily' (Eve).

The following quote of how Ryan justifies his decision for buying a new car stands for another elucidate example of how heuristics are structuring action in daily life:

> 'I've just bought a car [laughs]. A new car. [...] But then my thinking came into that too, environmentally, and financially. I bought a car that's very light on petrol, so you can travel much further than lots more cars. Also being a new car there's less pollution involved, because the technology now, whereas if you buy a second hand old car, chances are that it's going to be more polluting. And also I bought a small car, as well. I'm not going to be buying a big car for myself.' (Ryan)

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[76] Natalie works in a sustainable development division for a big UK retail company.

All three previous examples (Natalie, Eve and Ryan) demonstrate a distinct 'technophile' heuristic which could be titled 'the-newer-the-more-efficient-the-better'.

In an attempt to make local public transport more environmentally friendly, Emma has once contributed in setting up a local system to collect old vegetable oil from restaurants. Together with a co-operative group she wanted to achieve running a certain percentage of public transport in Manchester on old vegetable oil:

> 'I was interested in bio-diesel. We formed the Manchester bio-diesel co-op. But one of our principles was that none of our bio-diesel would be sourced from palm-oil. So the whole idea is about that close-loop system with using waste vegetable oil to make fuel. And I actually designed a perfect closed loop system where basically you start off with organic grown rape seed, regionally grown, that is then used by public sector organisations for cooking [...] So what happened was we opened a [?]-co-op, but it was only opened for just over a year.' (Emma)

Apart from her political activity with the local fuel co-operative Emma see problems with her personal mobility. She finds that '[m]y transport system is not great', and then continues with wondering about herself: 'I gave up flying but we still have a car' (Emma). For the car Emma has a specific plan:

> '[...] we [...] bought a diesel Volvo with the idea we'd run them on bio-diesel. And I mean, I still kind of doubt the bio-diesel unless it's sourced in a very particular way, it can be carbon neutral.' (Emma)

But then this plan fell apart when the fuel co-operative discontinued working. Still, Emma is very concerned about various environmental issues such as pollution, climate change, and the loss of biodiversity. She is also very concerned about future generations which is why she is engaged in environmental education projects. Both green and civic conventions form a strong stance and a base for action in Emma's case.

4.2.3.1.1. Car Sharing or Lift Sharing

Nine interviewed subjects frequently practice *car sharing or lift sharing*. Especially for the co-housing community, car sharing is a common practice. Out of the nine, four co-housing members mentioned sharing.

By the time of the interview Sam has got two cars. According to him, one is to be run down soon and is not going to be replaced. His wife Grace will soon be retired and so she will not have to commute to work every day. Once their car pool is sized down Sam plans from then on to borrow a car from the community in case he and his wife need more than one at a time. Anna already benefits from the practice of lift sharing. She

hasn't been driving for long and needs to see her GP regularly which is why she relies on others to drive her:

> I'm thinking about relearning how to drive but whether I would actually then buy a car, I don't know. If I did I would want it to be a pooled car. We've talked about car pools but nobody's really worked out a system to do it. Quite often most of the vehicles here are being used for going to working. [...] I have to rely on people to drive me. Luckily I have people who are quite happy to drive me to the hospital every month. [...] But we get a bus that goes pass the end of the drive every two hours, [...] so that I could go shopping. I try and use the buses as much as I can. [...] NOAHDIAH's car is insured for any driver, and she's happy for anybody to drive [...] She charges a mileage rate, which is petrol plus a bit of maintenance. And she drives me to the hospital monthly and I pay her for that. (Anna)

Even though the community has not organised to set up a proper system to share cars or lifts there are some individual contributions, as the above quote shows. Noadiah has already changed her insurance conditions so that now everybody can drive legally. However, car and lift sharing requires a certain amount organisation and interaction. The co-housing community has found different ways to do this:

> 'Sometimes on the board[77], someone will say, 'I'm going to [...] [the nearest city, ed.] tomorrow morning, eight o'clock'. That's the way we do it here' (Ryan)

> '[I]f somebody here is going into [...] [the nearest city, ed.] you just call like 'Do you want a lift? Or can we take you in?' Or if other people are going shopping, they ask if you want things and you say, 'Oh yah, can you get me some milk?' So you kind of do that exchange' (Mia)

But not only in small communities and (quasi) familiar social settings lift sharing is a common practice. Dave spends his working days in Frankfurt, about 250 kilometres away from home where his wife and children life. He regularly offers to share the lift on Monday morning and Friday afternoon. To find fellow passengers he has a regular advertisement on a popular lift sharing platform on the internet, where he provides all information (including departure time, car type, number of seats, luggage entrainment, smoker/non-smoker, and price for the lift[78]). Interested fellow passengers call or email or call Dave to arrange the pickup. To Dave this is the perfect mix of economy and ecology (market and green conventions). The online advertisement is free of charge, and Dave is happy to do a little extra effort and pickup his passengers. After a while now, he has got frequent passengers anyway, who live that same kind commuter life he does.

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[77] clipboard in the communal kitchen area
[78] E.g. www.mitfahrgelegenheit.de

William would like to do much more lift sharing in daily life especially when commuting. But he reports to be heavily restricted time wise by his employer in terms of tight schedules and flexible working hours due to spontaneous demand. So the organization of his work would not allow many compromises on how he commutes, so that lift sharing is not really an affordable option for him time wise. Anyway, in his private life William has arranged a frequent lift sharing, having convinced his football teammates to participate:

> 'I play football on a Sunday, I now ensure that we all car share to go there. We're all going from a car park, to a football pitch, back to a pub. If there's twelve or fourteen of us. We need three cars, we don't need eight. We used to go eight or nine cars, what's the point? You can influence people and yourself to lead the good life, it's easier with money but you can do it without. It's about influencing I guess your own mind set, isn't it?!` (William)

In contrast, Lorelai has arranged a frequent lift share to work with a friend. They share as much as possible to reduce both cost and individual carbon emissions, running their sharing system as a rotating circle so that the workload of driving is almost equally distributed. Likewise, Eve reports of her flatmates' sharing practice.

> 'INTERVIEWER: Do you, do any of your flatmates do car sharing [...]? EVE: My flatmates do [...] do it probably equally for environment and cost, cause there's an element of effort they've gone to. So one of my flatmates works out in [inaudible] he's commuting from [inaudible]. But they've found four people in the area, so they've taken turns to drive and then on their fifth day they all work from home and their companies support that.' (Eve)

When Benjamin reflects upon his holiday trip to France, he finds that from an ecological point of view he (and some friends) should have done their holiday within their own region in the Southwest of England. However, he has found a compromise:

> 'We drove to south of France this year for our holiday. Should have maybe gone...walked to the south of Cornwall. But we didn't. We did take 4 people...We did go with a car full of 4 people. So we did...you know, we're mindful of sustainability.' (Benjamin)

Sharing a car for a holiday trip is an example of a special occasion usage. In terms of a heuristic which supports decision making and justifications it may be noticed that Benjamin – even though from his own normative ('ought to') point of view Cornwall might have been the better choice – highlights that to him being 'mindful of sustainability' is to make the maximum use of the car. So in a relative measure in terms of emissions per person, Benjamin considers this the best option. His decision heuristic for choosing the car might be named 'exhaust-all-capacities-in-case-of-use'.

4.2.3.2. Cycling

According to some interviewees cycling is both a way to commute as much as a way to carry out the needs of daily transportation. Five interview partners have mentioned cycling explicitly. Four of them using their bike to commute. Alyssa, Maggi and Kathryn cycle all year long. Kathryn lives close to her work place to ensure she can cycle to work. She state she would 'always try to live in a place that allows [her] [...] to stay independent of a car to get to work' (Kathryn). In contrast, Maggi finds it keeps her fit and healthy to cycle 10 miles each way to work every day. She has a very advanced and comfortable bike. To manage different weather conditions she is equipped with rain gear. In the winter time she rides on tires with metal spikes to respond to snow and ice. Johns' motivation in daily commuting is to reduce his footprint as much as possible:

> 'In practical terms for me as an individual I cycle, [...] trying to reduce my footprint as much as possible. Have done for years. So none of that is new. [...] And so I think in my personal life and with my family I´m trying to reduce as much as possible.' (John)

In contrast, Lorelai would like to cycle to work more often. However she finds various restrictions for herself to do so. She's going to buy a house soon and move closer to where she works which to her is the key factor to make possible she can cycle to work. For in winter time she would not want to cycle at all. Therefore she considers other environmentally friendly ways to commute. The new house will have better access to public transport infrastructures so that taking the bus to work might become an alternative option for her then.

> 'So at the moment I live about 15 miles from work, which is a bit too far to cycle every day. The new place I'm buying is about six miles away, so it means that in summer, because I probably don't want to be doing it in the snow, but I'll be able to cycle to work. And the bus route's better as well. Ideally I would really like to be able to walk to work. But you can't always guarantee you're going to be at the same job. So that's very hard to do, especially if buying, not renting. I do like the idea of kind of having a community and fewer cars, more green spaces.' (Lorelai)

The difficulty for Lorelai in her attempt to commute in an environmentally friendly way is to match her work place and her living place in terms of distance for daily cycling and appropriate public transport infrastructures that she could draw upon in case she can't cycle. Anyway, Lorelai favours the idea of communal car sharing.

4.2.3.3. Public Transport

Public transport is commonly considered an ecological alternative to any other engine powered option of mobility. Hence, it is a topic of consideration to many of the interviewees. Four of the interviewees (Mary; Elias; Kathryn; and Maggi) do exclusively use public transport to travel or commute (unless they cycle). They all live in cities with good and extensive public transport infrastructures. Also all of them live alone. Others, who live in different situations, face certain restrictions when using public transport. Alyssa for example prefers to travel with trains. She felt forced to giving preference to a flight as she wanted to travel with a one-year-old baby, finding the train journey would be taking too long for the baby.

> 'we've just recently come back from skiing. We got the train to France. Last year we flew but ... and before we had our son we used to go with a train. But then last year we were a bit like, 'oh, what do we do with a one-year old on the train for eight hours. But this year we thought 'right, we'll do the train with the two-year old. And it obviously worked alright.' (Alyssa)

Similarly, Lorelai would 'always try and take the train rather than drive for larger journeys', bearing in mind the ecological aspects of public transport as compared to motorised private transport. An example of how actual practices change is given by Isabella who reports having switched to public transport almost entirely after having had a nationwide free travel pass while she could not drive due to illness:

> 'I had a free travel pass which just expired last October and that was really, really good. Really changed my habits and I use the bus almost always when I'm going to town and I haven't really gotten into cycling that much' (Isabella)

In Isabella's case it was a matter of getting used to new systems for mobility. When commuting, Eve adapts her vehicle to varying purposes on the basis of her plans and needs. To be more environmentally friendly she usually commutes to work by train. Occasionally, she would drive depending on what she would be doing after work. Either daily commuting or travel, the most common crucial conflict line runs between price (market orders), time efficiency (industrial orders), and ecologic aspects (civic/green orders). Lorelai gives an illustrative example of this:

> 'There's always the element of cost; cost, and time as well. So if I want to go for a ski holiday I always look at getting the Euro[star] overnight, which sometimes works because you get an extra day at the ski resort because you travel overnight, but if the flight is half the price and you've got a limited time I think it's quite difficult to be green at the moment because in my opinion I don't think enough emphasis is put on making greener choices and there's not as much incentive. Travel is probably my best example, but also with a bus or a train if I would get that to work it would cost me

> ten pounds or something, but to drive it would cost me less than half of that. If I'm doing that every day and don't have any better alternatives, it's hard to make that change.' (Lorelai)

In regard to the perception of comfort there are contradictory perceptions throughout the interviewees. Some interviewees perceive it as more comfortable to travel or commute on public transport as they say they'd always have someone to drive them around and also they'd never have to worry about things like maintenance, tax or MOT for a car or other. Meanwhile other interviewees feel restricted in their personal freedom if they have to rely on public transport. Luke, after having passed his driving test, does not use public transport any more.

> 'I tend to drive everywhere because I passed my test back in April and before then I had to use public transport all the time. As soon as I passed my test, it was like, 'Oh, my God.' I didn't ever want to get on a train or bus ever again. So if I go out to Stroud or anything like that I would go in my car.' (Luke)

4.2.3.4. Flying

Flying is well known for its environmental damage as by its carbon emissions– and has almost become a symbol of environmental damage (Randles & Mander 2009). Accordingly, most interviewees have mentioned concerns about flying and aviation throughout the interviews. However, the stances towards personal flying practices vary, as the following examples show.

Kathryn likes to fly, but she would not fly just like that for holiday purposes. Whenever she has to travel long distance for business purposes she compares train conditions with flight conditions. Usually she would prefer night trains but since they are not always available, or too expensive she ends up taking the plane often. Anyway, she claims not to fly very often, and that's why she doesn't worry too much about it:

> 'I like to fly. I once had a transatlantic long distance relationship for several years. Anyway I don't fly much. I would not participate in a certain way of holiday making, e.g. I would not fly to Mallorca and spend my holidays in a hotel.' (Kathryn)

Yet there is more to it to Kathryn than just the attempt to rarely fly, as the above example shows. While flying to see her boyfriend was not an issue to her she would not support a distinct kind of package holiday. Kathryn clearly distinguishes private travelling from business travelling. For private long distance travel she considers thoroughly whether to spare some comfort and convenience by taking the train, while

for business travel she clearly prioritises convenience which allows her to focus on the business. When having a business meeting in Krakow Kathryn was facing the choice to either take the train or fly. Checking her options it showed the night train route had been closed down. A 10-hour train ride at day time followed by a business meeting did not seem to be a feasible option compared to a flight. So Kathryn chose the plane. She finds that 'morally' (Kathryn) o.k. as long as it is for business purposes but not for private reasons. In general, Kathryn holds the view that her travel and commuting behaviour very much depends on infrastructural provision and that this is of political rather than individual matter.

John sees contradictions in what he is doing. Transport is the domain where he faces the biggest challenges in terms of contradictories between what he thinks is right and what is practically essential. His wife comes from the US. So he uses to fly occasionally to visit her family. In this case domestic orders of worth, expressed in the value of unifying the family, contradict and overtop environmental (green) orders of worth, expressed in John's aspiration to reduce his carbon footprint.

> 'The biggest challenge for me I think in terms of a good life in a utopia of ten years from now is probably is aviation. ... I´m really concerned about that because...because we´re... because I´m married to an American...ehm...I´m hard wired into a future that involves flying and its absolutely, you know, the thing that really enrages me about [?] debates about aviation is 'feel free to come into my home and tell me that I can´t be married to an American'. It`s not acceptable.' (John)

Further, John backs up his decision to fly with civic conventions, mentioning that to him there is a value in building up cultural capital which can he experience when travelling:

> 'So I think for me there is quite a big issue around global connectivity and also I value global connectivity: I learned a lot from travelling, I like to visit people doing similar thinks to what I´m doing in other countries. It's incredibly valuable. And so I don´t wanna close the door on globalisation. I think globalization is an immensely positive force; possibly. My big worry is about carbon load. So that's my only BIG worry really.' (John)

Cultural capital gained from travelling is also a topic William picks up. Even though he has reduced the amount of business flights in exchange with virtual conferencing he finds he has gained valuable environmental (!) knowledge and experience from his trips to China where he has seen massive environment pollution. This knowledge and experience now helps him better understand environmental issues and contributes shaping his practices:

> 'but 5 or 10 or 20 percent of my decision would be, 'what's the right thing to do?' But, that would never stop me making the journey, and that's just being honest about it. I really value my holidays

> and I really value my experience of seeing the world. So going to China, made me more..., even though it costs a lot of carbon. It really affects my carbon footprint to go to China. It was work, it wasn't personal, but the effect of me seeing that was great for my attitude about how to approach this. Walking through Shanghai and watching everyone with their masks on and going to some of the industrial cities, just the smell of plastic and production is horrible. It makes you feel sick.' (William)

From the above quote it is tempting to assume that seeing the pollution in China has been a crucial experience for William that possibly shaped his behaviour and his point of view today. Theories of convention are difficult to apply in this particular example. On the one hand, William has given priority to other orders of worth but green and/or civic orders when deciding to fly to China. Certainly, first all he was doing what was professionally expected of him when he was flying to China. But then seeing the pollution supported shaping his point of view.

Other interviewees (e.g. Emma and Noadiah) also highlight the fact that (and the extent to which) they gained social and cultural benefits from travelling in terms of knowledge, understanding and experience, and this to some extent for them outweighs the environmental pollutions (e.g. carbon emissions) from aviation. Noadiah for example points out clearly that to her 'the sort of wisdom that you gain can be worth the cost of the traveling'.

With Brian, aviation is a case that demonstrates the way in which he radically plays out his green environmental conventions against all other possible conventions: His only remaining relative lives in Australia. Seeing each other would require a long distance flight which for Brian is an almost absolute reason not to visit his last relative.

> 'I try to avoid flying. I wouldn't say I have complete no-fly-policy, but I haven't been flying for 5 1/2 years, which is quite difficult. I mean, I'm not really worried from my work, I have flown for work often in a personal perspective and I don't see them linked quite closely. From a personal perspective it has been quite difficult as most of my family, unfortunately most of my family are dead, and my closest blood relative is actually in Australia, so I don't see him anymore. And I probably won't see him before he dies now because I don't think I am likely to fly over there.' (Brian)

Brian certainly represents one of the most radical approaches to prioritizing green and/or civic over all other orders of worth. This radical stance appears to be serving as a heuristic decision making shortcut in the way that he would almost as per default prioritize green and/or civic orders worth over all others. The fact that Brian rejects flying in an almost ultimate way to demonstrate how he reduces all of his choices and decisions. Considering heuristics are simplifying devices, one could say that he holds

ups and applies a green heuristic that could be titled 'everything-but-carbon-emissions' helping him reduce his options in complex multi-optional decision situations.

Opposing Brian's radical stance, Natalie would not consider travelling a subject to change (with regard to environmental issues). Even though (elsewhere) she mentions having many concerns, and confirms to be carrying out numerous practical actions in order to be more environmentally friendly:

> 'Travel, well I don't really consider sustainability a barrier for me for my personal travel.' (Natalie)

To Alyssa's estimation flying clearly has the biggest environmental impact. Therefore she finds she has to sacrifice somewhat harder in this practice domain. If turned into a decision making shortcut for environmentally friendly consumption, Alyssa might be considered holding a heuristic of 'do-most-where-it-matters-most'.

> 'If you're trying to reduce your impact on the environment it's kind of flights and travel. That's maybe the area where you feel you might make most sacrifices. You know, when friends just jet off to somewhere nice for a long weekend. And you keeping thinking 'it would be quite nice to go there for a long weekend.' And even though if its places where you can get there by train you might think 'uh, it's gonna take a day to get there. And a day to get back' so it will only, I will only have to take more time off work. And you think 'I don't have more time off work!' (Alyssa)

The above quote may be seen as a typical example of how holding up green conventions over other potential conventions can result in individual sacrifices. Alyssa solves what she perceives as a problem by refraining from flights mostly, even though a holiday would become harder for her to realize than it would be for her friends who fly. Alyssa and Gerald are colleagues at the same research institute. Gerald has often found himself in a similar situation with flights: Taking a flight to him would often be the easier choice. But his story slightly differs from Alyssa's: Working in the field of climate change research, Gerald finds he should be a role model with regard to carbon emissions, especially those emitted through flights. But at the same time he admits it would be very difficult for him:

> 'I suppose since being at [a climate change research centre] [...] was the first time I worked specifically on climate change and I have felt more that I didn't want to fly so much, but I wasn't prepared to say that I am not, you know that I was never going to fly.' (Gerald)

Demonstrating how difficult it would be for him to completely restrain from flying (which obviously he thinks would be good to do), he gives the example of how some of his friends planned to fly to Island for a stag party. He was supposed to be the grooms 'best man'. Contrary to his particular stance on flying he would give priority to the

group interest in order to be part of the group other than e.g. travel alone by train and ferry:

> 'it was much more important for me to go along with what the group wanted to do and be part of that circle of friends than to say 'no, I am not going, because I don't like flying', I mean, that wasn't an option as far as I was concerned. And it wasn't an option for me to try and convince them that they should stay in the UK.' (Gerald)

This is an example of how domestic conventions outrule civic or green conventions in a contradictory situation. This example stands for a typical contradiction in the context of sustainable travel practices. The following quote suggests that domestic orders of worth (in terms of being part of a group or other) rank higher to him.

> 'And my cousin lives in Stuttgart and was getting married and so I flew with my family to Stuttgart. If it would have been going on my own I would probably have got the train. But I wasn't prepared to suggest, even to suggest to my family that they should get the train. And I just thought, their flying is more important to be part of the family than to travel on my own on a train.' (Gerald)

So in the above examples Gerald prioritizes domestic orders of worth in terms of social ties and interpersonal dependencies against green and/or civic orders of worth. In his attempt to rationalize and generalize his criterion to whether flying or not, Gerald draws a line at where he thinks he would be subordinating all other potential conventions as by default.

> 'I would not just fly at the drop of a hat [...] I wouldn't just do a weekend break here, a weekend break in there. I mean, it does seem to me to be important to minimise the amount that I fly but not to the point where I am going to be fanatical about it.' (Gerald)

So when Gerald makes a decision to either fly or not he would consider the reason for why he would fly. The above quote gives a hint to Gerald holding a personal hierarchy of orders of worth to which he could judge upon. Leisure or weekend trips obviously do not rank high for him as the above example suggests.

Similarly, Benjamin argues that he would certainly not do weekend trips which involve flying, and that leisure activities would not be an acceptable justification for him to fly. But if other conditions applied – e.g. such as family members moving abroad – he would fly without hesitating:

> '[T]he last time we flew was 96, so we haven't flown in quite a while but if my daughter moved to Australia I'd go see her and my grand-child. [chuckle] Sorry. [...] I certainly wouldn't go to Prague for the weekend like lots of people do. But if there was a holiday I really wanted to do and I would like to go back to India one day then I would fly.' (Benjamin)

However, the above quote suggests that Benjamin holds up a differentiated hierarchy to judge on whether he would fly or not. A short term stay over the weekend would not justify flying for him while a journey to India would.

Mary also has a differentiated hierarchy of values to justify whether she would fly or not. The following quote suggests there are some reasons to fly which she could not validate within her personal order of worth:

> 'I haven't ...I don't fly as much as I used to but I would never say I would never fly again. Depends on why I was flying to do as too much it would contradict or not. Under certain circumstances it might be. [...] I was flying for a valid reason that I was taking a flight to which I knew was no, where the company had an environmental policy where they minimize their, they are actively mounting their carbon emissions when a flight is for a work function to something I couldn't avoid doing and I could not find a better alternative or...If you have to travel to a certain destination sometimes it's – even within Europe – it's to fly better then take the train because carbon footprint for two journeys would be lower for certain aircrafts then is to take a land journey. [...] I don't see why flying is such a bad option.' (Mary)

For example Mary could accept flights for work or professional purposes, especially if carbon offsetting would be available for the flight. From her professional background as a researcher who works on climate change she has gained knowledge about how carbon emissions relate to various ways of transportation, and a particular flight might be more carbon efficient than an overland train journey. So to Mary, industrial conventions – in the sense that she might try and sort out the lowest emissions per travel unit (e.g. emissions per mile) – play a huge role in judging on the right way to travel.

Lorelai has a different strategy to cope with what she perceives as conflictual with flying. She enjoys travelling very much and does not intend to cut down on it. So for example for her private travel she considers balancing out the carbon emissions caused through a flight to Brazil by volunteering for a rainforest eco-camp, knowing that this would not make the emissions un-done.

> 'I love to travel; I went to Brazil earlier this year. I can't see myself wanting to cut back on that, but I am interested in going to eco-camps in the rain forest, and that sort of thing, which doesn't negate the carbon footprint of the flight, I know that' (Lorelai)

The above example is nothing but a consideration for Lorelai; it is nothing she has actually done by the time of the interview. However, the example shows that with regard to flying Lorelai obviously finds herself in a conflictual situation. Her suggestion to volunteer in a rainforest eco-camp may be seen as an attempt to balance out this

conflict. Likewise, Eve gains many rewards from travelling. But at same time she finds herself in a conflictual situation because of what she knows about flying. The following example demonstrates that to her there is no simple solution to this problem other than ignoring it:

> 'I think the key thing is flying. So I really value my holiday. I really enjoy them. And over the last couple of years I have certainly enjoyed some very far flown holidays [...] I'm sort of thinking 'This outweighs everything I'm doing to reduce my impact on the environment. ...It's knowing that it's bad and then trying to put it out of your mind ...because you're looking forward to your holiday! It's blown out by these holiday flights. [...] ...It's knowing that it's bad and then trying to put it out of your mind ...because you're looking forward to your holiday!' (Eve)

Both Lorelai and Eve are somewhere in between their mid-twenties and mid-thirties. Unlike Lorelai or Eve, Ryan has switched his preferred holiday destinations in order to cut down his travel emissions. Now that he has retired from work he does less often travel abroad for holidays. To him, it is both the environmental aspect of travelling as much as the financial. Hence, he combines green/civic and market convention to justify and shape his travel practice.

> 'It's like I try to keep flying down to a minimum. Lots of my holidays now are in this country. If I do go abroad, it's normally only short call, it's not long call. I don't really fly much further than Europe, and that's it. Again, that's a financial thing, as well, but the carbon footprint, as well.' (Ryan)

Having done a lot of travelling, it does not appear too much of a compromise to Ryan now, to choose his travel destinations within the UK.

James uses the example of flying to outline his idea of sustainable consumption in general terms. There are two main points that stand out from his following quote: First of all consuming in a sustainable way to him means to consume less. Second, to him there are always comprises in what he is doing, or, in other words, establishing consistency between what he thinks he should do and what he actually does is not feasible for him. Usually James claims not to fly for private ('pleasure') purposes. He brings up two arguments of why he thinks he would make an exception. First, he would fly to guide his son to New Zealand. In this case family loyalty outweighs James' environmental stances. Second, he justifies his aspirations to fly as being a counter reaction to people who he thinks consume in a 'regardless' (James) way without spending a though on the environmental impacts. This implies a scenario where James – in his own perception – has made sacrifices with regard to aviation and his practices of travelling.

> 'The first bit is reduce which is for me sustainable consumption which is first of all consume less. Having said that, I have got to the point where I said I am going to take my son to New Zealand for the summer which is absolutely for years I haven't flown apart for work. I fly for work but I wouldn't fly for pleasure, but now I am contemplating doing that. Really just in reaction to all these other people that I see who are consuming regardless, but overall, yes, I would tend to not over consume, reduce. But, of course, there is always compromises.' (James)

There is no way of describing James' second argument within Boltanski and Thévenot's (1991) theoretical outline of conventions.

Another example of how domestic orders of worth (expressed in giving preference to family issues) potentially outweighs aviation environmental impacts is provided by Mia. In fact, Mia considers herself and her family as well informed and environmentally conscious. However, she states not to be 'fanatical' about flying, in the sense that flying would always be an option to her since her husband comes from South Africa. The main argument with regard to aviation to her is the cost of a trip to South Africa by which she refers to market conventions:

> 'INTERVIEWER: What about special occasions such as holidays or trips? MIA: No, we're not fanatical about that. If we're going to fly, we'll fly. But it's more the cost I think that stops us from going. Because, now she's two [pointing at her child] and you've got to pay for a seat. [...] BENs family is South African. So if we go on back to South Africa, it's 700 Pound for a return flight. [...] For us it's more the cost inflations now that will stop us from flying. But we try and use the most fuel efficient cars to do different things' (Mia)

Mia's example illustrates how domestic orders of worth in the sense of '[t]rust, social ties and interpersonal dependencies' (Evans 2011) outweighs civic or green orders of worth. Domestic and civic/green conventions are outweighed by market orders of worth in this case.

To reduce the amount of his business flights, Marc tries to substitute face-to-face meetings with virtual meetings, as he thinks that flying contributes heavily to his carbon footprint. Putting a single flight in relation to all his other efforts to reduce his carbon footprint, he concludes that most other efforts he could make are relatively small in terms of their carbon impact if compared to his flying practices.

> '[I] reduce [the] number of flights for professional travel; use virtual conferencing or phone/email instead where possible. [...] I think there are some obvious areas where I have tried to make some improvements. So I'm now much more careful with flying, in particular. That is the single biggest chunk of my carbon footprint, and also the single biggest thing I can do to make a change. That single extra flight is so much bigger than any efforts to recycle or use re-usable bags or whatever it might be. Those are all good things to do, things that I try to do, but I recognize the relative importance of those different things.' (Marc)

However, Marc finds that virtual meetings cannot fully substitute face-to-face meetings in qualitative terms. There are other qualities to face-to-face conversations that cannot be substituted in his professional life. Yet in his private life, Marc tries to avoid flying, saying he'd prefer his family holidays in Scotland by car rather than flying somewhere.

Isabella finds flying problematic. Her way handle aviation is to compensate for her flown miles by carbon offsetting.

> '[M]y sister lives in the states and I've got a really good friend lives in Denmark. I do fly. Some people don't fly at all and I do fly. I try to offset. I use the train almost always' (Isabella)

In summary, with regard to daily commuting, several interviewees refer to the same conflict between using public transport, or drive by car to get to work. Equally, the choice between cycling and driving is a matter of conflict and consideration for many interviewees. In both cases the car usually is seen as the easy, fast and comfortable choice. Public transport however is seen as environmentally friendly but expensive and time consuming. Cycling is perceived as environmentally friendly, healthier, cheap and also time consuming if compared to a car on medium or longer distances. Also cycling requires more preparation such as weather proof clothes and special facilities such as bike lockers. Regarding their flying practices, interviewees often highlight the difference between various occasions (i.e. reasons) for their travel. All interviewee state to find flying highly problematic as for they think it causes massive environmental damages. However, in their judgement and practices many responds distinct flights for business i.e. profession purposes from flights for leisure and holidays. Many interviewees tend to more likely accept a business flight then that would accept a flight for leisure. With long distance business flights most interviewees do not see any good alternative. In some cases virtual meetings are seen as a feasible option even though they are considered as less productive than face-to-face meetings. Therefore virtual meetings are not taken as a full substitute for face-to-face meetings but rather as complementary to spare at least some flights. Some interviewees have mentioned that in cases the purpose for flying is private, the benefits in terms of cultural and social capital they have gained from long distance flown trips.

4.2.4. *Crosscutting Domains*

While the previous sections focus on single domains of consumption, this section now focuses on how different domains interact with each other in terms of their implications on practices and actions. Starting from the point of view of two domain implications interacting (section 4.2.4.1.), the last section focuses on the implications at the intersect of two or three domains, and on the impact this has on practices and actions which cross-cut several domain boundaries. The particular focus is put on the implications collective living and the collaborative organisation of consumption (section 4.2.4.2.). As outlined in section 2.5., the domain of householding covers the material aspects of the household, and the use of material artefacts.[79] In addition, the domains - as used in, and defined for this study – covers social and geographic features of the household in a wider sense.[80] The inclusion of the social organisation of a household within the householding domain allows to focus particularly on the implications of collective living – where several individuals share one household, and organise their consumption in collaborative ways. The inclusion of geographic features of a household allows to draw on particular implications which refer to the geographic environment, for example implications of living in a remote area as compared to living in a métropole.

4.2.4.1. Householding & Transportation

This section draws on the how the implications of householding and transportation interact. It picks upon examples from subjects who live in remote rural areas and subjects who live in cities, showing how different socio-technological infrastructures shape practices in different ways.

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[79] e.g. house insulation; use of electric light; use of energy in general and energy supply; use of water and water supply; and other household related services as much as technical utilities – and their use

[80] As outlined in section 2.5., 'social features' are seen as reflected in the social organisation of the household, so for example in the implications of collective living (sharing a household with a group of people) on certain aspects of consumption as compared to single households, or family households. 'Geographic features' of a household are understood, and relevant, in the sense that particular socio-geographic settings of a household (e.g. rural area, or métropole) have implications on the ways subjects carry our practices and perform actions.

The following examples are taken from the co-housing community. They illustrate specific problems of living in a rural area: All members of the co-housing group have chosen to live in the community in order to live life in a way they think is more sustainable. 'Live light on earth' is the eye catching motto displaying form a large framed poster in the communal kitchen area. One of the mayor concerns that has come up frequently in the interviews with members of the community is that living in a remote rural area requires a vast amount of motorized mobility i.e. motorized transportation. Ryan sums up his perspective on the problem in the following quote:

> 'But, again, living here - it is awkward living here if you haven't got transport in some form. We're eight miles away from [...] [the nearest city (ed.)] and at least seven or eight miles away from [...] [another nearby city (ed.)] as well. If you had, say, a bicycle, you could get there but first of all, the roads are very busy, and also you'd need to go every other day to get stuff, I would have thought. [...]But when I was living in London, I never used my car. I would use public transport. One of the biggest reasons I used public transport was it was quick and more efficient than using a vehicle inside London' (Ryan)

A number of different problems arise from the fact that rural living implies a need for motorized mobility. The following collection of quotes from different co-housing members illustrate this issue and provides evidence that for most interviewees it is contradictory to their idea of sustainable living:

> 'my travelling has gone down since though I have moved into the co-housing even though we are a long way from ... it is also the point that I am not actually working anywhere that I was working before.' (Jacob)

> 'INTERVIEWER: Would you consider yourself a sustainable consumer, whatever that means? It's a much used and abused word. JOSHUA: As much as I can be. But living in a rural area, personal transport means a lot to me. So I could be a lot better. [...] And I try and find cars, cars and motorbikes, with a reasonable fuel consumption.' (Joshua)

> 'we do have a car and my wife works. She is out teaching at the moment. [...] the only way she can get around is by car; within the countryside the busses are infrequent. You can't do our shopping on the bus, you can't go to work and back on the bus; if she has to take a projector screen and stuff, it's just impossible - the car is the best mode of transport' (Benjamin)

The essence of the above quotes is that living in a remote rural area requires motorized vehicles to be mobile. This contradicts the claim for a low carbon i.e. low impact way of living which in other consumption domains appears to be easier to establish in a rural environment, like for instance autonomous self-supply with food, energy or water. In order to resolve this contradiction the co-housing group tries to reduce their car mileage. They have started to organise their drives in a well-planned way, and to bundle as many settlements or transits as possible per trip. Therefore, they use a white

board in the communal kitchen as a place to communicate and to advertise single drives to each other. From a theoretical point of view this is an example of how groups attempt, manage, and to some limited extent succeed to overcome socio-technical limitations. Overcoming such kind of socio-technical limitations is hard to realize, or rather impossible for individuals who do not in life in a community but on their own.

Living on her own, Kathryn provides evidence to this finding as she reports facing the following conflict: Kathryn lives in a city and prefers cycling and public transport. On the one hand she states that ideally she would prefer to live in a rural area in a property she would like to own. On the other hand she does not want to have a car. She refused to even get one when her mother offered her old car for free to Kathryn as a gift. To make sure she can cycle to work, she would always try and choose to live in a place where she could either cycle or use public transport to get to work. She has changed her job several times in her life, which includes moving to other cities. Whenever searching for a new flat, her main criterion apart from the facility itself, is that it is in a good cycling range to her office:

> 'I don' have a car and I don't want one. [...] My mother wanted to give me her old one. [...] I want to try and stay without car as long as possible. I cycle. I find public transport great. In most cities. [...] It really depends one where you live and whether the public infrastructures are good. So far it worked well for me, and I will do whatever I can to make sure it works well for me. [...] I will always try to live in a place that allows me to stay independent of a car to get to work.' (Kathryn)

In summary Kathryn's conflict is to either live in her own property somewhere out of town which then she could improve e.g. in terms energy efficiency etc. This would require her to use a car to get to work[81]. Or she can remain living in a rental property in the city (where she cannot improve the energy efficiency etc.) so that she can spare having a car. For the coming years she has chosen to remain living in the city for she finds that neither professionally not family wise she is settled yet.

Lorelai's example points out this conflictual situation even more clearly: a situation that opposes a short commuting distance to work (which to her means low emissions and the pleasure of cycling) to living somewhere outside the city where a modern and energy efficient flat might be affordable to rent or buy:

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[81] Kathryn works as a researcher and lecturer at University so that her job location will most likely always be in the city.

> I don't live in London, so my public transport options are a bit more limited. But I really like the idea of getting to work under my own steam. So at the moment I live about 15 miles from work, which is a bit too far to cycle every day. The new place I'm buying is about six miles away, so it means that in summer, because I probably don't want to be doing it in the snow, but I'll be able to cycle to work. And the bus route's better as well. Ideally I would really like to be able to walk to work. But you can't always guarantee you're going to be at the same job. So that's very hard to do, especially if buying, not renting. I do like the idea of kind of having a community and fewer cars, more green spaces.' (Lorelai)

Lorelai, however, links a notion of how she would like to live (a 'good life')[82] with explanations of how transport infrastructures, commuting and living location connect from the point of view of reducing carbon emissions. At the same time she intends to sustain conditions that are feasible, practically useful, comfortable and convenient.

In contrast, an example of how city infrastructures make possible to spare a car is given by Elias who lives in a big city with his wife:

> 'For the rest it has been a budgetary but also an environmental decision that Jenny and I do not have a car in Munich. It was a rational decision somehow. From time to time we have regretted the decision because we don`t get to know the hinterland. De facto, you never really need a car and for that we would use it maybe once in a week or once in a month to go to the hinterland we simply do not have one. But this is down to the big city. If I would live in the countryside I would immediately buy one because I would not be willing to use ÖPNV [public transport, ed.] in the countryside.' (Elias)

In Elias' case, market orders and civic/green orders of worth are mobilized together in favour of sparing a car. But clearly, this alliance is bound and restricted to the specific socio-technical structure of Elias' environment: the city. As Elias states, civic/green conventions would not weigh enough for him to spare a motorized vehicle if he would be living on the county side.

Gerald does not have a car. Having neither kids nor family, and living in a city with good infrastructures he states not to urgently need a car. But from time to time he feels tempted by the benefits of driving, wishing he had a car. Working at a climate change research centre, his rationale to resist getting a car has its foundation in his self-perception as role model:

> 'GERALD: I don't have a car. INTERVIEWER: You don't want a car or you just don't need a car? GERALD: I used to have a car and it was really it was the kind of old thing. It died and I thought 'well shall I get another one?' and I thought 'well (laughing) you work at [a climate change research centre] [...] (laughing). [...] I don't have kids, I live on my own so I don't have to ferry people around to karate lessons or ballet lessons or horse riding lessons. And I live on a very good bus route and I like walking so I don't drive. [...] I suppose I was pulled in two directions: part of me would have

[82] See chapter 8

> liked to have car, and is because it's an easy life, isn't it?! And, there are undoubtedly advantages to having a car. So in a way I was looking for a way to persuade myself that I should forsake those advantages and say that 'well, I work at [a climate change research centre] [...]!' You know, I mean, I suppose I said to myself ' if you are not prepared to do it, who the bloody hell is, really!!!' On the other hand, you know, in the absence of some sort of cap on emissions, how important is individual action? I'm not sure really. But it felt, it felt like it was by enlarge the right thing to do.' (Gerald)

With his perception as a role model, Gerald refers to domestic orders of worth in the sense that regard and reputation play a significant role in shaping his mobility practices. Anyway his decision not to have a car requires – and is possible only in – a local or geographic environment that provides appropriate public transport infrastructures which allow travel and commuting without a motorized vehicle.

An illustrative example of how city infrastructures support a variety of ways of transportation is given by Samantha who lives in London. In daily live, Samantha combines public transport (to commute) and rental bicycles with walking, taxis and a family shared car. The following quote does not show Samantha's concern about carbon emissions in daily life. However, elsewhere in the interview she states to be very concerned about carbon emissions in general:

> 'SAMANTHA: I take the public transport to get to work. When in central London I use Boris Bike. And I walk quite a lot. But in the evening I always take a taxi. INTERVIEWER: What kind of bike is it you mentioned? SAMANTHA: The Boris Bike. INTERVIEWER: Right, yes. In the evening you take a taxi home to London? SAMANTHA: No no, sorry. If I'm going out at night. INTERVIEWER: And for special occasions like holidays how would you get around? Do you own a car by the way? SAMANTHA: Yes I share one. I share one with my husband's brother. And we all just have a car that we use probably once a month, if that. If we need to go somewhere. Normally I don't drive anywhere. INTERVIEWER: So how do you run this system? Is it a kind of private carpool with one car? Or how do you do it? SAMANTHA: It's an old family car that sits out by our house and anyone that wants to use it does. But it's not being used daily. INTERVIEWER: Interesting. And so for other special occasions you'd fly? SAMANTHA: Yes, on vacation I always fly. INTERVIEWER: Any consideration about flying? Anything that comes to your mind when you fly? SAMANTHA: No, not really. I don't think out of the years I've stopped using low cost carriers unless it makes sense. I pay a bit more now to go through Heathrow. But I don't think about the carbon impact.' (Samantha)

On the one hand, Samantha's case is an example of how city infrastructures and transportation choices make possible to combine various sources of transport that may be considered more energy efficient than motorized individual transportation. This applies to the use of public transport in particular as much as to commercial rental bicycles. Taxis may not be considered as environmentally friendly in particular but the presence of taxis at least makes possible for the individual to organise mobility without having to have an own car. Sharing a car within the family is matter social organisation, which implies the willingness (or coincidence) to live closely together. The fact that

Samantha uses a mixture of varying sources of transportation might either imply that there is a certain practicability in this to her, or that she willingly takes on an extra effort to do what she considers to be environmentally friendly. Anyway, doing what Samantha does requires a sufficient access to, and availability of various means of transportation.

4.2.4.2. Collective Living and the Collaborative Organisation of Consumption

Many of the interviewees have reported to share certain material artefacts and goods. Throughout the interviews collaborative consumption has mostly been mentioned either in the context of sharing a flat or house with others, or sharing with people who live collectively in a local community. Various artefacts and 'doings' (e.g. transits by car) have been mentioned to be shared. The co-housing community for example is built on the idea of sharing resources. Sharing as such has become a practice here in terms of daily life routines. Many artefacts and for daily life are shared in the co-housing community.

> 'we share washing machines and chainsaws, and garden mowers, and I think as the stuff that we all each individually own start to pack up then we're like, you know, well [inaudible] is broken, can I borrow yours. Rather than going out and buying another one. So they'll be that kind of use and we'll be moving more to buying commercial appliances that can be used more effectively and have a better quality, you know and a long shelf life.' (Mia)

The above quote only picks up on material artefacts to be shared. It does not mention other shared objects such as the communal kitchen, facilities such as the green houses, and stables[83]. By the time of the interviews the co-housing community was about to set up a sharing scheme for their existent car pool. However, the realization of this idea was at an early stage of planning. Far more, the actual practice at that time was that cars and vehicles were lent to, and borrowed from each other to an extent that some community members had already upgraded their vehicle insurance to include other drivers to be covered. Also, lifts to various places are planned in advance and then announced at the blackboard in the communal room by some members.

[83] I recognized those 'things' as much as specific practices which relate to them when I lived within the community for a while, having the chance to do some ethnographic observations.

Other interviewees who don't live in a co-housing community make use, and benefit from sharing. For example Eve lives together with other young professionals in the same house. Apart from sharing the facility including kitchen and bathrooms she also shares food and lifts to work with the others. According to Eve, the main trigger for her and her flatmates is to be more environmentally friendly (applying civic/green conventions). By sharing food they avoid things from being thrown away too early so that in total they waste less.

In contrast to the above examples that describe informal sharing practices, Natalie has joined a formal sharing scheme. It is a nationwide network to share and exchange stuff and utilities for babies and children. Natalie describes this as less convenient for her than actually purchasing new things. At the same time she points out that the financial benefit of sharing is not the key criterion to her as the following quote illustrates:

> 'For example, having a child is a big shopping opportunity but I can get some useful things but they are only useful for one month or something. So to borrow things and share with friends and to exchange them in second hand charities and markets and parent groups like the NCP. The NCP is very common in our country for exchanges although I don't need to do it financially. It would actually be more convenient for me to order something online and then, I don't have to wait for the next spring and buy stuff. Actually from a principle point of view I would rather have something that has already been used or to sell my stuff again or give it away or share it. [...] Also you're supporting a charity at the same time.' (Natalie)

Even though the above quote does not explicate (the context does), the key argument for sharing to Natalie appears to be that by doing so she can keep some more material artefacts in the 'loop' of usage instead of being thrown away too early or instead of sitting on storage shelves unused' (Natalie).

In summary, with regard to orders of worth, interviewees who share goods, artefacts and devices predominantly combine civic/green orders of worth (collective interest, benefit for the natural environment) with market conventions (referring to price and economic value).

4.2.4.2.1. Eating and Food Provisioning & Householding & Transportation

This subsection focuses on how domain implications of eating and food provisioning interact with implications of the other domain areas on practices and actions.

For a group like the co-housing community it is possible to purchase food in bulk quantities. Doing so, lowers the cost per unit of food. It also reduces waste since there is less packaging.[84] Anna explains the community internal organisation of bulk supply in the following quote:

> 'the bulk buying of food works very well, because it's silly everybody buying their own little bits for their own houses, so we have the bulk supply and then you can buy some of that and bring it to your household, or it's used over there for cooking for everybody' (Anna)

Bulk food helps reduce the amount of individual travelling since then not every community member needs to drive for their own food. This argument was often brought up in (off record) conversations with members of the community. The bulk food is stored in the communal storage room next to the communal kitchen. From there it is either used for cooking in the communal kitchen or taken to community member's individual households. Also it was argued by community members that the number of food deliveries (when ordered directly from the supplier) or 'food miles' can be reduced this way. Apart from purchased bulk food the community bottles some of the fruit and vegetable from their garden, and produces their own jam and marmalade or fruit juice in bigger amounts. Handling food in a collective way enables the community to lower their cost, reduce waste, or share the work load of bottling and preserving the products from their garden.

For Grace food freshness is of high value. It is obvious to her that fresh food combines better taste (aesthetic experience – referring to inspirational orders of worth) with health aspects (fresh food considered as healthy choice), and environmental protection (no packaging, organic waste can be composted). With the latter she refers to civic and green conventions. The following quote does cover some but not all of these aspects[85]:

> 'I try to use fresh stuff as much as possible and recycle as much as possible. Any spare veg goes over to the compost bins. It annoys me when you go to the supermarket and the area for the prepared foods is getting bigger and the fresh foods smaller. Another reason it is nice here because you can just go down to the Poly Tunnel or to the veg patch, which is great.' (Grace)

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[84] Being with the community I had the chance to observe various sorts of bulk food i.e. bulk packaging. For instance flour, various cereals and milk were purchased in bulk amount from organic suppliers in big bags or jars. Fruits and vegetables were also purchased in bulk amounts to the extend they were not available from the communal garden.

[85] Some aspects were mentioned by Grace elsewhere in the interview and off record in conversations we had.

An approach to reduce food waste (not food packaging) is illustrated by Eve who explains how she and her housemates have established an informal sharing scheme for food left overs. The following quote illustrates how the group of housemates shares food in order to save kitchen storage space and, as to what Eve reports, in order to spare the food from going bad. It also shows how living in a group with specific practices can create a peer pressure to single members and hereby supports certain changes of practice changes:

> 'we tend to cook as a house, we have quite a good system going in that is in a certain part of the fridge is for anybody to take. And there is a clear-area so when something is running out of date you'll put it there and then someone is going to eat it. We share milk and fruit juices. So it's not that there is six individual bits of milk. And bread and things and fruit. Some fruits we just keep in one place so that everyone can share. Equally there is quite a lot of cooking together, we're just pulling resources. [...] So that I think reduces food wastage. [...] there is an extend of an email at five o'clock saying that someone is cooking and 'just bring the wine' or whatever it is. [laughs] Living in this house is pretty good at this sort of thing. But at the top of that the leftovers do get put together and even to an extend to where there are labels for who gets to take it to work on the next day. [...] We got little stickers and I think, they are very foodie and they'd be horrified of food waste. And I the social peer pressure of moving into the house is that you wouldn't want to waste any food. [...] Some of the other guys are a bit more keen on farmers market and especially on checking out the ethics of the fish and how sustainably sources that is. So there is quite a regular conversation 'I bought this because it is XYZ [...] it would be either locally sourced or, you know, happy chickens and sustainable fish, this is quite a big topic.' (Eve)

Jacob gives an illustrative example of how food provisioning, transportation and the geographic location of the household (in his case: the co-housing community) are related to each other.

> 'We do buy quite a lot of food outside as well. One of our problems is that we're nine miles from the nearest town; we do get quite a lot of stuff from the local shop. We certainly try to support the local shop as well. They do have a little local produce but not a lot. So if we go into the supermarket which we still do and buy supermarket stuff.' (Jacob)

An example of strong dedication to animal welfare (reference to green conventions) is given by Noadiah, who is one of the initial founders of the Cornish co-housing community. Noadiah suggests creating and controlling own 'good' conditions of animal husbandry, and source own meat e.g. by breeding pigs.[86]

> 'The meat, well one of the reasons for setting up [...] [the co-housing community (ed.)] actually was that there were quite a lot of us that wanted only to eat kindly kept meat. I don't mind at all the idea of killing animals; I think death comes to all of us. The only thing about death is it needs to be administered painlessly and in an okay kind of way. I think what we actually do is we give pigs the gift of a happy life, they've got beautiful fields, sea view, people tickle their tummies, it's not unpleasant at all. If we weren't going to eat them, they wouldn't have that life. So it's almost like you create a happy pig and the pig is as happy as happy can be, it doesn't know it's going to be

[86] Doing so she also draws on a vision of a 'good life' as discussed in chapter 7 and 8

> killed and as long as we can make the slaughtering process totally painless and fear free, I just think that's fine, eating the meat is wonderful.' (Noadiah)

Breeding pigs and sourcing own meat in the way the co-housing community does, crosscuts and bridges aspects of all three consumption domains, in the way that it combines food (meat obviously) with transport (which relates to carbon emissions caused by food transportation), and specific geographic and social structures of the household. In terms of household geography there needs to be a sufficient amount of space and facilities to keep animals which is more likely to realize in rural areas. Keeping animals requires a lot of work which needs to be organised in terms of work load. The co-housing community does not do commercial farming which is why nobody can care for the animals on a 'full time' basis. This then requires social organization to distribute the work load among the members of which some are employees in full time jobs. A single individual would certainly not be able to keep, and care for livestock in parallel to a full time job.

Another example of what is perceived as sustainable food provision is given by Noadiah who illustrates the case of self- provision with dairy. To Noadiah, it is a matter of social organization in terms of distributing the workload of keeping a cow and processing milk. Space and facility is not a matter of scarcity for the co-housing community. Yet, the organisation of labour distribution is the main issue. Noadiah puts in the following way:

> 'I like dairy stuff, so I like to have milk for breakfast. [...] Now, to have a cow, we need half a dozen of us who are prepared to spend time milking it. I could, but I don't want to spend an hour every morning milking a cow. So I want to have a gang of friends who are prepared to keep a cow. I'm really into processing the milk, so I wouldn't mind a bit of butter churning and cheese and everything. But again, it's good to spend a couple hours a week doing it, rather than my whole life' (Noadiah)

However, by the time when the interviews were conducted, the group was planning to get a cow. So far the co-housing community only keep pigs. They get beef meat from a neighbour farmer. Sometimes they would exchange their pork meat with beef meat from the neighbour; sometimes they would purchase beef meat from him. Mia highlights her preference for domestic orders of worth by referring to the trust she has in her neighbour. In addition to this she emphasises on her esteem for welfare oriented animal husbandry. Doing so she refers to green orders of worth:

> 'Whereas our beef is organic and we know the farmer, he is just across the road. If my own pigs, for example, I know where they have been and they are well feed, more important to me. If I know that a farmer treats their animals well, it is much better to me than an organic, because an organic is a useful title for people in the city who don't necessarily know their neighbours or their neighbours are not farmers producing.' (Mia)

Benjamin argues for holding up aesthetic perceptions (and so refers to inspirational conventions) against potential concerns[87]. He argues that '[t]he way that farming is done in this country sustains the landscape that [...][he] love[s]'. Yet, he puts his preference to sustain the aesthetic of the Cornish countryside over potential concerns with meat and meat production, or vegetarism.

While rationalizing the selection criteria for the second interview sample, an additional but subordinate side aspect of seen in whether the membership or participation in particular groups makes a difference to individuals – in terms of how they carry out 'sustainable' practices (see section 2.6.). The following passages briefly compare how members of two different groups within this study see and enact their role as practitioners of sustainability differently.

The 'green champions' predominantly follow up a heuristic of seeing the world through their professional engagement in terms of products and the role of material artefacts in a world in which economy and ecology are connected. They have an understanding where they see their own way of enacting their cares and concerns as in their role as retailers being influential in shaping globalized supply chains in a way they think is more social and environmentally friendly. The way they enact their concerns in their individual life (as opposed to their professional life) appears influenced by their professional actions in the sense that many of them would find the impact their own individual effort in daily life comparably irrelevant in contrast to the impacts of their professional influence. As a result, their individual effort is, according the their utterances, rather moderate. For example one interviewee mentioned his role in reducing carbon emissions whilst he was contributing to improve the entire lorry fleet of several thousand vehicles, and the way the lorry drivers actually drive. The absolute effect on the reduction carbon emissions of this measure is comparatively huge to what

[87] This example has been referred to in the section 4.2.1.2., as an example of how inspirational orders of worth in the sense of aesthetic perceptions trump other orders such as civic or green orders of worth.

a single person could do e.g. by driving a car in a more efficient way. That's why and how many of the interviewees in this group find and rationalise that there is not much reason for them to carry out practices differently – in a 'sustainable' way – in their everyday life.

In contrast, members of the co-housing community allocate the biggest influence they could possibly wield within their private life as individuals, and as a group of likeminded 'practitioners of sustainability'. They rather focus on the impact of, and achievements within their practices and actions as individuals in everyday life. In terms of their estimation of where and how they see their influence they hold a heuristic saying that by changing and adapting their local situation they do as much as possible, whilst they see no other way of influencing the globalized issues for them in a either short or long term. As a result, they make an attempt to change and adapt the means and ends 'at hand' in a holistic sense, by self-provisioning with food; producing, repairing, maintaining and sustaining material artefacts; and adapting the ways the live, work and travel as much as possible according to their concerns while mobilizing local support structures.

4.3. Discussion and Conclusions

4.3.1. Domain Implications and Practice Issues

'Organic' food to many interviewees represents the triad of health; lower environmental or social impact; and quality in terms of better sensual experience. In other words, 'organic' food is considered healthier, better to the environment or the people who actually produce it[88], and better tasting. With this, interviewees refer to opinion; domestic; and inspirational conventions in order to justify their stances on 'organic' food. Another consideration that is not necessarily linked to the 'organic' aspect is the assumed carbon footprint of food that originates from far away (e.g. apples from New Zealand). This concern is covered by civic and green conventions, referring to the climate change impact of carbon emissions caused by long transits. Local food combines a similar variety of conventions. For most interviewees local

[88] e.g. in case it is 'fair trade' also, which sometimes goes together.

produce - if purchased from local markets - means emphasizing on human relationships and strengthening the local community in social and economic terms, which combines domestic and market orders of worth. Some interviewees would emphasis on the ease to control and regulate environmental and social conditions of local production. To most interviewees local produce is associated with low carbon emissions, more freshness and therefore ranking high in terms of health and taste. This in addition brings in civic/green, and inspirational orders of worth. An often mentioned set of limitations to local produce is the difficulty of access, availability and affordability.

There is a heuristic aspect to purchasing i.e. decision making practices with food, whereby 'better' is what is considered pro-environmental; healthier; or better tasting. In case either of these criteria is not available, the others are taken into account for making the decision. The fact that 'organic' food might be more expensive is considered less relevant by most interviewees[89]. However, less relevant does not mean irrelevant, and some interviewees do in fact state that higher prices are their strongest constraints to purchasing 'sustainable' food. Others, as examples show, use trade-off heuristics in the sense that they would better plan their meal and so buy less food than they would have done formerly. In this way, to them, they can balance out higher prices.

In general, with regard to the domain area of eating and food provisioning – and therein particularly with regard to dairy and meat consumption – interviewees provide strong examples in cases where they bring together different conventions to then translate into particular actions, or sets of actions, or practices. In contrary, there are cases where conventions (and possible consequential action) stand against and compete with each other. In such cases heuristics become mediating devices in the attempt to solve the tension.

Domain areas hold different limitations to action. These limitations differ in regard to how difficult it is for the individual to overcome them. In the domain of eating and food provisioning interviewees manage to act consistent to their values at relatively high levels, and at higher levels than in the two other domains. The interviews have shown

[89] The sample selection is not representative in socio-structural terms, and possibly more or less biased towards interviewees with educated middle class background.

that one of the main reasons for this is that in this domain it is easy for the interviewees to combine several conventions in single practices and actions, sufficiently supported by provisional infrastructures. There is a wide range of choice, and the individual is relatively autonomous in choosing between actions, be it choosing specific products, growing food, or preparing and using up the food in specific ways, including pre-arranged distribution networks in shared households or communities. Besides this, practices within this domain require relatively small financial investments. The threshold to engage is quite low, and efficient changes are easy to enact. The domain of eating and food provisioning can be explained from the point of view of systems of provision in the sense that if there is a choice provided people opt for the sustainable alternative. This however does not explain cases where people create and organise food provision on their own – cases where people grow their vegetables, and breed animals.

The matter of waste (related to food) provides insights into how some of the interviewees slightly adapt their practices in order to cause less physical waste such as packaging or actual food waste, or waste less energy e.g. while cooking. In case of the former it is mainly civic and green orders of worth that interviewees refer to. In cases where interviewees try not to waste energy there are market conventions coming into place, which add to civic and green conventions.

The domain of householding in this study is used as an umbrella to cover a range of practice areas. Much of it gravitates around energy, and the use of energy. The choice of the energy provider to the interviewees mostly refers to how the energy will actually be sourced. The decision to switch to 'green' energy supply confronts market orders of worth with civic and green orders: either energy is cheaper and sourced in conventional ways, or it is sustainably sourced and more expensive. The responses throughout the interviews cover the whole range of options. Some interviewees have picked their energy supplier according to prices, while others use trade-off heuristics, balancing out more pricy energy with lesser energy consumption, induced through both more efficient devices and particular ways of using these devices more efficiently. Though all interviewees claim to be reducing their energy consumption in total, some state they are capable and willed to accept higher prices for 'green' energy. Both, interviewees

opting for lower prices and interviewees opting for 'green' energy regardless of costs apply one-good-reason heuristics.

The combination of market and civic or green orders of worth has repeatedly come up throughout the householding domain. It often translates easily into practice and action for the interviewees, who appear likely to act when saving money and reducing carbon emissions (due to reduced energy consumption) fall together.

The actual practices within the domain of householding do not differ much across the interviews. Most interviewees hold similar sets of views that encourage them to use technical devices more efficiently; or less; or shorter (in terms of 'on' time; or longer in terms of lifecycle); or to use less technical (material) artefacts in general. Particular actions are to fill up the dishwasher, washing machine or tumble to the maximum load before running it. Further, to wash laundry on lower temperatures and/or short wash programs. Other actions are reducing the usage duration for hairdryers or tumble dryers, or to spare them at all if possible. All interviewees appear to be very knowledgeable about energy usage and well aware of their heating practices. The range of strategies to improve heating practices includes to heat less in total; to heat in more intelligent ways in terms of timing the heater; to use and so heat less rooms in winter time; to wear warm cloths and therefore reduce the room temperature; and to ventilate the air in an intelligent and efficient way e.g. by inrush airing. Some interviewees have improvised on insulating the roof of their house using wood from old furniture etc., and hence providing a par excellence example of bricolage.

Many of the interviewees live in rental properties which for them makes it particularly difficult to improve the energy efficiency of some of their equipment in the house, especially in the UK where household hardware (e.g. dishwasher, washing machine, tumble dryer etc.) are often pre-installed in rental properties, and belong to the property. An implicit logic to this is that landlords, in order to save money, would equip rental properties with cheaper, and often less energy efficient devices etc. (with electricity and heating bills paid by the tenants). Those devices are invariable to changes for the tenants. The latter applies to heating systems and other structural improvements to the energy efficiency of the building such as insulation or PV panels. To people with 'sustainability' aspirations, this, as the interviews have shown, may be

problematic, and raises the question of the influence of landlords on householding practices i.e. the opportunities for tenants to reduce their energy consumption. However, when it comes to the actual everyday practices within the house (such as washing, cleaning, eating, showering etc.), a rental property does not differ from an owner occupied property.

Throughout the analysis two opposing heuristics have come up which are held and mobilized by the interviewees with regard to household hardware and devices. One can be paraphrased as 'the-newer-the-more-efficient-the-better' heuristic. This is the technophile heuristic of sustainable consumption. The other can be paraphrased as 'the-longer-in-use-the-better' heuristic. People who hold this simplifying decision shortcut have in mind upstream emissions such as the emissions caused by the production and distribution of a product, and the problem of waste disposal.

Aesthetic perceptions in the sense of inspirational orders of worth have shown to be competing with other orders of worth. In the examples given they contradict civic and green conventions. Inspirational orders are mobilized to argue for the maintenance of meat consumption in one case, where grazing cattle are seen as maintaining the particularity of the Cornish landscape. In cases the beauty of buildings or residential areas stands against the energy efficiency of buildings. Fashion is another example of where inspirational orders of worth have shown to be competing with environmental issues. Remarkably, though individuals similarly refer of orders of worth, some would give preference to aesthetics while others wouldn't.

In the section on waste and wastefulness, Noadiah provides an example of why she thinks repairing broken devices or artefacts is preferable to buying new things. She provides three arguments in order to justify her view. To her, repairing and mending is useful in terms of household economy; economic independence (which she has a strong ambition towards); and environmental protection. With this, she mobilizes market conventions (saving costs when repairing something) together with civic orders of worth (where economic independence is understood as supporting collective interests of the co-housing group), and green orders of worth. It remains subject to negotiation whether Noadiah also refers to inspirational conventions inasmuch as repairing involves an element of non-conformity, and creativity.

The example of how John desires to de-materialize his consumption (section 4.2.2.7.) bears some inconsistency. To clarify, it must be said that John has in mind two different things when speaking of de-materialization. On the one hand, substituting broken artefacts if necessary. The idea of de-materialisation in face of the given example remains particular and unconvincing since downloading multimedia contents rather than buying material data carriers still requires an advanced technical infrastructure (e.g. at least a notebook). But what John also has in mind is a re-orientation of his activities in order to spend less time with 'consuming' material goods in general, and rather spend what he calls 'quality time with friends and family' (John). However, substituting a broken device with a new one – even though the new might be more energy efficient – must be considered 'sustaining the status quo', and therefore differs from de-materialization.

Carbon emissions and the use of non-renewable resources are the biggest concerns related to mobility and transport to most interviewees. All interviewees assert to attempt keeping their carbon footprint a low as possible. It shows throughout the interviews that the readiness to act accordingly is much higher in interviewee's private life than in their professional life. In their private life many interviewees are willed to spare or abandon their car and use public transport, walk or cycle instead. Many try to organise their daily life in a way that they do not rely on a car. For example they purchase daily utilities in walking or cycling range. Others travel even long distances by coach or train, just to avoid flying or using a car. This picture changes when it comes to professional purposes. In fact, interviewees are not less willing to reduce their travel and commuting footprint in a business context. But as a matter of fact there are many strong limiting factors that come along with the business context. According to some interviewees, these are time scarcity, conventions of the business culture (e.g. dress codes that would not allow cycling), and other matters of appropriateness. To some of the interviewees it is simply a matter of practicality for them not to use public transport to commute, as it might either take too long, cost too much or even both. Some interviewees therefore have established car sharing practices with colleagues who live in the same local area. There are some infrastructural limitations to cycling as well such

as the lack of area-wide cycle ways. This lack consequentially exposes cyclists to compete with motorized traffic. The practice of cycling to work is also restricted by other factors such as being exposed to weather conditions. Additionally, cycling often involves the need of specific facilities such as showers, or places to store wet cloth, or secure bike lockers. Some employers do not provide such facilities sufficiently. However, according to some of the interviewees, infrastructures in general do not support area-wide public transport or cycling sufficiently. Both cycling and walking combines the conventions of opinion (where it is seen as healthy to cycle or walk); market (where it is beneficial in economic terms); inspiration (where it is perceived as relaxing, recreating and refreshing to 'slow down'); and civic or green (where cycling and walking are seen to be carbon neutral).

Flying is seen as environmentally harmful due to its carbon emissions and its climate changing impact most commonly by the interviewees. Civic and green orders are referred to by many interviewees to justify why they try not to fly, or to seldom fly. However, some interviewees report having witnessed what actually made them re-think their practices while they did long distance journeys. (William for example witnessed pollution in China which made him think about sustainable living.) Getting around the world in order to gather cultural capital (in a Bourdieusian sense) appears to be an effective driver to re-consideration of everyday practices within Western lifestyles, as has been confirmed by several interviewees. Others claim to no longer fly at all, using one-good-reason heuristics to confirm their decision where avoiding carbon emissions is taken as the one-and-only reason. Others, again, try to compromise, trading-off long-weekend flown short trips (which they find inappropriate) against occasional 'proper' holidays which than may involve flying. Family gatherings are taken as good reasons to fly for many interviewees, by which priority is given to domestic orders of worth. Social pressure through peers (as in Gerald's case) has further been reported to be constraining alternative travel practices.

4.3.2. Practices Crosscutting Consumption Domains

This section shows how multiple dimensions of different practice domains interact, or rather – to be precise – how the implications interact with each other; implications that

different domains have on providing opportunities of action, or constraining actions. When different consumption domains are combined analytically, some new opportunities to practice and action show to come up, but also some new constraints. Two criteria have crystallised out that make a difference in terms of opening up opportunities, as well as bringing up constraints. First, living in a rural area as compared to living in the city brings about a range of implications, and second, living collectively as compared to living alone.

Living in a rural area potentially offers the chance of growing food in the garden, as often space and facilities for growing are available in plenitude. The co-housing community make extensive use of their land, on which they grow a wide range of fruit and vegetable, some in the open, and some in spacious greenhouses. Yet, the access to commercial food supply is bound to the use of vehicles which – due to rural area typical long distances between homes and the shopping facilities – require motorisation, and so emit carbon dioxide. Community members report public transport infrastructures in remote rural areas to be under-developed and time consuming in case one would use them. Interviewees who life in a rural area perceive it as difficult to make their transportation more efficient. Many interviewees state perceiving this particular aspect as contradicting other aspects of their life where they find to manage making changes to improve daily live in terms of sustainable practice.

With regard to the self-provision with food, groups such the co-housing community benefit from living together in a rural area. Collective living and collaborative consumption allows them to share and distribute work load among the group, according to skill and individual availability of time. This allows them to allocate reasonable bits of work to single individuals. As a result, they manage to grow fruits and vegetable in summer time, and keep their own farm animals all year long for self-provision with food, which they perceive as being of high quality. Different members of the co-housing group state a high personal value to eating and the self-provision with food, and find there is a community-creating, and -strengthening aspect to these practices. This includes growing, breeding, and shopping together for food, as much as preparing and eating the meals together.

In contrast, interviewees who live in the city are facing different challenges in their attempt to live and consume in ways they perceive as sustainable. Shops might be in walking distance, which some interviewees mention positively as they do not need a vehicle for daily purchases. On the other hand the shops in walking distance often might not be the ones that provide local produce, but rather groceries which provide 'organic' or 'fair trade' labelled products of international origin. Farmer's markets are reported to be hardly available for they might open during working hours only, or be too far away. Living in the city leaves little or less room for facilities that would allow self-provision with food such as growing food in the garden or keeping livestock[90].

Collective living allows the co-housing community to cut across the boundaries of domains in multiple ways. For example they purchase food in bulk packaging, and profit from relatively lower prices, also finding that bulk food needs less packaging in general, and causes lesser carbon emissions due to lesser transit per unit. Civic, green, and market conventions are brought together this way. Living collectively allows the co-housing members to share lifts for daily purposes, which they rely on due to their remote situation. In contrast, living in the city, especially in métropoles, may imply a provision with transportation infrastructures such as tube systems, tight networks of bus lines, commercial rental bicycle services or taxis etc., that allow interviewees to organise their daily transportation – often without having to rely on cars – in ways they perceive as environmentally unproblematic.

Collective living allows the co-housing community to partially overcome socio-technological constraints in order to live out what they consider as living more sustainable. For example installing wind turbines or solar panels for the entire co-housing community is a heavy financial burden, which single households often cannot take. Apart from the monetary aspect, for the community it is neither a matter of lacking space or facilities, nor legal restrictions such as caused by ownership issues (for in the given case they do not live in rental properties). The same applies to the self-provision with freshwater, as the community (by the time of the interviews) are (about) setting up their water well. Sharing lifts, and setting up an internal information system

[90] though there are recent projects as such 'urban gardening' etc.

for lift shares, in a way, can be seen as an attempt to self-provide transport infrastructures for the community.

There is a range of constraints and limitations to practices and actions that have come up frequently throughout the interviews. Some interviewees have witnessed lacking social acceptance for their aspiration to live more sustainable, from within their family, or from friends or colleagues. Especially in professional contexts, certain 'sustainable' practices might not be seen as appropriate (for example cycling to work might conflict with certain dress codes; or bringing in lunch from home might be a disadvantage to those who catch up over lunch in the canteen). Another general constraint to 'sustainable' practices and actions can be the financial burdens it involves. Organic food, 'green' energy, energy efficient cars or washing machines – all are slightly more expensive compared to 'non-sustainable' alternatives. This raises an issue of affordability, and in some cases an issue of trust, where higher prices may not be seen as justified, or producer's justifications for higher prices may be disbelieved as 'marketing only' without additional value to consumers. Further, time has been mentioned as crucial over establishing or carrying out certain practices. Especially interviewees with full time jobs report they would appreciate more time to look out for fresh, organic, local etc. food, and time for cooking; but also time to investigate and discover other 'sustainable' options within other consumption domains. Finally, the interviews confirm infrastructures constrain practices in various ways. In some cases, shops or local markets that hold certain products have been reported to be too far away for easy and convenient access, or having rare or inconvenient opening hours. Parallel with the issue of accessibility, the provision of particular goods or services has been mentioned as insufficient. Interviewees for instance mention a shortage of cycling lanes that would allow them cycling to work, or public transport structures that cannot seriously compete with individualized commuting.

Collaborative consumption is a universal device for the individual in their attempt to live in ways that may be seen as less harmful in environmental or social terms. Individuals who live in communities or who are members of distinct groups benefit from collaborative consumption practices. Also, individuals who participate in anonymous and formalized sharing schemes such as for example commercial car

sharing pools or city bike sharing, benefit[91]. Collaborative consumption enables to overcome financial restrictions and helps distribute not only costs but also the effort of maintaining material devices. Throughout the interviews two forms of collaborative consumption have come up. Some interviewees participate in formalized, commercial and anonymous consumption schemes such as car sharing schemes (Elias; Gerald) while other participate in non-formal, communal and interpersonal schemes such as communities, or individual arrangements to commute to work.

4.3.3. Conventions in Practice

The individual articulation between conventions and actions, as well as practices, is complex and multi-facetted. The way conventions are articulated into action does not have systematic connections across the consumption domains. Though conventions appear to have an overarching character in the way that they are held up across different domain areas, the articulation into practice varies across the domain areas. For example, someone might try to reduce the personal carbon footprint by being vegetarian and by installing energy efficient devices all across the house. So in the domain areas of eating and food provisioning; and householding this person would hold up and follow through civic and green conventions in order to reduce emissions. Hence, the same person might fly regularly to visit family members, or commute to work by car every day. In other words, the conventions that articulate into consequential action in one particular domain area may not do so in another – due to either various external constraints; or due to competing other conventions which out-rule the former. One could say that the translation of conventions into various forms of action depends on the domain. In other words: actions are shaped by domains; domains structure action. An attempt to explain this has been undertaken by comparing different consumption domains with regard to how individuals enact 'sustainable' practices. The interviews have shown that domains structure action in a significant way by providing opportunities on the one hand and limiting the

[91] Car pool vehicles provide ease of use for there is no maintenance, no issues with repairs or MOT etc. to the individual. Costs, and reduced environmental impacts may also be reduced for the individual participant.

interviewee's radius of operation on the other hand. In the context of consumption, the concept of 'sustainability' does not make sense in the absence of domains because the domains pre-define the range of possible actions and practices – which can be performed and carried out in 'sustainable' ways, or not.

The relationships of conventions and actions are rarely singular i.e. mono-causal in the sense that one single convention would be referred to in order to justify one single action. The interviews have shown that particular actions are likely performed if there are several combined orders of worth pointing towards an action at once. Actions and practices – which are understood as consequential to conventions – on the one hand differ across the domain areas, and on the other hand differ across the individuals. Hence, though individuals might refer to similar (sets of) conventions, the consequential actions may vary across individuals. There is no consistent pattern to this. One individual might act in a particular way with regard to a particular convention while another individual might act different with regard to the same convention; all within one domain area. This can be seen to happen throughout all domain areas.

4.3.4. Theoretical Implications

In theoretical terms this chapter challenges sociological theories of practices in the way that it draws on how individual thinking and reflection feeds into, and shapes practices and actions. Though, at the same time theories of practice are substantially confirmed in the way they put forward socio-technical and (infra)structural constraints in order to explain how practices are shaped and shifted. However, it has shown how some individuals manage to navigate around particular constraints. In this sense, the concept of 'practice' has been taken from theories of practice as a necessary support in order to understand the data and structure the analysis in this chapter. A novelty of this analyses is to look at practices from a perspective which crosscuts and interrelates different consumption domains, showing how they interfere with each other, in the way that sometimes constraints within one domain would trigger or limit particular practices or actions within another.

However, 'practice' in theoretic terms does not sufficiently explain individual accounts on agency, and how individual reflexive thinking accounts for particular practices and

actions. Informed by the empirics, this chapter has undertaken the attempt to add an explanatory dimension to 'practice' that allows to better understand the basis on which individuals act in particular ways they consider as 'sustainable', and how individuals 'muddle through' everyday decision making by negotiating various constraints, uncertainties and non-trivial contradictions 'as best they can' in order to establish and maintain ways of living which approximate 'best they can' sustainable consumption across multiple domains. To achieve this, 'practice' has been combined with theories of convention, bricolage, and heuristics.

Conventions, or orders of worth, have been used in a way to understand and structure how individuals frame their concerns in terms of 'sayings', and how they justify their 'doings'. This undertaking has provided fruitful insights. In the sense that orders of worth represent the individual's reflexive expressions of concern, they can be seen as intermediate devices between the local and the global, which link individual local activity with implications that spread across the globe, hence providing a link to theories of citizen-consumership where individuals are approached in their role as reflexive responsible consumer.

Though, with regard to the initial intention of using conventions in order to frame and conceptualize individual 'values', orders of worth do in fact not provide in-depth accounts of how individuals root and justify their moral understandings.

The study finds that 'green' orders of worth have turned out to be a matter of critique, since they appear to be overlapping with other orders of worth, mostly with civic orders. In this sense they can be seen as configurations, or compositions of other orders of worth (as outlined in table 1 (section 3.4.)), and the question may be raises whether 'green' orders are rather over-simplifying the understanding of conventions, or helpful in analytical terms. Though in few particular cases, for example where subjects refer to animal husbandry, or the value of nature as such, 'green' orders of worth appear to provide an accurate theoretical account with no or little overlapping with other conventions.

Bricolage has proven to be a useful theoretical concept. Bricolage provides a concept to frame the understanding of how individuals 'muddle through' in face of restrained

access; limited material resources; and often contradictory and complex information, in search of their ways to be sustainable in their terms.

Heuristics provide a framework to understand how individuals handle such complex or contradictory information in their attempt to make sense of it, and to direct their available resources towards their ends. Both, the understanding of problem solving and the understanding of decision making, have been approached with 'bricolage' and 'heuristics, and mobilized within an framework of practice in order to shed light on sustainability in practice.

Chapter 5. Theories of Change and Agency

5.1. Introduction

The previous literature discussion (chapter 3) has drawn on the spectrum of theories of practice and uses these as a springboard to develop a theoretical framework capable of making sense of how people negotiate everyday live involving multiple consumption domains simultaneously.

This chapter, by contrast, follows up the threefold intention (1) to conceptualize the understanding of change in this study; (2) to position the individual and her role as an agent of change in the theoretical context of structure and agency; and (3) to provide an account of agent reflexivity which aligns with an understanding of citizen-consumers as being agents of change. In order to do so it reviews three different literatures.

The findings of the previous empirical chapter (chapter 4) suggest that entering into communal arrangements of social living partially allows individuals to overcome structural constraints such as socio-technical arrangements or infrastructures of provision.

The fact that sociologies of practice put practice at the heart of their theory also partially accounts for why they are relatively quiet on theorising change. At its most, sociologies of practice tend to explain change as a result of a crisis of practice routines which then might put the individual in the uncomfortable situation of having to improvise.[92] However, with regard to the interview material this study draws on, there is a lack of explicit accounts of agency with sociological practice theory explanations of change.

Focussing on routines and routinization, theories of practice provide explanations of why practices do not change, but little is provided on why and how change does occur.

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[92] It is not surprising that theories of practice do not provide a theory of change for they mostly focus on explaining how and why practices do not change, especially in ordinary and mundane situations. They do so, arguing that the ordinary and mundane is the most significant characterising feature of everyday life. Hence, practice is the central unit of analysis to certain theories of practice, leaving little space for agents and human agency, and therefore reflexive agency.

With a focus for example on socio-technical infrastructures and systems of provision, social practice approaches face difficulties to explain how and under which conditions individuals or groups manage to negotiate such infrastructures or systems, or create a degree of autonomy to adapt socio-technical infrastructures to their own requirements. In order to address these questions of change, for this study subjects were found to invest considerable effort in making or trying to make changes to their everyday life and consumption routines.

The first section (5.2.) of this chapter draws on the morphogenesis/morphostasis approach as developed by Margaret Archer (Archer 1995)[93], arguing for a conceptual model of change that focuses on the central role of human agency in sustainable consumption practices while simultaneously succeeding to withstand the temptation to disregard the role of social structure and constraints in limiting and shaping the pathways of action[94]. In contrast, section 5.3. explicitly mobilizes accounts of reflexive agency, within recent theorizations of the conceptual alignment of citizens and consumers. Spaargaren & Oosterveer (2010) analyse and discuss three ideal-type forms of citizen-consumer alignments: environmental citizens, political consumers, and individual moral agents. Section 5.4. deepens and re-confirms the theoretical foundation of reflexivity that underlies the alignment of citizens and consumers, focussing on different modes of reflexivity throughout socio-historic periods. Portraying meta-reflexivity as the predominant mode in late modernity – as outlined by Margaret Archer – the last section aims to build a conceptual bridge between reflexive expressions of concern and agency in late modern civil society.

5.2. The Morphogenesis/Morphostasis Approach

The majority of sociological theories of practice (as discussed in section 3.2.) acknowledge a theoretical underpinning which does not focus on the role of the individual as an agent of change. However, in this study, theoretical accounts of change

[93] As Gram-Hanssen (2011) points out, theories of practice, unlike the M/M approach do not claim to be general social theory which is why the following is not a comparative discussion.

[94] Another reason to look out for theoretical concepts of change is that whilst theories of practice focus on structural and/or systemic constraints they do not hold accounts for reflexivity, and hence causal effects of reflexivity in shaping practice.

were found to be required which aligned with the empirical data pointing to conscious efforts on the part of the subjects to change consumption routines in line with complex normative concerns. The key argument to justify the search for such underpinning derives from the empirical data itself: change actually happens; interviewees provide oral – and some even observable – evidence of this. It occurs in the face of various constraints, and to varying extent, but it occurs.

With the explicit attempt to bypass the breadth and depth of the classical sociological structure/agency discussion – and namely Giddens structuration theory – this section seeks to mobilize a social theory of change that refers to the demands rising both from the research questions and the empirical data. Doing so, it draws on Margaret Archer's morphogenetic/morphostatic approach (henceforth referred to as M/M) which provides an agency based model of social change[95;;96]. Archer elaborates the M/M approach as a 'complement and supplement' to what she calls the 'philosophical underlabouration' (Archer 1998a, p 357) of Roy Bhaskar's Transformational Model of Social Action (in the following referred to as TMSA)[97].

In order to introduce her approach, Archer draws on Roy Bhaskar, highlighting the similarities. To Archer, structures precede human agents which form them. The M/M approach posits human agency in a role central to sustaining or changing social structure:

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[95] Embedded in a realist theory the M/M approach is compatible and epistemologically consistent with the vast range of theories of practice that in some cases draw upon Giddens.

[96] Archer, though not considered a theorist of practice, may be considered a theorist of human action, and by that, the individual is put into the heart of the theory. However, Archer is also interested in practice, theorizing from the point of view of a sociology of action – with practice being part of social action – she finds that the individual is the key unit of analysis. Archer's thesis does not rest on social practice. Practice however, in Archer's term, changes through the actions of reflexive agents. Reflexive agents change practice, which is why human agency is the entry point to Archer, while at the same time structure is not denied. Thus, Archer lays out a dialectic between structure and agency at the heart of her theory.

[97] In fact Archer's approach has been worked out very close alongside, and with regard to Roy Bhaskar's Transformational Model. In order to introduce Archer's model, there are some vital references to Bhaskar.

> 'it is no longer true to say that human agents create [social structure]. Rather we must say: they reproduce or transform it. That is to say, if society is already made, then any concrete human praxis ... can only modify it: and the totality of such acts sustain or change it.' (Archer 1998, quoting Bhaskar 2000, p 33)

The M/M approach conceptualizes humans as agents of change in process of frequent structural reproduction and transformation[98], by this it is distinct from Giddens' process of 'structuration'. To Bhaskar agents can only restructure the given structures which they find themselves (born) in(to) as the following quote highlights:

> It is because the social structure is always a given, from the perspective of intentional human agency, that I prefer to talk of reproduction and transformation rather than of structuration as Giddens does [...] social practice is always, so to speak, restructuration. (Archer 1998, quoting Bhaskar 1983, p 84)

The M/M approach emphasises on the temporality, and so on the historicity of social processes. Practice theories seek to understand practices in their historic development (Randles & Warde 2006), while the M/M approach conceptualizes the change of social order explicitly in a temporal and historicising perspective. In order to prove its transformational model workable the M/M approach requires to sustain the analytical distinction between structure and agency, arguing that without it there would be no comprehensive social analysis possible. (Archer 1998a, p 361). Bhaskar's transformational model works with different temporal states. It has a 'before' describing pre-existing social states; a 'during' describing the actual change itself; and an 'after' describing the transformed social states. Considering that social states are only relatively stable the 'after' state becomes the next 'before', which can be seen as the start of a new transformation cycle. The M/M approach takes over this model (as shown in figure 7). Hence, human activity becomes central to the process of structural transformation in both models:

> Human activity is seen as 'consisting in the transformation by efficient (intentional) agency of pre-given material (natural and social) causes'. (Archer 1998a, p 370, quoting Bhaskar 1989)

However, Archer's transformational model takes into account the interplay between social structure and human activity. This interplay requires 'mediating concepts [...] to explain *how* structure actually does impinge upon agency (who and where) and *how*

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[98] As Bhaskar maintains, the TMSA (and so the M/M) 'can sustain a genuine concept of change, and hence of history' Bhaskar (1989, p 77). Giddens however, for various reasons argues that there is 'little point in looking for an overall theory of stability and change in social systems, since the conditions of social reproduction vary so widely between different types of society' (Giddens 2000, p 217)

agents in turn react back to reproduce or transform structure' (Archer 1998a, p 371), giving rise to morphogenesis or morphostasis in Archer's terms. In other words, what is needed is a conceptualization of a 'point of contact' between human agency and social structure that links action to structure, which thus requires both to 'endure and be immediately occupied by individuals' (Archer 1998a, p 371). This point of contact is conceptualized by Bhaskar as a 'mediating system' (which in his later work he refers to as 'position-practice system') (Bhaskar 2000, p 41):

> [T]he mediating system we need is that of positions (places, functions, rules, duties, rights) occupied (filled, assumed, enacted etc.) by individuals, and of the practices (activities etc.) in which, in virtue of their occupancy of these positions (and vice versa), they engage. (Bhaskar 2000, p 41)

Structures (pre-)condition action by constraints or 'enablements' (Archer 1998a, p 372). However, within the position-practice system, from the point of view of human agency the M/M concept calls for an element of intention and reasoning which drives the actual activity. Archer puts it in a catchy formula, saying that 'intentionality is what demarcates agency from structure' (Archer 1998a, p 372)[99].

Though the M/M has been presented in complex models, the following illustrates the basic conceptual elements sufficiently.

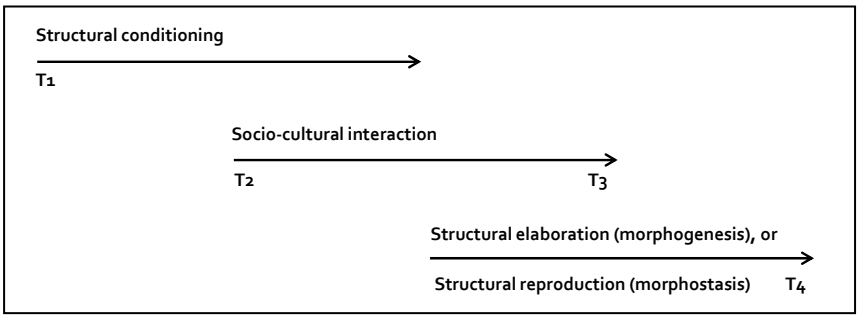

Figure 7: Basic Morphogenetic/Morphostatic Cycle Model of Structural Transformation/Reproduction

[99] In this, Archer, again, refers to Bhaskar who adds the feature of rationality to his characterisation of 'intentionality' in an almost tautological way: 'intentional human behaviour is caused, and ... it *is* always caused by reasons, and . .. it is only because it is caused by reasons that it is properly characterized as intentional Bhaskar (2000, p 90)

The model explains the basis of a circular process (over time) where structural conditions are either reproduced/sustained through socio-cultural interactions[100], or transformed in case of unintended consequences occurring[101].

With its call for elements of intention and reasoning which drives the actual activity the M/M (as much as Bhaskar's TMSA) implicitly articulates a demand for theoretical accounts of reflexivity. In order to interpret the empirical data this conceptual gap shell be filled by drawing on literature on political consumption.

5.3. Citizen-Consumers as Agents of Change

The attention on actors as means of solving environmental problem-solutions in Western democratic market economies has increased throughout the last decade which is well-documented by a rising body of literature (e.g. Barr, Gilg & Shaw 2011, Evans 2011a, Dobson 2010, 2003; Seyfang 2009; 2006; 2005; Soper & Trentmann 2008). From the point of view of political governance and policy making a shift has been noted in transferring responsibility from the state to the individuals (Clarke 2009; 2008).

Spaargaren & Mol (2008, p 354) state that bringing together the concepts of 'citizenship' and 'consumer' means aligning two fundamentally modernist concepts '[that] used to delineate different sets of responsibilities, practices and identities, which under the present conditions can no longer be analysed in isolation'. According to Spaargaren and Mol (2008) conventional modes of citizenship used to refer to, and exercised through the nation state. Contemporary modes of citizenship however are decentralized and distributed, acting below and above the state in various sites of power. Many of these sites for citizenship politics are sites of consumption (Livingstone, Lunt & Miller 2007) which are characterized by the fact that 'traditional

[100] Yet, in a former model version, the 'cycle' consists of structure (T1), action (T2-T3), and structural elaboration (t4) (with arrows in the same order); see Archer (1982)

[101] Despite the overall elaboration, Archer concludes that 'there is yet more fine-grained work to be done on the conceptualization of structural conditioning, on the specification of how structural influences are transmitted [...] to particular agents in determinate positions and situations (the who, the when and the where), and on the strategic combinations which result in morphogenesis rather than morphostasis' Archer (1998a, p 379).

modes of economic exchange are being transformed into sites of ethical, moral and economic discussion' (Barr, Gilg & Shaw 2011, p 1225, referring to Clarke 2009).

Yet, despite the notion of declining accounts of citizenship (as can often be found in literature pre-dating the millennium) there is a shift within the forms, modes and objectives of citizenship. It is a shift that incorporates consumption to become an issue of civil responsibility in a globalizing world. To Scammell (2000, p.351)

> '[t]he act of consumption is becoming increasingly suffused with citizenship characteristics and considerations. Citizenship is not dead, or dying, but found in new places, in life-politics.'

From the theoretical point of view of political consumerism, change is a matter of political and normative perception of the individual or group. Spaargaren & Oosterveer (2010) discuss the ideal types of agents of change in the context of sustainable consumption against the backdrop of a declining distinction between 'citizens' and 'consumers'. They contrast the concepts of (1) environmental or ecological citizenship, (2) political consumerism, and (3) individual moral agency vis-à-vis sociological accounts of social (sustainability) transition – transition that takes place against the backdrop of objects, technologies and infrastructures that are most commonly implied in consumption practices.

To Spaargaren & Oosterveer ecological citizenship (as outlined by Dobson 2003; and Seyfang 2006) brings together politically defined citizen roles with moral and ethical considerations and motivations of individuals. Political consumerism – often labelled as 'ethical consumerism' (Clarke 2008; Barnett et al. 2005)[102] - merely refers to the role of individual purchasing decisions, based on specific ethical or political preferences, in shaping the market provision of products and services. Consuming, from this point of view, has recently been seen as and equated with voting, as the political implications to purchasing decisions have become strikingly evident throughout the last decade (Shaw, Newholm & Dickinson 2006). In the literature on sustainable consumption, this role has generally been discussed as marginal and irrelevant, or, at its most, relevant to niche markets (Spaargaren & Oosterveer 2010). However, in political consumerism the concerns of citizen-consumers for sustainable ways of living become articulated, and

[102] For fuller discussion see also chapter 7

directed to providers of goods and services, giving power and authority to citizen-consumers.

Lifestyle politics primarily deal with actors in the context of civil society and with dynamics of change that go beyond markets and states, directing to the life-world, and as such, connecting to moral considerations within routines of ordinary consumption (Spaargaren & Oosterveer 2010). In the state of what Beck (2003) has described as 'reflexive modernity' individuals are constantly experiencing the signatures and impacts of globalization through systems of provision. Spaargaren & Oosterveer go as far as to note that 'life-politics can be said to connect the personal to the planetary in a direct, unmediated way in the present phase of modernity' (2010: 1895). According to Spaargaren & Oosterveer

> '[r]esearch on lifestyle politics, in both the socio-psychological and sociological traditions, emphasizes the ways in which actors interpret and make sense of everyday life consumption practices – actors ways of dealing with innovations in practices, and their handling of the inconsistencies that might emerge between the principles and dynamics that come up at the different situations of life e.g. within the different social practices they are involved in' (Spaargaren & Oosterveer 2010, p 1896).

The concept of lifestyle, in this understanding, allows to connect the individual and the social 'in a theoretically meaningful way without lapsing into individualist explanations of consumption behavior' (2010: 1896).

For this study, the focus of lifestyle politics, as outlined by Spaargaren & Oosterveer, is of particular interest, as it

> '[…] refer[s] to the ways in which (groups of) individuals, at some points in time (especially when confronted with sudden changes, challenges, or fatal moments), are made to reflect on their everyday lives and the narratives attached to those lives.' (Spaargaren & Oosterveer 2010, p 1896)

Focussing on sudden changes, challenges, or fatal moments, and on how these translate into everyday lives of individuals is the key issue of the empirical analysis undertaken in the next chapter (6) which – using slightly different terminology – works out triggers of change, crucial events, or happenings, and key experiences that interviewee's claim to be initial for their personal practice changes.

Inspired by social practice theories, Spaargaren & Oosterveer (2010) argue within the perspective of de-routinization when finding that

> '[t]he sources of de-routinization, and the ensuing discursive reflections, can be located either in personal, private life (divorce, illness) or can be rooted in wider social and political processes (BSE-

> food crisis, financial crisis). De-routinization of practices [...] can [...] happen both at the level of the individual, and at the level of social practices.' (Spaargaren & Oosterveer 2010, p 1896)

De-routinization, here being used synonymously with 'change' is placed theoretically in the intersect between the individual and social practices. In this context, individual moral agency sets in as the 'direct consequences of agents reflexively (re)considering their existing behaviors and narratives' which will, likewise, 'pertain to both the level of the individuals as well as to the practices involved' (Spaargaren 2010: 1896).

5.4. Reflexivity in Late Modernity

With the alignment of citizenship and consuming, the citizen-consumer discourse is a discourse about reflexivity and agency likewise. In order to highlight the implications of reflexivity for citizenship and civil society, Margret Archer provides an insightful sketch of the characteristic features of reflexivity, tracing the predominance of different modes of reflexivity in a socio-historic perspective. According to Archer reflexivity is

> 'the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social) contexts and vice versa' (Archer 2007, p 4). [As such, reflexivity is] 'the process through which reasons become causes of the courses of action adopted by social subjects' (Archer 2010d, p 31).

With this close connection to action, and hence agency, Archer opens up an opportunity to link to the increasing social importance of reflexivity particularly within the theoretic context of citizenship and civil society. Comparing pre-modern, modern, and 'nascent morphogenetic' society, Archer (Archer 2010d) allocates dominant modes of reflexivity to each socio-historic period of society, arguing that each dominant mode has a specific impact upon the 'component institutions' of civil society: For pre-modern or traditional societies *communicative reflexivity* is the predominant mode where '[I]nternal conversations need to be confirmed and completed by others before they lead to action'. Such societies are characterized by a high and lasting degree of everyday 'contextual continuity' in the sense that situations are most likely repetitive; interactions routinized[103]; expectations stable and relations durable (Archer 2012; 2010d).

[103] Archer (2012) drawing on Garfinkel's demonstration (Garfinkel 2008) that even everyday routine interaction require i.e. involve 'reflexive accounting'

To Archer, modern societies, in this simplified view, are characterized by 'contextual discontinuity'. Autonomous reflexivity is the predominant mode where 'internal conversations are self-contained', and lead to direct action. Nascent morphogenetic societies – often attributed as 'late modern' – are characterized by 'contextual incongruity' where 'subjects [...][are] increasingly thrown back upon their own personal concerns as their only guides to action'.[104] However, Archer points out that all modes of reflexivity are present and traceable in all socio-historical periods, with some modes being predominant at a time.[105]

From a functional point of view to Archer (2010), communicative reflexivity mostly serves social reproduction (morphostasis); while autonomous reflexivity serving social productivity; and meta-reflexivity serving social re-reorientation (morphogenesis). For both modern and nascent morphogenetic society, different social institutions are ideal-typically allocated to different modes of reflexivity: According to this, family reflexivity is predominantly communicative, while market reflexivity being autonomous, and the 'third sector' of society predominantly being meta-reflexive. However, Archer (2012: 3) maintains that the intensification of reflexivity (and the corresponding modes of internal conversation through which reflexivity is practiced) 'is directly related to mutually reinforcing changes in cultural and social structures'. In other words, an increase in reflexivity may likely increase structural changes.

In traditional society, structural and cultural domains 'supplied negative feedback to each other' (Archer 2012, p 18), contributing to, and resulting in morphostasis – the sustaining and perpetuation of the status quo, fostered by the predominance of communicative reflexivity among the majority of the population.[106]

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[104] Archer points out that none of the modes of reflexivity is exclusively correlated to only one socio-historical period of society. However there is, of course, overlapping. (Archer 2010)

[105] In this Archer's accounts of reflexivity differ from Beck's (2009) thesis of 'reflexive modernization' as to which intensive and extensive practice of reflexivity arises with late modernity exclusively. Likewise Beck's thesis, individuals in late modernity in Archer's terms have become more than ever free of structure, which paradoxically puts them in a situation where they permanently have to re-define structure (see also van der Loo & van Reijen 1997).

[106] In pre-modern societies, 'contextual continuity', as Archer (2012, p 19) puts it, is a result of the absence of variety which continues shaping 'situations for successive cohorts of the population in which neither new interests nor alternative ideas could be consolidated'.

In modernity, a state of 'contextual discontinuity' is prevalent, where, according to Archer (2012), the domains of structure and culture have discontinued to co-exist in synchrony with each other, causing a lack likewise in the synchrony of structural and cultural changes. The corresponding state of society to Archer is morphostatic/morphogenetic. Referring to the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe, Archer argues that collective agents both the recipients of situations and the protagonists of change 'whose exertions created further `contextual discontinuity` for others' (20012: 26), while 'primary agents' (26) were constrained in multiple ways (mostly geographically in association with work place and family as support networks). Both these effects, as experienced by different 'sections' (26) of the population, shaped the situation of modernity where autonomous reflexivity could diffuse and become predominant while communicative reflexivity could continue, though decreasing in its stability. Thus, 'collective agential interactions between promotive interest groups, both material and ideal' (26), brought to light the dynamics that made autonomous reflexivity become the predominant mode associated with modernity.

With the shift from pre-modern to nascent (late modern) society, accordingly, there is a shift within the modes of reflexivity with a declining prevalence of communicative reflexivity; durable obtaining autonomous reflexivity; and an increase in meta-reflexivity. Individuals exercising meta-reflexivity are then typified as 'meta-reflexives' (Archer 2010).[107] As for nascent morphogenetic society, Archer typecasts another mode, the 'fractured' reflexivity, with 'fractured reflexives' being '[t]hose whose internal conversations intensify their distress and disorientation rather than leading to purposeful courses of action' (Archer 2012, p 318).

For morphogenetic society, Archer (2012) sees an entirely new 'phase in the relationship between structure, culture and agency' (31) coming into being, that is

[107] Meta-reflexives are '[t]hose ware critically reflexive about their own internal conversations and critical about effective action in society'; communicative reflexives are '[t]those whose internal conversions require completion and confirmation by others before resulting in courses of action'; autonomous reflexives are '[t]hose who sustain self-contained internal conversations, leading directly to action' Archer (2012, p 318). Correspondingly, individuals predominantly exercising communicative reflexivity are considered 'communicative reflexives', while individuals exercising autonomous reflexivity are considered 'autonomous reflexives' (Archer 2012).

shaped by the fact that structure and culture have each become morphogenetic, and positively reinforce towards one another in their relationship. Archer describes this as a new generative mechanism entailed by this relationship that produces more variety, as more and more of the former constraints (such as 'previous quasi-traditional interests and ideas or adherence to prior forms of routine action' (2012: 31)) keep falling apart.

For the first time in human history, as Archer (2012, p 1) proposes, 'the imperative to be reflexive is becoming categorical for all' , as a result of a situation where an increasing number of subjects find themselves in various contexts that require novel manners. This, according to Archer, is the practical manifestation of nascent morphogenesis. Individuals have to determine for themselves what they are going to do in these situations, having to 'draw on their socially dependent but nonetheless personal powers of reflexivity in order to define their course(s) of action and in relation to the novelty of their circumstances' (2012: 1), as habits and habitus (and so the social guidelines to support mastering novel situations) have become less reliable, or lost[108]. Archer finds there is also an upside to this reflexive imperative: it opens up the opportunity for the subject to pursue what they care about most in the social order, with personal concerns becoming the 'compasses' to guide activity.[109]

Drawing on her empirical studies with young adult students, Archer (Archer 2010d) describes 'meta-reflexives' comprehensively in contemporary society with regard to their political role as citizens shaping civil society. According to this,

> 'it is the meta-reflexives alone who display a political engagement that exceeds the bounds of national or regional (EU) politics. They are already engaged in a variety of global social movements, whose nature reflects their subversive stance towards the social in general. They are unanimous about the unfair nature of contemporary [...] society, although their diagnoses of injustice are not uniform' (Archer 2010d, pp 48–49)

Meta-reflexives, according to Archers' description, are particularly political both with regard to awareness and activity. In addition, Archer states matters of justice[110] to be of concern to meta-reflexives. Further describing the political perceptions of meta-reflexives, Archer highlights the role of multiple concerns in shaping particular sets of values and collective agency:

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[108] For fuller discussion see Archer (2010a); Sayer (2010)

[109] Another negative aspect, as Archer (2012) points out, is that with following their own courses of action people possibly can also go wrong with negative outcomes bouncing back upon them.

[110] This closely links to Etzioni's (2006) findings on 'voluntary simplifiers' as outlined in chapter 7.

> 'What is striking is their equal concern about the unjust use of global resources, affecting the welfare of humanity, and about international relations unjustly intensifying existing imbalances of power, wealth and education. [...] Since meta-reflexives adopt a value orientation towards the social and endorse the practical aim of 'making a difference', their intrinsically critical stance transfers directly onto the global canvas. [...] [T]his signals the preparedness on the part of meta-reflexives to undergo the transformation into some (or several) new forms of collective agency - that is, their mobilisation into organised groups with articulate aims on a global scale' (Archer 2010d, pp 48–49)

With regard to various concerns, Archer finds that living out value commitments is itself a high value to meta-reflexive's, who she describes as a finding satisfaction in seeking consistency between their values, and their practices in making a difference:

> '[M]eta-reflexives often recognise the best prospects for living out their value commitments. Their satisfactions overwhelmingly consist in the creation of relational goods - a combination of the intrinsically good, defined by their values, and the 'difference made' to others through realising something of them.' (Archer 2010d, pp 48–49)

The pictures Archer draws of the meta-reflexives implicitly entails a normative conceptual frame of what this group possibly perceives as living a 'good life'. Archer recently (2012) provides a conceptual model (table 1) illustrating reflexivity being the driver in the pursuit of the 'good life'.

Defining and dovetailing one's	Developing concrete courses of action	Establishing satisfying and sustainable
CONCERNS →→→	**PROJECTS →→→**	**PRACTICES**
(Internal goods)	(Micro-Politics)	(Modus vivendi)

Table 2: The Reflexive Pursuit of the 'good life', after Archer (Archer 2012, p 108)

According to this, concerns (in the sense of 'caring about'[111]) lead to the development of courses of action (expressed in various 'projects') which shape the modus vivendi in terms of 'satisfying and sustainable' practices.

5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has mobilized three different literatures. The fact that sociological theories of practice, as shown in chapter 3, give very limited room for accounts of

[111] Archer points out that '[t]o care is different from to want or to desire' (2012, p 104)

agency and reflexivity, has directed the focus of this chapter unto the field of structure, agency and reflexivity. The first section sheds light on the theory of Morphogenesis and Morphostasis (M/M) by Margaret Archer, that provides an account to change puting emphasis on individual agency without neglecting the role of structure as preceding and pre-conditioning action; and so highlights the role of the individual actor in the process of structural change. Being predominantly consistent with social practice approaches, the M/M provides the theoretical backbone required in order to understand individuals in their role (and in their limitations) as agents of change as required for this study.

In the second section, literatures on citizen-consumership have been discussed with the dual intention to (1) provide a theoretical account of individual agent reflexivity, and (2) to draw on illustrative theoretical and practical implications that result from the alignment of these two fundamentally modernist concepts. Merging citizens and consumers implies a shift from the traditional role of citizens being the counter-actor in a national state context to citizens being actors in a globalizing world, expressing citizenship through consuming in particular ways. This extends citizenship beyond 'purchase choices' and includes ways of re-structuring social practices and the re-shaping of individual lifestyles. Ordinary consumption has gone through a shift from being seen as the fulfilment of needs to being perceived from the point of view of its social and/or ecological impact.

The ability to develop such perception is claimed at least for those who are considered as meta-reflexives in Archers terms, which the third section of this chapter has shown. Hence, consuming has become a political expression in a world of globalizing markets, and globalized social and ecological problems. This conceptual understanding has informed, and vice versa, been informed by the empirical analysis in reciprocal ways. However, Archer's elaboration of different modes of reflexivity remains open in the question of whether the individual is to be seen as the sum of multiple identities, i.e. how the single individual copes with, and integrates in his or her actions different modes of reflexivity, and whether those modes might potentially contradict each other (even though this might be object to psychological studies more than to sociology). Anyway, for this study it may be noted the assumption that different modes of

reflexivity exist within an individual, and that reflexivity is not understood as an exclusive matter of 'either or'. With different modes of reflexivity competing, change may be understood differently from the point of view of different individuals, and individuals may not be equally capable of bringing about what they consider as change. Citizen-consumers however, in their role as such, are understood as primarily following the particular mode of meta-reflexivity, as outlined by Archer, in order to shape their everyday life practices. Thus, in general terms it arguable that all agents within the data samples of this study are differently reflexive: they are concerned about different issues in different manners, and they try to bring about the changes they talk about in different ways. The theoretical foundation of reflexivity however, has been outlaid in a way allowing to propose that all agents do reflect about the consequences of their actions, and try – within a socio-technically constrained world – to do the best they can within the means of their availability ('bricolage'), to shape a world they would like to see being different.

Spaargaren & Oosterveer (2010) have provided a hint, pointing out on individual agency understood as direct consequences of agents' reflexive (re)consideration of their existing practices. According to the authors, individuals are more likely to reflect on their everyday lives (and the narratives attached to those lives) at some point when they are confronted with sudden changes, challenges, or fatal moments. This hint is taken as a lever in order to analyse the empirical data from the point of view of exactly this: sudden changes, challenges, or fatal moments, and the question of how those have been reflected by the individuals who took part in this study[112].

[112] The question of how then these reflections translate into practice (and practices change) is picked upon in PART 4 , where findings from all three empirical chapters are drawn together.

Chapter 6. Trajectories of Practice Change

Sometimes it's about meeting people who are inspirational …
I think for me living in California was […]s really big …
it wasn't that I wasn't at all green before I moved there
but I feel that the Californians are prepared
to sort of pioneer on the frontiers of everything.
(Emma, Interviewee (see appendix))

6.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the triggers of change that make, or have moved subjects to change or adapt their actual practices, and act in a different way. By focussing on what triggers subjects to enter the process of changing their practices and/or acting differently, this chapter points out the main drivers that cause shifts in individual lifestyles and consumption in a way individuals perceive as more sustainable in an ecological or social sense. Further, the chapter seeks to shed light on how changes express in, and find their way into everyday life practices, and on how subjects manage to implement what they think are 'better' practices. Accordingly, the unit of analysis are the triggers of change[113] and the ways individuals reflect upon changes, and implement them in their daily life.

Following this programme, the main question this chapter addresses is rather simple: Which are the triggers of change, and how do the interviewees reflect upon their changes? The following subsection is based on the assumption articulated by Spaargaren & Oosterveer (2010) that discursive reflection may either be located in personal private life (events, happenings, crisis etc.), or rooted in greater social or political processes (crisis, catastrophes, etc.), and may pertain both at individual level and at the level of practices involved. To this understanding, key points (such as turning points); crucial moments and situations; or particular experiences in the life of the individual supports explaining the development of individual reflection, concern and recent practices.[114]

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[113] in the following also referred to as 'accounts of change'

[114] This also includes the individual educational and religious background and experiences such as interacting with peer groups or charismatic leaders.

Interviewees were prompted to describe their sustainable consumption 'career' identifying points at which their perceptions, actions or practices changed onto more or less sustainable trajectories as compared to before, and identify the events and influences behind the change.

6.2. Findings

Throughout the interviews interviewees have described two different accounts of changes of their practices. On the one hand, many interviewees describe the way they have changed or adapted their practices as incremental and gradual[115]. Gradual changes are implemented stepwise by the subject; sometimes on occasion where resistance of any kind (especially of socio-technical infrastructures) would be low, and sometimes even against massive external resistance. On the other hand, in some cases interviewees refer to, or name specific crucial moments, events or happenings that made them change almost instantaneously. Such turning points contain an element of surprise and rapidness (which is why in the following they will be referred to as rapid changes).

Eight interviewees have given general statements about a gradual raise of their awareness for issues they see as linked with their personal ways of living and acting as a consumer. The following quotes can be seen as general statements on how some of the interviewees understand, interpret, and explain change:

> 'I have not always been like that. I think that learning about the impact ... if I didn't act like that. It sort of led gradually to sort of an increased level of action' (Samantha)

> 'it is a gradual evolution to realize the damage that we're doing to the world. I mean I do believe in the theories of climate change...never really believed in peak oil.' (Benjamin)

> 'It's [...] that I became more and more aware [...]. It wasn't like a conscious effort on my part to find out about it. It was more like the people I came across and the people that have been involved in the communities and the ideas that they have had, but I am not a fundamentalist greeny if you know what I mean.' (Mia)

> 'It's not a big investment in time. Maybe it's a small investment in money, but an investment of two pounds on a hundred pound shop to buy better. Just don't have a pint down at the pub. You change your behaviour slightly. Not buying this beer could make you buy so much more effectively. It wasn't, I can't even remember, the Al Gore film. An Inconvenient Truth. It wasn't that or 9/11 or anything. When I was ten I probably dropped litter on the floor and my mom told me that was the

[115] 'Gradual' and 'incremental' used simultaneously in the following.

wrong thing to do. It was just a slow evolution of awareness. Now it's something I'm quite interested in.' (William)

'So I started out in my environmental journey and I've worked on environmental issues all my life. So I've always been conscious of the ethics of production if not the actual production itself and the over-consumption and consumption issues associated with it probably really started ten or fifteen years ago when I started to realise that climate change and resource limitation wasn't just a concept but really a reality that has a really significant impact on our future.' (James)

'I don't think I had so I had so much of a sudden coming to awareness like that. It was much more of a gradual thing and sort of meeting people from different backgrounds and different ways of life. [...] I suppose when I was young sort of wandering around different places doing different jobs with different people in different parts of the country and learning about what sort of values there were out there and coming to realize the ones that I was brought up with were actually pretty good. [...] I mean just long conversations with people about politics and getting involved in political issues and political groups. I worked on a pacifist magazine for a while, and I went to Green Common once and embraced the basting, and I got involved in anti-nuclear events as well and I was fairly active for a while. [...] I think I'm very privileged to have done that, and never having had enough money to do expensive things like foreign holidays and buying new expensive things. I've always kind of lived on the bread line and enjoyed doing it. (Anna)

'I think it's more gradual. [...] So lots of it comes from the media, but when I look back I recognize all the good practices that were in existence, they were the common practices in previous generations. We kind of lost for a few years and we're trying to regain them slowly.' (Natalie)

'[change is (ed.)] about meeting people who are inspirational ... I think for me living in California was a really big ...it wasn't that I wasn't at all green before I moved there but I feel that the Californians are prepared to sort of pioneer on the frontiers of everything' (Emma)

Most of the interviewees mention other people to be the key source of inspiration and the trigger of change for their own life. As shown in the following, 'other people' may be peer groups; role models, charismatic leaders and pioneers; friends; or family. Especially members of the co-housing community strongly emphasize on the effect of their peer group – the community – on their own understanding and their own practices, which Anna points out:

'Here [in the co-housing community (ed.)], I have been here a year and a half and I have learned so much form other people about a real in depth community living' (Anna)

Sam articulates his perception very precisely when talking about the effect that living in the community has on him:

'INTERVIEWER: When it comes to community and knowledge, how much do you think does the community life contributes to your knowledge of sustainability? SAM: Quite considerably. It's the fact that you've got diversity here. You've got different people, different lifestyles, but they're all leaning toward sustainable lifestyles, which is a common factor and keen to embrace anything that advances that. And I admire NOADIAH and JACOB particularly because they're very well-educated, well-travelled, and well-experienced. And I find that I am learning from them all the time. And I'd like to think at the same time that I have skills that they can learn from. And I'm quite happy to do that without any charge, because I like them.' (Sam)

Ryan's story of how he changed his way of thinking and acting is also linked to learning from 'other people'; in his case it is other communities and their practices he learned from:

> 'a friend of mine put me in touch [which sustainability knowledge and practices (ed.)], he started doing WOOFing[116], [...] and I kind of got interested, so I decided to do some WOOFing. And I think once you do something like that and the WOOFing I did, I did in communities. [...] I actually went to communities like this one. And you could see the systems they had set up, be if for food, be it for waste, be it for anything, really. You could see they had all systems set up for things, and I had never had systems because I lived on my own, I just did what everyone else did, basically, and I was on very good wage and I was a single person so basically I bought the best food and wasted lots of it, and didn't think twice about it really, to be honest. But when you kind of go to these places the simple life they grew some of the food like what we do here now. So they grew the food, they looked after it, and then they cooked it, and what was left over they put on the compost heap and stuff like that. And I thought, this is good because it's using up less resources. And it's simpler; I like the simple part of it. And I liked the working together part of it. Whereas when I was living in London, as I say, it was just I was just working like most people have to work, coming home in the evenings and chucking some stuff in the microwave [...] So, as I say, the WOOFing about ten years ago started, and I started to think about and just trying as much as possible, but still failing miserably, but trying as much as possible to not leave a footprint. [...] that's what made me, as I say, change from being a person who didn't really think about it, and now I think of it on a daily basis.' (Ryan)

Whereas the three above examples deal with interviewees who live(d) in communities which have been formally set up as communities, Eve mentions that sharing a house with others who are involved in various 'sustainable' practices had an effect on her:

> 'there is probably something about the people I have lived with. I can think back to when I've lived in a household where we just didn't really recycle as we should have done because we were lazy and busy.' (Eve)

Other than moving into (or founding a) community, or moving together with a group of people who share a house, there are interviewees who describe their upbringing as a process that was strongly formative to their practices today. The following quotes have been chosen as the most illustrative among others. Interviewees were prompted to describe and explain the influence they have experienced to become who they are today, and do what they do today:

> '[at home (family) (ed.)] ... heating is never on, and food is never wasted even if it is four years out-of-date [...] [there where] items [...] thinks that have been used and electrical equipment that is older than I am and older than my sibling. So it is definitely a real believe you should not waste things that have had a lot of energy to make.' (Eve)

> 'the influence comes from whether it is from the media and from my work, but also from my upbringing. My mother in particular is very conscious about waste, food waste and some clothing waste if you were throwing away something that was reusable or there has always been an

[116] Working On Organic Farms

> influence there from family history and previous generations who always mend things that are broken instead of throwing them away. (Natalie)

> 'For me i think it has been more of a gradual change, I guess my growing up on a farm was very formative because I was always outside, I was in the natural world and I'm sensitive to what is going on.' (Marc)

> 'I'd say pretty much so far I'm only 20 and my only own influences really are my parents to be honest with you because that's just the way I've grown up, and that's just yes, the way that they've taught me to live.' (Luke)

> 'that's something that I grew up with because I grew up in a family with very little money and my mother made all our clothes. When I was old enough I started making my own and it took off from there. A lot of it comes from my family really, being careful about food, not wasting and being economical, growing food.' (Anna)

> 'my parents were very non-materialistic. They were also very poor, but they are some of the few people that I know who were very poor and didn't mind being poor. They actually thought that their life was so wonderfully good, that they didn't want more money. [...] I was definitely brought up to understand that happiness wasn't linked to money. We were poor and we actually kind of enjoyed being poor. So, I didn't have the sense that I wanted to get away from this poverty and buy stuff. So, that was a really strong influence.' (Noadiah)

All of the above examples show how interviewees have been used to certain practices, which by the time of their upbringing were not considered ecological or environmental, but essential and necessary, as they were caused by limits or material acquisition.

Another example of how experiencing material limits can shape daily life practices is provided by Kathryn who ascribes her continuous attempt to not waste any food to her upbringing under the conditions of scarcity in the former German Democratic Republic. The effect of growing up under scarce conditions has also been mentioned by Benjamin, who describes that his upbringing in the 1960s effected his perception particularly in terms of not being wasteful:

> 'at the time I grew up most people weren't really [environmentally conscious (ed.)]. Nobody thought about driving a car was bad, driving a car was something you did. People flying wasn't considered bad. Eating meat was positively healthy and good. There were other... it was a very moral upbringing in lots of ways but green issues didn't figure at all. The only thing I guess... I wasn't brought up in a very affluent house and not a lot was wasted but that was partly because it was the 1960s and people didn't have a lot to waste' (Benjamin)

In addition to the effects of learning from, and within the family of origin, or informal groups or formal communities, there are some accounts of change where interviewees report a strong influence which certain role models and/ or charismatic leaders had on them. The following quotes give evidence of this:

> '[W]hen I was about 17 Jonathon Porritt[117], who at that time headed the Green Party in the UK [came (ed.)] [...] And I heard him speak and I just thought 'that's it!'' (Gerald)

> 'I decided to work for an organisation called 'Global Exchange' which was a political campaigning group [...] headed by Kevin Danaher [...] [who] was one of the main players in the battle of Seattle in '99. So they are very engaged and campaigning' (Emma)

> 'NOADIAH has been an influence obviously. I suppose people that I met at University, because that was quite a radical crowd.' (James)

> 'charismatic leaders within my family or community, people that can speak passionately about subjects and make you think. And also it's other people that through the 'green champion' project I've heard speak. You know, people who are charismatic and educated and knowledgeable and credible, who'd say 'this is serious'. So through the 'green champions', I can't think of the name of people who have come to see us, but scientists and people who work in this field and can explain this really clearly and have a solution for you.' (Eve)

A marginal influence on interviewees appears to be due to formal learning, which – at least throughout the interviews – does not seem to be a major trigger of change. Anyway, some interviewees mention forms of formal education as to be a source of influence that made them re-think and change their practices. Jacob for example, did an environmental PhD and afterwards worked on 'regulating industrial processes to minimise the impact of industry on the environment.' (Jacob). Others like for example Lorelai and Eve have gained a lot of knowledge from events that have been organised by their employer in the context of the so called 'Green Champion' initiative in which they participate.

> 'being part of the Green Champions [...] We've had some really good speakers actually who come and aren't tree-hugging hippies, which is the perception, they're actually scientists and kind of spell out what's going to happen.' (Lorelai)

> 'Yeah, I would say [my knowledge comes mostly from my professional background (ed.)]. I mean, I think there is a low level of seeing it in the press. And several years ago [...] I don't think I took it particularly serious then. [...] I think I have certainly grown much more increasingly aware of and aware of my role.' (Eve)

Other interviewees who also volunteer as 'Green Champions' have mentioned similar experiences in the sense that the knowledge about environmental issues they have gained from their professional activities as 'Green Champions' helps them change and shape their practices.

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[117] Jonathon Espie Porritt, CBE (born 6 July 1950), is a British environmentalist and writer, perhaps best known for his championing of Green issues and his advocacy of the Green Party. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonathon_Porritt, April 29th 2012)

Among the interviewees there are few (Anna, Gerald, and Mary) who have mentioned religious practices and spiritual beliefs as being influential, in shaping their daily practices in a sense they would consider as environmentally sustainable or ethical with regard to the way they consume. Mary explains in the most illustrative way how her religious thinking influences her practices:

> 'I was brought up as a Quaker and a part of that – I still am a Quaker – and a part of that is, well, principles of Quakerism are that you have concern for equality amongst your people, that you live simply, that you are truthful and honesty, you are pacifist and [?]. So a lot of those four pillars or truths or testimonies of Quakerism are quite well unto or DO direct you to live ethical standards and implicitly environmental standards.[...] I have an existing framework to check my decisions and my actions against. So I don't have to develop that in a way...I have to interpret that to myself but I've already got the same ground framework. [...] A lot of the time it's intuitive. And then new things which come up I have to think through it, but a lot of it is functions-lead. [?]...you weighing up that 'this is perhaps unethical but' or 'this is production normally is un-ethical, but.. I can't find an ethical alternative though' ' (Mary)

With Mary, there is an example of a direct connection between religious beliefs and daily life practices. The other two examples do not suggest drawing such a direct line. However, in the context of this study, the effect of religious thinking may be taken as an outlier. Another, far more particular outlier is James' case. James narrow's down his path to entering the process of changing to what he perceives as a sustainable lifestyle as a reaction against his parents, or his father in particular:

> 'Fundamentally my biggest influence is reaction against my parents. My father built . . .my father's previous job was building nuclear power stations. So, my job is energy efficiency and demonstrating outside of nuclear power stations and getting arrested at peace camps - all of that stuff, I've done it all!' (James)

All the above examples either implicitly or explicitly describe accounts of change that can be characterized as incremental and gradual: changes in perceptions and practices over a certain longer or mid-range time span; changes which occurred step by step. The following passage picks up on examples of interviewees who claim having had particular key experiences. Some of the interviewees are able to trace back the moment they started entering the process of changing their thinking and their practices to some crucial event, or happening; something that qualifies a turning point for their life. Even though the changes that followed as a consequence of such key experiences might be rapid or not, this section counts them as rather rapid, as they can be traced back to a particular turning point:

Two interviewees describe having had crucial aesthetic experiences which were influential on them in different ways. Grace describes the way she was positively experiencing nature when she was milking a cow once.

> 'Milking a cow is the most relaxing thing you can do. [...] It's absolutely wonderful, even in mid-winter when your fingers are freezing cold. I found that I could milk with one hand and put one between her udder and her hind leg [...] So I suppose, yeah, she [the cow, ed.] was an influence in a way.' (Grace)

In the sense of Boltanski and Thévenot's (1991) orders of worth this may be seen as a reference to an inspirational orders. Grace leaves open the actual influence this experience had on her, most likely because the aesthetic perception did not directly trigger into practice. Yet, for Kathryn there is a direct connection between a specific aesthetic experience and a particular practice: A friend of hers had pointed to the unpleasant smell of pork meat. Afterwards, when Kathryn was cooking a meal with pork, she suddenly realized what she had never realized before:

> 'I had a key experience with pork [...] after a friend had told me [...] I found that it really smells awful when you cook it [...] and I really found it disgusting [...] and this had resulted in my decision' (Kathryn)

For Kathryn, this became a key experience resulting in her turning vegetarian.

Samantha has witnessed the decline of coral reefs which is most likely due to climate change. Ironically, witnessing these environmental damages for her involved a long distance flight. However, seeing the decline of the reef has made Samantha start thinking about how and what within her daily practices and actions she can contribute in order to at least not increase climate change:

> 'SAMANTHA: I always cared about the fact that I always kind of knew and I've always acted on them more. INTERVIEWER: How would you explain that? How would you explain that you started caring more? SAMANTHA: Perhaps fully understanding the consequences. INTERVIEWER: Which might be? SAMANTHA: Being first hand effects or say land fill or climate change on areas I love. INTERVIEWER: Where do you see it? SAMANTHA: Scuba diving on coral reef. I dive a lot. [...] on vacation I always fly. [...] I've stopped using low cost carriers unless it makes sense. I pay a bit more now to go through Heathrow. But I don't think about the carbon impact. ' (Samantha)

A similar configuration of circumstances has led William to making a key experience: Having travelled to China William witnessed environmental pollution in Shanghai:

> 'I've been fortunate enough to be to China for work, and I've walked through Shanghai and seen the smoke and the temperature there. [...] It is terrible' (William)

This experience made William re-think about production chains in globalizing markets, and his own way of consuming and acting as a consumer. Also he started re-thinking

about his role as part of an influential UK retailer which soon after resulted in his active engagement in the 'Green Champion' initiative within the company.

Emma's reaction to a crucial event in world history is best presented in her own words first:

> '...the point at which I realized that I need to forget about my individual ambitions on a very ego-centred scale was 9/11. [...] And when 9/11 happened it seemed such a kind of cataclysmic event that it kind of shook me to the core and made me realize, actually, there is so much ...human society is on the brink of disaster in one way or the other and I need to put my energy into identifying and colouring a path that can help.' (Emma)

It is not an environmental catastrophe but a political event which involving a vast amount of human life losses that made Emma become pro-active with regard to environmental issues and specific practices. However, Emma names this event to be crucial to her in the way that she made it a turning point for herself. As a result she became politically active and involved environmental activism but at the same time she changed her practices in private life dramatically.

A different story which also involves life loss is provided by Anna who started to actively engage in various practices and activities when her son died.

> 'it is an important part of who I am now, so yes. The child that I had he died when he was 17 quite suddenly, unexpectedly, having been perfectly fit and healthy all his life up till then. He suddenly got pneumonia which was misdiagnosed by an emergency doctor [...] So, that made an enormous impact on my life for the last seven years. [...] INTERVIEWER: Was he also a part of your decision to come here [to the co-housing community (ed.)] then to change place? ANNA: Yeah.' (Anna)

Anna describes this sad loss as a life changing event which has resulted in her changing the path of her life and move into the co-housing community.

Moving house has been described as an event that can be taken to initiate changes in terms of particular practices. Even though not in detail, Natalie mentions that moving together with her partner had an effect on the way she now handles purchasing decisions:

> 'One of the biggest things that made me stop and think was moving house. Because we've been in the same house for a number of years. We put two houses together when we got married and we realized how much stuff we have and then to try and condense it to those of the new house which is smaller. We realized how much stuff that we had that we really didn't need in the first place. [...] So, I'm much, much more careful about what we buy and what we do with it.' (Natalie)

Grace describes a social key experience which helped her discover meaning to her life. To Grace being embedded in, and being recognized and accepted by a local community weighs more than living a life of material affluence:

> 'I suppose in my younger days, my life was affluent. Cause my parents were then well off...but then they lost it all. And that was quite a shock. Because I lived in the part of the country, this was back in Buckinghamshire. And you had to live in certain roads. Otherwise people, some people, wouldn't talk to you. [...] And I experienced somebody that I knew very well... I've been to school with and thought...[she (ed.)] was a friend. I was walking across down the road...and she actually crossed the road to avoid me. And I suppose I was about 17, 16; 17 or 18 at the time. And she walked passed me turned her head away...and I thought 'Why'? You know, why? And I think I realized then...that it wasn't what you got...that mattered. It was people. And that one incident, I think more...than probably a lot of other things that have happened over the...changed me tremendously.' (Grace)

The conclusion Grace has drawn from being socially excluded, laid out a path for her to follow what might be considered a 'post-material' lifestyle in the co-housing community.

Many interviewees mention being influenced by information media like daily news, books or pertinent movies. Christopher, Madison, Kathryn and Samantha highlight the effect which specific topic related movies such as *We Feed The World* or *An Inconvenient Truth* had on them:

> 'I found it very impressive when I watched the movie *We Feed The World*. It was shocking what is behind all the products you buy in a supermarket, even vegetables! [...] What I learned from the movie is that apart from the biological conditions [...] of plants there are so many social problems related with it.' (Kathryn)

> 'thinking that was - *Inconvenient Truth*, I really thought that was quite a powerful message. I think that probably wasn't the only [inaudible], but I was drawn to it.' (Christopher)

Samantha describes a shift within the television landscape that contributed in raising her awareness of environmental issues:

> 'You know how much in the UK has led to consumer driven changes like use of poultry program, fish program, Charles Clover's End Of The Line documentary, the rise of the Celebrity Chefs, and the extension of their work into sustainable socially responsible initiatives. So, yeah, the media charismatic people that have definitely been a large influence just because they would take this story I was always vaguely aware of and make it more obvious the impact of it. The really poignant media images. If you coupled with the fact that as I am getting older a bit and seeing first hand some of these things. I think when you are at school you care a lot.' (Samantha)

With the above quote, Samantha describes the role media (and prominent characters within media) can have in summing up and simplifying complex environmental issues and constructing stories around these issues which make them appreciable. Another example of this kind is given by Elias who saw a deforestation machine on TV when he was a child:

> 'And I have had a real horror-experience when I was a child, about 5 or 6 years old. [...] What I was allowed to watch was the [...] [evening news, ed.] with my parents. [...] And I remember that at some point [...] I saw a deforestation machine, a kind of deforestation robot. And I asked my parents and they explained it to me and I really had a, I had a real panic attack because [...] in my child reality I was convinced that when I am in my parents age there will be no more tree and we will live under glass domes and eat somewhat artificial soya-meat from bio-reactors.' (Elias)

Other interviewees mention different media sources such as books on particular topics, or simply daily news to having (had) an effect on them. They describe this effect to be shaping their perception of environmental issues, and influencing the way they conduct certain practices, as the following two quotes show:

> 'I bought a book a couple of years ago on carbon counting I was interested to see that even if I lead the greenest lifestyle, if I took one long whole international flight I would cancel out everything else I did. So I then thought that this is a good place to start.' (Emma)

> 'I first became environmentally conscious, I guess, when I read the Silent Spring when I was about 20 or so. That's how far it goes back. I've been involved in environmental issues for about 40 years.' (Jacob)

In summary, throughout the interviews, interviewees have described different accounts of change with regard to their personal life paths. On the one hand, most commonly, subjects describe the changes in their thinking and practices as gradual and incremental. Step by step, sometimes over years, they adapted or changed the way they are carrying out practices, or changed some practices entirely either by abandoning them, or substituting them with others. On the other hand, interviewees have described the way they have come to change their way of thinking and acting (in terms of carrying out practices) as rapid, inducted or initialized through crucial events, happenings, and key experiences.

The following table captures various accounts of change that have come up within the analysis.

Account of Change / Trigger of Change	Gradual / Incremental	Rapid (in the sense of turning points)
Human Interaction(s)	**learning from others in direct interaction** peer group(s) role model(s) friend(s) charismatic leader(s)	**stigmatisation due to social decline** social exclusion (Grace' social key experience)
News/ Media	**watching / reading daily news** **reading pertinent literature on the topic** **watching pertinent movies on the topic**	**watching / reading daily news** e.g. 'horror experience' of seeing deforestation machine in the new (Elias) **reading pertinent literature on the topic** e.g. 'Silent Spring' (Jacob) **watching pertinent movies on the topic** e.g. 'We Feed the World' (Kathryn), 'An Inconvenient Truth' (Madison + Christopher)
Formal education	**did an environmental PhD** (Jacob)	
Crucial Event(s) Happening(s) Key Experience(s)		**milking cows** (Grace) (aesthetic experience; experiencing nature) **Sept.9 2011 NYC** (Emma) (political event) **moving house** (Natalie) (changing social environment) **witnessing the decline of coral reefs** (Samantha) (witnessing environmental damage) **smell of cooking pork** (Kathryn) (aesthetic experience) **sudden loss of son** (Anna) (loss of beloved person)
other	**following religious / spiritual practices** (Anna; Mary; Gerald) (religious beliefs and spiritual practices) **protest against his father** (James)	

Table 3: Accounts of Change according to the Empirical Analysis

6.3. Discussion and Conclusions

The analysis has shown that there are various patterns in the way subjects reflect upon their role as consumers and practitioners in daily life, and consequentially change or adapt their practices and routines. Those changes and adaptions are directed towards an alignment between subjects' normative perceptions on the one hand, and their actions and practices in everyday life on the other. The analysis, on the one hand, brings up subjects' normative perceptions in terms of how they would like either their life, or social life in more general terms to be (as articulated in their concerns). On the other hand, it shows how these subjective normativities align with actions and practices in everyday life – including the consequences subjects find to be implied in their practices.

A number of parameters to drive the change of consumption practice have shown up throughout the interviews: Man-made socio-technical catastrophes such as the nuclear catastrophe of Chernobyl in 1986, or the collapse of the World Trade Centre towers in 2001 have had an effects on two of the interviewee's reflections, and shaped their need to become proactive in changing their actions. Information media such as TV, internet, print news or radio have also been mentioned by some interviewees to be influential to shaping their concerns. According to the interviewees, information media influence is rather weak in those cases where media information is the only source, especially in adult age. Other sources of influence such as charismatic leaders, peer groups, or personal attachments to catastrophes have been mentioned to be configurative to subjects' becoming proactive and changing their practices. However, determining the amount to which single triggers of change have an impact on shaping individual reflexivity and which then may result in practice changes would require quantitative research methods.[118]

The analysis shows how individuals refer to various triggers of change, and that for some subjects a single crucial happening or experience has given an initial input to kick-off, while others state that various triggers adding up over time to make them re-think their practices. A third group refers to their upbringing – often under conditions of

[118] The educational aspect has not been at the centre of focus of this analysis. Anyway the analysis provides hints that early in life impacts such as childhood experiences weigh heavy as compared to later in life experiences with regard to the development of active engagement and changing practice.

limited resources – , stating that their practices have always been on the 'sustainable' end as to what they think. Reflexivity is difficult to trace and verify in some cases where it is less obvious. So when some interviewees state they have always been doing 'things' the way they do as in terms of a continuation of practices they learned and carried out with their upbringing, the notion of reflexivity is less obvious. Though all interviewees who do say so have now re-interpreted their practices from being related to scarcity to being related to sustainability, which can be considered a reflexive effort. Other interviewees provide obvious examples of reflexivity, either in cases where they directly connect changing practice or performing actions to crucial happenings (such as e.g. 'New York 9/11'), or where they describe themselves changing their practices incrementally over time due to a continuous growth of knowledge they gather about environmental and social issues which relate to consumption and Western lifestyles. In summary, there is a spectrum of accounts of change from big personal transitions in the sense of more or less radical changes, to tipping points of incremental change where subjects change and adapt their practices step by step.

From the point of view of consumption domains (as laid out in chapters 3 & 4) it appears that within some domains it is easier for the individual to change certain practices. This is most obvious with the domain of eating and food provisioning, for which interviewees claim having changed certain practices, for example shifting to purchasing organic food, or fair trade labelled food; cutting down on meat or becoming vegetarian. Such changes require changes in the structures of provision, which confirms theories' of practice point of view. For within other domains, the actual process of changing practices is unsurprisingly more difficult. For example, commuting to work by bike where there is no proper cycling lane, or in bad weather, causes more difficulties to subjects than making choices at a well-sorted supermarket shelf.

Reports which seem contradictory on first sight, have been provided by Samantha and William. Both have undertaken long distance journeys (and both refer to the environmental impacts of long distance flights), and have come to witness environmental pollution: William, when breathing in the polluted air in China; and Samantha, when seeing the damage of coral reefs on a tropical diving holiday.

Chapter 7. Theories of the good life and happiness

7.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses and sets out the theoretical frame that is required in order to understand and make sense of the variety of narratives of a good life that derive from the empirical data. These narratives each combine individual notions of what it means to live a good life with individual notions of environmental citizenship[119]. However, the common point of view that the majority – if not all – of the interviewees takes is that there are fundament incompatibilities between what the interviewees perceive as living a good life on the one hand, and (i) the stresses placed upon global ecologic capacities and (ii) the increase of social and economic inequality caused by particular consumerist lifestyles on the other. Besides this, there is a notable variety of focus throughout the interviewee's different 'good life' narratives.

In order to disentangle the articulated 'good life' narratives theoretically, this chapter briefly reviews the philosophy of the good life (section 7.2.), and draws a line to contemporary happiness research in social science to illustrate what has been phrased as the 'paradox of prosperity' (Jackson 2011). This taken as a background, the chapter then (section 7.3.) focuses on recent research literature on practices of sustainable consumption which – in a wider sense – link with practitioner's notions of a good life. These practices have been described as voluntary simplifying and downsizing (Etzioni 2006; Elgin 2006) collaborative consumption (or 'sharing') (Schor 2006; Botsman & Rogers 2011), and 'de-materialisation' of (mostly cultural) consumption (Magaudda 2011)[120]. All these can be summed up as practices of resisting consumerism (Jackson 2006b). These literatures suggest – if not explicitly highlighted – that subjects engaging in any (or all) of such practices would do so for certain reasons. Such reasons then are rooted in subject's notions of what a life worth living is about.

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[119] as has been framed e.g. by Dobson (2010) and Spaargaren & Oosterveer (2010)

[120] Magaudda (2011) picks upon what is considered a the 'dematerialization' of consumption, providing the example of cultural consumption, with the digitalization of music. Maguladda concludes that with the digital availability of music there is a shift from former media (such as cassettes, vinyl, CDs and DVDs) digital carriers and listening technologies such as portable mobile devices (smartphones, mp3-player etc. and various associated accessories) where the music is stored in file format. However, Maguladda finds, materiality does not disappear. It rather articulates in new ways.

7.2. From 'Good Life' Philosophies to 'Happiness' Research

Humankind has pursued a documented search for happiness for almost 3000 years. (Schoch 2006).[121] The philosophy of the 'good life' is a discipline which deals with justifications, arguments and assumptions about human needs and objectives of happiness. It is an independent stand-alone body of literature. However, it folds seamlessly into contemporary theorizations of consumption ethics (Michaelis 2006; 2000; Buchholz 1998; Crocker & Linden 1998).

Barnett & Cafaro (2005) introduce the distinction between 'ethical consumption' and the 'ethics of consumption': The term 'ethical consumption' refers to moral commitment accounting to consumption and the social (or sometimes socio-economic) and environmental implications of consumption in general. The 'ethics of consumption' constitute a subcategory within the philosophy of ethics[122], and critically refer to the whole panoply of modern consumerism (Barnett & Cafaro 2005; Barnett et al. 2005). Ethical consumption, at its simplest and most obvious, refers to two aspects, an environmental and a social: the recent consumption patterns of the modern Western world rely on heavy natural resource use and generate unacceptable environmental impacts. On the other hand, there is an element of inequity, as the richest countries benefit most, while the poorest suffer from the absence even of the basic necessities of life. In addition, often the poorest bear an even bigger share of the environmental impacts (Jackson 2006).

Three different basic philosophical scholar approaches are useful to understand and evaluate issues of ethical consumption, namely consequentialist ethics, deontological ethics, and ethics of virtue. Consequentialist approaches are concerned with defining ethical conduct by referring to the consequences or outcomes of actions. This kind of teleological approach bases judgement on the (anticipated or real) end (*telos*), independently of moral obligations.[123] In opposition to the consequentialist approach

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[121] In Western philosophical thinking has pursued this topic for at least more than 23 centuries if we consider the beginning with Plato, Aristotle and Epicure (O'Neill 2008b)

[122] Another subdomain of the panoply of philosophical ethics is the ethics of the 'good life'.

[123] Critique has been articulated in recent philosophical discussion that ethical consumption debates and policies often take an implicit consequentialist perspective (Barnett & Cafaro 2005). This includes the

deontological ethic puts emphasis on defining what right action is, independently of any contribution to happiness or other favoured goals (Rehfus 2003). Deontological approaches therefore have been critiqued to be 'duty-based' and too narrow in terms of systems of rules.

The philosophy of virtue focuses on human flourishing, and living a 'good' life. According to Barnett & Cafaro (2005), in recent moral philosophy virtue ethics has become a serious alternative to both outcome-oriented consequentialism and rule-based deontology by making possible new kinds of consumption arguments. Virtue theory is interested in specifying personal performance and societal flourishing, and the ways to achieve them. As Barnett & Cafaro (2005: 17) put it, key issues of virtue for example are 'What are my duties to others and their responsibilities to me?' and 'What is the good life and how can we go about living it?'. According to Barnett & Cafaro, virtue theory, in the context of consumption, focuses on habits and practices through which virtues are adapted. With this '[i]t is thus well placed to discuss which habits and practices might lead us to act in ways that are, for example, more environmentally sustainable' (Barnett & Cafaro 2005: 17). This qualifies virtue ethics appropriate to the analysis of ethical consumption.

The most influential theorist of virtue in Western philosophy is Aristotle who, with the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Gigon 2002), has shaped the concept of a 'good life' like no other philosopher thus forming the central ethical debate of the ancient world (Hansen 2000); (Rehfus 2003). The objective of this debate is to explore *eudaimonia*, felicitousness, or happiness, and to consider the conditions of human flourishing and felicity.. The *Nicomachean Ethics* intends to provides a manual for the 'good life', driven by an intrinsic conceptualization of happiness. Aristotle judges from what today we would consider a realist perspective, taking the world given as it is. He approaches the question of how to achieve a 'good life' by emphasizing on individual behaviour and the (assumed) reverse effect of certain behaviours on individual well-being. To Aristotle, the 'good life' is defined as that which brings happiness, or that which satisfies. Happiness, *eudaimonia*, is the highest goal and the 'ultimate good' (Michaelis 2000, p

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assumption 'that ethical decision-making works through the rational calculation of ethical obligations, for which the provision of knowledge, advice, and information is an essential prerequisite' (Barnett & Cafaro 2005, p 2).

24) of all human actions. Anticipating a stratified order of goods that leads to the achievement of this goal, Aristotle places the (philosophical) contemplation on the top end of goods.[124] At its heart, Aristotle's philosophy follows the ideal of a *telos*, a final purpose. According to this, being human implicitly entails *telos*, which is, to achieve happiness through living a life in accordance with the virtues. Aristotle unfolds a normative concept to which happiness relates to different degrees with pleasure (*hedone*), social engagement (for Aristotle this is to serve the *polis*) (*bio praktikos*), and at its highest, the theoretical contemplation (*bios theoretikos)*. However, for Aristotle it is unquestioned that living a 'good life' also requires social relationships with family and friends and some level of material wealth to satisfy basic needs such as accommodation and nourishment.

The concept of *eudaimonia* is based on the 'Golden Mean' (*mesotes*) that refers to a multidimensional equilibrium: A good person is in a balanced state of health that draws back to an equilibrated way of consumption (mostly of food but also of all other kinds of material goods). This to Aristotle means that one's character never goes to extremes.[125] Aristotle strongly argues for the uselessness of exorbitance in any kind of consumption. Based on this position he unfolds a theory of ethical virtue. Acting in accordance to the virtues (in terms of behaviour) will – to Aristotle's normative point of view – entail the 'good life'.[126] O'Neill categorizes the Aristotelian – *eudaimonic* – concept of as a 'more objectivist capabilities approach' in which is of significance 'what person's can be or do' (O'Neill 2006, p 169) [127]. In brief, Aristotle provides a reason-based normative concept of the 'good life'.

The most prominent modern adaptation of virtue ethics has been undertaken by Alistair MacIntyre who is a highly contested key figure in the recent virtue ethics. MacIntyre discusses Aristotle 'whose account of the virtues decisively constitutes the

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[124] Doing so he also anticipates Maslow´s 2.300 years later assumption of a hierarchy of needs. Maslow also places the pure mental activity (in terms of reflecting about morality, creativity and absence of other needs such as esteem, belonging (community), safety and psychological needs on top of his 'pyramid' model (Maslow & Frager 1987).

[125] With regard to the present context of (the sustainability) of consumption this implies not to over-consume whatever one consumes.

[126] It is worth mentioning that Aristotle points out justice to be one of the virtues. According to Aristotle, acting just does also contribute to increase happiness (Gigon 2002).

[127] O'Neill (2006) contrasts this approach with modern approaches that focus more on particular psychological states of happiness (*hedone*) and which therefore he considers as subjectivist.

classical tradition as a tradition of moral thought' (MacIntyre 2007 (1981), p 147). MacIntyre identifies the central question of morality as with the habits and knowledge of how to live a good life. Elaborating this approach, MacIntyre understands himself to be reworking the Aristotelian concept of ethics by demonstrating that good judgment emanates from good character (as arising from good – virtuous – actions) (Knight & MacIntyre 1998; Stewart-Sicking 2008). MacIntyre argues that the pre-modern ethics focus on the *telos* (goals) of social practice and human life provide a context to evaluate the morality of actions, and that they are more insightful than modern ethical theories. Mainly he criticizes the latter for their reluctance to provide a normative description of the good life. [128, 129]

Michaelis (2000) briefly reviews the spectrum of traditional – pre-modern – views and theorizations of the 'good life', demonstrating that the 'good life' by most has been subject to religious approaches[130]. The only reason-based approaches in Michaelis' review – in the sense that religious views are understood as opposing rational and reason-based views – are those provided by Plato[131] and Aristotle.

Pre-modern philosophies of the 'good life' have primarily sought to provide normative concepts. Today, we rarely find normative concepts of the 'good' life[132]. Modern Western philosophies are reluctant to impose any singular concept of a 'good life' on themselves (Michaelis 2000, p 24), and predominantly reject formalistic philosophical positions such as provided for example by Aristotelian virtue ethics or consequentialist

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[128] MacIntyre directing his critique towards modern ethical theories such as the theories of utility as put forward by Mill and Bentham, and theories of rights as elaborated by Locke and Rawls (Knight & MacIntyre 1998).

[129] In critique of post-modern value pluralism MacIntyre argues that if mankind had a common ideal of the good life, it would be fairly easy to identify the virtues that have to be cultivated in order to achieve that state. Within external sources of meaning, there would be not motivation towards the good. Developing an ethic for sustainable consumption, according to MacIntyre, would mean to first clarify a vision of a sustainable life (MacIntyre 2007 (1981)).

[130] Michaelis (2000) depicts the 'good life' approaches of Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam and Taoism.

[131] Plato's concept of the 'good life' is primarily ordered by his Idea of the Good. Ultimate happiness is to be achieved in rational (philosophical) contemplation of the Good. This highest state of the 'good life' is available only to those who are able and capable to engage in philosophical contemplation Michaelis (2000). By Plato's time, these criteria would most likely apply to philosophers.

[132] Foreseen exceptions such as Alistair MacIntyre's ethics of virtue (Murphy 2003; Knight & MacIntyre 1998)

and deontologist ethics scholars. Modern philosophy however commits herself to the individual right to pursue and realize her/his own individualized 'good life' visions.

A contemporary offshoot of the 'good life' philosophy has found its place in other academic disciplines whilst moving to sociology, welfare economics, neuroscience, psychology and interdisciplinary studies, adapting its name to 'happiness research', or, as O'Neill (2006) recalls, 'hedonic research'. A characteristic feature of all approaches that stand in this tradition is the focus on the individual's subjective state of happiness and well-being in means of how the individual perceives herself or himself as being happy and satisfied with live (O'Neill 2006) [133].

Within the fields of welfare economics, green economic theory and social policy there has been the appeal to happiness and hedonic theories. The obvious reason for this is that there is a possibility for decoupling economic growth (and so growth in consumption) from the improvement of subjective well-being. As O'Neill (2006: 159) explains:

> 'It raises the prospect of decreasing pressures on consumption without a loss in the quality of life and hence of a sustainable economy. [...] Recent hedonic research allows us to redefine prosperity in a way that renders a transition to a low consumption sustainable society consistent with an improvement in the quality of people's lives.'

The environmental promise of this strand of research, as O'Neill (2008b) adds, is that sustainability can be achieved by 'taking individuals off the hedonic treadmill to which material consumption is subject'. A number of empirical studies have been produced over the last two decades coherently stating that subjective well-being and the individual perceived state of happiness has not proportionally grown to the increase of wealth and affluence in Western democratic societies, and thus, can be decoupled from increased material consumption. These studies more or less coherently conclude that once some level is obtained, a growth in material wealth and consumption will not cause further increase in happiness and well-being (Layard 2006; Lane 2000; Sustainable Development Commission 2003). This has been described as the 'paradox of prosperity' (Jackson 2011; Rustin 2007; Brown & Kasser 2005). An illustrative example subjective happiness measure is the 'Happy Planet Index' which on a global

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[133] As Layard puts it: 'by happiness I mean feeling good – enjoying life and wanting the feeling to be maintained' (Layard 2006, p 12).

scale correlates material affluence with the perception of happiness (Marks et al. 2006). The main finding of this index is that affluent developed countries rank relatively – and some even in absolute numbers – behind poorer countries with regard to how happy representative samples of people in each country see themselves to be.[134]

In social psychological terms, or, as O'Neill (2006: 161, quoting Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz 2003) puts it,

> '[h]edonic psychology [...] is the study of what makes experiences and life pleasant and unpleasant. It is concerned with feelings of pleasure and pain, of interest and boredom, of joy and sorrow and of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

In other words, psychological accounts of happiness seek to understand the determinants of happiness and well-being (as a matter of mental states). The social-psychologist Michael Argyle demonstrates in his comprehensive work *The Psychology of Happiness* (Argyle 1994) that the relationship between consumption and satisfaction is subtle, and involves comparisons over time with social norms[135]. Argyle (1994) concludes that 'the conditions of life that really make a difference to happiness are those covered by three sources – social relations, work, and leisure', yet implying that the main determinants of happiness are not at all related to income and consumption. Happiness to this relates to family life (including marriage), friendship, satisfaction with work, and the developing of talents in leisure activities. As Durning (2006) notes, there is some evidence suggesting that social relations in households and communities 'are neglected in consumer society' (Durning 2006, p 131), adding that against common assumptions, leisure fares worse likewise.

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[134] In detail, The *Happy Planet Index* gains its innovative potential from combining environmental impacts of material affluence with happiness. It assumes that poorer countries profit from intact local communities increased individual time resources. However, the report critically reflects that no country achieves an overall high score and does well on all indicators. It does not fail to overlook that poorer countries suffer from different other sever problems.

[135] As Durning – discussing the work of Argyle – puts it 'satisfaction of consumption derives from matching or outdating others, it also comes from outdating last year' (e.g. with regard to fashion) (Durning 2006: 130) According to Argyle upper classes in any society are more satisfied, and above average compared to lower classes. But also upper classes in affluent societies are no more satisfied (in total) than upper classes in much poorer countries (Argyle 1994)

Happiness research as such has been subject to fundamental critique. Amartya Sen (Sen 2003) (also see Griffin 2007) criticizes contemporary accounts of happiness, arguing that happiness as such is always a matter of subjectivity and thus incommensurable. To Sen, most recent measurements and comparisons of happiness and well-being rely on a normative concept of human needs which turns out to be too subjective in its multiple uses. Instead, Sen's suggests the 'capabilities' concept which refers to the individual relatedness to standards of a given socio-cultural environment, as to the relative perception of a 'good life'. This concept originates in Sen's work on development, with Sen putting forward the argument that economic development cannot not be an end in itself, but rather must be seen as one among several means to the end of increasing human well-being. Consequentially, wealth and income to Sen cannot be seen as appropriate indicators of well-being (Sayer 2011). Even though Sen provides examples of capabilities, he refrains from proposing a particular list of capabilities that are preconditions of well-being. This concept has adapted the Aristotelian objectivist idea of a good life to the extent that both, moral virtue and a modest access to material goods are required to achieve happiness within a social environment[136]. In Sen's concept, some capabilities depend on material consumption, while others require particular kinds of freedom or social relationships. Hence, to Sen, the 'good life' - though matter to subjectivity – is merely socially defined. In other words, human needs are context dependent. In the sense that an individual requires particular capabilities in order to flourish within a given socio-cultural environment. To Sen, however those capabilities to high degree each depend on the specific cultural concept i.e. perception of a 'good life'.

The American philosopher Martha Nussbaum (Nussbaum 2007) has gone even further in this direction, providing a list of 'central human capabilities', as Jackson (Jackson 2011, p 35) recalls:

- life (being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length); bodily health
- bodily integrity (to be secure against violent assault)
- having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and choice in matters of reproduction
- practical reason (being able to form a conception of the good life)

[136] As Michaelis (2000: 10) puts it, reflecting on Sen's concern about economic approaches to happiness: '[I]f we seek equality, what is it that we wish to equalise. [Sen's] answer is that rather than being concerned about equality of wealth or access to resources, we should be concerned about equality of capabilities (to carry out valuable acts or to reach valuable states of being).'

- affiliation (being able to live with and toward others)
- play, and control over one's environment

According to Nussbaum individuals need to possess these capabilities, and the societal context they require, if they are to achieve the full spectrum of capabilities and freedoms needed for a good life. O'Neill (2006) puts both Sen's and Nussbaum's approaches in line with the Aristotelian *eudaimonic* tradition as they understand each the list of goods as constituents of well-being and happiness.

Referring to Sen and Nussbaum, Mulgan (1998) identifies a range of circumstances (regardless of the form of society) in which the individual needs to flourish in order to live a good life. These circumstances are: (1) belonging to a family; (2) belonging to a community; (3) having access to material goods for sustenance, (4) adornment and play; (5) living in a healthy environment; and (6) having a spiritual dimension to life. With regard to consumption and the issue of sustainability, Michaelis (2000) adds to this the element of autonomy:

> The capabilities and circumstances required to live the good life depend on how that life is defined. Personal autonomy is one of the most important of these requirements if the good life is presumed to be determined by each individual for him or herself, as in modern western society. [...] Consumption for such social purposes can also be understood as helping us to meet basic needs related to autonomy, or in Nussbaum and Sen's terms, human flourishing. If we are to live a good life we must have basic capabilities to form affiliations or join communities. (Michaelis 2000, p 11)

With regard to the question of how (theoretical) accounts of happiness link with the individual concern for the future and the well-being of future generations (which then links to environmental citizenship[137]) O'Neill highlights the strength of the Aristotelian capabilities approach(es) finding that

[137] As outlined by Dobson (2003)

> [h]edonic accounts [...] cannot give us an account of the way that the future might matter to our own lives. The future like the past does not matter for us. Our concern for future generations can only be understood in terms of other-regarding ethical commitments. This is not a problem as such, but it does undermine the initial appeal to hedonism. In contrast more objective Aristotelian accounts of well-being do highlight the ways in which the future does matter for us. They offer the basis for an account of nature of intergenerational citizenship and the conditions for its existence. (O'Neill 2006, p 168)

Overall, considering the variety in disciplines, methods and the altering degree of distinction, the studies reviewed in this chapter conform in a high degree in congruence in their findings and propositions.[138]

7.3. Sustainable Practices and Notions of the 'good life'

Few studies have investigated the actual link between sustainable consumption practices and issues of the 'good life' (which includes matters of happiness and well-being). Though the topic has gained the attention of a broader audience as numerous recently published non-academic books document.[139] Within academia however, this particular topic has yet sparsely been subject to reflection and investigation. Most evidently, research on voluntary simplicity brings together questions of sustainable consumption practices and the 'good life', as shown in the following.

7.3.1. Voluntary Simplicity

The topic of voluntary simplicity as a means of resisting consumer society dates back to the 1980s, when Duane Elgin in 1981 (Elgin 1993) first wrote 'Voluntary Simplicity', drawing on various religious and spiritual traditions in order to explore the philosophical underpinnings to living a simple life (in mostly anti-consumerist terms). Since then the topic remains vivid up to date. Prior to this, in the 1970s, a significant number of members of Western society were discovered to embrace values of counter-consumerism. As Etzioni (2006, p. 162, quoting Inglehart 1977, p 3) puts it, '[t]he value

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[138] With regard the different philosophical traditions, O'Neill (2006) finds a 'surprising' amount of convergence at the level of the empirical results between approaches that stand in *eudaimonic* tradition and such in *hedonic* tradition.

[139] To mention some representative, most identifiable and self-explaining titles: '*Do good lives have to cost the earth?*' (Simms & Smith 2008); '*How bad are bananas?: The carbon footprint of everything*' (Berners-Lee 2010); '*The age of absurdity: Why modern life makes it hard to be happy*' (Foley 2011); or '*Enough: Breaking Free From The World Of Excess*' (Naish 2009).

of Western publics have been shifting from an overwhelming emphasis on material well-being and physical security toward greater emphasis on the quality of life'. Etzioni further points out that the 'quality of life' refers to what Inglehart calls 'post-materialist values', which among other includes a desire for freedom, a strong sense of community, and a sense of political engagement.

When dealing with the topic of voluntary simplicity it needs to be made clear that it is referred to the choice of free will – and not to any matter of external force such as poverty, which may force individuals to various life simplifications known as 'downsizing' (e.g. moving to smaller flat, selling the car and cycle instead).[140] Elgin (2006) examines the relevance of simplicity for the area of consumption (and also for communication and work). With the distinction between 'needs' and 'wants' – where needs are the essentials for physical survival, growth and social participation while wants are all kinds of 'extras' on top of that – Elgin points out possible benefits to of a path of 'balanced simplicity' to the subject, that is

> 'that our lives become clearer, more direct, less pretentious, and less complicated. We are then empowered by our material circumstances rather than enfeebled or distracted' (Elgin 2006: 153)

Elgin then outlines criteria for 'balanced consumption' of which some refer to personal well-being, for example: 'Does what I own or buy promote activity, self-reliance and involvement, or does it induce passivity and dependence?` (2006: 153). Another criterion – though not explicitly – refers to the individual role as a responsible citizen in a social and environmental sense, for example: 'Do I consider the impact of my consumption patterns on other people and on the Earth?' (Elgin 2006: 153). Recalling on these criteria, Elgin brings together personal well-being and the notion of citizen-consumers (as outlined in Theories of Change and Agency). In addition, Schor (Schor 2006) argues that continual striving for more consumption in a cycle of 'work and spend' (also labelled the 'upward creep of desire') results in a decline of people's subjective well-being.

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[140] Elgin (2006) provides the example of two persons cycling to work. The two persons cycle for different reasons, as the first person voluntarily choses – and enjoys the ride – while for the second person the 'simplicity' of riding is involuntary imposed by the external circumstance of financial necessity. The first person might derive satisfaction from the physical exercise, while the second might perceive riding as a signature of poverty and discomfort.

Etzioni (2006) opens up a spectrum of three variations of downshifting[141] (which is used interchangeably with 'simplifying'). In this spectrum there is (1) a rather moderate form of voluntary simplicity where economically well-off people would spare some or few consumer goods[142]; (2) a strong form of simplifiers who give up high-paid, high-stress jobs in order to live less stressful with less payment, accepting the loss both of socio-economic status and the comforts of high level affluence; and finally there are (3) holistic simplifiers who adjust their entire life to the 'ethos of voluntary simplicity' (2006: 164). People considered as such often move from affluent areas such as suburbs or gentrified parts of bigger cities to rural and less affluent areas, to farms, to villages or smaller towns[143].

According to Etzioni (2006), to those who participate in any of its variations, voluntary simplicity refers to three motivations: (1) to income and happiness (Etzioni uses the term 'contentment'); (2) to environmental concerns; and (3) to concerns about social equality. As for income and happiness, the effect of working less (or in less demanding positions) and earning less by those who practice simplicity might be perceived as an increase in life quality. This has been widely discussed in studies on the correlation of income, stress, and the subjective perception of happiness (with Richard Layard 2006 and Robert Lane (2000) leading the way; see also Jackson (2011); Rustin (2007)). According to Etzioni, it has been recognized among practitioner that voluntary simplicity 'if constituted on a large scale, would significantly enhance society's ability to protect the environment' (2006: 173) because it uses up fewer resources than conspicuous consumption.[144; 145] Finally, as Etzioni puts it, socio-economic equality and

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[141] Apparently, Etzioni's three variations are rather graduations on a continuous line.

[142] Etzioni adds that in this 'often [...] inconsistent' pattern the 'person adhering to the norms of voluntary simplicity in some areas does not do so in many others' (2006: 161).

[143] The difference Etzioni sees for the third group as compared to the previous groups of moderate and strong simplifiers is that the latter is 'motivated by a coherently articulated philosophy' (2006: 164)

[144] This is why many authors including Elgin (1993) use 'voluntary simplicity' interchangeably with 'ecological living'

[145] In his 2013 report David Rosnick (2013) argues that reduced work hours can be seen as a means of slowing climate change, which supports Etzioni's point here. Rosnick estimates the reduction in economic growth which relates to a scenario of less work and lower average income, and finds a positive correlation to reduced environmental impacts. This has previously been confirmed in a similar way by Birch et al. (2009) who investigate socio-economic groups each with regard to the environmental impacts of their consumption, concluding that the rich and educated - those who are most likely aware of the problems – have higher carbon emissions than the poor.

social justice can be of concern to those who practice voluntary simplicity[146]. With this, an explicit political dimension adds to the former dimensions which refers mostly to liberal and politically left ideas. By withdrawing from their privileges in various ways the privileged (those whose basic needs are well sated) may, according to Etzioni, 'free' resources which 'in turn, can be shifted to those whose basic needs have not been sated, without undue political resistance or backlash'[147] (2006: 175).

Adopting Etzioni's work, Shaw & Newholm (2002) add a further dimension to the concerns about equality, establishing the relationship between ethical concerns and voluntary simplifiers (also calling the latter 'ethical simplifiers') in order to highlight the appreciation of 'fair trade' labels i.e. products which as a reaction to labour conditions in a globalizing economy.

In summary, a wide range of issues has been subsumed under the umbrella of voluntary simplicity which in the width makes the term somewhat blurred arbitrary in its plausibility. However, of course, neither of the issues mentioned is restricted to groups of people who volunteer in practicing simplicity. The matter of happiness – as implicated in notions of a good life – ; concerns for the environment; and concerns about social equality have been subject to other studies. But to recall – the intention of this section is to draw on literature that combines the quest for 'good life' notions with sustainable practices in a wider sense.

7.4. Conclusion

Few authors have focussed on the actual connection of sustainable consumption practices and the 'good life' from the point of view of those who enact these practices. Even though one could argue, that Aristotle already proposes an implicit claim for

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[146] German philosopher Anton Leist (2007) discusses in how far questions of sustainability immediately turn out to be questions ecological justice, and provides argument to understanding sustainability as a fundamental principle that can be applied in various contexts. As for an ecological context, Leist enrols a model of material, moral and aesthetic sustainability. Drawing on the relation between sustainability and ethics (i.e. moral values) Leist points out that (a) an unequal use of natural resources is ethically problematic due to these resources finitude and that (b) an unsustainable use of natural resources causes strong social conflicts and a further endangerment of social stability on a global scale. The social instability itself again entails further risk to increase environmental instability.

[147] In ideal terms this might be feasible but practically it sounds – carefully expressed – rather unlikely to happen.

sustainability with his concept of *mesotes* – not do overdo whatever one does - but however, Aristotle had in mind rather a universal *modus vivendi* than today's particular notion of sustainability in ethical or environmental terms. Recent happiness research however, provides profound arguments – expressed in the consistency in findings throughout various disciplines – that wealth and material affluence are to be seen to very limited extent as indicators and causes of perceived happiness and satisfaction. In addition, findings suggest that other factors such as social relations, satisfaction with work and leisure, and also 'capabilities' as given per socio-cultural environment defaults, are crucial, and weigh heavy with regard to a happy and satisfied life.

The studies on voluntary simplicity provide a deeper insight into practitioner's reasoning, exploring why and how people do actually volunteer to shift their practices, and adjust their personal environment (on the micro scale of their household, group or community) in order to obtain what they consider to be a 'good life'.

Chapter 8. Narratives of the 'Good Life'

'If you were to step outside your front door today and ask the first ten people you met what your town or city might look like in ten years' time if it began today to cut its emissions by 9% a year starting today, I imagine most people would say something between the Flintstones and Mad Max! We have a paucity of stories that articulate what a lower-energy world might sound like, smell like, feel like and look like. What is hard, but important, is to be able to articulate a vision of a post-carbon world so enticing that people leap out of bed every morning and put their shoulders to the wheel of making it happen.'

Rob Hopkins, co-founder of the Transition Network
and author of The Transition Handbook;
grassroots campaign award-winner

8.1. Introduction

This chapter investigates in the 'good life' in the context of sustainable consumption practices from the point of view of those who attempt to actually live out and practice 'sustainability' in their own terms. In this chapter the empirical data have been approached with the question of how individuals articulate their visions of a 'good life' in a way that brings together sustainability (in their terms) with notions of happiness and well-being.

Each interview ended with what was titled the 'real-utopian exercise', where interviewees where prompted to picture and unfold how they would be living in ten or twenty years' time[148] in regard to their understanding of what it means to live a sustainable life[149]. Interviewees were then free to choose whether their narrative of a 'good life' was to be an individualized vision dealing with their own life, or rather a 'holistic' societal vision of how social living ought to be in a 'sustainable' world of tomorrow. However, the task was set up (and explained to the interviewees) to be both realistic and utopian: 'Realistic' on the one hand in the sense that whatever the answer might be there must be some plausible connection either to the interviewee's life as it has been described previously within the interview, or plausible as to what would commonly be perceived as 'the world, or society etc.' as it is today. 'Utopian' on the other hand in the sense that an element of fiction would be allowed, and expressly

[148] Interviewees were allowed to choose which one would be easier for them to imagine.
[149] Assuming that interviewees in context of the interview would likely associate 'sustainable' with social or environmental contexts.

desired to evoke a situation where interviewees would volunteer to articulate ideas and draft life plans they eventually would not dare to verbalize otherwise.

8.2. Findings

Throughout the previous two empirical chapters it has shown that interviewees – with regard to the way they act and carry out practices – perceive it as difficult, and mostly contradictory to live a good life while acting in accordance to what they consider as ethically correct. The following three quotes provide evidence of this perception in its broadest shape, giving insight into how individuals perceive the conflict line between ethical correctness and living a 'good life':

Natalie sees happiness and fun in life standing against the perceived need to reduce carbon emissions:

> 'I've been able to understand how to find the middle way where we can continue to lead happy and fun lives but in a way that reduces our impact on each other and on our natural resources of the planet.' (Natalie)

Yet, Elias finds that joy, fun and beauty in life to him find its expression in egoistic well-being which opposes ethical behaviour:

> 'What is a good life for me? Well, a good life to me means that I can enjoy my life, that it's fun, that I find it beautiful, that it causes delight to me. In principle, I think, everyone would give this answer. And that depends on the moral development stage. So saying it very simple: if I am completely egoistic [...] I would only care for my own well-being. I mean, without speaking too abstract, in my case I try to combine individual maximizing of delight with ethical behaviour.' (Elias)

Mia opposes good living conditions for future generations and some comfort for her own life to the using-off of natural resources:

> 'I just think we need to treat the planet better and use our resources carefully into the future where our kids will have a good lifestyle and their kids as well have a good lifestyle. Have the bells and whistles and not have to go back to the Medieval times or even the Victorian times, doing everything by hand, slave labour. That's what I want for my kids. It's about compromise. It's about having a few comforts and not a life expectancy at 40 years.' (Mia)

The previous narratives of 'good life' are abstract, and rather descriptive. The following represent the most identifiable visions that have come up throughout the interviews.

The following two quotes stand for 'good life' narratives that are directly linked to the domains of consumption such as 'food provisioning'; 'transport and mobility'; and 'householding'[150].

Natalie's vision of a 'good life' splits into two parts. Both are about how practices could be aligned with Natalie's green orders of worth. In the first part Natalie reflects upon previous generation's practices such as growing and preserving food, and her own attempt to regain them.

> 'I recognize all the good practices that were in existence, they were the common practices in previous generations. We kind of lost for a few years and we're trying to regain them slowly. [...] Growing your own food, gardening, knowing how to preserve things for the winter, make the best of an exchange instead of buying everything at the shop. All these kinds of things that were practice for many years, I think we lost that habit. And we lost that community bit.' [...] (Natalie)

In the second part however Natalie precisely imagines what her practices and actions would be like if she had adapted to previous generations (which is what she thinks she should be doing in order to be sustainable) under conditions of feasibility.

The following quote shows how in terms of commuting Natalie would like to see herself to be able to get to work without emitting carbon at all (which from a theoretical point of view puts into alignment her orders of worth[151] with her daily practices). The same applies when Natalie would like to have better access to food which is sourced and/or produced and sold locally. With clothing (which might be counted to the domain of householding for now) Natalie could see herself combining economic and environmental aspects such as durability (and maybe reparability) with aesthetic aspects. The limitation of budgetary scarcity has been overcome in her 'good life' vision. In her own words, all this reads as follows:

> '[In twenty years' time ahead (ed.)] I would work much closer to home maybe someplace where I could walk or cycle or take a short train ride instead of driving. I think I would have much more access to local food. [...] But I like to think that I could get most of my food from local farms and sustainably sourced, fresh food. If I had more time, I would go to the local farmers market with my shopping basket and enjoy that aspect of life planning more time for cooking and enjoying it if I actually had the luxury of time. [...] . In an ideal world, I would have a higher budget for clothing and buy more long lasting designer pieces.' (Natalie)

Emma's 'good life' narrative appears to be an outlier at first sight because of a geographical specification she chooses that will be a little far off to most readers: The

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[150] as outlined in detail in chapters 3 & 4
[151] as discussed in chapters 3 & 4

place she would like to see her 'good life' realized is a Greek island[152]. Apart from the prospect of geographic location Emma's narrative is an illustrative example of an alignment of orders of worth with practices and actions within the domain of householding:

> 'I've got too much stuff in my home and it depresses me. It's a problem. And my plan in the moment is like in the next few years, before I go and live in the Greek island I'm gonna get rid out of, I'm gonna find ecological canals through 'real-cycle' and 'free-cycle' and whatever. I'm gonna pass on the stuff, distribute it. It's going to good places and I'm gonna be FREE of being over-accumulated.[...] And I think we all have a problem. So when you talk about the good life it's not about having too much stuff. It's about having stuff that can facilitate a life where you got time to see your friends; you've got time to work on project that add value to the ecology and society; you eat good food and your existence isn't polluted.[...] my dream now is that we're gonna go and live on a Greek island. I'm gonna build an earthship[153] on a Greek island which basically is completely, it's kind of positive carbon. It's carbon positive. Just passive solar. It's got to have all of this eco-design elements. And the idea with the earthships is that all the grey water gets circulated back into the building to feed the plants that grow in the greenhouse which is inside the building. You know, pretty much a model of self-contained close-loop system within a beautiful structure with lots of glass and recycle materials. They're really very cool. So that's kind of a living space. [...] We live here because we're not damaging the planet and everything we use, you know, nothing is wasted and everything is part of a cycle, like in nature ... and it works. And nature has been doing it for free for five billion years' (Emma)

Building and living in an earthship for Emma is a prospect of combining civic and green orders of worth with housing facilities. This expresses in Emma's desires to (1) achieve a positive carbon footprint; (2) use off waste[154]; (3) stop polluting natural water resources[155], and (4) self-provide with energy and food. With the desire to reduce the amount of material artefacts and goods she adds a prospect of simplification and downsizing, referring to two different conventions: On the one hand she refers to inspirational orders of worth in the sense of an emotional quality. On the other hand,

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[152] Though rarely chosen, Greek island however is not to be seen as a utopian place to live at all.

[153] 'An earthship is a type of passive solar house made of natural and recycled materials. [...] primarily constructed to work as autonomous buildings and are generally made of earth-filled tires, using thermal mass construction to naturally regulate indoor temperature. They also usually have their own special natural ventilation system. Earthships are generally off-the-grid homes, minimizing their reliance on public utilities and fossil fuels. Earthships are built to utilize the available local resources, especially energy from the sun. For example, windows on sun-facing walls admit lighting and heating, and the buildings are often horseshoe-shaped to maximize natural light and solar-gain during winter months. The thick, dense inner walls provide thermal mass that naturally regulates the interior temperature during both cold and hot outside temperatures.' (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earthship (visited: November 14th 2012))

[154] Apart from natural materials such as wood, clay or soil etc., earthships are built using waste material such as old tires or plastic bottles, and therefore are considered carbon neutral.

[155] Ideally, all the water remains within the house internal water supply system.

she refers to civic or green conventions in the sense that to her private over-consuming is the cause of almost all existing environmental problems[156].

Simplicity, or the simplification of life in terms of daily practices and actions is a topic that has come up several times throughout the interviews. The prospect of this being perceived as better for the environment, or better for other people (including future generations) often appears to be a side effect of simplification, not the objective. From the point of view of subjects attempting to align orders of worth with practices and actions, simplifications can be seen as supportive (heuristic) devices, because by simplifying it is possible to leave out, or adapt practices that have previously shown as contradictious to certain orders of worth.

Ryan for instance, seeks to enter into a state of local exchange economy whereas he finds a globalized market economy to be unjust. Substituting monetary economy with exchange economy (at least on a local scale) offers a scenario to Ryan in which the local production of food achieves a prominent role. Another aspect of living simple to Ryan is to remain local in terms of travel and commuting. Basically he would to like to completely cut down on travel (apart from emergency cases). With his idea to cut down on all kinds of carbon emissions that relate to mobility, Ryan articulates a reference to civic and/or green orders of worth which becomes evident with his worry about future generations:

> 'And in [...] twenty years [from now (ed.)] I guess that I'd like to think that... I'll be living a simpler life then now. Because I wouldn't want to keep using up everything, you know. The more you get in the end for yourself, you should start realizing the next people are around might not be as fortunate as you are. [...] But some people DO, and you see them. And it's a throw-away society. I feel sorry for the children because the children now are going to inherit a rather overpopulated, under-resourced place and it's going to get more and more. It's not going to get any easier. [...] as I said that within the next 20 years, living a simpler life to what I'm living now and hopefully trying to live locally. In other words, kind of cut out travels, period, you know. Unless there is an emergency or something but staying more localized as well [...] live a simpler life and live a local life and try to well remain ethically, so you know [inaudible] with food and everything else is concerned. Yeah. I keep thinking about that because it's going to get more difficult. [...] Like last night LUKE said 'oh everything on this plate we are eating now is from here', you know. Apart from one thing and you think 'Great!'. Now the vast majority of people couldn't say that. They could say, all the food you eat in here is from Tesco's. [...] that's what I do like more than anything here is when you're eating the food that you know, even down to the sausages, its either very local or it's [from (ed.)] here. That's good. But then I still go to Morrison's to buy stuff you know, but I do as I say most of the time look at the labelling and see; where's it come from. [...] Basically, I'm older now and I think this is nicer. Nicer for me and nicer for the earth. That's it. Win, win, well [laughter]' (Ryan)

[156] The above quote does not point this out but it says elsewhere in the interview.

A different vision of a life in material means is provided by Noadiah who opposes an over-accumulation with material artefacts and goods with of a state of empathy and happiness which to her arises from interpersonal relationships rather than from the material bases of life:

> 'And I've thought that, all my life really, that the general idea that you have to work hard and get high salaries so you can buy lots of stuff and buy a nice house and buy a nice car is a kind of insanity. [...] But it doesn't take many years of struggling to get better and better things to find out that it is really empty, that it doesn't make you feel good at all - it actually makes you feel worse. [...] So, it's not just that sustainability is better than that way of life from the point of view of saving the planet or anything, I just think it's better for people as well. I think if you live the kind of life where you can get away from that and just... Well, it sounds a bit spiritual but if you think that the point of life is love and goodness and kindness and helping others and all that stuff, then that is so much more fulfilling and rewarding that you don't have to chase all this stuff, so you're happier and the world is then much better because you never lay a footprint on the world. In fact, I do think you could actually get to the point to where you're positively enhancing the world rather than taking what you want for yourself and destroying the world, usually unconsciously, on the way.' (Noadiah)

In the sense that Noadiah denies the role of (consuming) material artefacts and goods, her story can be seen as a 'good life' vision where simplification is the key trigger. Both Noadiah and Benjamin make very distinct statements about material artefacts and goods for private purposes:

> 'I have never bought into the materialistic society. Not at all. Not ever. Not when I was young or middle or old.' (Noadiah)

> 'I'm not into that much material goods. Most of the furniture you see here is...well family heirlooms, books from charity shops, second-hand furniture.' (Benjamin)

Both statements were given in the context of how to live in a way that is less harmful to the natural environment.

Mary makes clear her stance on material artefacts, which she finds she does not need much. In particular she finds she does not need new technical electric things. She labels these things as 'gadgets', so she's happy to use them second or third hand, as gifts from friends mostly.

> 'I don`t have gadgets really. [...] I´m afraid I have a radio alarm clock which I have since I was 10. It´s been a Christmas present. That still works. My CD player just died which was donated by a friend about 6 years ago. Haven't replaced it yet. I want to try to fix it.... I have inherited TV which is tiny. I don`t have i-pods. [?] My phone is six years old. I tend not to buy. [?] So all I do have has been given to me as presents or has been casts-offs by friends or family who don´t want it anymore.' (Mary)

In this case she combines references to market conventions (in terms of price and user values) with implicit environmental conventions, highlighting the understanding that no new artefacts will be produced in order to satisfy her personal needs and wants.

By the time of the interview Jacob has moved into the co-housing community three month ago. He explicitly links co-housing with living in a smaller house, which does not provide much space to be filled up with goods:

> 'I think one of the things about co-housing is that you don't need a very big house to begin with, because that in itself reduces the consumption. You don't need to furnish many rooms and you don't need to heat too many rooms. That is probably the biggest contribution to sustainable consumption is not to have too big a house' (Jacob)

Even though Jacob does not mention explicitly what exactly to him makes co-housing a form of living that allows living in smaller houses, but most certainly he refers to the beneficial aspects of sharing many of the things needed in everyday life. Analytically, this might draw a connecting line between co-housing and downsizing.

Two examples do not offer enough substantial indication to draw conclusions so that instead of a conclusion it must be sufficient to only give a comment, saying that it is worth mentioning that both interviewees draw a connecting line between moving house and downsizing[157].

The quotes in the following passage have in common that they combine stories of interviewee's aspired or actual 'good life' practices with particular aspects and prospects of social order, namely communal living.

John on the one hand emphasizes that he would like to grow his own food, manufacture 'own things' and overall reduce his domestic carbon footprint. On the other hand, he highlights that to him there is no such 'good life' in individual isolation. To him the 'good life' is inseparably linked with communal i.e. social aspects of living. Unfortunately, the way he constructs the connection between communal living and 'sustainable' practices appears rather abstract in his narration. He leaves open how exactly he would like to see the elements combined:

> 'I think I'd like to be growing our own food, have reduced our environmental footprint at home quite dramatically. It´s gonna be a long way toward utopia but I would like to retrofit our home so that our domestic footprint is as small as possible and ... [my] company will have grown to be a major force in terms of sustainability communications and re-thinking of what our lives are for. The biggest challenge for me I think in terms of a good life in a utopia of ten years from now probably is aviation. ... I´m really concerned about that because I´m married to an American [...] I would like to find ways that I could be more encouraged to grow my own food and make my own things. Time is initial over that thing. [...] So what's a good life? A good life can only be lived in a collectively good society. And so a good life in isolation is a bad life. So I don't think you can have

[157] This has been picked be up in chapter 6

> an individual good life. Cause that's not how I see the world. [...] People have different desires, wishes, and so forth. And so... what would I call a good life? ...Probably one ...I mean there's lots of definitions of sustainability. But if you like the Brundtland, the very standard definition, so meeting your own needs, your own needs, desires and wants maybe, without infringing those of other generations or even those within the same generations. So if you can life a live that is one that in what you do you try to do the least harm to other people that are around you. [...] I don't think a collective society should be doing anything at the expense of others. I do belief very fundamentally in a far more egalitarian, in a far more even society in access to resources. [...] I can't see a private utopia. I mean, I can see a 'fun live' where I wouldn't give a damn about anything else.' (John)

While John has in mind society to be the frame to live in 'collectively', Mary instead has in mind a local community. Like John she combines communal living with the prospect of growing her own food and the self-provision with various other things (which remain un-specified here):

> 'My idea of a good life would be quite similar to a good life in a TV programme [laughs] ...Having a job as well. But I'd have much more balance between providing for myself rather than buying; [?] Having a farm [?]. I would grow much more of my own food. I'd make my own xyz regularly. And that would be it. ...yes. Very simple ... investment, simple [?] to interactions ... and be part of a community where there would be the opportunity to really integrate within a community and share goods and services. That would be my idea of a good life. It's nice a community where knowledge, sharing skills, sharing jobs. [...] enjoying simple things, simple pleasures for taking time to appreciate things of [cuts off], not needing a craving ... business and money and ... and more and more material goods and more and more sensual experiences that you have to have, that just...everyone is doing and you have to do it rather than what you have not got and what everyone else has got.' (Mary)

With regard to communal living Mary highlights the aspect of sharing goods and services, but also knowledge, skills, and workload ('jobs'). Like Noadiah (see above) she wants to see the consumption of material goods and 'sensual experiences' (such as watching television) substituted with 'simple pleasures' which involve time and interpersonal relationships. Jacob however, has moved into a community[158], and many of the practices Mary describes, have become ordinary to him.

> 'INTERVIEWER: The good life. If you could chose a life to live, obviously you have chosen [...] to be here [living in the co-housing community] [...], but in an ideal world if you could chose a life to live what would that be? What would that look like? JACOB: Well, at the moment, it wouldn't be any different from this. [...] I like being involved in things I suppose because within this type of life you are spending quite a bit of time involved in growing food, involved in projects to promote sustainability. It is certainly a very rewarding lifestyle. [...] It is the de-coupling I suppose there is always this thing in climate change about decoupling carbon emissions from growth and in a way, consumption is, decoupling the concept of happiness from increased consumption which there is plenty of evidence to say in terms of wealth that you don't get increased happiness.' (Jacob)

Remarkably though, Jacob provides a theoretical underpinning in order to strengthen his argument, picking up both on the political debate of de-coupling carbon emissions

[158] Jacob lives in the Cornish co-housing community.

and growth but also on the debate on de-coupling happiness and consumption. Considering that Jacob's environmental engagement initially started when about forty years ago he read a pertinent book on the topic[159], the assumption gets plausible that Jacob in his practices and actions is very much driven by intellectual i.e. political orders (and less by incremental engagement in particular practices). Another remarkable aspect is that Jacob states finding himself mostly in a situation where his vision of a 'good life' is realized in the sense that to him unlike most other interviewees the 'good life' is not a future prospect.

Likewise, Noadiah states being in a state of 'good life' which she has been seeking long for. To her, the combination of communal living (in the co-housing community) and the yet increasing amount of self-provision with food and other basic resources such as electricity and water forms a state in which she sees her 'good life' vision becoming realized, as the following quote shows:

> '[I] decided that what I really wanted in life was to live in a community, instead of talking about community, I wanted to get into a position where I could live and work on a place where we have our own food, our own renewable energy and water, everything. So that's the next bit of my life path, and here we are [...] I was giving talks, and I was always talking about a sustainable future. Whereas now I feel I am living the way towards a sustainable future, and I don't talk about it anymore. [...] so I think [...] [the place where I live now (ed.)] meets all those requirements, so I have no complaints.' (Noadiah)

Luke sees his vision of a 'good life' yet to come. Unlike for example Jacob and Noadiah who have retired already, Luke's working life is yet to begin. By the time of the interview Luke was experimenting at lot with food, trying to find ways to establish some small business from sourcing and producing local organic quality food that could earn him a living. He has collected some good experiences already with a range of products and facilities for food production such as a self-made smokery for fish and meat, with bee keeping (in the near fields), with making apple wine and cider, and bottling all kinds of fruit and vegetables which later on he sold to local shops and restaurants specified on local produce. Accordingly, to Luke the prospect of running a business to ensure his income primarily shapes his notion of a 'good life' which he combines with other notions such as communal living and the self-provisioning of essential resources such as food, water and electricity:

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[159] see chapter 6

> ‘I have ideas for a place in which I'd like to live when I'm older, if possible it should be quite a large small holding, basically where it's pretty much self-contained and off the grid, with lots of people living there and producing lots of different things, like lots of different businesses running out of it, like a brewery and a smokery and a dairy, and cattle and everything, so it'd be completely.... INTERVIEWER: Self-sustaining? LUKE: Yeah, making a range of products. But everything going into those products comes from that one plot of land, so basically that is my dream eventually, that's what I want to do. [...] Well, ten years from now it'd be nice if I could at least own a small plot of land of my own, and have small businesses running out of that. Basically selling to local restaurants, and hopefully helping the local economy and not trying to contribute to development gap really, because I think the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer. [...] And I don't agree with that. I think we should be, everyone should be supporting each other in the local community. That's what I aim to do.’ (Luke)

The previous visions of the ‘good life’ have highlighted social orders in terms of concise descriptions of communal living, and different kinds of political orders to various degrees of abstraction.

In contrast, the following passage introduces examples drawing on technological visions of a ‘good life’. Here, interviewees primarily draw upon technology and technical solutions which are seen as key to the attempt of achieving a state that a is considered as ‘sustainable’ living.

If he was free to choose a life, the ‘Green Champion’ William would install various technical solutions such as energy efficient devices and solar panels in and on his house. In order to do so he would first of all move into a bigger house that could facilitate the solar panels. To save water he would install rain harvesters, and to minimize the amount of energy required for heating he would use ground heating generators. However, Williams sees the limitation within the affordability for him at the moment as the installations would require quite an investment:

> ‘If I could afford to I'd do more. So I would. I'd probably have a bigger house, but I'd have solar panels. I'd have the best most efficient equipment in it. I'd have rain harvesters, and I'd probably have ground heat generators. I'd invest in the right things, because it'd be the right thing to do, it makes sense if I could afford to do it. [...] But having just got married and having just moved to a house, I can affect my shopping trip to make sure I behave in the right way. I can't necessarily go and invest in taking heat out of the ground through the right equipment. I just can't do it. But if I had the option to live the good life and the good life in the right way then I would. I would have a Ferrari as well.‘ (William)

In a similar way, Lorelai images her ideal way of living in an eco-house that would be very energy efficient and therefore contribute in living a low carbon life. Also she can imagine herself in a communal social environment with access to ‘green spaces’:

> ‘Absolutely having solar panels and having an eco-house and kind of ventilation and heating systems which are tech. I'd, absolutely, yeah, that would be great. I think it's just that the initial cost of having all that fitted would definitely go against it at the moment. But kind of, once I've got my

first place, looking forward, yeah. That would be good. [...] I do like the idea of kind of having a community and fewer cars, more green spaces.' (Lorelai)

Likewise, Marc sees himself in a scenario where carbon emissions can be reduced dramatically through technological innovations. Intending to sustain his life the way it is, his prospect of a 'good life' would be a situation with decarbonized energy supply that would crosscut and effect the all consumption domains positively. However, Marc's vision of a 'good life' contains two parts of which one is technical and practice oriented while the other is political, seeking the establish an equitable global market order and minimize the North-South gap.

'I guess I would like to see more people doing the sort of simple things that they can all do. [...] it's not so difficult.[...] The life I would like to lead is one where I can [...] live my life exactly the way I live it now, but [...] we have a decarbonized electricity supply, we are switching out of other fuels into low carbon energy, low carbon electricity. So things like electric cars are taking off. I think I'd like to see some successes in decarbonizing food production and there that's more about the other greenhouse gases [...].

'And I think I'd also like to see, thinking internationally, a more equitable system where people in the developing world are able to claim a bigger share without that feeling like a huge sacrifice for anyone. And maybe that's genuinely utopian. Or naïve.' (Marc)

8.3. Discussion and Conclusions

A range of topics have come up throughout the interviews about the 'good life' that are consistent with the literature as referred to in the previous chapter (7). Simplicity, and living a simplified live (compared to what it is at present) has been mentioned by many interviewees. Simplification here mostly refers to the organisation, structures, and material facilitation of domestic life which involves numerous manual physical activities such as gardening (in order to organise the self-provision with food) or cycling and walking (in order to organise mobility). Overall, Inglehart's (1977) finding of emphasis shifting from material well-being to emphasis on the perceived quality of life, appears vital throughout the 'good life' narratives. On the one hand, interviewees refer to the pleasure they would (or do already) gain from those practices, while on the other hand they see their vision for example realized in an environmentally friendly low carbon world enacted through such practices. In this sense, combining the positive effects of enhanced pleasures with the prospect of neutralizing (and so improving) one's environmental impacts, allows interviewees to construct a positive narrative that provides a guideline to action. The psychological component of downshifting has been

mentioned by Emma who finds herself depressed as a matter of being overly accumulated with material artefacts at home, nourishing Elgin's (2006) proposition that plenitude of material artefacts may be perceived as distractive, and not enabling. Noadiah for example criticizes what Schor (2006) has labelled the 'upward creep of desire', and what O'Neill (2008) calls 'hedonic treadmill' – the cycle of working more in order to spend more – and articulates her opinion of this being pointless to her perception of a happy and fulfilling life.

The communal aspect of living has been mentioned remarkably often by the interviewees – not only by those who live in a community. Communal living is associated here with aspects (or prospects) of collaborative consumption on the one hand, in the sense of sharing and interchanging ideas, knowledge, emotions; and also in the sense of sharing material items, build facilities and workloads. On the other hand collaborative consumption is associated with living out or elaborating political visions. When material artefacts and build facilities are shared, collaborative consumption within a group or community allows for the individual to downsize their household in terms of living space and material artefacts.

Personal autonomy has been described by Michaelis (2000) as a crucial requirement in order to implicitly flourish in terms of capabilities needed to live a 'good life'. Many of the interviewees have implicated, or explicitly articulated their wish to extend their autonomy and live (as Luke says) 'off the grid', self-providing with food, freshwater, and/or energy. Living in a self-erected and ideally self-sustaining 'Earthship', as suggested by Emma, may certainly be seen as the archetypical image of autonomous living in this context. Autonomous living in the way many interviewees describe it, involves a political element of resistance to consumer society, as mentioned by Elgin (2006).

A different path is taken by those interviewees who emphasise the paradigm of technologization to nourish their hope of sustainable future prospects through technologization and technological advancement. Their emphasis rests upon technical innovation with which they connect the hope for an improvement of their individual environmental impact, mostly expressed by the wish to reduce carbon emissions.

Some of the characteristic features of environmental citizenship, or citizen-consumership, as drawn upon previously in chapter 6, are broadly re-confirmed in this chapter: concerns about equity, mostly on a global scale, and concerns about the environment including considerations about future generations – these are entangled in many of the interviewee's 'good life' narratives and visions.

The narratives as such vary strongly in their constituent components. Some are mostly oriented towards practices and activities in particular; some draw on combinations of practices and political aspects of living; some are political only.[160]

The literature review has shown that as yet only a few authors have actually linked sustainable consumption in practice with the 'good life' and matters of happiness from the point of view of those who actually carry out particular practices or perform particular actions (or actions in particular ways) in order to be what they consider more sustainable. This chapter intends to provide empirical underpinning for the link between sustainable consumption practices and practitioner's visions of the 'good life' to show how some practices are carried out on the normative bases of how individuals would like their life to be.

This chapter is the third step in a series of three, and it builds on the previous chapters. In a first step, a deep exploration of practices has been undertaken to shed light on how individual justifications articulate into practice and particular actions. In a second step, agent's reflexive accounts have been at the centre of focus in order to shed light on their understanding of trajectories of change and hence better understand and allocate sources of individual practice change. These two step have given the material to connect subjects' real-life practices and experience – in a third step – with narratives of the 'good life'.

This chapter has shown how subjects draw on the 'good life' in their attempt to frame their practices and actions in a way that expresses, and helps them follow up their trajectories as sustainable citizen-consumers, laying out normative guidelines and

[160] But even for those interviewees whose 'good life' narratives do not contain political components, it often shows – when looking closely each at the entire interview – that political aspects would be mentioned elsewhere but in the 'good life' narratives in particular.

positive accounts of how to achieve either personal or societal well-being and happiness. The analysis has brought up three categories of 'good life' visions. First, there are social visions where subjects see communities as resilient self-contained and self-sustaining refuges of collaborative consumption. Communities provide individuals with empowering capabilities to partially overcome external (socio-technical, infrastructural or social) constraints. The second category are practice based visions which rest on ideas and practices of life simplification and downsizing form what subjects perceive as unnecessary ballast of an overly affluent society that inauspiciously and misguidedly worships the over-consumption of material artefacts. The third category are technological visions, drawing on technical solutions such as products and services that allow ways of living which are less or non-harmful or attributed positive-impact in social or environmental terms.

PART 4

One of the unsurprising conclusions is that understanding the forces that influence and shape consumption is an incredibly complicated task. Although consumption behavior is complex, failure to address it will result in a failure to bring about the necessary changes in consumer behavior and consumption patterns and levels.
(Mont & Power 2010, p 2245)

Chapter 9. Conclusions, Contributions and Outlook

This chapter consists of five sections. Section 9.1. briefly re-prises the methodological approach. Section 9.2. pulls together and re-prises the findings of the three research themes which were presented as 3 couplets (six chapters) in PART 3, and provides overarching conclusions of theoretical analysis and empirical findings based on drawing together the three 'couplets'. Section 9.3. reflects upon the thesis in broader terms of how the findings, as well as the elaboration of the conceptual framework, contribute to the field of research on sustainable consumption from a subject-centred point of view. Section 9.4. re-prises the contextualisation of this thesis within a broader context of normativity in social science, and highlights links between this thesis and broader academic debates in order to position it within a wider research spectrum within and beyond its genuine terrain. Section 9.5. provides an outlook, suggesting avenues for further research projects that could potentially emerge from out of this thesis.

9.1. Methodological Approach

This thesis rests on a methodological approach in that the research process has iterated between the empirical work and its findings, and the development of a conceptual ground on which the findings were interpreted. In this sense, the findings have implications for the conceptual work, and the latter, vice versa, have implications on the interpretation of the findings. In epistemic terms, this iterative process constitutes a mutual approximation of inductive and deductive work, which reflects the fact that it has derived from, and been inspired by Glaser and Strauss grounded theory

methodology. Accordingly, the fieldwork was entered with little theoretical background, and only few loose assumptions based on the overarching question of how people translate their cares and concerns into the ways in which they live and consume.

A preliminary data analysis has provided findings that were used both to shape the thesis' theoretical underpinning and the analytical focus itself. The findings were allocated to three separate but related themes. The three themes are outcomes of the preliminary analysis and were taken as an entry point to structure the findings, as presented in the following section.

9.2. Re-Prise of Findings and Conclusions

This section briefly re-prises the findings of the empirical research. The findings, in the following, are presented according to the themes, and connected across the themes where possible. The themes are presented each with regard to their objectives; their theoretical underpinning; and the actual findings.

The first theme (presented in the couplet chapters 3 and 4) investigates how individuals carry out practices and perform actions in everyday life in a way they see as sustainable in environmental or social terms. It investigates practices and actions from the perspective of multiple practice domains – eating and food provisioning; mobility and transportation; and householding. Doing so, it looks into how individuals, according to their utterances, (a) navigate their way 'as best they can' through a world of multiple options, multiple constraints, and multiple contradictions; (b) justify their 'doings'; and (c) negotiate their 'doings' within a spectrum ranging from consistency (with what they think they should be doing) to compromise (with what they actually can do, or have to do).

The first theme mobilizes sociological theories of practice as a theoretical platform in order to conceptualize subjects 'doings' (as practices and actions in everyday life). 'Practices' are combined with a framework that theoretically covers subject's value claims – in terms of explanations of why they do what they do. The French theory of conventions has been drawn upon to conceptualize the problematic notion of 'values' in a way that accounts for subject's justifications as references to established – and therein 'conventionalized' – orders of worth. The empirical work has brought up many

cases in which orders of worth, according to individual statements, are competing with, or even contradicting each other, so that individuals have to find ways to make their decision in order to give preference to any. To conceptually cover such empirical cases of decision making, theories of heuristics have been mobilized which account for decision making strategies from a subject-centred point of view. Heuristics are seen as simplifying shortcuts for individual decision making and problem solving, applied by subjects in order to speed up the process, and reduce the effort of decision making, and so to manage complexity in daily life. Also, informed by the empirical work, there has been requirement to frame how individuals – in their attempt to handle both practical and cognitive issues of sustainability in daily life – 'muddle through' in as 'best they can'. Subjects often face situations with limited resources such as information, skills, cognitive capacities, or materials, or money to purchase any of these resources. The theory of bricolage frames the understanding of these situations, providing accounts of how agents mobilize limited resources to navigate towards their ends and objectives, using the best at hand to their judgment at times given.

One particular aspect of this thesis is to investigate how different practice domains relate to each other with regard to practices and actions that crosscut single domains in the sense that they would overarch and involve several domains in order to be carried out or performed (see section 4.2.4.). The analysis has shown that the domains interact which each other in terms of the implications they particularly have on providing opportunities of action, or constraining actions.

In general terms, there are some relations 'that matter' between the practices with regard to individual's attempts to live and consume more sustainable. The location of where someone lives has an impact on how people can organize their everyday logistics in terms of transport and mobility including everyday food shopping etc.[161] It does make a difference to the attempt to live and consume in sustainable ways whether one can walk and shop locally, or use public transport infrastructures[162] easily in order to organize personal everyday logistics, compared to cases where distances are

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[161] Logistic features of the socio-geographic household location have been defined as part of the householding domain (see section 4.2.2.).

[162] (see Samantha's example in section 4.2.4.1.where public buses, rental bicycles, taxi, tram and tube are all being used to organize everyday life logistics)

too long to walk or cycle, and where public transport infrastructures are less developed. It does seem to make a difference if a spacious house and garden allow growing food or storing food (that has – as in the example of the co-housing community – been preserved from the garden etc.), compared to a small rental flat where neither growing nor storing food are available options. Hence, obviously the practice domains of eating and food provisioning; householding; and mobility and transportation have overlapping implications with regard to how they allow, shape, pre-define or constrain actions. In many cases it is difficult, impractical, or even impossible for the individual to change practices in one *single* domain without changing some practices or settings within (at least one of) the others. For example, a garden to grow food may be difficult to realize in a city, and living out of town with a garden may be impractical without a car to commute etc.. Further, the social constellation of a household makes a difference where in case several people share a household or living unit there are chances to bundle resources (such as technical devices, lifts with a shared car, but also knowledge, skills, or money) and so, in environmental terms, be more efficient.

In particular, some aspects have come up throughout the analysis with regard to how practices and actions cut across the boundaries of single practice domains (in terms of the implications domains have on practices and actions. In the given cases collective living and collaborative consumption falls together with particular implications of 'living in rural areas' which is why the latter is analytically contrasted with implications of 'living in the city'. Living in a rural area as compared to living in the city each brings about a range of particular implications, with each entailing some opportunities to practice and action, but also some constraints. [163]

[163] It may be noted carefully that these findings strictly refer to the given interview data of this study, and may most likely not withstand any generalization. It is highly negotiable that in general terms, living in rural areas facilitates sustainable consumption practices 'better' as it is well known that rural areas in general suffer from other issues such as austerity and high unemployment rates much more than metropolitan areas. Also, as a matter of fact, public infrastructures are less developed in average in rural areas than in cities, which is why the positive display of living in rural areas provided here must be read as a strict reference to the interviewees' utterances, mainly informed by the Cornish co-housing community who represent 'rural living' in this study. To be analytically clear it has to be reflected critically that the analysis does not fully disentangle the aspects of 'collective living' on the one hand, and 'living in a rural' area on the other. To fully develop the findings both a contrast sample of individuals living 'on their own' (not collectively) in rural areas, and collectives or co-housing communities living in cities or metropolitan areas would need to be conducted. However, the theoretical juxtaposition of 'living in rural areas' with

For the Cornish co-housing community, living in a rural area potentially offers the chance of growing food in the garden, as space and facilities for growing are available in plenitude. The community make extensive use of their land, growing a wide range of fruit and vegetable, some in the open space, and some in spacious greenhouses. Yet, the access to commercial food supply is bound to the use of vehicles which – due to rural area typical long distances between homes and the shopping facilities – require motorisation, and so emit carbon dioxide. Public transport infrastructures in remote rural areas have been reported to be under-developed by community members, and time consuming in case one would use them. Interviewees living in a rural area perceive it as difficult to make their transportation more efficient. Many interviewees state perceiving this particular aspect as contradicting other aspects of their attempt to live in a more sustainable ways while in other aspects of their life (and other practice domains) they are more satisfied with how they manage making changes towards particular 'sustainable' practices.

In contrast, interviewees who live in the city report to be facing different challenges in their attempt to live and consume in ways they perceive as sustainable. If motorized vehicles are required for daily shopping and other purposed there is (in most cases) a good and reliable public transport infrastructure. Also, shops might be in walking distance, which some interviewees mention positively as they do not need a vehicle for daily purchases. The issues of transportation and logistics is considered as much less problematic here. Other issues, for example the access to 'sustainable' food remain difficult (according to some of the interviewees reports). Even if shops might be in walking distance, they might not be the ones that provide local produce, or 'organic' or 'fair trade' labelled products. Living in the city is reported to leave little or less room for facilities that would allow self-provision with food such as growing food in the garden or keeping livestock.

Overall, collective living and collaborative consumption has shown to empower communities – at least to some extent – to cut across boundaries of single practice domains, and to partially overcome constraints in multiple ways. Collective living may

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'living in cities and metropolitan areas' provides some insights with regard to a the implications each has on 'sustainable' practices and actions.

help the individual for example to compensate for under-developed public transport infrastructures by setting up their own local lift sharing (or car sharing/car pool) transport systems. Transitions towards and onto trajectories of more sustainable consumption, in this sense, are made possible to the individual at the meso-level of (and through) the collective[164].

This study has focussed on the part of the individual as an agent of change. It has demonstrated how communities mobilize the benefits of collective living by for example distributing workloads with food production and food provision among the group; sharing lifts; bundling resources such as knowledge, expertise, and skills; or by increasing the individuals' relative purchasing power by putting money together in order to buy devices for everyday practices that are presumably of high quality and long lasting (e.g. industrial standard washing machine), or energy efficient. Collective funding also makes it possible for communities to invest in alternative autarkic, or semi-autarkic energy solutions such as solar panels or wind turbines, which in many cases a single household could not afford to buy. In this sense, collective living empowers individuals to partially overcome socio-technical or infrastructural constraints and boundaries, and constitutes an integrating device for individuals to enact what they consider a more sustainable way of living. With the findings given, from a theoretical point of view collaborative consumption can be seen as a universal device for the individual in their attempt to live in ways that may be seen as less harmful in environmental or social terms. In this respect, individuals who live in communities or who are members of distinct groups benefit from collaborative consumption practices.

However, from a political point of view the fact that collectives partially manage to overcome socio-technical constraints, must not mislead over the role which public authorities (on local, regional, national level) play in providing socio-technical infrastructures (for example bicycle lanes) which support people in their attempts to act and carry out practices in more sustainable ways. Highlighting the benefits of collaborative consumption must not be mistaken with a political message as if to say 'Sustainable consumption is a bottom-up matter merely, and if people would really

[164] (where the individual in contrast is seen as operating at a micro-level)

want to be more sustainable they could be (, and ergo – people are obviously not interested)'. This study does not intend to articulate policy recommendations (though it almost recommends itself to it). Yet, some of the findings obviously imply such recommendations. Abdicating public authorities (e.g. the state) from their responsibility however, is not a sufficient response to target sustainable development within affluent Western countries, and certainly nowhere else. The author finds that public authorities' role in the matter of sustainable development (within affluent Western countries) must be to create public goods and provide socio-technical infrastructures that enable and support the individual to live and consume in ways that may be more sustainable in environmental and social terms. Particularly with regard to interventions on socio-technical infrastructures public authorities – from the theoretical point of view of organising action on the macro-level – hold a key role. In contrast, social innovation on the micro-level is far more accessible to the individual or to collectives; communities; and groups on the meso-level. In other words, top-down and bottom-up approaches have to act jointly in a double movement, each pushing from its side.

In parallel with the actual practices and constraints, the first theme has focussed on how individuals justify their 'doings', finding that they often refer to orders worth to explain why they do what they do. Overall, within and across the domains, individuals have demonstrated how they make use of opportunities at hand, and approximate 'as best they can' daily life sustainability in their terms; hence acting as bricoleurs of sustainable practice. As such, they cope with complexity both in cognitive and practical terms, using decision making shortcuts in order to navigate their ways and 'muddle' through in daily life.

All individuals who were interviewed for this study have provided explanations of why they are doing what they are doing – in terms of sustainable practices. These explanations were, more or less, articulated in the way of 'I'm doing *abc* for *xyz* reasons', which in this study was interpreted as 'value claims', and conceptualized as 'conventions', or orders of worth. Practitioners have shown to refer to multiple orders of worth in order to justify their 'doings'. The individual articulation between

conventions and actions or practices however, is complex and multi-facetted; and the ways orders of worth articulate into 'doings' do not have systematic connections across the domains. The empirical analysis has brought up cases where different either single or multiple orders of worth were referred to with regard to different 'doings'; and cases were one particular convention was drawn upon to justify a range of different 'doings', e.g. where subjects would refer to green conventions in almost everything they do, and not compromise on this. Other cases show that conventions which articulate into action in one domain area may not do so in another – due to varying constraints; or due to competing other conventions which may weight heavier in one domain than in another. In other cases, subjects refer to several conventions at the same time in order to justify one particular action or practice. For example when subjects refer to market, opinion, and civic or green conventions in order to justify vegetarism, which they may see as comparably cheaper, healthier, and 'better' in terms of climate change impacts and animal husbandry. In such cases, where multiple conventions are drawn upon to justify one particular practice, subjects throughout the interviews have appeared likely to carry out consequential practices and perform actions, and so make their value claims consistent with their doings. On the contrary, the relationships of conventions and the actual 'doings' are rarely singularized, in the sense that one particular convention would be drawn upon in order to justify one particular action. Other cases have come up throughout the analysis where orders of worth do not converge, but contradict each other. Purchasing meat from the local butcher for example may be positively attributed with regard to domestic orders of worth – reflecting trust in, and support of local communities – but at the same time it may contradict 'green' orders of worth for the meat may not be sourced to 'organic' standards. In order to make decisions between competing orders of worth, practitioners apply heuristic shortcuts – for example 'trade-off', or 'one-good-reason' heuristics – that help them navigate their way through complex and contradictory situations.

Overall, it shows that the way orders of worth translate into various forms of action depends on the practice domain. In this sense, actions are shaped by domains; and domains structure action. They do so by implying and providing opportunities on the one hand, and constraining subject's range of action on the other hand. Carrying this thought further, this study brings up the question, whether and to what extent a

concept of sustainability in the context of consumption is useful in the absence domains, because the domains pre-define the range of possible actions and practices which may be performed or carried out in 'sustainable' ways, or not. In advance of the second theme of this study where reflexivity and individual concern are specified in order to define and characterize 'meta-reflexivity', orders of worth can be said to represent the individual's reflexive expression of concern. Conventions, in this sense, can be seen as intermediating devices between the local and the global, linking individual local activity (practices and actions) with implications 'at a distance' that spread across the world.

However, from a critical point of view, orders of worth do not provide in-depth accounts of how individuals root and justify their moral understanding. Further, in this study 'green' orders of worth have been critically assessed, finding that in many cases they overlap with other (mostly civic) orders of worth. Yet, there are few particular cases where 'green' orders of worth appear to provide an accurate theoretical account with no or little overlapping with other conventions. Such cases are given where individuals for example argue for animal husbandry, or the value of nature as such.

Further, the first theme finds that practitioners of 'sustainability' in daily life are facing different constraints within and across the practice domains, which – as individuals – they handle differently. Also, it has shown that and how domains feature different limitations to subject's attempts to establish and maintain particular sustainable practices, or perform particular actions. The domain of eating and food provisioning has shown to be open and easy to access to the attempts to consume in sustainable terms. Established commercial systems of food provision offer a wide range of 'sustainable' options, thus increasing the challenge to the individual to make the 'best' decision. Easy access may be a supporting factor for the individual to approximate their sustainability claims. However, changing practices around eating and food has (as far as been mentioned) particular reasons. Some individuals simply adapt their diet in a way they think is healthier (e.g. eating less meat or dairy); some find more energy efficient solutions for preparing or storing food; others find solutions for making use of left-overs in order to spare waste. All in all, it appears easier for individuals to enact their sustainability claims in this domain than in the others. For in the domain of

mobility and transportation, inert infrastructures determine the availability of practices and actions 'at hand'. For example, where cycling lanes are missing, cycling – though desired by many – may be constrained. Changing the infrastructures, and so the systems of provision of mobility and transportation, is hardly an option available to the individual on short terms. For within the domain area of householding, subjects find a range of practices in which to engage easily, such as altered uses of technical devices in order to save energy, or water. Living more energy efficient however, for some individuals implies to invest in the infrastructure of their property, such as in insulation, or autarkic energy solutions. Such investments may be constrained for budgetary reasons. For other individuals who live in rental properties, there is no such option at all.

The second theme (presented in the couplet chapters 5 and 6) investigates how practitioners of 'sustainability' reflect upon their personal transformations with regard to what they find has triggered changes, i.e. with regard to what they find made them change their consumption 'careers' and enter trajectories that are more sustainable in their own terms. The theme looks at different sources that have, or may have, caused individuals to change, and encouraged them to practice 'sustainability' pro-actively in daily life. Doing so, it draws on Margaret Archer's morphogenetic/morphostatic theory of social change, and theories of reflexivity to account for the role of agency and the role of the individual as a reflexive actor in a globalizing world. Reflexivity and individual concern are the criteria that feed into recent theorizations of citizenship, bridging citizenship and consumerism by emphasizing aspects of political expression within daily consumption. These aspects take effect where subjects reflect upon the implications of their daily consumption practices on the environment or on other people, e.g. people who might be directly affected by climate change (e.g. through rising water levels, or desertification) or who might suffer due to low health and safety standards at work in their countries (e.g. health and safety standards in Bangladesh factories etc.). A local act of consuming, from this point of view, implies an element of concern for the impact of consumption on people and nature at a distance in global sense. Consuming, in this sense – other than for example symbolically displaying social status – is re-interpreted in a reflexive process by citizen-consumers as a matter of personal or collective responsibility, and as a political expression in order to bring about

transformations ('making a difference') to the ways in which goods are brought into being and circulate commercially through markets around the globe in a way, arguably, that representative (voter) democracy cannot influence, or does not influence affectively. In Archer's terms this mode of reflexivity is considered as 'meta-reflexivity'. Citizen-consumers, in their role as such, are understood as primarily following this particular mode of reflexivity in shaping their everyday life practices.

Merging citizens and consumers in theoretical terms implies a shift from the traditional role of citizens being the counter-actor in a national state context to citizens being actors in a globalizing world, where citizenship finds its expression through consuming in particular ways. This extends citizenship beyond 'purchase choices' and includes ways of re-structuring social practices and the reshaping of individual lifestyles. Ordinary consumption has gone through a shift from being seen as the fulfilment of needs to being perceived from the point of view of its social and/or ecological impact.

The second theme investigates practitioner's reflexive accounts from the point of view of how they understand their trajectories of change and their personal transformations towards being the 'sustainable' practitioners they describe themselves to be. The sources of de-routinization and practice change have been localized in crucial events and happenings, both in individual's private life (e.g. sudden loss of family members, illness, moving house, or changing job), or in subject's concerns about wider social or political processes. Such concerns can, according to subject's utterances, be triggered by mass media (e.g. news, films, documentaries), peers (e.g. friends; family members; charismatic persons etc.), or events perceived as catastrophic (e.g. witnessing deforestation, or coral reef devastation; or the 9/11 airplane crash in New York). In some cases, interviewees provide obvious examples of reflexivity, either where they directly connect changing practice or performing actions to crucial happenings, or where they describe themselves changing their practices incrementally over time due to a continuous growth of knowledge they gather about environmental and social issues which relate to consumption and Western lifestyles. In summary, there is a spectrum of accounts of change from big personal transitions in the sense of more or less radical changes, to tipping points of incremental change where subjects change and adapt their practices step by step.

The third theme (presented in the couplet chapters 7 and 8) investigates how individuals articulate their visions of a 'good life' in a way that brings together sustainability (in their terms) with notions of happiness and well-being. It brings together theories of the 'good life' and recent scholarly accounts of happiness and well-being with sustainable consumption in practice from the point of view of practitioners of 'sustainability'. Informed by the empirical work, the intention with this theme is to understand how subjects frame their visions of a 'good life' within their attempts (or projections) of living more sustainably. The third theme has shown how practitioner's draw on the 'good life' in their attempt to frame their practices and actions in a way that articulates and helps them follow up their trajectories as sustainable citizen-consumers laying out normative guidelines and positive accounts of how to achieve either personal or societal well-being and happiness. The analysis has brought up three categories of 'good life' visions. First, social visions where communities are seen as resilient self-contained and self-sustaining refuges of collaborative consumption with empowering capabilities to partially overcome external (socio-technical, infrastructural or social) constraints. Second, practice based visions which rest on life simplification and downsizing from what is perceived as unnecessary ballast of an overly affluent society that inauspiciously worships the over-consumption of material artefacts. Third, technological visions drawing on technical solutions such as products and services that allow ways of living which are less or non-harmful, or attributed positive-impact in social or environmental terms.

It seems that in many cases there is a linkage between narratives (in the sense of narrated visions) of the 'good life' as provided in the interviews and the actual social practices carried out by the individual. The analysis has shown that individuals often appear to be orienting their practices and actions towards the 'good life' narratives they are holding, using the narratives a guidelines to action. This however, rather applies where 'good life' visions refer to individuals' private life, for example where individuals articulate technological visions while at the same time in their practices they emphasise on technologization to bring about changes to their private homes in order to be more energy efficient. Other examples are given where individuals try to adapt their driving styles, or switch to more energy efficient cars while in their 'good life' visions they highlight the prospect of 'betterment' through technical solutions. Some

members of the co-housing community for example state realizing their visions of a 'good life' by living the way they do in the community. 'Good life' visions appear to provide less or no guideline to individual action where they generally refer to the betterment of society, or mankind, or 'the globe'; or where visions refer to individuals' private life in a purely utopian way that is fully detached from realistic options of its realisation. Overall, the analysis has brought to light some obvious linkages between narrated 'good life' visions and individual's actual social practices. However, given the fragmentary data situation with regard to this particular issue, is remains difficult if not impossible to claim any systematic connection between 'good life' visions and actual social practices.

Altogether, the findings of this thesis contribute to the development of a more concrete subject-centred understanding of how subjects cope with and resolve some of the inherent tensions and contradictions as to their attempt to shift to and establish sustainable consumption practices.

From an overarching perspective, and in terms of connecting the three 'couplet' themes, this study shows how individuals who act as citizen-consumers, enact multiple and heterogeneous concerns, and thus navigate multiple and heterogeneous normative preferences and directions. They care for the maintenance of the environment, or for social justice, or for both. Concerns may be referring to local issues such as local farmers' income, the integrity and maintenance of social cohesion and communal aspirations, local ecosystems, or direct experience and observation of local conditions of food production. Concerns may also be referring to global issues – where global often is taken in the sense of 'far away' and 'at a distance' – such as fair trade, working conditions in production, climate change, the maintenance of biodiversity, deforestation, global ecosystems, etc.. Local and global concerns have environmental and social dimensions, though they may involve multiple normativities. They also have a temporal dimension. Some concerns are directed towards issues at present, while others refer to the future, involving future generations. In other words: How people consume in practice aligned to their values and concerns for sustainability *now* is one interpretation of sustainability. Consuming *now* according to a concern for the future maintenance of the environment or maintenance of social justice is a slightly different

interpretation. However, sustainability in practice involves all these different concerns. This links to the critique of the concept of 'green' conventions, which brings together all different kinds of normativities in an undifferentiated way, and so provides an over-simplified account.

9.3. Contributions

The investigation of how different domains are connected in terms of how their implications (opportunities or constraints) shape sustainable practices and action is – to the best of my knowledge – novel as such. This thesis takes a 'crosscutting' perspective on practice domains (as discussed in section 9.2.) which sheds light on how particular sustainable practices – such that involve, and so crosscut several domain boundaries – are constrained or supported (and sometimes both at the same time) in multiple ways by domains of practice (or, to be more precise, by the implications of practice domains). It also sheds light on how individuals, in their attempts to live more sustainable, struggle from particular dimensions within single domains, while at the same time they benefit from others (e.g. living in rural areas). The 'crosscutting' perspective makes visible how and to which extent the practice domains of eating and food provisioning; householding; and mobility and transportation entail overlapping implications with regard to how they allow, shape, pre-define or constrain actions and practices that are considered more sustainable. In terms of shaping a particular theoretical perspective on practices of sustainable consumption, the domain-crosscutting perspective has shown be fruitful, and consistent in its outcomes.

This thesis has elaborated three conceptual frameworks that translate into the three themes as presented in the previous section. The first is the value-action-domain framework (VAD). This framework has come out of the preliminary analysis and has been elaborated by using conventions theory; actions and 'practices'; and practice domains (as informed by sociologic theories of practice). A similar framework however, that mobilises 'conventions' and 'practice', has been lined out earlier by Truninger (2005) and Evans (2011) (see section 3.4.). The research process – based on the iteration between data analysis, theoretical and conceptual elaboration – has brought up findings that raised further theoretical questions which required conceptual coverage.

Therefore, the framework of 'conventions'; 'practice' and actions; and practice domains was extended with theories of heuristics and bricolage, allowing to gain further insights, wherein heuristics were taken as a frame to understand the process of individual decision making (in the sense of how subjects cut short and efficiently handle internal negotiations in everyday life); and where bricolage was used in order to frame and underpin individual action in a contradictory and complex world with limited access to different kinds of resources – where resources are such as information (about available options); knowledge and cognitive capacities (to process the information); materials; skills (to apply material or intellectual solutions); or time (to carry out or perform consequential actions); or money. Altogether, this has formed a novel conceptual framework to investigate sustainability in practice from a subject-centred point of view.

Another conceptual framework has been created throughout the course of the research process iterating between inductive empirical and deductive literature based work. This framework was inductively informed by finding that subjects act upon their reflexive accounts as articulated through their concerns with regard to environmental, social, or wider political issues. These were interrogated empirically by prompting subjects to describe and explain the triggers that made them enter more sustainable trajectories (in their own terms) as practitioners in everyday life. Conceptually, these findings were underpinned by accounts of agency and reflexivity; and an explanatory account of how responsible reflexive agency refers to consumption practices in the context of late modernity. The selection of theoretical accounts in order to explain the empirical findings was seen as a deductive process. This process has brought Margaret Archer's theory of morphogenesis/morphostasis to the foreground in order to conceptualize (and emphasis on) the role of agency in the context of a dialectic relation of structure and agency. Further, Archer's theory of reflexivity was drawn on in response to empirical evidence of reflexivity – expressed in subject's concerns and cares. Within Archer's (2012) theorizations, meta-reflexivity (where meta-reflexives are subjects who conduct the meta-reflexive mode) accounts for, and frames individual concern and responsibility, linking to accounts of citizen-consumership, as theorized by Spaargaren & Oosterveer (2010). As quintessence, from a theoretical perspective, these reflexive accounts can be seen as multiple articulations of citizen-consumer

alignments, and so contribute to the understanding of accounts of citizen-consumership in the context of consumption and mundane practices.

An additional conceptual framework was created in iterative response to the fact that subjects with 'sustainability' aspirations were capable of providing narrative visions of a 'good life' which include, and sometimes even gravitate around the issue of sustainable living and its related practices. Given this empirical evidence, the conceptual elaboration has drawn on a conglomerate of theories of the 'good life', and theories of happiness and well-being; and established a connection of this conglomerate with the recent context of sustainability and sustainable living from a subject-centred perspective. Having done so, this thesis contributes highlighting and filling a particular niche in what may be termed as the *sociology the 'good life' in practice* (as differentiated from the philosophy of the 'good life' and from happiness research).

The frameworks outlined above, taken together constitute an overarching conceptual framework of sustainability in practice, as elaborated and applied in this study. Figure 8 illustrates its components and the correlations in the empirical work.

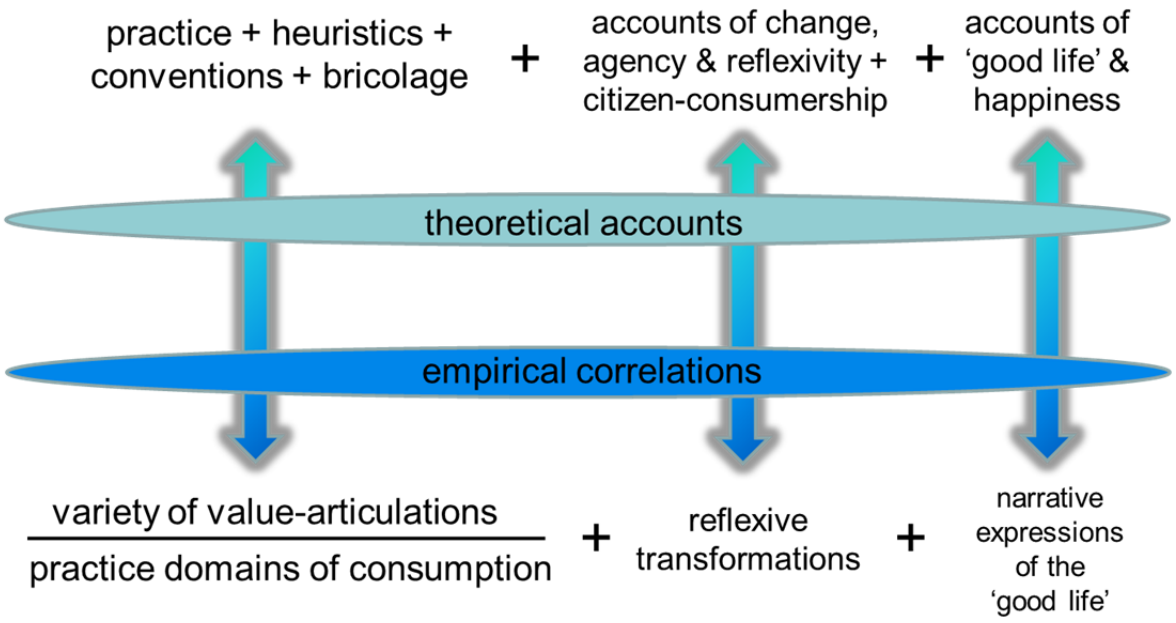

Figure 8: Overarching Conceptual Framework of Sustainability in Practice

With the above, this thesis proposes a conceptual framework of sustainable consumption in practice. It is tempting, though risky in epistemic terms, to propose generalizability, or transferability of this framework to other, similar research contexts. To do so, additional qualifying terms would need to be elaborated at least. This however, is a principle scholarly position. Most likely, for within similar research contexts where equally committed 'practitioners of sustainability in everyday life' are to be investigated, this framework may possibly offer an entry point and fruitful outcomes. It would be interesting to 'test' this framework through additional studies with different subjects.

Overall, this PhD thesis has sowed different sets of seeds of a sociology of sustainability in practice which have started to spring around a set of theoretical statements which however, cannot raise the claim of constituting a comprehensive theory of sustainability in practice. These seeds offer plausible, preliminary hypotheses addressing questions such as: How do people negotiate the potential contradictions of sustainability when they are trying to enact in everyday life sustainability in practice? How do people come to sustainability, or come to want to do things differently? How do people articulate the ways they would ideally like to live and consume?[165]

9.4. Contextualization of this Study, and Situation within broader Debates

This study has been inspired by the author's personal experience in living with, and observing people whose aspirations for consuming are primarily shaped by their concerns and care about the social and environmental impacts of their practices in daily life. This does not exclude other rationales such as conspicuousness or aesthetic consumption, but primarily those people enact their everyday practice according to their concerns and cares. The thesis speaks to and raises questions about the broader topic and normative debates about how Western consumer society can (or perhaps cannot) transform in order to be more sustainable in social and environmental terms. I assert, in conclusion, that the minority of people who pro-actively change their consumption practices as a result of, and according to their reflections upon the

[165] The last question includes the theoretical statement that people are actually able to visualise an ideal.

impacts of the ways they live and consume in daily life therefore constitute a legitimate and useful study group and sub-section of society. This study group helps to address questions about how some people transition into more holistic (if heterogeneous) patterns of consumption and living consistent with highlighting environmental impacts and consuming according to social concerns; and yet dealing with (negotiating) the inherent contradictions that these multiple objects and interpretations of 'sustainability' entails. What can we, as social scientists, learn from this minority and what are the potential societal implications in a context of global environmental problems? Or – phrasing it provocatively – do good lives have to cost the earth?

These questions fed into the overarching study question: How do people translate their care and concern for social and environmental issues into the ways they consume and live out their interpretations of 'sustainability in practice'? – This study has laid out a theoretical account in order to approach this question, and provides some practical answers based on empirical research. It situates within what has been called the 'normative turn' (Sayer 2000) – a shift within critical social science towards normativity and normative theory. For this study, the normative turn counts and applies in a double sense. On the one hand it investigates subjects' values and heterogeneous normativities, and on the other hand, it operates from a normative standpoint which sympathises with many of the discussed ideas about sustainable practice, and agrees with the notion of constrained, but individual or private collective responsibility for the betterment of many present environmental and social situations. This standpoint rests on the assumption that late modernity imposes specific conditions on the individual.

The thesis opens up to debates on responsibility and citizenship in the context of late modernity, where certain minorities of the population – individual agents or collectives – proactively attempt to live out a response against consumerism and an economic system that nourishes what has been labelled as 'consumer society'. Recent theorisations of social and societal transformation and transition often refer to normativities and responsibility in innovation terms, where social norms and normative understandings of responsibility are discussed in context of policy implementation and with regard to their role in shaping social institutions. With regard to the normative turn (as mentioned in chapter 1), this thesis connects to life-politics and multiple

perceptions of morality (or moralities – as there is variety across perceptions). With this, it connects to debates on the conditions of late modernity imposing responsibility on the individual or local collective.

Late modernity is understood as characterised by three conditions which are of relevance to the contemporary placement of this study. The first is globalisation, where in particular the phenomenon of extended supply chains and networks, creates a situation of distance between the place and conditions of production (e.g. worker rights and environmental implications) and the place of consumption. This gives rise to a second relevant phenomenon – the rise of the citizen-consumer. The consumer who expresses their values, and concerns: the things about which they care, through their purchase decisions and a range of other 'doings' in terms of mundane practices and actions in everyday life. The third and related phenomenon is the rise of political-consumption, which is that consumption decisions become a way of expressing political preferences and bringing about transformations (making a difference) to the ways in which goods are brought into being and circulate commercially through markets around the globe.

9.5. Outlook and Avenues for further Research

In terms of avenues for further research, it is possible to capitalise on this thesis by turning some of its findings (including the frameworks of sustainable consumption as outlined in section 9.4.) towards the topic of responsible innovation with regard to individual agents of change in a context of citizen-consumers. An interesting research area here would be to investigate how and under which conditions processes of 'sustainable' social change and transformation can on the one hand be better supported by particular policies (e.g. investments in socio-technical infrastructures) and regulatory frameworks (e.g. such that would provide benefits to sustainable practices, or support the legal and tax situation of communities). On the other hand it may be fruitful to investigate whether and how this particular kind of social change and transformation – considered as bottom-up social innovation – can be uplifted to a wider scale in order to make a wider part of the population participate.

Further, this thesis could be extended and deepened by undertaking further interview samples. It appears that the existing data from the previous two samples have saturated the findings on practices within single domains. However, with regard to the question of domain implications overlapping, and so influencing each other, there may be potential for some more systematic investigating, given that the recent study has a rather exploratory nature. In particular the juxtaposition of living in rural areas / living collectively in comparison to living in cities or metropolitan areas / living non-collectively (on one's own) might be a matter to further investigation and some clearer analytical disentanglement (as mentioned critically in section 9.2.).

In order to deepen the understanding of how subjects reflect upon, and enact change and integrate practice changes into their daily life (relating to the second theme, as described above), a more tailored interview 'tool' and additional interview samples might provide promising insights.

The same applies to the third theme. A more tailored 'tool' and further samples might deepen the understanding of subject-centred articulations of 'good life' visions aligned with 'sustainable' practices, and push on sowing further seeds for the development of a sociology of the 'good life' in sustainability in practice. Especially the variety of linkages between 'good life' articulations and actual social practices might be subject to further qualification both in theoretical and practical terms, as for now, with this study, it seems there are some linkages that are difficult to systematize with the given data material.

Further, the understanding of what triggers change from a subject-centred point of view might be deepened by additional research – both in terms of how subjects reflect upon external factors (such as social or socio-technical structures and their constraining or empowering effects), and internal negotiations (in the sense of reflexive internal conversations). The above framework (section 9.4.) may be used in a comparative way in order either to investigate geographic differences (between regions, countries or other geographic units), or to explore socio-cultural differences (which would include testifying if or in how far the framework is suitable beyond Western narratives in particular).

If this PhD thesis was to be extended, the investigation of communities of sustainable practice(s) would commend itself. For example, an in-depth case study might be conducted, with particular focus on moral normativities within communities, and a more detailed and thorough focus on implications of collective living and collaborative consumption on the conduct of 'sustainable' practices. Such a case study might incorporate quantitative elements in order to identify and approximate the actual percentage of population and the profiles (e.g. socio-demographic and educational[166]) of those who 'practice' sustainability according to the parameters unveiled in this explorative study.

A sociology of sustainability in practice intends to understand people who practice sustainability, and understand the parameters under which these practices extend – so like for example parameters of collective living and collaborative consumption; moments of change; or reflections on the 'good life', and what they mean. This study stops at this point, and remains mostly subject-centred in its propositions. A follow-up step for further research might draw upon this study and elaborate on implications and perspectives for a wider population based on the insights and findings presented here. Likewise, further implications for the development of a theory of sustainability in practice might be subject to follow-up research, based on the theoretical seeds laid out with this study. This might include a more substantive dive into theorisations of late modernity and responsibility.

[166] see appendix A.1.1.2. for example

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Appendix 1 – Technical Appendix

A.1.1. Questionnaire 'prompting tool' iteration

A.1.1.1. Sample 1 - Tool 1

No.	Description	Prompts / questions	Comment / Options	Purpose
1	The interviewee's current life description from the individual's point of view of difference from what is individually perceived as mainstream consumption	*'Would you consider yourself to be a sustainable consumer? If so, what would you distinguish you from what you perceive as the mainstream of consumers?'*	This prompt has shown to be too broad in its range of possible responses. This has made it difficult to relate different responses to each other. For the next round of interviews this 'overall' prompt will be keep as a starter to kick off the conversation. The follow-up prompts will be specified to different domains of consumption such as food;	This prompt aims to introduce the interviewee to the overall interview topic and to initiate a reflection process for the following prompts. It further provides an overall insight the interviewee's perception of sustainability and sustainable practices.

			transport & mobility; household devices & domestic services. The order of these follows-up prompt depends on the interviews response to the starter prompt.	
2	The interviewee's life history from the point of view of moments of change i.e. transition towards a different (e.g. more sustainable) ways of living	(a) *'Tell me your life story vis-à-vis your recent way of living. How have you been living earlier (e.g. ten or fifteen years ago) and how do you live today?'* (b) *'Can you describe to me highlighting any points that you see important in the story as to what changes you made* [with regard to the interviewee has said before]*?'*'		This prompt aims to highlight changes the interviewee has undertaken in order to make one's own practices more sustainable. The combination of narratives of an individual consumer 'career' with the individual life history aims to identify individual experience, crucial moments

				of change, turning points etc. or external influence variables to correlate them to how practices and actions change or have changed.
3	The individual interpretation of the 'good life'	*'How would you describe the 'good life' from the point of view of sustainability etc. in its component parts?'*	This prompt has turned out to be too abstract for some interviewees, especially those who did not have a strong individual take on the subject of sustainability and consumption. However those who have a strong take on the subject could easily pick up this prompt. Some interviewees even provided both, an individual and a social vision. Anyway it has shown that this prompt needs to be placed	This prompt aims to explore the research hypothesis that sustainable consumers bear in mind notions ethical notions of a 'good life'. The interviewee chose from bifurcate options to either unfold an individual vision OR a social vision of a 'good life', depending on individual preferences. Likewise, some interviewees choose both options one by one.

			further towards the end of the interview because some interviewees appeared to be slightly irritated by its abstractness which had a negative effect on the oral fluency at this point of the interview.	
4	The interviewee's social group(s), or social environment(s), current living environment and networks.		This prompt has been handled in a flexible way depending on what has been mentioned before already by the interviewee.	Prompt articulated in order to explore the effect of peer groups, charismatic leaders (i.e. pioneers in the field) or other distinct social parameters on individuals.
5	The interviewee's family background, sociability and	*'Have you grown up in a somehow political or religious household etc.?* '		

	socialization			
6	Political attitude and perception of policy in general	*'Do you feel represented by any political party?'*		
7	The interviewee's inherent tensions, contradictions and disparities as to their attempt to shift to and establish sustainable consumption practices	*'How do you deal with disparities/contradictions in your own actions* [with regard to what the interviewee has articulated before]*?'*	This prompt depends very much on the overall order of events of the interviewee and needs to be raised at an appropriate moment.	
8	Real-Utopia Exercise	*'Imagine you were living in the year 2020, ten years from now. What does your life look like? It's up to you on what you reflect. Here are some examples: Where do you live? How do you live? What does your house or flat look like? How does your neighbourhood or local community look? What kind of services do you use? [Further explanation to the interviewee:] Why is this exercise called 'real-utopian'? 'Real' because you*	With the bifurcate option to choose to answer in terms of an individual or social vision or either. The interviewees choose from bifurcate options to either unfold an individual vision OR a social vision of a 'real utopia' depending on	This prompt specifically aims to generate stories and narratives which contain distinct structural elements of stories or storylines. It specifically refers to the purpose of the structural analysis as outlined in the previous paper (II).

		most probably won't be Bill Gates or Rockefeller. So the scope of your consideration is your real life. 'Utopian' because I'm interested in your positive (or negative) vision of what your 'good life' in the near future looks like. If 2020 is too early you could either choose another time horizon.'	individual preferences. Likewise, some interviewees choose both options one by one.	
9	Interviewee's simplified justification of actions and practices	*'Now that you have explained all that to me in mature wording, how would you actually explain this to a five year old who is asking you why you'd be doing all this?'*	With the rationale of simplifying the narration to align it and to bring it into line with the virtually supposed cognitive capacities of a child, this prompt seeks to generate simplified storylines and 'purer' versions of the above narratives, assuming this will support the subsequent	This prompt specifically aims to generate stories and narratives which contain distinct structural elements of stories or storylines. It specifically refers to the purpose of the structural analysis as outlined in the previous paper (II).

			process of interpretation and help to make making sense of the narratives.	

A.1.1.2. Socio-demographic Questionnaire (as used for Sample 1)

Sociodemographic questionnaire

Respondent name: _____
Year of birth: _____
Gender: M / F
Marital status: _____
Number of children: _____
Employment status: _____
Highest Education Qualification: _____
Personal beliefs and/or religious faith_____

Question: What is the highest grade (or year) of regular school you have completed? (Check one.)

Elementary School	High School	College	Graduate School
01____	09____	13_____	17_____
02____	10____	14_____	18_____
03____	11____	15_____	19_____
04____	12____	16_____	20+____
05____			
06____			
07____			
08____			

Question: What is the highest degree you earned?

_____High school diploma or equivalency (GED)
_____Associate degree (junior college)
_____Bachelor's degree
_____Master's degree
_____Doctorate
_____Professional (MD, JD, DDS, etc.)
_____Other specify
_____None of the above (less than high school)

Question: Which of the following best describes your current main daily activities and/or responsibilities?

_____Working full time
_____Working part-time
_____Unemployed or laid off
_____Looking for work
_____Keeping house or raising children full-time
_____Retired

Question: With regard to your current or most recent job activity:

a. In what kind of business or industry do (did) you work?

_____

(For example: hospital, newpaper publishing, mail order house, auto engine manufacturing, research.)

b. What kind of work do (did) you do? (Job Title)

_____

(For example: registered nurse, personnel manager, gasoline engine assembler, grinder operator.)

c. How much did you earn, before taxes and other deductions, during the past 12 months?

_____Less than $5,000
_____$5,000 through $11,999
_____$12,000 through $15,999
_____$16,000 through $24,999
_____$25,000 through $34,999
_____$35,000 through $49,999
_____$50,000 through $74,999
_____$75,000 through $99,999
_____$100,000 and greater
_____Don't know
_____No response

Question: How many people are currently living in your household, including yourself?

_____Number of people
_____Of these people, how many are children?
_____Of these people, how many are adults?
_____Of the adults, how many bring income into the household?

Question: Is the home where you live:

_____Owned or being bought by you (or someone in the household)?
_____Rented for money?
_____Occupied without payment of money or rent?
_____Other (specify)_____

Date of Interview: ___/ ___ / ___
Interviewer Name: _____
Interview setting: _____
_____
Time interview commenced: _____
_____

A.1.1.3. Implications and Modifications for Sample 2

Outstanding / open questions	General implications for the tool development	Questionnaire implications
Theoretical implications		
Gaps in understanding what values are. Gaps in understanding how values transform into action	According to my literature review on the Sociology of Values: values are mostly unobservable because most people would not be consciously reflected enough to tell what their values are. But there is a chance of deducing values from narrative contexts. So this is to ask WHAT people do and WHY they do it.	
Gaps in understanding how robust & consistent values are	According to my literature review on values: environmental values are most likely not to be consistent. It is very difficult (nigh on impossible) for people to act consistently in relation to a set of abstract values	With regard to literature review the question of robustness and consistency of values turns into: How is that difficulty value consistency navigated, reflected upon, and justified by individuals? How do individuals manage conflicts between commitments across different practices, so that e.g. the claims of family will outweigh claims of environment in some situations for some people?

Clarify how exactly I want to define and operationalize ETHICS and VALUES. How do they relate to each other?	Ethics conceptualized as an umbrella for particular values. There can be either conflicting ethics as much as conflicting values.	There is no particular need to disentangle ethics and values.
Heuristics	-	(How) Do people utilize different heuristics to transform values into action?
Combined heuristics	-	How can some people manage to combine certain heuristics (while others don't)? E.g. some people will combine 'health', 'family' and 'environmental' heuristics in saying 'We don't have a car. It is much healthier for us as a family since we walk and cycle more'.
Practical implications		
So far, the focus of the interviews has been very wide so that it is difficult to compare data, especially when it comes to single domains for consumption such as food, transport, household devices.	Specify prompts	Narrow down focus on specific domains of consumption: • Food • mobility and transportation • householding (devices & services)

Gaps in understanding what values are. Gaps in understanding how values transform into action		Directed requests on WHAT subjects do in terms of practices and WHY they do what they do. Purpose: • Gather individual justifications of actions that allow drawing conclusions about individual values. • Gather individual heuristics to better understand how values transform into action.
Is there a remarkable difference between individual members of committed communities vs. individuals not explicitly from socialised group situations?	Choice of target interviewees	

A.1.1.4. Sample 2 - Interview Request and Consent Form Sample 2

The University of Manchester
Sustainable
Consumption Institute

MANCHESTER 1824

Hi,

my name is Thomas Schroder and I do research on changing consumption practices. I am interested in people who are active and have decided to change their life styles to be more sustainable. 'Sustainability', however, is a much used and abused term these days. In my understanding it can be anything that is environmentally friendly (or at least less harming to the environment) or that provides social benefits. There are many options to act more sustainable in everyday life. I am particularly interested in what options you choose and why.

So if you consider yourself to be sustainable, in one way or the other (and with all the difficulties and contradictions this may imply) I would very much appreciate to do an interview with you.

An interview – what would that look like? How might it be conducted?

The interview usually takes between 1 and 1 ½ hours, depending on how much you want to tell me. Actually, I would rather prompt you to tell me something about your daily practices, your life and what you think is sustainable or not. You will not need to prepare anything beforehand. The interview will be recoded with your permission. Any kind of data will be treated strictly confidential. All interview data will be anonymised so that by no means will it be possible to identify individuals or groups from the data or from any related publication.

Who I am and what my ambitions are

I am a doctoral student in my 3rd year of research at both the Sustainable Consumption Institute in Manchester and at the Manchester Institute of Innovation Research. With my study I aim to contribute to a better understanding of how and why consumers change the way they live and consume and how others may be enabled to do so. I seek to conclude my study with recommendations in an effort to help improve policies that support sustainable action and living within different domains of consumption.

Thank you for your co-operation. I hope to meet you soon.

Best wishes

Thomas Schroder

Thomas Schroder phone: 0161-275-5935; mobile: 07549-532269 thomas.schroder@postgrad.mbs.ac.uk

Obligatory Information

The following list contains obligatory information about the research project, the interview, the usage of interview data and the participants' autonomy in the course of the study.

- The research is for a doctoral student project.
- The title of the research project is '**Sustainability Narratives. Consumption & the 'good life"**
- Participants will be asked questions like (for example) the following
  - *'Would you consider yourself a sustainable consumer? If so, what do you think that means and would distinguish yourself from what you perceive as the mainstream of consumers?'*
  - *'What kind of values do you think you have that are relevant to you being a sustainable consumer?'*
  - *'Do you ever find it difficult to act according to your values?'*
  - ...
- Based on experience the interview is going take between 1 and 1 ½ hours, depending on how much information the interviewee volunteers to provide.
- The location of the interview is to be agreed on individually. Usually a quiet place is preferable.
- Answering the interview questions will not have any implications on the participant. At any time the participant is free stop the interview or to refuse answering any particular question.
- After the interview there are no other expectations of the participant in the course of this study or beyond. In some cases participant might be contacted by the researcher to clarify particular questions in terms understanding or interpretation. These questions might come up in the course of transcribing or analysing the interview.
- The participant is not obliged to take part in this study, and may withdraw from it at any time (see consent form)
- The interview will be recorded using an audio record device. The record will be transcribed and fully anonymised. Parts of this transcript may be used as direct quotes in later research publications. By no means will it be possible to identify individuals from the data or from any related publication. No identifying information about the participant will appear in any later publication. Any kind of personal data will be treated strictly confidential. Audio record data will be stored in digital form with proper (256-bit) encryption of files and folders.
- The participant is entitled to see the transcript of the interview at any time.
- The participant will be asked to complete a consent form (see next page) to declare her or his consent to participate in this study. (A printed copy of the consents form will be brought by the researcher to be signed prior the interview.)

Thomas Schroder phone: 0161-275-5935; mobile: 07549-532269 thomas.schroder@postgrad.mbs.ac.uk

MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester

Sustainability Narratives. Consumption & the 'good life'

CONSENT FORM

I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet and I am happy to participate in this research study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and have these answered satisfactorily. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant	Date	Signature
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature

A.1.1.5. Sample 2 - Tool 2

No.	Description	Prompts / questions	Comment	Purpose
Screening Prompt				
1	Overall	*'Would you consider yourself a sustainable consumer? If so, what do you think that means and would you distinguish yourself from what you perceive as the mainstream of consumers?'*		Screening prompt to prepare the interviewee for the coming. Combine interviewee's notions of (1) what it is to be a sustainable consumer, (2) mainstream and (3) practical attempt to be sustainable. ↓ Notions of what the interviewee's (4) values are

				↓ How does the interviewee attempt and manage to marry those 4 things up (or not)?
Influences				
2		*'What or who would say have been the most important influences on you or what you think of yourself being a sustainable consumer as you just described?'* *Some keywords to might be* - *Political influences* - *Communities / groups* - *Family* - *Religious influences* - *Media* - *Events in your life or in recent global history* - *Individuals i.e. charismatic figures / leaders / pioneers* - *other*		

3	Political attitude and perception	*'Do you feel influenced by any political position or group? What or who would you say has been the most important influence?'*		Political attitude and perception of politics in general
4	Religious beliefs	*'Do you feel attracted by or are you committed to any spiritual or religious belief? … If so, please tell me about it.'*		
5	Community / social group(s), family / household members, or social environment(s), current living environment and networks.	*'Can you describe me your community life in general and in terms of daily practices? What does it look like? What are the benefits to you? What are the limitations? Why did you choose to be part of this particular community or group?'* *[Pick up hints on community to then prompt: 'How does that [e.g. the community etc.] influence you…?']*	Examples would be: sharing goods, gardening, sharing opinions	
6	The interviewee's family background, sociability and socialization	*'What kind of household have you grown up in in terms of political orientation and religious beliefs? Would you say that this (your upbringing) has had a specific*		Gather additional information.

		influence on what you do now in terms of what you described as being a sustainable consumer?'		
Life History & Changes				
7	The interviewee's life history from the point of view of moments of change i.e. transition towards a different (e.g. more sustainable) ways of living	(a) *'Tell me your life story vis-à-vis your recent way of living. How have you been living earlier (e.g. ten or fifteen years ago) and how do you live today?'* (b) *'Can you describe to me highlighting any points that you see important in the story as to what changes you made?'* *'Can you tell your own personal life journey vis-à-vis the life you just described?'*	This prompt depends very much on what the interviewee has said before	This prompt aims to highlight changes the interviewee has undertaken in order to make one's own practices more sustainable. The combination of narratives of an individual consumer 'career' with the individual life history aims to identify individual experience, turning points etc. or

				external influence variables to correlate them to how practices and actions change or have changed.
8		*Have you always lived this way? What changes have you made when and why?*		
Practices & Practice domains (Use and order of the following three prompts depending on the interviewee's response so far.)				
9	Single domains I: Food	*'Tell me something about the food you buy and eat. + prepare + waste & disposal + storage + planting* *Specify Food occasions* *[e.g. average weekly practices + shopping in a rush] e.g. in the course of a week tell me about your food shopping and how you make the decisions that you do and what it is about being a sustainable consumer* *[mirror screening prompt]*	For each domain: *'Now that you have described all that, what would you wish to emphasize to me about what makes it special and what distinguishes you as a sustainable consumer from the mainstream.'*	Specify prompts to single domains of consumption. Looking for specific steps, or personal investments (e.g. sacrifices) that people do over and above what is easy to do because

		What is there about the way you shop for food and prepare … food that distinguishes you from the mainstream? [create scenario in terms of a process story rather than a practice story] *'Now I want to talk about some particular weekly activities that you do. I would like to start with …food.* *In a typical week I'd like you to tell me about your food purchasing and how you think that distinguishes you as a sustainable consumer and how it is different to the mainstream.* *In a typical week, how do you prepare the food?'*	Hint: repeat and use a pattern for other domains	they want to behave in a particular way. Use the triangle (values-actions-domain) and try to unpick examples of consistency and inconsistency.

		[easier language] *'Can you take me through getting the food to preparing and eating to getting rid of waste and disposing? And for a typical week, tell me what you do.'* [follow-up, slightly different from previous question] *'In a typical week, what is it in general that you are trying to do (or not to do) to be consistent with what you think is a sustainable consumer?* *What do you eat? Where and how do you buy your food? (e.g. supermarket with car; local foot store with bike etc.)' Why do you do …?'*		
10	Single domains II: Transport & Mobility	*'Tell me something about your individual transport and the way you organise your*	Everyday and exceptional occasions	Specify prompts to single domains of

		personal mobility in everyday life and at exceptional occasions (e.g. vacancies). Which ways of transport and mobility do you use? Which do you prefer? Why do you do …?' *'I'd like to move on and talk about transportation and travelling. In a typical week, how do you get around? [When would you do X (e.g. walk), when would you do Y (e.g. cycle)?* [specify:] *How do you get to work? How do you do your shopping?* *Are there things that you'd like to do that you can't do? Are there things about what values can follow though in terms of action? Are there things that you can't follow through* *And how about special occasion, for example when you go away for leisure or on*	(like vacancies); examples: usage of car, aviation, public transport	consumption

		vacancies? '		
11	Single domains III: Household practices, goods, devices & domestic services	*Some keywords to your answer would be housing, household devices, gardening, water supply & usage (washing & cleaning), energy, investments.)'* *'Now I'd like to talk about your housing and your use of energy and equipment in the house.* *Do you pay particular attention to these aspects of your everyday life from the point of view of how you described your views about sustainable consumers and what you do yourself to what you said you are doing differently to the mainstream?* *OR:* *You described yourself as a sustainable consumer. Now, in the particular setting of*	Examples: housing, household devices, gardening, water supply & usage (washing & cleaning), energy, investments.	Specify prompts to single domains of consumption.

		household, what do you do?		
Values				
12		*'What kind of values do you think you have that are relevant to you being a sustainable consumer?'* *'How would you bring the following values in relating? How do they relate to each other to you with regard to the actions and practices you have described? You could either talk me through one by one or simply pick out some values to comment on. You may also want to bring them into a hierarchical order in terms of what you care for the most or the least when you reflect upon you daily activities and practices as you have described.* • Work ethics • Animal welfare / husbandry	Give the interviewee a little while to think...then show list of various values that might come into question.	

		• Reducing carbon emissions • Global justice • Environmental protection • Future generations (Brundtland) • Health • Family • Pleasure, convenience & comfort		
12	The interviewee's inherent tensions, contradictions and disparities as to their attempt to shift to and establish sustainable consumption practices	*'Do you ever find it difficult to act according to your values?'*	This prompt depends very much on what the interviewee has articulated before and on the overall order of events of the interviewee and needs to be raised at an appropriate moment.	The interviewee's inherent tensions, contradictions and disparities as to their attempt to shift to and establish sustainable consumption practices
13		*'What's your little 'green sin' i.e. un-green sin'?* *OR: What was your most embarrassingly un-green activity in the last week / month?'*		
Interpretation of the 'good life'				
14	The individual interpretation of the 'good life'	*'If you could choose a life to live…what would that look like?'*	Individual vision and / or social vision	
15	Real-Utopia Exercise	*'Imagine you were living in the year 2021, ten years from now. How would your life be?*	With the bifurcate option to choose to	This prompt specifically aims to generate stories

		It's up to you on what you reflect. Here are some examples: Where do you live? How do you live? What does your house or flat look like? How does your neighbourhood or local community look? What kind of services do you use? [Further explanation to the interviewee:] Why is this exercise called 'real-utopian'? 'Real' because you most probably won't be Bill Gates or Rockefeller. So the scope of your consideration is your real life. 'Utopian' because I'm interested in your positive (or negative) vision of what your 'good life' in the near future looks like. If 2020 is too early you could either choose another time horizon.' *You can choose to talk me through your practical version of your live in 10 years' time or an ideal version of your live. You might also want to talk me through both versions*	answer in terms of an individual or social vision or either. The interviewees choose from bifurcate options to either unfold an individual vision OR a social vision of a 'real utopia' depending on individual preferences. Likewise, some interviewees choose both options one by one.	and narratives which contain distinct structural elements of stories or storylines. It specifically refers to the purpose of the structural analysis as outlined in the previous paper (II).

		of your live ten years from now.		
16	Interviewee's simplified justification of actions and practices	*'Now that you have explained your vision of a future life to me in mature wording, how would you explain this to a five year old who is asking you why you'd be doing all this?'*	With the rationale of simplifying the narration to align it with the virtually supposed cognitive capacities of a child, this prompt seeks to generate simplified storylines and 'purer' versions of the above narratives, assuming this will support the subsequent process of interpretation and help to make making sense of the narratives.	This prompt specifically aims to generate stories and narratives which contain distinct structural elements of stories or storylines. It specifically refers to the purpose of the structural analysis as outlined in the previous paper (II).

A.1.2. Fieldwork Schedule

January – March 2010	April – July 2010	August 2010 – March 2011	In the following	October – November 2011	December 2011 – Aug 2012
Conducting 1st interview sample	Transcription and data analysis 1st sample	Series of preliminary analysis papers in order to testify methods, data, and to elaborate theoretical background	Planning the 2nd interview sample and contacting potential interview partners	Conducting 2st interview sample	Transcription and data analysis 2st sample

Appendix 2 – Data

A.2.1. Interview transcripts

Interview transcripts, in *.PDF format, are attached in this thesis in digital format. Please consult files in the subfolder on the attached CD:

A.2.1.1. Interview Transcripts Sample 1

Appendix 2\A.2.1. Interview Transcripts PDF

A.2.1.2. Interview Transcripts Sample 2

Appendix 2\A.2.1. Interview Transcripts PDF

A.2.2. Data Coding Spread Sheets

The data coding spread sheets contain data from both the 1st and the 2nd interview sample.

The data coding spread sheets, in *.xlsx format, are attached in this thesis in digital format. Opening the files requires in MS Excel© 2010 or later version.

Please consult files in the subfolder on the attached CD:

A.2.2.1. Data Coding Spread Sheet Sorted by Individual

Appendix 2\A.2.2. Data Coding Spread Sheets\A.2.2.1. Interviewee sheet sorted by INDIVIDUAL.xlsx

A.2.2.2. Data Coding Spread Sheets Sorted by Domain of Practice

Appendix 2\A.2.2. Data Coding Spread Sheets\A.2.2.2. Interviewee sheet sorted by DOMAIN.xlsx