

Motivations for Pro-environmental Behaviour

A research report completed for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by RESOLVE, Paul Collingwood and Andrew Darnton.

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Glossary

Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
F	Female
M	Male
Q	Interviewer or focus group moderator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This six month research project was commissioned as part of Defra's Sustainable Consumption and Production research programme. Its main aim was to develop a better understanding of the role played by key identified social and psychological phenomena in motivating or hindering pro-environmental behaviour change, with particular focus on identity and social norms. The research examined these phenomena in five of the seven segments from Defra's segmentation model. These segments were Positive Greens, Waste Watchers, Concerned Consumers, Sideline Supporters and Cautious Participants.

Objectives

Defra proposed three key objectives for this study of motivations:

- Explore in depth the motivators and barriers that influence different pro-environmental behaviours in relation to five of the seven segments.
- Explore why some motivators are relevant to certain segments but not to others, and explore the implications this has for efforts to encourage pro-environmental behaviour change.
- Finally, and most importantly, investigate the way in which self-identity, social identity, social norms, guilt and agency motivate or hinder pro-environmental behaviour, and how individuals construct their understandings of these motivating factors.

Research methodology

The research objectives were addressed through a multi-method approach, of which the main elements were:

1. A desk review of key literatures and segmentation research to date;
2. 35 in depth interviews to provide a contextualised understanding of the role of the motivations in relation to pro-environmental behaviours;
3. 10 focus groups to test deliberately the relationship between the identified motivators and pro-environmental behaviour.

Key findings

The 'motivations' we have examined within this research project are complex and contested. For each individual, different motivations interact in a variety of different ways producing a

unique pattern of behaviour. In assessing the relationship between motivations, behaviour and the environment, all findings within this report should be treated as being indicative. Nonetheless, we have sought to identify where there seems to be consistency and coherency in the relationship between motivations and environmental behaviour, and in doing so, we have tried to understand how these motivations operate for different groups of people and across different behaviours. In summary, we would suggest that:

Changing perceptions of pro-environmental behaviour

- In general, most of the individuals and groups in our sample felt that undertaking a small amount of pro-environmental behaviour was no longer seen as being unusual or the preserve of activists. For the most environmentally active segments, there appeared to be an expectation of some environmental action as normal, responsible behaviour. Indeed, not undertaking any pro-environmental behaviour was perceived to be lazy or selfish. This is particularly true of recycling.

Identity

- Our respondents were invariably negotiating their environmental values and identities alongside other rewarding sources of identity and self-esteem, such as work, family, home and a sense of self as a good person. How important these different sources of identity were to the individual affected the likelihood of environmental actions.
- Not all of the self-identities which supported pro-environmental behaviours were overtly environmental. Instead identifications with frugality, anti-waste, anti-consumerism and self-sufficiency acted alongside more 'green identities' to help stimulate behavioural uptake. Perceptions of the self as non-materialistic, unselfish and thoughtful were facilitated through undertaking some pro-environmental behaviours, especially for those who perceived a social expectation of action.
- Not all pro-environmental behaviours carry the same kind of meaning personally, socially or morally. Some behaviours may enhance social status and self-esteem, others may hinder this. This is because people are negotiating a range of different self and social identities; and different behaviours can speak to those different identities. For example, some participants think that owning a small car or buying second hand clothes will not provide them with the personal and social rewards that they feel they deserve as a result of their hard work and successful careers. For others the car was essential to ensuring their children could attend the best school or arriving at work looking professional. Alternatively some smaller behavioural changes

can enhance the perception of the self as a good person; larger changes may allow the more proactive environmentalist a sense of consistency or authenticity from living their values.

- The prevailing discourse of 'doing my bit' appeared as the predominant environmental position for many in the sample. More than just a rhetorical expression, this allows individuals to validate themselves as non-materialistic, unselfish or responsible whilst at the same time protecting other important identities and behaviours. It facilitates a sense of personal responsibility and action for the environment, in line with social expectations and the actions of important others, whilst not demanding that the individual has to do a lot or give up valued goods. This becomes played out through a notion of 'balance' between self and society, and between luxury and morality.

Social Norms

- People tended to position their behaviours as being in line with those of their friends, family or neighbours. For those participants with an active pro-environmental social group, some pro-environmental behaviours were supported by shared meanings of being a good person and a group norm that defines what is acceptable or valued behaviour. However, for others in the sample without such a social group, undertaking some pro-environmental behaviours had little social value and might even conflict with their social identities.
- Differences were apparent in the willingness and ability of individuals to undertake behaviours which might conflict with their desire to maintain or enhance their status and membership within a social group, especially those behaviours perceived to bring social stigma. Strong personal norms or sense of self in relation to a behaviour were the primary motivations for breaching social norms. However, a lack of resources could also lead people to breach social norms. Conversely, those less certain in their self or social identities seemed less likely to want to breach social norms or give up high status behaviours, for example by buying second hand goods or swapping a large car for a smaller one.
- A range of different actors appear to be working to create new social norms in relation to pro-environmental behaviours. Friends, family and local community influence seem crucial to changing norms. However, government, the media (including celebrity chefs as agents of consumer morality), and social institutions such as schools and

workplaces are also influential. The workplace appeared as a useful source of new social norms for those without an active friendship group. At the same time, improvements in infrastructure that facilitate environmental action normalise changes in behaviour, reduce the justification for doing little or nothing, and can signal a wider change in social expectations.

Agency

- Not all action was premised on the belief that it would make a major difference to the environment or climate change overall. Indeed, for those with strong pro-environmental values and identities personal accountability appeared to be more important than the efficacy of small changes in behaviour. Moreover, doing nothing for the environment is not considered by some to be a positive or self-enhancing option. For those who saw their role as 'doing their bit' alongside others in society, personal responsibility as part of a collective effort appeared to be more important than worrying about what difference any single action might make in isolation. However, more will need to be done to convince people of the efficacy of large scale actions particularly if they require more people to make sacrifices to their current lifestyles or compromise their self or social identities.

Guilt

- Both the findings on self-identity and guilt suggest individuals are more likely to undertake actions which fit with specific moral standards. For example, those concerned about climate change were more likely to say they would feel good or guilty in relation to whether they undertook climate change related behaviours or not, whereas those concerned about waste or strongly identified with frugality were more likely to say they would feel good from undertaking waste saving behaviours or guilty about wasting food, water, energy or money.
- Social comparison appeared to be a key process in managing guilt related to pro-environmental behaviours. Possibly because of the construction of personal environmental responsibility as part of a larger set of collective action, people offset guilt they might feel about not doing enough by comparing their actions favourably with other people's. So, some people may only recycle but they can reduce their feelings of guilt by pointing out that they are still doing a lot more for the environment than many other people here and in other countries.

Suggestions for further research

This research project has covered a wide range of motivations and behaviours. The findings have provided a number of interesting insights, some of which suggest the need for further research to establish their robustness. Those factors that we feel offer the most potential to influence behaviour change have been highlighted as priorities for further research, particularly to establish the most appropriate format for policy initiatives. These areas are set out in the following paragraphs.

1. Across the research we have identified a range of identity related concepts which could have potential to drive further behaviour. For example, people appeared to use pro-environmental behaviours to help position themselves against 'selfish' and 'materialistic' lifestyles, and in line with responsible and caring ways to live; the workplace may prove to be a key site for changing the status of inefficient cars and engaging those without a proactive social group in energy efficient behaviours; gardening, DIY, dog walking and outdoor pursuits suggest themselves as activities which could provide a meaningful self or social identification to link to pro-environmental behaviours.
2. We have suggested that the economic downturn, in line with an increased awareness of the impacts of wasteful systems of production and consumption, offers an opportunity to encourage more buy-in to pro-environmental behaviours through a focus on wastefulness and frugality. We recommend further research into how people talk about a 'wasteful' or 'spoilt' society and how those discourses might be utilised to support the shift to a new era of efficient resource use and more frugal lifestyles.
3. We have tested the use of a descriptive norm to drive the uptake of a wide spread pro-environmental behaviour. The results were not conclusive. However, they do suggest that the types of people undertaking the behaviour and their motivations for so doing may affect other people's perceptions of the need to undertake similar behaviours; for example, a perception that a behaviour is being undertaken because people cannot afford to do otherwise will not encourage others to follow suit. We recommend further testing to understand the impacts of audience perception of financial and altruistic motivations for behavioural uptake. In particular, it would be useful to test whether more affluent consumers would feel the need to conform to widespread behaviours they identify with low income groups or money saving.

4. A close analysis of the differences in narrative between those undertaking a particular pro-environmental behaviour and those who believe the behaviour has low status or carries social stigma could help to provide alternative methods for promoting behaviour change. Rather than directly targeting change by seeking to curtail a meaningful behaviour or increase uptake of a stigmatised behaviour, policies to promote socially acceptable or personally rewarding alternatives could be devised instead. For example, cycling as a healthy alternative to car use or second hand goods shopping as a social activity.

We have looked at the roles of self-identity, social identity, social norms, guilt and agency in this research project. We have concluded that these are all important factors in motivating pro-environmental behaviour. Whilst few of the pro-environmental behaviours we examined showed signs of being current social norms, many appeared to have the ability to become social norms. Overall, we concluded there is a growing perception of a need to undertake some pro-environmental behaviour as part of being a responsible person; this will help to support further environmental initiatives.

1 INTRODUCTION

Background

This six month research project was commissioned by Defra's Sustainable Behaviours Unit as part of the Sustainable Consumption and Production research programme. Its main aim was to develop further the understanding of the role played by key identified social and psychological phenomena in motivating or hindering pro-environmental behaviour change, with particular focus on identity and social norms. The project examined these phenomena in five of the seven segments from Defra's segmentation model.

Since 2007, Defra has been developing an environmental segmentation model. Segmenting the public into differentiated groups based on their attitudes, values and beliefs, has allowed Defra to build an understanding of the most effective means to engage different groups in order to encourage pro-environmental behaviours. The profiles for each segment provide a detailed account of people's different ecological worldviews; motivations and barriers to environmental behaviours; current behaviours across activity in the home, personal travel and purchasing; and knowledge and engagement levels with issues related to the environment and climate change.

Based on these findings, Defra has identified five of the seven segments which are most likely to respond positively to pro-environmental messages if they are targeted by communications programmes. This does require, however, a better understanding of the roles that self and social identity, social norms, guilt and agency play in influencing the behaviour of people within each of these segments, and the implications these have for motivating each segment to act in a more pro-environmental way. The aim of this study was to contribute to that understanding.

Objectives

Defra proposed three key objectives for this study of motivations:

- Explore in depth the motivators and barriers that drive different pro-environmental behaviours in relation to five of the segments.
- Explore why some motivators are relevant to certain segments but not to others, and explore the implications this has for efforts to encourage pro-environmental behaviour change.

- Finally, and most importantly, investigate the way in which both self and social identity, social norms, guilt and agency motivate or hinder pro-environmental behaviour, and how individuals construct their understandings of these motivating factors.

Additionally, Defra identified a number of issues that the research needed to explore in relation to identity, social norms, guilt and agency. The *Interim Report* attempted to answer these questions from a theoretical perspective and develop a methodology that would enable a more in depth analysis of these motivations to be conducted through a programme of one-to-one interviews and focus groups. The key questions that have been addressed through a detailed literature review, analysis of the quantitative data held on the segments, and a range of qualitative primary research methods, were as follows:

Self and social identity

1. To what extent does self-identity motivate or hinder the pro-environmental behaviours of the different segments?
2. How do individuals perceive their own self-identities and how do different pro-environmental behaviours contribute to this?
3. How do individuals construct different social identities in the context of pro-environmental behaviour?
4. How do different social identities motivate or hinder pro-environmental behaviour, and are pro-environmental behaviours signifiers of certain identities?
5. To what extent does self-identity compete with social identity in the context of pro-environmental behaviour?

Social norms

1. At what point do individuals begin to interpret a specific behaviour as being a social norm; and is this dependent upon how many people are engaging in the behaviour or who is engaged in the behaviour?
2. Are there differences between perceived and actual levels of behaviour?
3. Does visible evidence of others acting affect the extent to which individuals perceive social norms; and how do people form opinions of less visible behaviours?
4. Why are social norms more important to some segments than to others?

Agency

1. To what extent does a lack of agency prevent behaviour, rather than justify inaction?

Guilt

1. How is guilt linked to identity?
2. Does the perceived social acceptability of a behaviour affect levels of guilt?
3. Is guilt a primary motivator of pro-environmental behaviour?
4. Is guilt based on a recognition of personal impacts or social expectations?
5. What strategies do people employ to alleviate guilt?

The five segments

This research includes only those segments of the population that are considered to be open to environmental actions. Each of these five segments had already been given different descriptors though for the purposes of this project, particularly during the focus group stages, they have also been allocated non-leading names. The segments, with Defra's estimates of the percentage of the population they represent, are:

- Segment 1; Positive Greens; 18%
- Segment 2; Waste Watchers; 12%
- Segment 3; Concerned Consumers; 14%
- Segment 4; Sideline Supporters; 14%
- Segment 5; Cautious Participants; 14%

Where possible within this report, the segments will be referred to by their title. However, we will more usually talk about the parts of these segments for which we feel we have robust data.

Theoretical approach

The research and analysis of the roles that identity, guilt, agency and norms play in people's lives is based on an understanding of the theoretical perspectives underpinning these concepts. Part of this understanding is summarised in the 'theory section' of this report. A more detailed review is available in the *Interim Report*. To enable non-academics to engage with these concepts, we have minimised the complexity and number of theories utilised. It should, therefore, be acknowledged that whilst we have engaged with only a few theoretical perspectives within this research, all of these concepts are contested and open to rigorous academic debate.

In line with this approach of theoretical simplification, we have opted to call the phenomena and concepts under consideration 'motivations'. Again, we acknowledge that by referring to guilt, agency, identity and norms as 'motivations' we have moved away from a strictly

academic conceptualisation of these phenomena. However, we believe that by simplifying the language a broader audience will be able to engage with the report. Similarly, we have referred to self identity throughout the report rather than having a detailed discussion of the relationship between self-concept, personal identity and self identity. Moreover, we have only explored the psychological conceptualisations of all the motivations. This final report should, then, be seen as informed by psychological understandings, rather than strictly conforming with academic concepts and terms.

Timing of the fieldwork

To understand some of the results of this research, we should highlight the fact that most of the fieldwork took place during a period of rapid increases in fuel prices in 2008. Across the interview and focus group sample, it was apparent that many participants had begun to re-evaluate those behaviours which increased energy consumption primarily because of the rise in costs. Hence, the findings should be understood within the context of widespread and rapid behaviour change motivated by non-environmental factors.

Structure of the report

The report has been structured to place the emphasis on the specific findings for each 'motivation'. Short summaries of the main theories for each of the motivations have been included in the theory section to ensure that the empirical findings can be understood by the casual reader. We have included additional referencing and theories within the main text of the report where necessary. However we have tried to keep this to a minimum.

2 METHODOLOGY

Methodological approach

A multi-technique approach was employed to provide a robust methodological process with which to research the key motivations under consideration:

- 1) Desk review of the pro-environmental motivations literature and segmentation research to date;
- 2) Development of a research framework and empirical methodology in light of the findings from the desk review;
- 3) In depth interviews to provide a contextualised understanding of the role of motivations in relation to pro-environmental behaviours;
- 4) Focus groups to test deliberately the relationship between the identified motivators and pro-environmental behaviour by segment.

The results of stages 1 and 2 were detailed at length in the *Interim Report* and will not be reproduced here. The main elements of the empirical methodology were 7 interviews per segment, focusing on the individual's lifestyle and values, and the 10 focus groups. The interviews were the primary methodology utilised to understand the role of self-identity and personal norms by segment. The focus groups were held subsequent to the analysis of the interviews, and were designed to test whether hypotheses arising from the interviews could be substantiated at a group level. The focus groups proved to be the more successful method for understanding the role of social norms, although a combination of the two methods appeared to be essential to facilitate a more complete understanding of the segments.

The Study Sample

A summary table of the sample is given below; in total 110 respondents were interviewed.

	Depth Interviews (30 th May - 27 th June)	Focus Groups (19 th - 26 th July)
Positive Greens; Waste Watchers; Concerned Consumers; Sideline Supporters; Cautious Participants	<i>5 interviews in each of the following locations:</i> Inner and Outer London; Suburban Surrey; Rural Staffordshire; Leeds; Brighton; Gloucester	<i>5 groups in each of the following locations</i> London; Leeds
Total	35 depths	10 groups

Table 1: recruitment schedule

Recruitment

At the time of recruitment for this project, Defra was piloting different methods of recruitment for the segments to explore their effectiveness. Two new recruitment methods were, therefore, designed for this study which adapted existing methods utilised by previous qualitative studies for Defra.

For the interviews, a block method utilising 14 environmental values and attitudes questions to assess segment membership was used. Those belonging to the two segments with the least openness to pro-environmental behaviours were screened out. This methodology was further refined for the focus group recruitment. A combined block method utilised the same questions but reduced the need for the recruiter to interpret the results.

Evaluation of the recruitment suggests that there were some issues with the process. Deep analysis of the Brighton and Staffordshire interviews suggests that some of the interviewees had been recruited through friends and not from members of the general public. This has been helpful in understanding the role of social groups and norms, and therefore we have used the interviews where we believe they would be useful. However, it raises questions about the accuracy of the segmentation allocation as it was applied to these interviewees.

We found that when using the segmentation methodology that it was not always clear the individual belonged to the segment to which they had been recruited. Because segments share certain characteristics, it appeared that several of the interviewees could belong to

more than one segment and some did not immediately seem to fit in any particular segment. We have tried to gain a sense of similarities through analysis of the interviews in line with the focus groups. At the same time, the interviews provided most of the insights into how the 'motivations' operated in practice. Because there is a level of uncertainty about specific segments for some of the interviewees, we have opted not to label interviewee quotes by segment.

The focus groups appeared to be more in line with particular segments. The exception to this was the Leeds Concerned Consumer group, which showed little uniformity or consistency with either the London Concerned Consumer group or the findings from the interviews. Additionally we felt there was more uniformity amongst the younger members of the Sidelines Supporters than the groups as a whole, which may be something to explore in further research. The focus group quotes are identified by segment.

Interviews

Seven depth interviews were conducted with each of the five segments; one interview per segment in each of the seven different locations. The locations were selected to ensure we had a spread of interviewees from across the country, representing urban, suburban and rural lifestyles. The interviews were approximately 1.5 hours long covering the interviewee's lifestyle, roles, routines and aspirations; their reaction to seven of the headline pro-environmental behaviours; and their attitudes towards environmental action and the social antitheses of these attitudes. The interview schedule was developed to test and extend our understanding of the motivations based on theory, the quantitative findings and the type of findings identified in previous Defra projects (full details of these are included in the *Interim Report*).

A full interview schedule is attached as Appendix A. The interview schedule was designed to ensure a natural flow to the conversation across three distinct stages:

- How the interviewee saw themselves and their lifestyle, the importance of different roles and activities, and their main social networks;
- The meaning of the seven pro-environmental behaviours to the interviewee and the influence of the key motivations within the decision making process;
- The interviewee's environmental attitudes and how they saw themselves in relation to the environment.

The seven pro-environmental behaviours tested within the interviews were:

- Better energy management and usage (heating and lighting)
- Install insulation
- Use a more energy efficient vehicle
- Find alternatives to using the car
- Eat more food locally grown and in season
- Buy more certified/assured fish
- Re-use or buy more second hand goods

Focus Groups

Two focus groups were held per segment; one in London and one in Leeds. The focus groups were two hours in length and had been designed around a series of tasks to stimulate discussion about the phenomena being investigated. Rather than a more flexible exploratory discussion, the groups were used to test our findings from the quantitative analysis and interviews, and extend our understanding of the motivations in line with theory where necessary. A detailed schedule for the focus group is attached as Appendix B.

Unlike the interviews, the focus groups were designed around discussions about environmental attitudes and pro-environmental behaviours. Environmental concepts, such as climate change and carbon footprints were introduced to the participants during the session. Rather than studying the seven headline pro-environmental behaviours, the groups were given the opportunity to introduce their own understanding of environmental actions. As a result, the meaning of 'pro-environmental behaviours' and the meaning of 'behaviours which are pro-environmental' have been explored in some detail across both the focus groups and depth interviews.

The differences between the segments in their answers to the tasks were subtle, and frequently answers could only be understood by comparing them with responses from the other segments. However, the methodology was successful in opening up discussions about complex phenomena, such as the effect of social norms, without the participants being aware that they were being asked to discuss these motivators. This made for a more candid analysis of which groups could be influenced both positively and negatively by social norms. Furthermore, the groups complement the interview findings about environmentally active social networks for the different segments, overall providing a robust analysis of the role of social norms and influence by segment.

Analysis

Both the interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed. Analysis of the interviews employed a variety of techniques including coding, mapping of the outcomes of the behaviour questions, and some discourse analysis.

Across the quantitative analysis, interviews and groups the same motivations have been tested and analysed. Within both the interviews and groups, several questions and tasks have repeatedly tried to prompt a discussion of the complex social phenomenon under examination. No single aspect of the methodology has been sufficient to provide an understanding of both the 'which' and the 'why' of specific motivations in relation to different types and segments of individuals. Whilst we shall illustrate our findings with individual quotes taken from the interviews and focus groups, the findings are also as a result of layers of interpretation.

Throughout the report changes have been made to names and details contained within quotes where these could compromise the anonymity of the participants. All names are pseudonyms.

3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

There is a considerable amount of research that attempts to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between identity, social interaction and behaviour. It is clear that how we see ourselves, and how we relate to other people, exerts a significant influence on our attitudes, beliefs and values, and ultimately defines the way we choose to lead our lives. Clearly, this has implications for how we perceive pro-environmental behaviours, and the extent to which we are prepared to adopt them. The purpose of this section is to highlight the key findings of this work, and to provide some kind of theoretical context for the interpretation of our research findings later in the report. The section is split into four parts covering each of the key motivations that this research programme was exploring: identity, social norms, guilt and agency.

Identity

The theories of identity explore the nature of who we are and explain how the relationship between individuals and their social and physical surroundings influences our perceptions of who we would like to be and how we would like to be regarded by others. Identity is, therefore, subject to constant re-assessment and re-negotiation as we experience changes in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, and strive to consolidate or improve our feelings of self worth. This is particularly relevant because it can provide some insight into how we behave now, and what might influence us to behave differently in the future.

At the core of this on-going process of accommodation, assimilation and evaluation is the view that self-identity is primarily motivated by the desire to achieve self-esteem, authenticity, efficacy and continuity (Breakwell, 1986, 1993), and that we constantly prioritise our actions based on how we perceive the relative worth of each element that makes up our identity.

In this context, identity process theory suggests that these elements can be interpreted as:

- How we seek to protect and enhance our self-esteem through actions that support a positive self-evaluation.
- How we try to establish and maintain a sense of difference from other people we know or come into contact with.

- How we aspire to achieve feelings of control and competency.
- And how we look for continuity and a degree of consistency between our experiences of the past and present, and our aspirations and expectations in the future.

Identity can, therefore, act as a strong motivator for behaviour change particularly when there is a perceived threat to self-esteem, authenticity, self-efficacy or continuity. This threat can originate from our changing perceptions of ourselves, of other people or of the world around us.

By the same token, how we assess the relative worth or meaning of these different elements within our identity may lead to very different reactions. For example, continuing to fly to overseas holiday destinations or driving a large, prestigious car may be regarded at any one point in time as being more or less desirable than holidaying in the UK or owning a smaller, more fuel efficient vehicle.

From this theoretical perspective, we can begin to understand the role that self-identity plays in influencing the decision to adopt pro-environmental behaviours, and the relative value that is attached to these actions.

The construction and re-negotiation of identity does not, however, operate in a vacuum. Identity theory suggests that the roles we play in life operate at the core of our identity. Each role is associated with different meanings and expectations, and is defined by different rules and norms. So, by taking on the roles of husband, father, work manager, charity worker, team mate, I assume multiple identities, each of which is constantly being shaped by my interactions with other people in each group. Furthermore, we continually re-assess the relative importance of each role which then defines the extent to which one identity takes precedence over another (Hogg, Terry & White, 1995; Stryker, 1980).

How we manage our different role identities has a direct influence on how motivated we are to act in a pro-environmental way. If I consider myself to be a 'good parent who wants to protect the planet for my children' then I am more likely to recycle more, drive less and conserve energy because I believe it is fundamental to my role almost irrespective of whether or not I think it will make any difference. On the other hand, if I occupy a role that is more about creating or maintaining a comfortable, hedonistic lifestyle then I am far less likely to be motivated to act in a pro-environmental way.

Self-identity is also influenced through social interaction whereby individuals classify themselves and other people depending upon membership of different social groups which could be defined by gender, family circumstances, occupation, leisure interests, religious beliefs and so on (Tajfel & Turner, 1978). Our identities are shaped by the similarities we share with other members of each social group we belong to and the differences we perceive with those people we know who belong to other social groups.

Social identity can have a significant influence on whether or not we decide to behave in a pro-environmental way. If pro-environmental behaviour is a social norm for one of the groups that I belong to, then it is likely that this will have some influence on my choice of behaviour if I wish to conform with the rest of the group. On the other hand, if a group that I'm not part of makes a virtue of ignoring the need to act in a pro-environmental way, then I may wish to disassociate myself from that group by adopting alternative behaviours. Of course, this can work in reverse if the over-riding behavioural norm of my social group is to drive large cars, take foreign holidays and buy the latest electronic appliances.

It is also worth considering the effect of other groups on the identity and behaviour of the individual. Any attempt to use the behaviour of one group as an example of how another (un-related) group should behave can be perceived as a threat to the social identity of the group, and the individuals within it, and this can force the members of the group to become intransigent or even to adopt a more radical stance in order to maintain their group differentiation. Telling one group, for example, that it is a good idea to start buying second-hand clothes because another group is already successfully doing it is no guarantee that they will accept this behaviour change. Furthermore, it may even push them into rejecting the concept of re-using or recycling old products altogether.

Social Norms

There is a close relationship between social identity and social norms. Social norms can be defined as shared beliefs about how we ought to act that are enforced through the use of rewards or sanctions. Social norms are closely linked with personal norms where personal norms can be viewed as internalised social norms that create standards for what is morally the right thing to do (Thøgersen, 2007).

The development of a social identity is influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by the social network of the individual, the characteristics of the social groups that make up this social network, and the role of the individual within each group. One simple criteria for defining

when a behaviour becomes a social norm is 'when a sufficiently high proportion of the population knows the rule and the situations within which the rule applies' (Bicchieri, 2006). According to Cialdini's social norm theory (1991), individuals will feel the need to conform to a social norm when they believe that there is a sufficient number of others conforming to the rule (descriptive norm) and/or it is the socially acceptable thing to do (injunctive norm). And for those individuals who fail to conform to the rule, behaviour change might be encouraged by introducing social or financial sanctions.

Research has shown that the behaviours that most people approve of tend to be the behaviours that most people do (Bicchieri, 2006). So, most people approve of recycling because they believe that the majority of the population is already involved in recycling of one kind or another.

Experiments conducted by Schultz also showed that both descriptive and injunctive norms influence people's behaviour (2007). Individuals are motivated to conform with the way other people behave and the way other people expect them to behave.

This does, however, assume that social norms operate across the entire social system. In reality, social norms can also be specific to one or more groups. For example, composting organic waste is not a social norm across the entire population but it could well be amongst a group of keen gardeners. So, the social norm of a gardening group could be more influential on changing the behaviour of some individuals within that group than waiting for society as a whole to adopt the behaviour. Conversely, social groups who have little or no interest in adopting pro-environmental behaviour might only be encouraged to change their behaviour if they are encouraged or forced to conform to a wider social norm that is pro-environmental.

If individuals cannot form a judgement about whether or not people are undertaking a particular pro-environmental behaviour, then they are less likely to feel that other people will expect them to behave in the same way. Feeling the need to conform is even less likely if this behaviour is also against the individual's self-interest or personal values (Rimal et al, 2005). Nonetheless, there is evidence to suggest that media coverage for pro-environmental behaviour, public information campaigns, commercial marketing and lobbying programmes can have the effect of creating an injunctive norm even if a descriptive norm does not actually exist (Jackson, 2005a; Thøgersen, 2007a).

The debate about the role of a social norm in influencing behaviour tends to ignore the moral dimension in the decision making process. Schwartz's Norm Activation theory attempts,

therefore, to provide a moral framework for understanding pro-social, altruistic behaviour (Schwartz, 1977). The theory puts forward the idea that pro-social behaviour is determined by personal norms that are driven by feelings of a strong moral obligation to act in a particular way. In this context, personal norms are determined by our awareness of the consequences of our actions and an acceptance that we have a personal responsibility for these consequences. In the case of pro-environmental behaviour, if I am aware of the negative consequences of not insulating my house, and accept a personal responsibility for the increased amount of carbon dioxide emissions that this entails, then I am more likely to take steps to rectify the situation. Conversely, if I am unaware of the negative consequences of not having insulation and deny any personal responsibility, then I am unlikely to feel the need to make any changes to my behaviour.

It is worth pointing out that though Schwartz attempts to create a direct link between personal norms and behaviour, in reality other external factors such as knowledge, time, cost, resources and so on will also have some influence on whether or not someone is willing and able to undertake a particular action. I may believe insulating my house is the right thing to do but if I don't think I can afford to do it, then it probably won't happen.

Guilt

Guilt is generally understood to be one of the emotions felt in response to the violation of personal norms. The feeling of guilt can lead to a negative assessment of the self and a reduction in self-esteem both of which can act to motivate people to change their behaviour.

There is clear evidence that guilt and identity are closely linked. Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory suggests that we have several different selves: an 'actual' self, an 'ideal' self and an 'ought' self. Conceptions of these selves are then divided between how I think of myself and how I think other people see me. Any discrepancies between these selves can then lead to different kinds of emotions. Guilt might arise because of the difference between who I think I am (a lazy, selfish, middle manager) and who I think I ought to be (a dynamic, charitable entrepreneur). And the more I feel guilt about these discrepancies, the more likely I am to try to change to behaving like the person I want to be. Shame, on the other hand, is a response to a discrepancy between how I see myself and how I would like others to see me. So, to avoid feelings of shame, I might be motivated to do more so that I can live up to the expectations of others.

Guilt and shame can, therefore, be seen as related emotions although they act as two different types of motivation. Guilt is an 'approach motivation' which will encourage the

individual to do something to alleviate the feeling while shame is an 'avoidance motivation' that might provoke the individual to hide.

The alleviation of guilt can, according to some researchers, lead to three different types of response: change behaviour, pay compensation or deny responsibility altogether. The nature of this relationship between guilt and behaviour is particularly relevant in exploring what might motivate people to act in a pro-environmental way.

Research has shown that some people alleviate guilt by carrying out a different behaviour. In other words, they will trade between behaviours that make them feel guilty and actions that help them feel good about themselves (Collingwood, 2007; Bedford, 1999). This approach will often have fewer negative consequences for the individual and is relatively easy to accomplish. For example, I will continue to take holidays abroad travelling by plane but will ease my guilt by buying into a carbon off-setting programme run by the airline. Alternatively, I will drive a large, high emissions sports car because it is a conspicuous status symbol but will reduce my energy consumption at home in an attempt to compensate. A similar but distinct reaction to feelings of guilt might be described as the 'limited action' response. So, I've switched to low-energy light bulbs but I won't make the effort to turn unwanted lights off. In other words, 'I'll do my bit' but 'I'll only do so much'.

Of course, these types of response assume that people are clear about how they should ideally behave but also in what way they have failed to meet their own and other people's expectations. Quite often the difference between 'ideal' and 'ought' is ambiguous, particularly if the individual is not sure what the social norm is in the first place. Under these circumstances, individuals utilise a defence mechanism of self-serving denial, shifting their own obligations away from themselves. According to Lindenberg and Steg (2007), this can involve a series of different mechanisms:

- I deny the seriousness of the problem by ignoring, minimising or distorting the impacts.
- I project my contribution as being meaningless compared to some other, more significant entity.
- I deny my personal ability to deal with the problem thereby undermining my perceived behavioural control.
- I deny my responsibility for solving the problem altogether.

Agency

Agency describes an individual's willingness to act based on their belief in their ability to undertake and complete the action, and deliver the desired outcomes. Amongst the various

views and interpretations of human agency, two in particular are worth including in this section. The first is Albert Bandura's concept of self-efficacy which, according to his concept of the "self-system", lies at the centre of the individual's attitudes, abilities and cognitive skills (Bandura, 1977). Secondly there is perceived behavioural control, which was added to Fishbein and Ajzen's (1980) theory of reasoned action in an attempt to deal with situations in which people lacked the necessary resources or degree of control to carry out their preferred behaviour.

Self-efficacy refers to the conviction that people can successfully execute a particular behaviour required to produce certain outcomes (Bandura, 1977). In essence, this is an internalised function that is determined by goals, aspirations, expectations, emotions and perceptions all of which serve to encourage or deter us from carrying out specific actions. So, if I genuinely believe that reducing my energy consumption at home will make a difference, then I am more likely to change my behaviour. Conversely, if I believe that whatever I do will make little or no difference given the growth in carbon dioxide emissions in China, India and other developing countries, then I may decide not to bother.

The second mechanism is perceived behaviour control. This refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing a particular behaviour and accounts for the external factors, most of which are beyond the individual's control, that will affect his or her ability to carry out a given task (Ajzen, 2002). For example, I may want to find ways of using my car less but then discover that local bus and rail services don't offer me a suitable alternative, it's too far to cycle, and I don't know anyone who is able or willing to car share.

In assessing how agency relates to people's intention to undertake pro-environmental behaviour, it is worth noting that self-identity and attitude still play a critical role in the decision making process. Studies that have looked at recycling behaviour, for example, have shown that people who consider themselves to be committed recyclers are less likely to view a lack of local recycling facilities or other barriers to be sufficient reason for not recycling. In contrast, non-recyclers have been encouraged to recycle more when it has been made more convenient for them. Nonetheless, increasing participation simply by making it easier is ultimately limited by personal and social resistance to engaging in recycling behaviour in the first place (Nigbur et al, 2004). In other words, investing in resources that will make pro-environmental behaviour easier to undertake will have some effect but does not guarantee long-term behaviour change once those resources are no longer available.

Summary

We have used this chapter to provide a brief theoretical overview of identity, norms, agency and guilt. We will refer to these terms and their theoretical underpinning throughout the empirical chapters.

4 SELF IDENTITY

Introduction

We were asked to explore how individuals perceived their self-identities and how those identities motivate or hinder pro-environmental behaviour. It is worth noting here that we only worked with those segments containing people who had some pro-environmental values or an openness to pro-environmental behaviours.

In reality it is impossible to separate self-identity from the other motivations being explored within this report. Self and society are in dynamic tension, with what provides self-esteem largely being related to what provides social status and approval, particular in relation to consumer goods (Leary, 2007). Guilt operates through the diminishment of self-esteem. Our need to feel competent is central to both agency and identity. Thus, whilst we have primarily focused on individual motivations in each section, we have tried not to enforce false dichotomies, instead writing about what makes most sense under each 'motivation'. Additionally we have included 'case studies' throughout the report to illustrate the motivations more holistically.

Following Breakwell's (1986) self-identity theory we were interested in what individuals found important and gave them a sense of authenticity in their actions; what gave them a sense of agency or competency; what gave them self-esteem; and what provided them with a sense of consistency. We pursued this through questions and probes about how the individual saw themselves, how they would define themselves, what was important to them, what they would not want from life, and the meaning of specific pro-environmental behaviours for themselves and environmental actions more generally.

From the interviews several factors underpinned the individual's sense of self in relation to the environment and self-esteem more generally. Of these, we have found four to be key to our understanding of the different groups under study and their uptake of pro-environmental behaviours:

1. The role of work, consumption and materialism;
2. The primacy of family;
3. The role of personal values and moral self-identities;
4. The need for a positive self-image as a 'good' person.

We will begin this chapter by outlining these factors, before examining how these are resolved in different groups of individuals.

Sources of self-identity

Whilst this is a study of pro-environmental behaviours, the likelihood of the uptake of those behaviours cannot be understood outside of the social and psychological factors which underpin self-identity. We do not have the space for a deep analysis of these here, and neither do we have the levels of findings which would provide us with the full set of these sources of self-identity; in particular, the roles of religion, generation and life-stage appeared important for some individuals. Here we have chosen four key sources of self-esteem and authenticity to highlight. These were identified from the narratives of the interviewees, but touch upon phenomena which have been written about by other theorists of sustainable consumption, such as the relationship between work and consumption, the tensions of materialism, and the relationship between being a 'good' person and social norms (Ropke, 1999; Sanne, 2005; Soper, 2007; Nyborg et al, 2006). These are not mutually exclusive and there are clear crossovers between the different factors. Whilst we cannot do these themes justice in this report, we feel some basic explanation of their role in relation to self-identity and pro-environmental behaviour is essential to this report.

1. Consumption, work and materialism

The worlds of work and consumption are central to our society. Aspirations, expectations, status and self-esteem are largely created within and fulfilled through the work-consume dynamic (Ropke, 1999; Sanne, 2005). For most of our sample, a good home, holidays and improving quality of life were central to what they felt was important to them, alongside giving their family security. The work of either the individual or their partner provided the means through which this could be achieved and the family could feel proud of themselves.

We will begin our analysis of the importance of this dynamic starting with the role of work. There were significant differences in attitudes towards work across the sample. Some had given up stressful jobs to do something they found less challenging or more rewarding, others so they could look after their children. However, most were either proud of what they had achieved or were working to achieve more.

For some interviewees who felt they were successful in their careers, there was undoubtedly a strong reward in terms of self-esteem and being a competent person. This was often about feeling their hard work had achieved its end both personally and in being able to provide for their family:

Michael: *I get great satisfaction in working that hard and achieving that status in my career, which gave me the financial well being if you like to give my children the best.*

Sarah: *And I think I've done a good job with my children, I think they are quite happy and doing well at school and I think that is quite an achievement. I've always done well in my jobs and things, I've always been quite happy that I've worked my hardest and to my full potential. I've been quite proud of myself generally. I haven't done anything that I haven't done well.*

A few of our sample had down graded their job, given it up temporarily or retired. Whilst some saw this as a positive change in their life, this was balanced against finding methods of maintaining a reasonable standard of living and self-esteem on low incomes. One example of this is how Alan talked about how he had to find new ways to negotiate his necessary consumption and his self-esteem having given up his job to look after his children.

Alan: *No, I don't see myself as out of work, I think there's a certain, it's weird because you see it in career mums that have stopped a career to have children as well. There's certainly, definitely a feeling of less self worth because you're not earning the money, but you have to get over that.*

As salaried work is a principal source of validation within our society, it is clear that doing well in one's job or earning lots of money becomes a site for self-fulfilment. Across the sample people were taking courses to improve their job opportunities and working long hours to afford a better standard of living. Many of the sample had worked hard to improve their status in life, moving to better neighbourhoods, buying better houses, affording the luxuries that their parents and cohorts could not afford. Whilst some interviewees said they were content with what they had, in general a picture of self-improvement emerges as central projects in self identity:

John: *Longer term we look forward to moving to a bigger house with a bigger garden. Just to get that bit further up the ladder really.*

Rarely within the sample did it appear that this was as simple as an unthinking process of aspiration and accumulation, although some participants appeared to be less able to establish a sense of self-esteem outside of aspirational consumption. One example of this is an interviewee who acknowledges his own feelings of being locked-in to a work-consume

system through social expectations (see Brad case study for more details), and is honest about the centrality of material consumption to his ambitions and self-identity:

Brad: I don't know. Well cars, houses, a nice big car and a nice big house would be me, yes. Luxury, I would like to have a nice big house and a nice big car. I don't really know, I am quite a straightforward kind of person, just cars and houses are me, that type of thing. That would be it, I don't really know.

For others in the sample a more subtle relationship between the roles of work and consumption appeared to be operating. Firstly, there was a sense that even for those who enjoyed work, it was not sufficient for their happiness. The most common responses to a question about what they looked forward to were the weekend or holidays, time which those working could spend with their families and those who cared for their children could spend with their partner. Secondly, consumption as the 'reward for hard work' as well as the reason for hard work was mentioned by several of the respondents:

Michael: I like nice things. That's probably the reward for working hard. So yes, I like nice things.

M: I think everyone should be responsible for themselves. I am not saying don't go on holiday; we work hard, we should be able to enjoy ourselves. (Cautious Participants, London focus group)

This notion of the 'rewards for hard work' sat alongside ideas about 'luxury' as particular forms of consumption which were essential to self-esteem and making life meaningful. They also validated the self personally and socially as a successful person, possibly within a moral understanding that success and hard work were essential features of pride and social status. Thus holidays, cars (for men) and buying new rather than second hand goods became caught up in discourses about the meaning of work in the face of particular pro-environmental behaviours:

Case study - Brad

Brad is in his 20s. He is open to environmental issues, but does not show strong environmental values or practice pro-environmental behaviours. He works in a skilled manual profession. He is a hard worker, often working weekends so that he can earn enough to live his preferred lifestyle. He owns his own home, but would like to move to a better area. He says he finds social image and possessions important.

Well car, houses, a nice big car and a nice big house would be me, yes. Luxury, I would like to have a nice big house and a nice big car. I don't really know, I am quite a straightforward kind of person, just cars and houses are me, that type of thing.

He has in the past got himself into some difficulties trying to make money and recognises it is a driving motivation for him. However, despite stating that money and luxury were the most important things for him, he suggests this is a trap created by social expectations and the British culture rather than his real aspirations. Indeed when asked about his feared lifestyle he says it is living where he does.

It is just terrible here now with everything that is going on. I know it is all exaggerated by the papers and stuff, but it doesn't seem to be going in a very nice way. I have friends who live abroad and when we hear about their way of life it seems to be a lot slower than ours, people have got more time for each other. I think a lot of the time here we are all too stressed and chasing money, chasing dreams or whatever. I just don't really like it here.

Brad has grown up in the local area and still has a set of close friends living nearby. He says his friends would be interested in seasonal food because they are concerned to eat good food and are influenced by the television chefs. He has also noticed that they all recycle, although he no longer does as he does not have a recycling bin. However, Brad suggests his friends would expect him to have a status car rather than an energy efficient one and argues that most of the pro-environmental behaviours shown are not normal.

I am going on people I know and the kind of people I know don't care as far as I know.

In terms of his own environmental actions, Brad describes himself as 'a lazy beginner'. He admits he would be unwilling to do more if it was not made easy for him.

Yes, I feel like I do stuff but I could probably do more. A lot of the time it is a change of lifestyle and do I really want to change my lifestyle? No, not really. I am quite happy with what I do.

He is aware of environmental issues, particularly climate change, from the television. However, he is not sure how far he can believe what he hears. He says it is not something he worries about much, as it is less important to most people than worrying about your next pay packet. Mostly, he says, it is not something he thinks about.

It is only when I am talking about it that I think about it. The car, yes sometimes I do feel guilty about using it. I mean I do use it for stupid journeys and things. But it is not in the forefront of my thoughts.

David: *I spend my life earning and working, going to work, why should I buy someone else's second hand items? ... If I can afford it why should I buy second hand? I have spent ages earning the money, saving the money, I should buy what I want and what I feel I deserve.*

In the absence of equally rewarding behaviours, identities or alternative means to develop social status, particularly for those who are trying to improve their quality of life, losing the very goods which provide for a hard won sense of self-esteem and reward offers huge challenges to their sense of self and purpose in life. Moreover, it is clear that the interviewees found having a nice home, car, holiday and new goods to be genuinely pleasurable and rewarding. In this they cannot be dismissed as simply a feature of 'lock-in'.

Of course, not all of the members of the sample appeared to find the accumulation of consumer goods to be as rewarding. Indeed, several of the interviewees were highly critical of consumer society and did not view high levels of consumption as an authentic source of self-validation:

Victoria: *I definitely wouldn't want to be more concerned about [consumer] items than, you know, quality times spent with friends and family.*

Karry: *I just don't personally get the kind of culture of modern [society]. Obviously I am not very minimalist, but the idea of having everything new and everything has to be disposable - it frightens me. The more packaging there is, the harder it is to repair a white good, the more emphasis there is on throwing things away, the more frightened I get. And it is a feeling of fear actually, as well as a feeling of anger and a sense of being duped, because today's trend is tomorrow's embarrassment.*

Within the sample, several interviewees had established some sense of authentic lifestyle which they felt allowed them to be true to their less consumerist instincts. In particular a few tried to buy as much as they could second hand as a reaction against wasteful, unthinking consumption and derived high levels of self-esteem from being true to their values. However, even for those critiquing material possessions other high impact behaviours could continue to be central to their sense of self. One example of this is a participant who had opted against a new kitchen in favour of taking her family on holiday abroad. Whilst she was willing to change a variety of behaviours in response to her environmental concerns, flying abroad on holiday remained central to who she felt she was and what she found important.

As other researchers have suggested (e.g. Soper, 2007), there is extensive criticism of consumerism and the type of environment and society consumerism has brought. Interviewees and focus groups introduced concerns about how we had become hooked into high levels of wasteful consumption and how they recognised this had to change. Some interviewees talked about society becoming spoilt and there was some obvious discomfort about the disparity between their consumerist lifestyles and other people's living conditions (see the chapter on guilt for more detail). Several interviewees overtly positioned themselves against materialism. However, most of those who did view themselves as unmaterialistic clearly still enjoyed materialistic lifestyles.

An example of this is an interviewee who suggests her feared identity would be to be someone caught up in materialism and conspicuous consumption, even though she owned multiple high powered cars and a holiday home abroad. She does undertake a lot of small pro-environmental behaviours and anticipates getting a more eco-friendly car in the future. It is important to her to establish herself as a thoughtful consumer, not someone unthinkingly locked-in to a pattern of consumption:

Sally: I wouldn't want to be image obsessed. There's a tendency, lots of people around here are actually, I mean, they are, we're not short of money but there's a lot of very pretentious, very label conscious, got to have everything just right people and I would not want to be known as one of those.

Ger and Belk (1993) found that across a range of societies people felt materialism was distasteful, yet still found their own materialism acceptable. This was not quite true of all our sample, with a limited number of people criticising their own lack of control over their level of consumption. The following quote gives an example of this:

Victoria: I get so angry, annoyed at the amount of electric goods we have. I really get annoyed with myself. All my children have got, you know, loads of ipods and phones.

However, we did find that several of our interviewees were looking to position themselves away from 'selfish materialism'. For them, undertaking some pro-environmental behaviours helped to establish themselves as caring, thoughtful people.

Obviously whilst work and consumption are central sources of self-esteem, we do not want to over-emphasise their importance. Since interviewees tended to look forward to the

weekends and free time, unsurprisingly there were many other areas of life which were mentioned as meaningful and important to a sense of self. These included sports and fitness, being community leaders, religion and being skilled at something such as gardening, DIY or art. Given the wide variety of activities talked about, we could not examine these deeply. However, there appeared to be opportunities to use these alternative forms of self-esteem to promote pro-environmental behaviour. For example, there was a general openness to cycling amongst those who found fitness important, and dog-walking, gardening or growing one's own vegetables appeared to have close links to the openness to pro-environmental behaviours for some interviewees.

To summarise this section, work and the associated abilities to buy meaningful goods or provide a good quality of life for self and family, is a primary source of self-esteem for many people. Those working on a project of self-improvement, including those who have a recognition of being locked-in to a work-consume cycle, need to have other meaningful sources of self-esteem in place if they are to engage in pro-environmental behaviours which reduce their enjoyment of 'luxuries' and 'the rewards for hard work'. There is a distaste for materialism among some of the interviewees. This provides an opportunity for pro-environmental behaviour change as individuals are keen to position themselves against selfish consumption.

2. The primacy of family

Whilst we anticipated an important role for family in the discourses about what is important to the self, we were still surprised by just how central the family was to nearly all the interviewees. Most people self-identified themselves in relation to family, especially if they were parents, describing their parent role on our pro-formas and identifying family as the most important thing to them. Additionally, several interviewees described themselves as 'family-orientated' people.

We have not made a detailed study of the role family plays in self and pro-environmental behaviour. However, the centrality of family is important for a variety of reasons. Many of the interviewees situated their perceived primary roles as parents, children and siblings. Thus many of their behaviours are motivated not by selfish or self orientated consumption, but by caring or other orientated consumption. In particular, narratives of female car use are often about transporting children. The following quote demonstrates this split between selfish and caring behaviours.

Victoria: *Once I have dropped the children off to school I really feel guilty about being the only person in this big car, you know, to finish my journey.*

As we have seen above, parents look to provide their children with a good quality of life and some feel that to disconnect from certain standards of living would be to 'let their children down'. This offers both opportunities and issues for the pro-environmental behaviours we studied. For example, discourses about switching off appliances and lights were caught up in meanings around family and parenting roles, strengthening the value of this pro-environmental behaviour. However, school selection processes also left some parents driving their children both to school and to see their friends if the school was in a locality not easily accessible by other means.

Family also appears in many of the narratives as a key source of influence for pro-environmental behaviour. This is both specific in terms of providing the pressure to change behaviours (this will be discussed further in the 'Changing Social Norms' chapter) and through a belief that it is essential to undertake some pro-environmental behaviours to reduce either the risk to their children or the future negative legacy for their children:

Stuart: *It is a legacy we are going to leave our children.*

Jo: *Yes, yes because then I feel like I'm doing my little bit at the end of the day we all have to live here don't we and we'll have grandchildren further on down the line and I'd like to think that further on that life's going to be better for them environmentally.*

Amy: *On a larger scale I worry, you know, what's going to happen when we're not around and what world they are going to live in, so we try and do our little bit for sort of later on.*

Thus family becomes a further source of negotiation for pro-environmental behaviours. Some parents suggested a need to feel they are providing a good quality of life for their children to feel good about themselves, which they balance with a concern about their future legacy for their children.

3. Moral values and selves

As we have already stated, the sample for this research was chosen from people who held some pro-environmental attitudes and values. However, there were substantial differences in the strength of these values and attitudes, and in how important they were to an individual's

sense of self. For those who closely identified themselves with their ethics and values, the need to act consistently and to be true to one's self seemed more central to their self-identity. Those who had weaker values, but some sense of personal responsibility for environmental action still derived some positive sense of self from feeling they were doing their bit. Others appeared to have pro-environmental attitudes, but to be acting out of a sense of obligation which ultimately left them without any self-rewards.

Those who had intentionally made the most changes to their behaviours and lifestyles tended to be those with strong values, and a close identification with those values. These were not always overtly pro-environmental, and could instead be anti-consumerist, thrifty and frugal, waste related or part of a more holistic practice of 'thoughtful' or 'conscientious' consumerism. Some examples of different self identifications which drive more pro-environmental behaviours include:

- Nigel described himself as 'nature boy' and felt we had failed to be good guardians of the environment. He had moved from a city to the country to live more self-sufficiently, including having his own livestock, fishing and shooting game. He was energy conscious and keen to source sustainable fish as part of his strong identification with the 'River Cottage' lifestyle.
- Karry, who identifies herself in opposition to materialism and has consciously tried to move away from the pressures towards over-consumption. For further details see the Karry case study.
- David, who is highly self-identified with a dislike of waste, in terms of financial frugality rather than environmental values.
- Paula, who views herself as an idealist and works hard to live in the most conscientious or ethical way she can.

We shall explore David and Paula's stories further to emphasise the difference between financially frugal and environmentally driven self-identities. David avoids waste so that he can reinvest the money saved in more meaningful goods and services, such as his financial security or a larger house. He is very clear about how he sees himself in relation to frugal practices:

David: *I don't like waste. I like to think I am not a tree hugger type, I am not like that. It's more I don't like waste. I don't like other people wasting. I am not saying I look down on people that waste, I just can't see the point. Like people turning the heating up and then opening the window when it gets stuffy. I just get annoyed about people's stupidity and negativity. I just don't see why waste something.*

His frugal values in relation to energy use, water use and unnecessary consumption provide him with a sense of control, and longer term strategic access to status goods which he finds personally rewarding. Where other people may view these waste control behaviours to be antithetical to enjoying the prosperity and materiality of the current era, waste minimising behaviours allowed those with strong waste values to derive a positive or more authentic sense of self or personal enjoyment from their behaviours:

F: *I don't care about my carbon footprint as much as throwing things away. Because those are the things that make me happy. I don't like to be wasteful so it makes me happy.* (Waste Watchers, London focus group)

Kevin: *I don't get a kick out of material things. I've more or less got the same furniture I bought 20 years ago, but it really isn't important to me. No, I really think people have been overconsuming. ... You know I don't like huge bills, you know, so I have relatively small bills for heating and lighting. I don't have a lot of lights on. I mean if I am down here I switch the lights off upstairs. And it is partly for conservation reasons, but also for reasons of frugality.*

There was a large spread in the motivations of the waste and frugality driven individuals. Some were fairly affluent, yet acted voluntarily out of strong personal values. Others appeared to use anti-waste behaviours as a pragmatic control strategy in response to constrained finances. Some frugal individuals were cynical of materialism and consumerism, often bringing together financial and environmental concerns. However, others appeared to be acting out of internalised norms or habits from their childhood; often not seeing the point of wasteful behaviours nor identifying with the current norms of comfort or convenience (see Shove, 2003 for a more detailed discussion of the norms of comfort and convenience in social practices).

Case Study - David

David is married with a young family. He does not have strong environmental values, but undertakes a range of pro-environmental behaviours out of a frugally driven hatred of waste. He finds it important to be doing well enough to have a secure income and a good home. He is proud of being financially secure, reliable and responsible. Indeed, his 'feared identity' is not having any security or responsibilities.

I wouldn't want to be in that position of being insecure, and having been 40 and no mortgage and no real sort of heavy commitment [...] I wouldn't want to be a person that hasn't any stability. I suppose financial instability [is the one thing I would not want]. I could be single and have no problem with that, but not financial instability.

David does not see himself as being especially environmentally friendly, instead suggesting he is about 'average'. Indeed, his view of very environmentally proactive people is someone like 'Swampy', who he sees as having few responsibilities (something he deprecates). However, David is a careful consumer, describing himself as a bit tight. For example, he avoids buying products he views as unnecessary such as DVDs. He is not given to compulsive consumption and spends a lot of time researching products before buying them. This attitude towards consumption extends into pro-environmental behaviours through his unwillingness to waste energy and resources. This is based on deep seated values, which are central to his sense of self.

David's personal norms around consumption and waste, alongside his resistance to social pressures to consume the latest must have goods means he attracts some derision from his friends.

I used to get a lot of stick from my mates because I would [not] buy [expensive] jeans, but I look at them now and think 'well that's why I have a three bedroom house, that's why you are still living in a one bedroom flat'. You know people waste money by going out drinking, socialising. I would buy my own drinks, I don't get involved in rounds.

Yet, whilst he is willing to breach social norms (such as buying rounds) and group expectations about what he should spend on clothes, he is only happy to accept the stigma where his self identity and anti-waste values are more important than his social identity. At the same time as being frugal, David also wants to be seen as successful and able to afford whatever he wants. Because of this, he will reduce his consumption costs and resource use, but would be unwilling to buy second hand furniture or clothes since he feels this would put his desired social identity at risk.

It is image as well. I wouldn't want to be walking around in second hand clothes and people to know they were second hand clothes [...] I don't want to be walking around in a shirt that looks like a second hand one. I've got my own image with clothes. It's reputation I suppose.

We shall now look at those whose environmental values fitted with a strong identification with being conscientious or ethical. The best example of this is Paula. Paula was perhaps our most intentionally green interviewee. She described herself as an idealist at several points in the research and her values were central to her sense of self, from her job in a caring profession to the way she tried to live with as little negative impact on people, animals and the environment.

Paula: I am an idealist... I just want my family to be happy, for everyone around me to be happy.

Q: What are your priorities?

Paula: Family, happiness and health. I don't know, just bringing up the children and living life with sort of good morals and just about treating people how you want to be treated yourself. ... Trying to do things in the kindest possible way, if you know what I mean. Like with doing the chickens and wanting to do the pigs and eventually just trying to live a bit more organically.

Paula tried to buy as much as possible second hand. She talked about how this gave her a lot of satisfaction. Indeed, her move towards self-sufficiency appeared to provide her with an alternative sense of self-esteem. After moving from a wealthy neighbourhood where neither her income nor her values allowed her to 'keep up with the Jones', her life was more authentic and provided her with the moral status she sought.

More generally, for those closely identifying with pro-environmental values, acting on their environmental or ethical concerns offers a positive sense of self, through providing them with a sense of personal control in the face of global issues (we will say more about this in the section on self-efficacy in the Agency chapter). This is especially true of those who have begun to undertake some elements of self-sufficiency in their lives. Indeed, a move towards self-sufficiency appeared to offer people very high levels of satisfaction and enjoyment:

Victoria: Home grown strawberries, there's some satisfaction in it and I don't know it's just you get a feel good factor from it. There is something about it which is just self-satisfying as well you know. And again, it's good for the environment.

Moreover a move towards self-sufficiency appeared to offer some of our interviewees, particularly those who worked in skilled professions such as building, a project of improvement which was more ethical and less dependent upon systems with which they did not agree.

Many of the sample had pro-environmental values, particularly around climate change, but these were less intrinsic to a sense of self. One interviewee was beginning to undertake some small pro-environmental behaviours and felt it made him a better person. He talked about how there was something so inexorable about the image of melting icecaps that they could not be ignored. Yet at the same time, his identification with environmental issues was not central to his self-esteem even if his small actions made him feel he was doing his bit to help:

Benjamin: I would worry if [environmental concerns] dominated my waking thoughts because then they would be assuming in my mind an inappropriate priority really. I am not saying they don't matter, but you can't spend your whole life worrying. You have got to, most of it should be about reward and enjoyment for yourself and for others, and pleasure, and ultimately being as happy as you can be and fulfilled. And for me anyway, if they became my priority and governed my waking thoughts then I think I would become a bit mad. It is getting the balance right and striving for balance is a life long pursuit really isn't it?

Whilst acting on environmental and other values provided many of our respondents with some sense of self esteem or a 'good' feeling, there were others for whom their pro-environmental behaviours appeared to provide them with no personal rewards:

*M: I can't see why you keep talking about being a good person. It means nothing to me.
F: Yes, that's what I mean, for me I save energy, but I don't feel particularly good about doing it, I just do it, you know. I'd feel bad if I didn't do it, but mostly I don't feel anything, I just do it. (Concerned Consumers, Leeds focus group)*

This lack of self reward from undertaking pro-environmental behaviours was most likely to be mentioned by those who did little for the environment. Indeed, persuading people of the potential for self-rewards from pro-environmental behaviours may help embed more action:

F: The way they advertise [30^{litre} washing], it's like such a positive thing to be doing. It's almost like this day and age, if you're doing something positive for the environment it's something to be proud of. If they could get that message across to people that you know, you're doing the right thing. (Cautious Participants, London focus group)

4. Being a good person

Being a good person is closely related to the moral selves point above. However, here we wish to separate these concepts out because they provide a useful point of connection between self and society; and a tentative distinction between acting in relation to personal values and consistency of self as opposed to a more socially derived sense of duty and perception of being a responsible person. From the interviews we found some individuals seemed to be environmentally motivated out of the notion of 'being a good person'. We tested this further in the focus groups and found there appeared to be a link between personal responsibility and social expectations, which drove pro-environmental behaviour through this sense of being a good person. Nyborg et al (2006) suggest people are keen to maintain a positive image of themselves as a good or socially responsible person. Certainly in our research when asked to describe themselves, most people did so by presenting their good points (although we noted with some surprise that a few of the younger Sideline Supporters were more equivocal in their self-presentations). However, generally people talked using very similar terminology (honest, reliable, thoughtful, caring, decent, responsible, friendly and sociable), suggesting a generally agreed idea about a positive image of the self:

Sarah: Yes, well I'd like, well I hope I come across as being a friendly person, honest, reliable, very family orientated, and I certainly try my best to do what I can for the environment as far as in our home goes.

We found this notion of being good to be closely related to a sense of environmental responsibility which we felt was externally created:

Michael: It's all that [environmental] stuff linked in, but with a common purpose isn't it really. You know, to make a better you really.

Q: What do you think are the most important things in life?

Benjamin: I suppose peace of mind really. Stability. Being able to be reliable and conscientious and dependable. Yes, without being too cliched, being a good person rather than a bad person. Caring about things.... Having a sense of responsibility about your behaviour and its ramifications on people and the environment.

We pursued this in the focus groups by asking whether the participants felt that it was necessary to undertake some environmental behaviours to be a good person. This caused

intense discussion in all the groups, with some rejecting the concept on the basis that not acting would not make one a bad person. However, other groups seemed more accepting of the idea:

M2: I would say it was a small percentage of being a good person, but as you say, an increasing percentage.

Q: Sorry?

M2: The percentage is increasing. Particularly over the last few years, as to how much you consider it being an integral part of being a good person. (Sideline Supporters, Leeds focus group)

Q: Do you think part of being a good person is doing your bit for the environment?

F1: Yes.

M1: Yes.

F2: I think it is the modern equivalent now isn't it? I think once upon a time it was about other things, but I think now it has become the thing to be.

M1: It's a bit in vogue now. (Positive Greens, Leeds focus group)

One of the Waste Watchers focus groups had a particularly interesting discussion around the wording of the question, eventually settling on the idea that it made someone responsible rather than good; and that those who did nothing for the environment were selfish rather than bad. Indeed, the word 'selfish' was the most common term used in response to a question about what sort of person did not undertake pro-environmental behaviour, along with 'lazy' and 'ignorant' (as someone who did not realise their own role in environmental responsibility):

John: Just a real layabout, good for nothing really. Or just dense and ignorant. Which is why they think, it's not going to affect me and my generation. It's inconsideration really.

Returning to Nyborg et al (2006), they argue social norms operate through this need to maintain a positive self image as a responsible person. If an individual perceives that others are acting on an issue, and if they believe in the necessity of the action, then they feel obliged to reciprocate to feel good about themselves. Hence, it seems likely that for those with some environmental values self-esteem is derived through a socially influenced sense of personal responsibility in line with collective and co-operative action. In short, they are sensitive to a perception of their social group's understanding of what constitutes a 'good' person and wish to affiliate themselves with it. This may suggest that the self-identities of

some interviewees are informed by the changing social expectations around pro-environmental behaviour.

One final point relates this discussion on responsibility and selfishness back to our earlier discussions of materiality. When asked to elaborate on who did not undertake pro-environmental behaviours, interviewees from the more active segments tended to suggest those on a low income had more important concerns and young people were too self-absorbed. However, it was those who they perceived to be wealthy or materialistic who were regularly cited as too selfish to bother:

Sally: You can spot them a mile off, you know, preened to within an inch of their lives. ... They're teetering around at 9 o'clock in the morning with full face make-up and high heels, and you think, you know, they don't have a life. They don't do anything for anybody apart from themselves.

Michael: I think you get the same happening at the higher end of the spectrum, where people have got wealth, do you know what I mean. They could be really wasteful and disrespectful, just because they have got money. You know, whether they earned that money or inherited that money or won that money, you would still get the groups that would be massively wasteful. And you know you see things like people driving certain types of motor cars to take their children to school. They are these gas guzzling things aren't they. I don't mind if people have those vehicles, especially round here, but if they are using them because they need them that's one thing, but they don't do them. It's more a status symbol or class thing, more than anything. You know that kind of thing, it doesn't work for me.

This supports our tentative suggestion that undertaking some small pro-environmental behaviours helps to position one's self away from unthinking materialism. Instead pro-environmental behaviour allows individuals to feel they are actively co-operating in collective social and environmental solutions.

Negotiating different identities

The above phenomena, alongside differences in social and cultural norms, social status, levels of income, susceptibility to guilt, access to facilities and a range of other factors, resolved themselves in complex and highly individual ways to determine the likelihood of pro-environmental behaviour. How individuals negotiated and balanced their different sources of self-identity and esteem was dependent upon their relative importance to the

individual and, often, the individual's life-stage and level of material security. Moreover, one person could have more than one 'environmental position', for example holding both identifications with waste and nature.

Those proactive individuals acting out of strong ethical or environmental identifications, rather than a more socially agreed sense of being a good person, seemed able to establish an alternative status through their environmentalism, and may even use their pro-environmental behaviours as a differentiation strategy:

Nigel: I get a bit miffed I do with all this because, you know, I've always been out in the countryside with me dad and always fishing and trying to be in harmony with nature ... You know it has always been in me, but now it's quite en vogue ain't it.

However, for others material considerations took priority. This was especially true of some of the younger Sideline Supporters who were highly focused on achieving a comfortable standard of living, including some of those individuals who claimed to have pro-environmental values and to care about the environment. Their self-esteem and self image were much more caught up in their work and pursuit of status, particularly through possessions:

M: I think there's more important things in life, or seems to be more important things in life, or more immediate things. Things that actually affect your life. (Sideline Supporters, Leeds focus group)

Brad: Although I should be doing a lot more I have got other things to worry about, you know. I suppose a lot of the time with a lot of people where your food and fish comes from isn't as important as your pay packet coming in or something.

So whilst open to the notion of pro-environmental behaviour, these particular young people were still trying to negotiate their status and self-esteem in the face of conflicting social expectations. Personal happiness and materiality tended to win out over the need to be seen to be 'good' or other environmental concerns, especially for those without children. Until they have established a firmer sense of self and status, more secure quality of life or unless they perceive that environmental action will enhance their standing more important considerations will prevail.

For many people in our sample, 'doing my bit' for the environment was important, but not a central source of self-identity:

Michael: *Just conscientious you know, nothing more than that. That's all I would say we are, we are just conscientious and respectful. You know, we are not eco warriors or anything like that, we are not trying to be that. All we are trying to be is your average conscientious and respectful family towards the environment.*

Jo: *No it just makes me feel better that I'm doing it, you know I'm doing my bit to try and make the place a bit better to live in.*

Instead, work and the rewards for hard work were very important sources of self esteem, particularly where individuals saw themselves as providers of a high quality of living for their children. However, they also tended to be concerned about the impact of their lifestyle on others and the environment, and to be doing the right thing in line with others.

For many of the people deriving a positive sense of self from a range of sources, the conflicting demands of those sources of self were reconciled around the concept of 'balance'. This notion of balance, actualised through 'doing my bit for the environment', protects vital identities and rewarding goods. Especially when that 'doing my bit' is in line with the actions of important others, and is more duty driven than from strong environmental concerns or identifications. It allows the individual to balance the consumer and status rewards for the self against a sense of being a good, responsible person; self interest against collective responsibility:

Michael: *Most of the [environmental behaviours], I think we have got a good balance on really.*

Benjamin: *You worry about people who really don't care about stuff like using the car, recycling and stuff like that. But you know, I just try not to worry too much. The thing about having good values and not becoming obsessive, it is about getting the balance right.*

Sarah: *It's his luxury, so I would hate to impose that on him by saying we've got to get a more energy efficient vehicle because I think we do do a lot already and I think it is his one and only thing.*

Thus the positioning of 'doing my bit' is a useful control strategy for balancing self-identities of those with some environmental concerns. It validates the self as not being too materialistic, individualistic or selfish at the same time as enabling the individual to continue to enjoy valuable behaviours, such as flying and luxury goods. Moreover, the implicit sense of 'doing my bit' in line with other people in society means that the individual is protected from having to be too concerned about the environment and does not have to act on their own. It provides a sense of efficacy and collective action in relation to climate change and other global issues, yet it does not necessitate a loss of status or challenge the rewards for hard work. This, we would suggest, is the predominant environmental role in society.

Summary

We have used this section on self-identity to suggest there is a range of ways to develop a positive sense of self in society. Predominantly these revolve around work, home, consumer aspirational goods and the family. However, pro-environmental behaviour can provide the individual with self-esteem either through acting in line with deeply held personal values or from a more socially derived image of the self as a good person.

We have suggested that not undertaking any pro-environmental behaviour is viewed by most of the participants in our sample as being selfish or materialistic. In general, people wanted to situate themselves in opposition to these perceptions. Doing a bit for the environment helps some people to validate themselves as caring, unselfish individuals, who have not been caught in the trap of materialism. However, other members of the sample, particularly the younger Sideline Supporters, were more focused on gaining security and status within the social expectations of work-consume society rather than through pro-environmental behaviours.

5 SOCIAL IDENTITY AND NORMS

Introduction

We were asked to explore why some groups of people found social norms more important than others, and how social identities affected the take up of pro-environmental behaviours. Because of the close relationship between the two phenomena we will discuss these together within this chapter.

We will begin by reviewing some general findings about the changing social image of those who undertake pro-environmental behaviours and the growing social expectations of action. We will make some more specific observations about which of the pro-environmental behaviours we studied were viewed as social norms and which had connotations for social status.

Finally we will discuss:

1. Why some people are more likely to breach social norms or undertake low status behaviours than others;
2. How some individuals are more likely to have social norms and positive social images for pro-environmental behaviours than others.

The changing social norms and image of pro-environmental behaviours

We gained the impression from the interviews and focus groups that there was a perception of a changing acceptance of environmentalism. This was stronger amongst the more proactive segments. However, nearly all respondents talked about the increasing levels of pressure to undertake pro-environmental behaviours: environmental, financial and social. Whilst most people still suggested they were more likely to undertake the easier behaviours (particularly recycling), there was a sense that as structures and society change people will be able to do more without losing the important elements of their lifestyle or having to negotiate a negative social identity:

M: The movement of where people consider aspirational has improved. Whereas years ago, I don't know, you kept your newspapers and gave them to school kids who collected them. Now that is not even on the rung. As time goes on the issues with the environment are increasing. The norm or place people perceive they can get to without changing their lifestyles has moved. Society has allowed people to make that choice. (Positive Greens, Leeds focus group)

This notion of a changing society is referred to by many of the respondents. Interviewees talked about it becoming easier to undertake pro-environmental behaviours, such as cycling or recycling as the structures are put in place to facilitate this. At the same time, there is a sense that it has become a normal thing to do and no longer carries with it the same social image. Thus the changes taking place allow the average person to do their bit for the environment:

Amy: You can be, you know, a worker in London, a city worker or an elderly lady. I think it's much more normal now to do it, whereas before it was, you know, only a certain type of person that did.

At a behaviour-specific level there was a more mixed picture about their levels of social acceptability and uptake. We have included a longer examination of the social norms and status in relation to individual behaviours in the final empirical chapter. We will briefly summarise the findings here.

Recycling was perceived to be a social norm by most of the respondents. It was a norm across a range of reference groups including friends, family and work colleagues. However, neighbours appeared to be the strongest reference group, with people regularly talking about how their street recycled. It was the only pro-environmental social norm for which there appeared to be a perception of social sanctions for inaction. Recycling also seems to be the signifier behaviour for an 'environmentally friendly person'.

There is a descriptive norm for loft insulation, and emerging perceived descriptive social norms around switching off unwanted lights and appliances. Some members of the sample had a group norm for locally grown seasonal food and many saw this as a high status product. Sustainable fish was not subject to social norms and had no identity connotations for most participants.

A few behaviours were mentioned as having social stigma for some social groups. In particular, keeping the heating low and buying second hand clothes were perceived as low status behaviours and could attract social disapproval. However, there were large variations in the acceptability of buying second hand goods, with this being a group specific behaviour. We did not find any segment specific differences in levels of social acceptability, although those with strong personal anti-waste norms were the least likely to be concerned about the social status of the behaviour.

Similarly there were considerable differences in the acceptability of performance cars and inefficient vehicles. However, we gained an overall impression of a shift towards energy efficient vehicles becoming more desirable.

In summary, we would suggest that we are currently at a stage in society where many of the pro-environmental behaviours we studied are now largely socially acceptable, but with the exception of recycling there is little evidence that they are socially expected. There is no longer a negative social image attached to being environmentally active. However, for many in the sample there was no negative image of those who did not do a lot for the environment.

We explored the sense of the relationship between pro-environmental behaviours in relation to specific social categories. Across the interviews, it is clear that some social categories and social groups influence the choice of appropriate social behaviour. An example of this is contained in one interviewee's comment about how social image affects her decisions about car choice and cycling to work (see Jane case study for a more detailed demonstration of how self and social identity combine). She is critical of her partner for having a large car because of status concerns, she then suggests she would not be willing to cycle to work because she would arrive looking awful and so undermine her professional image.

However, across the behaviours we studied, albeit with a small sample, it was hard to generalise about social categories and groups and how these affect behaviour with any level of robustness. The types of behaviour each person undertook in response to their different social groups and categories tended to be highly individual to the interviewee. However, three key social categories were mentioned by several interviewees:

- Large engined vehicles appeared to be a somewhat gendered status item. Indeed, several of the male interviewees talked about their need for a car as part of their work and how their company was promoting more efficient vehicles or driving styles. The car still appears to be a status symbol in relation to particular professions, with men seeming to be more concerned than most of the female interviewees about what their choice of car signified socially.
- Class was mentioned in relation to specific pro-environmental behaviours as well as in relation to a willingness to be green more generally. Whilst the behaviours of the

Case study - Jane

Jane is a career woman with a family. She has environmental values around climate change and waste, and is consciously pro-environmental in many of her behaviours. She has struggled financially over recent years. With the rising fuel prices she has had to cut down on driving in particular, which does impact on her ability to socialise. She has a large social network, including a close group of similar female friends who encourage her to be pro-environmental.

Jane describes herself as very feminine and she likes the idea of luxury. She loves the countryside and green space. Whilst she is trying to reduce her car use, she does occasionally drive to the country to take a few minutes out for herself. When she was young she was a member of an environmental campaign group, but moved away from environmental concern until coming back to it in the last few years. Jane describes herself as very inconsistent in her environmental actions, although she hates waste.

When asked about energy efficient vehicles Jane talks about her best friend who has just bought a small car. Her friend is very pro-environmental and her happiness with her new car, alongside the social group's pro-environmental values, has influenced Jane.

'One of my friends has just bought a little car and the emissions are minimal so it means the tax is tiny on it. It's small, it's efficient and, put it this way, if I was to buy a new car (never having had the luxury of buying a new car) I would definitely, energy efficiency would be an issue...'

However, her partner owns a large engined vehicle and wants an even larger car. She says it has become a source of conflict between them as she thinks it is all about him wanting a status symbol.

'But you have to be accountable for what you do and why you do it. One household can make a massive difference. And it is easy to say 'Oh what difference does it make if I just have that? Why should I not have that status?' and you are biased because it is all about you. It's not. It's about, we're intelligent people, we know what we are doing to the environment and if you can make a difference, then for the sake of vanity don't...'

Whilst not sharing her partner's choice of status behaviours, Jane protects her own social image and status by not undertaking other pro-environmental behaviours. In particular, she talks about how she would not cycle rather than drive to work.

'Do you know why, it's utter vanity. I'd have to either sweat, get wet or add my helmet and my hair would be knackered, and I like to go to work looking nice. I look smart for work and I'm very, I would not turn up looking all scruffy and horrible. It's quite important to me, I think I've got a quite professional image. I feel it is anyway and I don't want to be all smelly.'

Jane recognises there is some hypocrisy in criticising her partner for not being environmentally accountable in his choice of cars for status and vanity reasons, when she herself does not cycle to work out of professional image concerns or what she calls 'vanity'. She explains this by saying you should not do anything damaging to yourself, but should instead do as much as you can.

sample cast doubt sample cast doubt on simplistic ideas about environmental actions being the preserve of the middle class, several interviewees suggested that class and level of affluence determined the willingness and ability of individuals to act.

- Finally age and cohort group appeared to have an impact on behavioural decisions. In particular, some of the more frugal behaviours around home heating and not wasting food were related to the norms of older generations.

Why some people are more likely to breach social norms than others

Across the interviews there were some differences in the willingness of individuals to undertake certain pro-environmental behaviours. This was particularly true if they ran against perceived social norms or reduced their ability to establish social status, such as buying second hand goods, owning more economical vehicles and reducing home heating. This section will explore what creates these differences.

We will argue that:

1. The strength of personal norms can motivate some people to breach the norms of their social groups;
2. Others are acting in line with the internalised social norms of their cohorts or family, rather than the changing norms of society;
3. Some people are constrained by their financial circumstances and need to breach social norms or adopt low status behaviours;
4. Those who are less secure in their social identities have less freedom to breach social norms or give up status goods.

1. Strength of personal norms and sense of self

Within the sample, we had several interviewees who had long standing environmental or anti-waste values and had started to undertake pro-environmental behaviours when they were still considered to be 'extreme' or 'mean'. Additionally, some of the respondents were highly proactive in their pro-environmental behaviours, attracting social disapproval from friends or colleagues who felt they had adopted behaviours or lifestyles outside the norm.

For this set of individuals, strong personal values, a sense of being true to one's self or being a highly self-determined person helps them to behave outside the social norm. Several of the proactive interviewees recruited as Positive Greens or Waste Watchers suggested they simply did not 'see the point' of wasteful consumption behaviours, even though they recognised social pressures to fit in with the norm:

Q: Do you think anybody thinks you're strange or has any negative reaction towards you doing any of these things or is it kind of fairly normal?

Sally: No, I think people think... There's a thing about sort of living here you know, it's... you know. The house is our expense, you've got to have quite a decent income to live here and then people [expect you to live in a certain way] yes. As I say, the worst is my sister who I'm very close to, but she'll say 'Well surely you don't need to worry about that'. Yes I do actually. And people just expect if you live where I live they expect you to act in a certain way. But I'm always quite pleased actually when I let people know that, you know, actually I do watch what I spend and how I spend it and shop around for stuff and try to use the car less.

So for the most environmentally concerned, personal norms around behaviours they viewed as problematic were more important than social norms. However, this is not to suggest all behaviours were equally open to personal rather than social motivations. Hence, whilst Sally was happy to undertake a range of pro-environmental behaviours that her neighbours and family thought were not normal for her social status, she is not prepared to completely compromise her social identity. Thus she will use her car as little as possible, but she still maintains a collection of status enhancing performance vehicles which other people can admire.

This negotiation between norms and social status was also in operation for the more frugal consumers. Previous research with frugal consumers has shown that they felt capable of being more resistant to social pressure than other consumers (Shoham and Brencic, 2004). Within our sample, several interviewees could be classified as frugal consumers. These interviewees had strong personal norms around wasting money and viewed themselves as cautious consumers, performing a range of behaviours which were outside the norms of their social groups. These included not buying unnecessary consumer goods and keeping home energy use to a minimum. Despite talking about how friends teased them about their actions, these behaviours were so important to the individual that they were prepared to continue to breach the norms of his social group:

Kevin: My friends always say how sort of frugal I am and I used to wonder why. Well I think I'm not. I mean I actually think people have been over-consuming for far too long.

At the same time, some frugal consumers maintained a strong concern to be seen to be a successful person. This can mean that individuals will save energy and moderate their

consumption in some areas, only to reinvest savings in items such as large houses or cars which would advance their social status (see, for example, the David case study).

Once again, this is in keeping with the previous literature on frugal consumers, which has argued that they are willing to delay gratification from consumption for longer term outcomes, such as enhanced social status (Lastovicka et al, 1999; Shoham and Brencic, 2004). Thus, whilst we would suggest that people with strong environmental and frugal values are the most obvious targets for the promotion of new environmental norms, this is not to suggest that they would be willing to undertake these behaviours if they cannot establish social status in other ways.

The strength of personal values or level of moral certainty not only allows the more environmentally concerned to act against social norms, but it can also motivate some individuals to actively try and change social norms. The more proactive interviewees, particularly the Positive Greens, said they talked to their friends about environmental issues and would happily try and influence others to follow their lead. For example, one interviewee, who was a local community leader mentioned how he had fitted cavity wall insulation and then talked to neighbours about it, in the hope that it would encourage similar behaviour. Indeed, both Positive Green focus groups said they wanted people to know about their environmental actions because they felt it was important to set an example:

F: Sometimes I feel I want to make a point to people, even if they are not there watching me. This is a statement I am trying to make. (Positive Greens, Leeds focus group)

Sally: I'm still not getting any friends to do more of this.

Q: Oh, 'use the car less'.

Sally: Yes, they're not, they all drive and it's dreadful.

Whereas we have suggested that those with strong environmental values were willing to try to change social norms around pro-environmental behaviours, those with less strong personal values tended to see their role in influencing behaviour change to be strictly restricted to creating change within their family.

Sarah: I'm not one really to preach to people. I think people know their own minds and they should be aware enough to do it themselves. ... They take that on themselves don't they? You can't change people's way of life, well I can't. It would take someone

more than me to do that. No, I just do what I can for my immediate family not the wider population.

Benjamin: I don't have many earnest conversations about using the car less and public transport more, because it is not really an interesting topic of conversation with your friends. It is not a topic of conversation I find particularly interesting put it that way. It doesn't mean it is not important, but it does not dominate conversation really. I think there are ways, I think most of my friends have got children and they make you more aware. It has an organic way of working its way into families and into adults really. ... I don't think it is my role to kind of tell people about these things and discuss them unless they come into the conversation naturally.

Thus for those motivated to do their bit as a decent member of society, their role in changing social norms was to respond to the change they saw happening around them or to issues and campaigns they felt were relevant to them.

Benjamin: There is always a small band of people who are pre-emptive, whereas I would describe myself as pretty reactive really, and I think most people are. I think a lot of people are predisposed to be reactive rather than pre-emptive and I think I am in that category. I think I tend to react rather than to discover, although you always like to think that you are going to be an initiator rather than a follower

To summarise, we have suggested that those individuals with strong values and personal norms around pro-environmental behaviour and wastefulness were willing to breach social norms where they felt it was important. Several respondents talked about how they had lived with social disapproval because of their environmental or frugal behaviours. This is not to suggest that all those with strong values would be willing to sacrifice their social status for their beliefs; indeed as we have shown, this is often more a process of negotiating an alternative status or only pushing the boundaries so far. However, it is still clear that committed environmentalists not only breach social norms, they actively aim to change them.

2. Cohort and family norms

Whilst most of the respondents appeared to be influenced by the changing norms of society in relation to the environment, this was not the case for the entire sample. Instead, particularly for the older interviewees, their personal norms appeared to reflect the internalised social norms of their youth. Having lived in more austere times, countries or families, these individuals did not appear to have changed their beliefs about how to behave.

In particular, many of the more waste focused respondents were from older generations and their values and behaviours were borne of necessity, and continued out of a belief that this is the responsible way to live (rather than just being habitual). Now their personal norms are so deep rooted they offer the individual a stable sense of self, which is constructed through a notion of being sensible and in control.

Kevin: So my first reaction was, when I was a kid you know, when it was cold you first of all put a sweater on, you know, or had a vest under your shirt. And you would have a sweater and then when it was colder you put the heating on. That's a bit old-fashioned these days isn't it? I'm always really amazed when I go into houses and I see people in the winter with the heating really high and they walk around in t-shirts. Now I know maybe that's quite comfortable, for me that's not sensible, but maybe it's because I'm mean. I don't know.

This highlights the fact that not all norms are defined by the current zeitgeist or existing peer groups. Where other norms are important to individuals, they become part of the individual's personal norms. As well as the social norms of a particular era, several interviewees talked about how they derived their sense of socially appropriate behaviour from the values and actions of their family. Mainly these family norms were anti-waste norms, including recycling, keeping the heating low and turning off unwanted lights; possibly reflecting the lack of history around other pro-environmental values and behaviours.

3. Lacking resources

One final aspect to acting outside social norms is tentatively suggested by the interviews. This is that some individuals do not possess sufficient resources to choose to act in line with some social norms. For them, the cheaper options presented by certain environmental behaviours such as conserving energy at home, not using a car or taking public transport offer some benefits. For this set of people, the financial considerations were paramount in the decisions they made.

It is hard to be exact about the relationship between a lack of resources and breaching social norms as this was not something any of our interviewees suggested they had to do. Whilst there was a great deal of discussion about how respondents would have to change their behaviour because they could not afford to continue driving large cars or maintain their current levels of energy consumption, there was less open recognition that some financially driven behaviours had subjected the individual to social stigma. Instead, we suspect a couple of our interviewees had reflexively positioned their financially constrained choices as

personal or rational choices; indeed, may even have changed their preferences to suit their circumstances. For example, one interviewee had given up his job to look after his children and talked about how he had had to work hard to reconstruct his self-esteem. Part of this was around having a lack of money. Whilst he recognises there is a stigma attached to buying second hand clothes and not having his heating on, he constructs both of these as personal choices. He states:

Alan: I've started to enjoy spending as little money as possible.

As well as constructing financially driven choices as personal preferences, we felt some of the more frugal consumers may have been employing environmental explanations for choices which were originally financially motivated. This is not something we can substantiate. However, some of the more financially conscious interviewees who talked about being motivated to reduce their energy consumption for environmental reasons tended to explain exactly how much money they were saving across a range of behaviours. This suggests that the two considerations were, at the very least, closely interwoven.

4. Security of status and identity

Whilst some of the interviewees felt able to violate the social norms of their group, we have suggested that this is not a commonly held aspiration across all behaviours. For other individuals, particularly those who are insecure about their social status or membership of a social category, stepping outside the norms of behaviour to attract social sanctions is a more challenging proposition. This inequality in the ability of individuals to go against social expectations is summarised by one interviewee:

Karry: So take me, maybe I'm a typical middle class girl trying to do her best, but with a very low earning household. I still have a certain degree of choice, but I'm aware of a great social divide here. Why is it that families with very little are dressing their children in designer clothes? [...] There is something very nasty at work.

Whilst the above interviewee feels secure enough in her identity and status, others are honest about how their insecurity leaves them making choices that contravene their strong ethical values. One example of this is Melanie. Speaking about her unhappiness at owning an inefficient vehicle, she says that as the first generation of her family to be 'middle class' she does not feel able to challenge what she perceives as being an expectation of this social category:

Melanie: *Vehicles are one of those things that, the problem with vehicles is it is a bit like class isn't it? It has got that stigma you know, the car you have got, it is terrible to even say that isn't it?*

Q: *Well it's quite honest though isn't it?*

Melanie: *Not that what I drive is, I mean not many people would know, as a woman I didn't even know the make existed and they are not very economical at all.*

Q: *Was it your choice?*

Melanie: *It wasn't actually my choice to begin with. My husband chose it as a second car. I have come from a family where a car was a privilege to have you know, you had to work to get it and my family background, they are Londoners from the flat era you know, when not everybody had cars so to have a car itself from the background I have come up from is sort of, you know, you are really lucky if you have a car...*

It was clear that individuals in the sample had different degrees of latitude to breach social norms and risk social disapproval or loss of status. Whilst a middle aged man, recruited as a Sideline Supporter argued that he was too old to feel too much social pressure to conform, the younger members of the sample, particularly those recruited as Sideline Supporters, were the most likely to suggest they would find it difficult to act outside the accepted norms of their peers:

M: I think friends doing it is important because you're going to follow suit aren't you? If they're doing nothing and you actually do something they'll..(make fun)..out of you and laugh at you. But if they are doing something and you are not doing it you think 'I should be doing it'. But we don't really talk about that sort of thing. (Sideline Supporters, Leeds focus group)

As an image conscious group, still negotiating their social status, they were very honest about their need to fit in with the actions of their friends. In particular, 'being cool' was mentioned as being important to these young people, hinting that certain forms of social approval were more important than others. This did not appear to be a concern to other members of the sample:

M: Yeah, we all want to be following the crowd to be cool, but no one ever admits that, even though there are loads of people who would.

M2: Like them [charity] wristbands weren't it.

General agreement that people had bought them

F: I had them up my arm to here... (Sideline Supporters, London focus group)

These younger Sideline Supporters did suggest that the social image around being environmentally proactive was slowly changing, possibly to the point where pro-environmental behaviour could actually offer social benefits to image conscious people:

John: I think it is a bit cooler or more accepted now.

M: Now it is the thing to be green ... it does become cool to be green. (Sideline Supporters, London focus group)

Since these younger Sideline Supporters included many individuals who have strong concerns about their social image and trying to avoid the social stigma of behaving differently from their peer group, it is telling that the focus groups tended to suggest that many of their friends did little or nothing for the environment:

F: Quite a few of my friends are like that. They know there's something to be done but they think 'I can't be bothered, I'd rather be doing this than that'. But then to be honest, they just sit in their houses all the time and they could easily contribute. Just pop down the road to the bottle bank and they could do it. But they tend to, where it doesn't fit in well with their daily routines they tend to prioritise things wrongly. (Sideline Supporters, London focus group)

These younger Sideline Supporters felt that the key to taking up more pro-environmental behaviours would be if they saw other people doing so, hence fitting in with a more general descriptive norm:

F: If you only see you and your family doing it, you tend to think no one else is doing it. But if you see the community doing it...it makes you want to do it. (Sideline Supporters, London Focus Group)

M: It's more like people are now. If you are one of the first people then you feel like 'ohh err'. If you and your friends are doing it or your family start doing it and if a lot of people are doing it, it makes you feel good. (Sideline Supporters, Leeds Focus Group)

These accounts point to the importance of group or social norms in situating pro-environmental behaviours as being meaningful, acceptable and even personally rewarding. We will explore the differences in group norms across the sample in the next section.

Differences in social norms

Above we have suggested reasons for differences in the likelihood of individuals breaching social norms or adopting low status behaviours. However, for the majority of the respondents their actions were in line with key reference groups, usually friends, family and neighbours. Therefore differences in behaviour are often due to perceived differences in social norms, rather than despite social norms.

The effects of social groups with shared beliefs about the meaning of the behaviour were obvious from the interviews and focus groups. Most interviewees suggested their actions were in line with the actions of their family, friends or neighbours (depending on the behaviour). The appropriate behaviours were recognised through a range of different means. For some interviewees with greener social networks, friends and family had talked to or even pressurised the respondent about certain behaviours. For others, an understanding about appropriate behaviour was assimilated through more 'fuzzy' social learning or expectations about what 'people like them' should do:

Michael: [My friends' pro-environmental behaviours] are just things that you notice to be honest really. I don't think, again, I don't think anyone of us would go round and start having a conversation about it, do you know what I mean. I think a lot of our friends are very similar to us in that they would be conscientious and think 'yes, that's got to be a good thing' you know. You wouldn't ask, you wouldn't sit there and say to them, you know, have you done that? It would be almost a case of you would expect them to have done that, if you know what I am saying.

More often the differences in the perceptions of socially normal behaviour can be ascribed to the actual behaviours of friendship groups and peers.

The most proactive individuals often suggested their friends and cohorts had similar values and actions leading to more pro-environmental behaviour:

Karry: Again, in the neighbour I've noticed that there are some people who are unashamedly wasteful with energy. There is a certain, again, almost a snob value there. But most of my friends would consider that to be a vulgar attitude.

On the other hand, the less active suggested that the people they knew had limited interest in pro-environmental behaviours:

Gill: *I think all of my friends feel the same, you feel you should do your bit and we want to do our bit, but sometimes it is not always convenient or it is too much like hard work. I don't know, I feel a bit like that.*

Avril: *Friends, none of my friends are that into it probably. Again, I mean there's one of my friends who's similar to me, you know she does try and, she is trying to start to recycle. ... If anyone ever asked me that before I probably would have gone 'oh no, not at all', but a lot more people like my friends and that are definitely doing it a lot more now.*

For some, doing their bit for the environment appeared to be partly motivated by a desire to fit in with the ever changing perception of what it is to be a good person. These people positioned themselves within the norms of their social groups:

Sarah: *I think a lot of people already do the reusing and recycling and the better energy management I think a lot of people do. Maybe more people could find alternatives to using the car or have more energy efficient vehicles perhaps. I already think, certainly the people I know, they do try to do their best bit for recycling and local food and stuff like that but I don't really know anybody that uses their car as little as possible or uses energy efficient vehicles, but that's just in my group of friends again. That would be the thing that I say we should change but then I'm mostly guilty of those two things anyway. The others I think I try to do.*

Jo: *Definitely yes, because there's not a lot of people that I know that don't. It's good; I mean one's got a people carrier but she opted for the diesel one, because it's more economical and greener. And she recycles quite a lot, and the neighbours they all do their bit.*

To summarise, many people in our sample argued their actions were in line with their peers and friends. For the most proactive, this meant their friends had a set of shared group norms which encouraged some pro-environmental behaviour. However, for the least environmentally active, their perceptions were that there was a general lack of pro-environmental behaviour. For them, acting in the absence of the actions of others simply did not appear to be a rational choice.

Summary

We have suggested that currently there are few social norms with related social sanctions which lock the majority of society into pro-environmental behaviours, with the possible exception of recycling and reusing plastic bags. However, at the same time there appeared to be few social norms stopping people from undertaking pro-environmental behaviours. There is evidence of a changing social status around inefficient vehicles, although the men in the sample were still more likely than women to view a large car as a status symbol. Locally grown seasonal food appeared to be viewed as a high status product by some of the respondents. For many there was a remaining stigma to buying second hand clothes, although within our sample this was specific to particular social groups rather than segments.

We have argued that those who are secure in their social identities, or who have strong personal environmental values, are more likely to breach social norms than others. Moreover, the strength of environmental values enabled the more proactive individuals to actively try to change social norms. Others are likely to be constrained into low status behaviours through a lack of resources.

Finally, we have suggested there are differences in the perceptions of social norms, which affected the likelihood of pro-environmental action.

6 CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS

Introduction

We were asked to explore how social norms were perceived and understood by the respondents; and how they motivated behaviour. We have already discussed social norms more generally in relation to the behaviours and segments. However, here we would like to highlight some of the key processes normalising pro-environmental behaviours and their potential role in further behaviour change social norms¹. In considering how social norms can be created, we would suggest that several potential processes for introducing descriptive or injunctive norms are at work simultaneously. Those we have found to be of interest include:

1. Changing cultural discourses
2. Social learning
3. The role of the media and the development of a common vocabulary
4. Local identity and community action
5. Work and school as socialising agents
6. Structures as normalising factors

In addition to discussing these processes of normalisation, we will outline the results from the testing of a descriptive norm in the focus groups.

Processes of normalisation

1. Cultural discourses

A growing body of literature is starting to look at how cultural discourses work to normalise ways of living and thinking around the environment (see for example Cauldry, 2004; Slocum, 2004; Bergland, 2006). We do not wish to get into complex discussion about how government creates and motivates particular forms of citizenship within this report. Yet the rise of the citizen-consumer role of 'doing my bit' is so central to understanding the current forms of pro-environmental behaviour that we feel the need to address it here, albeit in a simplistic way.

Rather than discourses being simple patterns of speech, they can have the practical effect of creating an understanding of the material world and how we should live within it (Foucault,

¹ For a detailed analysis of norms in social practices and how increasing levels of consumption can become normalised in practices more generally see Shove (2003).

1978). They can be created at any level within society, but at the top level they can be used as an instrument of governmentality to transform beliefs through language. The example used by Slocum is that the discourses surrounding neoliberal economics have convinced individuals across the economic system that neoliberal capitalism is the only workable form of economics, so that all policies and decisions are taken within this system. Moreover, as Ong (cited in Slocum) argues, particular discursive practices create new norms of thinking and acting, which regulate the behaviour of citizens.

Slocum, among others, has looked at how the 'citizen-consumer' has become established as the central force for environmental and social concern within neoliberalism; particularly for the 'moral middle classes'. By this we mean that the pro-environmental role established for the citizen is one which sees changed behavioural patterns within a system which does not challenge the rewards of consumer society. It would appear from the respondents in this project that this role has been normalised within a cultural discourse of 'doing my bit'.

Whilst we are not suggesting that the language of 'doing my bit' was created as a Government discourse of behaviour change, it has been used as the 'catch phrase' within some behaviour change campaigns, possibly reinforcing a sense that this is the appropriate environmental role of the citizen-consumer. Moreover, we recognise that even those who have strong environmental beliefs and actions outside of those desired by Government use the expression 'doing my bit' to suggest they are taking some personal responsibility for their environmental impacts. However, as we have already suggested within the previous chapter, there is a set of individuals for whom 'doing my bit' has become the primary environmental role. For this set of people, small pro-environmental behaviours are normalised within the idea of everybody collectively doing a little:

Stuart: I think the car manufacturers are getting more aware of that now and are making a conscious effort to do something more energy efficient and also emission reducing cars as well. So I just do my little but really to try and help out.

Amy: So if friends and people don't I get annoyed you know, when you see that it doesn't take that much of an effort to try and do a little bit. If everyone did a little bit it would all help.

Debbie: I do feel I am doing my bit, and if everyone did a bit it would help.

This notion of 'doing my bit as part of a collective' has a powerful effect albeit not perhaps being the most appropriate in creating high levels of individual behaviour change. It engages some individuals in limited action as part of being a good person or a decent citizen. However, at the same time it does not leave the 'good' citizen with a sense that they have to dramatically alter their lifestyle or consumer practices to address environmental issues. Indeed, convenience and ease of access is an important part of the process. As we have suggested in previous chapters, it allows the individual to validate themselves as a caring, unselfish person through a few small, simple actions. At the same time, it may prevent more substantial behaviour change through offsetting guilt (see guilt chapter for further discussion). Those who acted out the role of 'doing my bit' also talked about how that needed to be balanced with their need to continue to purchase consumer goods, luxury holidays and even prestige vehicles. However, we wish to draw attention to it here to demonstrate that the discourses used to promote pro-environmental behaviour create the norms around those behavioural choices. In the UK the discourse of 'doing my bit' has positively engaged some individuals as 'citizen-consumers'. However, at the same time it suggests they only have to undertake limited behaviour which does not threaten their current lifestyles and normal patterns of consumption. Thus changing the discourses around environmental behaviour and consumption, or the expectation of what 'doing my bit' involves, may be essential to engage widespread behaviour change.

Having discussed a cultural discourse within which the consumer-citizen is positioned and normalised, we now would like to focus on emerging discourses within which Government could seek to situate new behaviours. Across focus groups and interviews, respondents often talked about the relationship between society, environment and economy. Given their need to understand the effect of consumption on facilitating behaviour change, respondents were likely to discuss the impacts of behaviour change on the economy and systems of production more generally. These discussions touched on the possibility of government intervention in the economy, the difficulties of trying to promote an economic system which delivered social goods (such as dentists) without the social or environmental problems, and the implications for current lifestyles if high fuel prices or fuel shortages became normal.

These discourses represent possibilities for changing the cultural norms to support pro-environmental behaviour. For example, several interviewees and focus groups talked about the profligacy of an affluent or 'spoilt' society. Whilst these narratives were largely constructed by the greener segments, a change of course in response to a lack of resources was talked about across the segments. Moreover, they tended to have an implicit morality,

suggesting that being less wasteful is emerging as a new cultural discourse about the right thing to do.

F1: I was going to say, I think a lot of the wastefulness is that we used to have cheap electricity, cheap water you know. All these things were cheap so therefore I think there was an age of plenty wasn't there?

F2: Yes, though I think people went from scrimping to then being able to throw away, but now it is like the war years.

F1: It is like a throwaway society has been born and now we are realising that the throwaway society is not good, you know. We need to change what we are doing (Sideline Supporters, Leeds focus group).

M: I mean, we were much more eco back then than we are now. And this, giving you [financial incentives for returning/recycling can and bottles] is just going back to how it should have been all along. (Cautious Participants, London focus group)

These discourses may help re-position previously socially unacceptable behaviours within a new way of thinking. They hint at a recognition of a way of living which has failed to govern resources efficiently and is in need of change. Moreover, the recent economic downturn has revealed how behavioural norms rapidly adapt to new cultural and economic climates; for example, Andy Bond Chief Executive of Asda has spoken about how being frugal has now become cool, and being wasteful is no longer socially acceptable (The Telegraph, 12.12.2008). We suggest there is the opportunity to utilise these discourses to embed a sense of societal change from profligacy to conservation, underpinning new social expectations and norms. Although how these discourses can be disseminated without sounding preachy or antagonistic would need to be researched further. Moreover, however strong the discursive message, ways of being less wasteful will need to be made convenient and accessible across systems of provision and disposal.

2. Social learning

As we have already suggested in the previous chapter, the actions of friends and family are intrinsic to creating social norms around behaviours. This process happens both through direct pressure about the desirability of the action and from social learning about the benefits of an action to other people, either personally or from social rewards.

The interviews and focus groups were full of examples of pressure from friends to perform particular behaviours:

John: *I was chatting to a friend of mine who's bigger and better at doing the DIY than I am. He does crazy stuff like electricity and plumbing and fitting power showers and stuff. But he's got into the environment now, and he was saying to me 'you want to get [energy efficient light bulbs]'. I do like the idea.*

Whilst family was not mentioned as much in the focus groups, at a level of individual interviewee the power of family to influence behaviour was paramount, particularly because parents, siblings and even grandparents were cited regularly as the source of waste related values:

Avril: *[My nan is always getting the bus] just for the environment and everything, you know she's getting very... I mean she's very good. She sort of recycles everything and she's really into that, and she actually, to be fair, she's the one who does go on at us quite a lot to do that. She's passed a lot of that down.*

For much of the time interviewees were not fully aware of how they had decided that a pro-environmental behaviour was something they should do. The actions of friends, family, neighbours and colleagues, as well as a more general sense of what fits with certain categories of values, meant behaviours were sometimes half noticed, filtered through a range of different expectations and slowly merged into daily practices. It is hard to draw firm conclusions from such a small sample, but it seems likely that discussion of environmental problems and associated behaviours helps to normalise the behaviour and create the moral norm to drive it. Since not all the sample had strong concerns about the environment, or a pro-environmental social network, the discourses which normalise behaviours were often about other meanings of the behaviour. For example, a lot of the interviewees suggested they had begun to talk about energy saving actions with their friends and family in the wake of rising fuel prices.

Whilst social pressure and influence from friends and family may create the social expectation of action, social learning demonstrates the positive effects of a behaviour for an individual. For example, one interviewee talked about how her friend had bought a small car and had been really happy with it, convincing her to do the same. Other interviewees, when probed, believed friends felt good about themselves for undertaking pro-environmental behaviours, thereby making the uptake of the behaviour more likely. This social learning process of seeing the benefits of a product or behaviour is neatly demonstrated by the following explanation of the decision to buy an energy display meter:

Asha: *But my husband was going to buy something. I am not sure what it is called, but it actually detects like how much electricity you are using. Well his brother's got one, so he's ordered one yes, and it actually tells you how much you are using and actually how much it will cost you. So he is going to get one.*

3. The media and the development of a common vocabulary

The media was mentioned by most respondents in the sample, suggesting it plays a large role in both raising awareness and normalising the expectations of pro-environmental actions:

Mary: *Because I think, you know, because now everywhere you go or you watch telly it's like your carbon footprint and stuff like that, and okay I'm not the best person probably, you know, we leave our tellys and that on standby and things like that, so I just think if I can do things in other ways that might help then it just makes you feel a bit better really that you're doing something.*

A range of popular campaigns ran through the narratives of interviewees and focus groups. Television chefs were singled out as role models, with Jamie Oliver and Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall appearing to be influential with the greener segments. The respondents seemed to be open to television, magazines and newspapers as sources of new behaviours which *should* or *should not* be undertaken, with battery chickens, cheap clothes and reusing plastic bags being cited most frequently across the segments. Whilst these methods for cultivating awareness about ethical actions may not result in changing social norms, affiliation with role models and social learning processes suggest the importance of the media in establishing possibilities for individuals. Moreover, some interviewees suggested they would not have known about products on offer and how beneficial they could be without seeing these on television. For example, one interviewee had fitted a ground heat pump whilst renovating her house after seeing it on *Grand Designs*.

Whilst the media played an important role in creating a sense of what should be done, it may not always prompt people to undertake those behaviours, especially if their social networks do not view them as important. Moreover, for those who are more cynical and less interested in environmental issues, any messages that they feel are being pushed too hard could be met with some resistance, and could even be counter-productive.

F: I think there is so much pressure for people to be environmentally friendly, but it does not make you a bad person if you're not.

M: I sort of resent having to have the environment on your conscience. Things are much bigger than whether you recycle a plastic bottle or not (Cautious Participants, London focus group).

Gill: You do get a bit fed up with it.

Thus the media is a useful force for promoting social learning about pro-environmental behaviours. It is unlikely to be sufficient to encourage the wide scale uptake of behaviours without being related to the actions of social categories or local communities. However, it provides the average person with not just knowledge about environmental issues and behaviours, but also helps to create a shared language so people can discuss the issues and suggest what 'doing my bit' might mean. We intentionally avoided providing the interviewees with any environmental terminology, and found their vocabulary was very limited in talking about environmental issues, particularly climate change. Those more likely to read broadsheet papers or listen to the news tended to have the best grasp of the more technical language. However, those who were the most motivated by personal norms often used more personal language to talk about issues; for example, a very waste motivated interviewee talked about 'light pollution' because it was his perception that leaving lights on unnecessarily was the problem rather than climate change per se.

We are tentatively suggesting that we found a high degree of awareness about issues and actions from our sample, although not all respondents had thought through what role they could take in addressing these problems. However, the media still has a role to play in providing a shared language, and normalising roles and behaviours beyond simple campaigns.

4. Local identity and community action

Across the interviews and focus groups, the discussions were filled with talk about norms for different geographical spaces. So people talked about behavioural norms in different countries, parts of the country and for their neighbourhood. Similarly they discussed the pressures to be pro-environmental from work and their children's school; we will talk about work and schools in a separate section below.

Whilst there were some examples of environmental norms in other countries, the more interesting findings were around the differences in norms within the sample areas. We

conducted research in six different geographical locations. It is apparent from the analysis by location that the place or area where you live is likely to affect perceptions of social expectations about how you should behave, and provides visible examples of descriptive norms. Rather than simply reflecting the impact of structural provisions (such as public transport use in London), these social norms appear to link to social identities through how you should be seen, what it means to achieve a sense of belonging in an area and the responsibilities to the community that may bring.

Sarah: It's much more environmentally friendly in Brighton [than here]. There's more markets and things and there's quite a few health food shops that sell organic whole grain local produce. They collect from the doorstep most of the recycling and I think just more generally people are more aware and more into being energy conscious. There is a lot more second hand shops and where we were in the centre there is loads of people riding bikes and walking. There's more cars in the centre, but all of my friends would walk, we wouldn't consider meeting in town and driving. Just their whole way of life is environmentally friendly there. People, I think, are probably less aware here and it's less easy to do it here.

We only conducted five interviews per location, one per segment, and findings cannot be more than indicative. However, it did appear from our sample that some locations lent themselves more readily to pro-environmental behaviour than others. Participants who lived in or around Gloucester had been greatly affected by the wide-scale flooding that took place in the area in 2007. All of them had experienced problems with water and power supplies, and access to local amenities, and continued to live under the threat of further flooding if weather conditions deteriorated again. Not surprisingly, some of them made the direct connection between climate change and the flooding, and were prepared to acknowledge that they had a responsibility to change their behaviour if further environmental problems were to be avoided.

In the most rural interview locations, the potential for creating new social norms through community action and a sense of local identity was demonstrated. For example, one village had introduced some limited environmental initiatives. This seemed to both reflect the proactive approach of the community and their sense of shared values. Moreover, all these interviewees frequently bought locally grown seasonal food or grew their own. Partly this was due to some of the interviewees trying to live self-sufficiently. However, more generally the use of the local farmer's shops and butchers was about belonging to the local community

and a sense of responsibility for supporting local businesses against the threat posed by national supermarket chains:

Michael: *Before we moved here [locally grown seasonal food] wouldn't have been on the agenda. Even if we could have gone to a farm shop, and we could have done, we didn't. But since we have moved here, we've really sort of taken that attitude. And maybe it's because our peers do it, do you know what I mean, and we want to.*

Q: You said there has been [an environmental campaign] in the village, is it quite environmentally minded here?

Michael: *Yes, I think because, you know, it is a traditional countryside village, if you know what I mean. There's a lot of values there amongst its people. And you know, it's things like litter, you don't tend to see any litter in the village. It's very clean and it has massive pride in that.*

John: *It is definitely a rural thing in terms of when people live here I think they do it more. It's more on their doorstep. I think the farmers' markets and stuff is a lot more about local support and there is a lot of mention of it in the local newspapers.*

Whilst these interviewees all needed to use their cars to travel to work in the absence of effective local transport, the affiliation to a close rural society did support the creation of new social norms for other pro-environmental behaviours. This suggests that local community actions, especially those targeting behaviours which can be seen to have local benefits or are in keeping with the local identity, could help provide new local social norms. In particular, recognising and promoting behaviours which locals think symbolise the values of the local community could help to encourage the emergence of new social norms.

5. Work and schools as socialising agents

In the absence of pro-environmental social networks, school or work provide a supporting role in creating social norms for the less environmentally proactive segments. We have already suggested the importance of work environments for choices around energy efficient cars. Several of the male interviewees talked about how tax levels on company cars, and even company advice about more efficient driving techniques, had made them think more about the impact of their car on climate change. For the more career orientated, and for those who need a sense of collective action, we get the impression that company initiatives could be instrumental in encouraging new patterns of energy and car use behaviours.

The areas where there appeared to be most change from work based social pressure were recycling and energy use. In particular, individuals in both Cautious Participant focus groups mentioned how the introduction of schemes at work had made them begin to adjust their behaviour:

F: At work they are always talking about making sure that lights are being turned off. I think the company I work for are making sure that their bills are a lot less. But since we've done it at work, we are kind of the same at home. We have quite a lot of pressure at work to reduce our carbon footprint, and you do it and realise it is easy. So we are doing it at home, recycling more and making sure electricity is turned off, we are a lot more careful. (Cautious Participants, Leeds focus group)

Another participant talked about how her workplace had begun to leave post-it notes on computers screens that had been left on, thus providing a highly visible sign that failing to turn computers off was considered inappropriate and subject to public criticism. More obviously, there were a few people in the sample, most of whom were involved in skilled trades, who suggested that they had become more aware of how many people were undertaking environmental actions, such as installing more insulation, from people or policies they came across in the workplace. However, whilst in some cases work had helped to change behaviours, there were other individuals in the sample who worked for pro-environmental organisations, or even in jobs where they were responsible for part of their organisations environmental policy, and yet showed little change in their own behaviour. Partly this can be seen as being a result of behavioural specific norms, but also because without a social network who acted on the environment, work norms may not always translate into a social norm.

A second site which was frequently mentioned as a new source of social expectations was schools. Across the sample, both those with children and without suggested that schools were responsible for raising awareness and changing values 'by osmosis' from children to their families. Some interviewees went even further to argue that their children brought home new ideas about 'what should be done' from school:

Amy: It's coming through schools now, so you're getting it through the children. They're coming home with it and they're saying 'oh mum, you know, we ought to do that because...' or it's 'oh mum we ought to, you know, walk to school or eat this or don't do that'. So yes, definitely it's really being drummed into kids at school.

Indeed, Amy gives an example of a pro-environmental behaviour which her children's school is working hard to promote: driving less to school. It is doing this by introducing a week where children are not only told they should walk to school, but they are put under social pressure to do so. The scheme uses social surveillance and sanctions to make children aware of the social injunctive to act.

Amy: We use the car less at the moment because at school they have a 'golden boot week' which tries to get the children to walk to school more. So even though we live far away we drive to a friend's house and we park the car and we walk, or we park a little bit further away from schools and we walk.

Q: So the kids really like being part of it?

Amy: Yes, definitely, yes, yes. And every morning they ask you, right, how did you get to school and if they drive it's like 'awwww'.

However, Amy's story also demonstrates the difference between the injunction to act and the practical demands of everyday life. Whilst the school aims to reduce driving, the school selection process means Amy has to drive her children some distance to the school her children attend. Moreover, both the desire to see her children get safely to school and her desire to engage in the golden boot week were motivated out of her desire to be a good mother, causing conflict within the social role.

Other interviewees talked about the impact of schools selection on their driving habits, arguing that children did not necessarily end up going to the nearest school and had to be driven to school and to see the friends they formed at school. Furthermore, a couple of our interviewees had children who attended different schools, making driving a more essential norm. Whilst participants listed several things government could do better to encourage people to be more pro-environmental, schools admission policy was the only policy which interviewees mentioned as actively discouraging people to act more pro-environmentally by driving their car less. Moreover, it was the one policy that left some parents feeling disempowered.

Q: But there's not much more that you can see yourself being able to do as an individual, is that right?

Alan: Well me personally, no. I think things are going to have to change big time. I mean just sending your kids to school 10 miles up the road. It gives parents the choice, but just changing that one thing, can you imagine how many miles of car journeys there are taking your kid 10 miles instead of 500 yards up the road to a local school. And

because you have the choice you do it because you want to give your kids the best education, but it's destroying the environment.

This difference between what one should do and what one practically has to do was also mentioned in the Leeds Positive Green focus group. One of the participants was a teacher who talked about how the children at her school were told they should be switching things off rather than leaving them on standby. However, in computing lessons the pressures on class time meant the school had a rule of leaving the computers on. Thus children were told to do one thing and made to do another. As the teacher argued, children are more likely to learn habits in practice rather than discourse. This means that if an organisation is aiming to embed environmentally friendly practices, or to change norms, then it has to help create the practical means of action instead of just the injunction to act. In other words we need to change the physical and social structures within which behaviours become routinized rather than just telling people they should behave differently.

6. Structures

Whilst unable to provide the social impetus for pro-environmental behaviour, structural changes were cited by participants as one of the driving forces for change. Because of this, changing infrastructures had allowed people to make assumptions about appropriate behaviour. Indeed, participants sometimes assumed other people did the same as them because they assumed they had the same structures determining their behaviours.

Q: What do you think most other people do?

F1: Save water, because it costs money. Because most people now have meters.

Q: Do you have a water meter?

F1: Hmm, you have to, don't you?

M1: No.

Q: Anyone else got a water meter?

Everyone in the room indicates they do not.

F2: Energy saving bulbs.

Q: Everybody agree?

F3: I think partly because they're giving them out in supermarkets.

M2: Probably people have got a few, but not all. (Waste Watchers, London focus group)

This pattern was replicated across a range of behaviours, with some groups suggesting that their perceptions of how much it is practiced were often based on what they viewed as

happening structurally, financially or at a legislative level, and what people were funnelled or 'nudged' into doing. Thus they felt people, in part, recycled because doorstep recycling schemes made it easy or necessary; people used energy efficient light bulbs because they were being given out by the utility companies or discounted in supermarkets; loft insulation was encouraged through grant aid; and people used public transport in London because it was available and the congestion charge made it too expensive to drive.

As well as suggesting the most appropriate behaviour and normalising it in everyday practices, structures also convinced individuals of the importance and longevity of the behaviour. For example, the provision of doorstep recycling facilities creates a sense of necessity and provides the individual with a signal about the long term importance of the behaviour for business or government.

Jane: Then you got the bins, that came in and you thought 'Okay, this is actually now a way of life'. Then you felt like the council and the government are now making an effort, this is the way things are. It's like 'they are doing their bit, so I'm obliged to'. I've no excuse now, everybody can do it because you are met halfway.

Thus investment in visible structural changes, more efficient technologies and the provision of facilities for pro-environmental behaviour normalise new ways of living. Rather than encouraging people to undertake each new government initiative, providing new structures and facilities first can convince the individual of the long term commitment of other actors. Moreover, it embeds the behaviour in everyday practical choices and therefore makes it easier to perform.

Using descriptive norms to drive behaviour change

The social norms literature suggests that people will be motivated to conform to a descriptive norm, with this motivation being strengthened by a clear injunctive norm. However, whilst participants recognised certain behaviours (such as reducing home energy use) as the 'things' most people do, they do not necessarily believe they do them for environmental or social reasons. In fact, both throughout the focus groups and interviews, respondents were swift to suggest that people were either in some way acting in their own self-interest or had been forced to change, mainly through financial necessity.

We tested a descriptive norm with the focus groups using the example of the adoption of energy efficient light bulbs. To begin with, we asked the groups to suggest how many people in the country they thought already used energy efficient light bulbs. The spread of

percentages suggested by participants was large for most of the groups, and across the sample as a whole ranged from between 15% and 80%. This reveals that there are substantial differences in individuals' perceptions of the uptake of the behaviour.

We presented all the focus groups with a descriptive norm statement that 3 in every 4 households had energy efficient light bulbs and analysed the groups' reactions to the statement; the figure was taken from self-reported behavioural uptake in the Defra/BMRB 2007 survey. From our testing of focus group reactions to a descriptive norm, we are tentatively suggesting that the groups questioned a descriptive norm they did not recognise from their own experience, especially if they felt the levels of behavioural uptake had not been created from altruistic or pro-social motivations. This is not to suggest the descriptive norm would not motivate people to change their behaviour, since we know that people are hard wired to conform to what they see as being the norm. However, it is to suggest that a stronger recognition of a moral underpinning for the behaviour would provide the normative statement with more power of command. We will explain this further.

We anticipated the groups would find the descriptive norm statement challenging, especially for some of the Positive Greens who we felt were using pro-environmental behaviour to feel 'better' than other people, and for those segments less likely to be using energy efficient bulbs. In fact, only two groups accepted the statement without further discussion. One Concerned Consumer group because everyone in the room had energy efficient bulbs and so felt it was normal. The other Concerned Consumer group showed signs they might react positively to a descriptive norm statement.

Across the rest of the groups, there was both some surprise and a generally positive response, with most people saying they felt it was a good thing. Only two participants (one Positive Green and one Cautious Participant) suggested they felt guilty enough to change their behaviour in response to learning about the actions of others, although we would not anticipate an instant intention to change behaviour anyway. However, more usually the groups questioned the meaning of the descriptive norm, seemingly to identify whether it had meaning for their own behaviour. These discussions tended to touch on one or more of three points:

- 1) The accuracy of the figures

Q: You said it surprised you though; why did it surprise you?

M: Well because, I don't want to sound cynical, but including our earlier conversation, I think that to be energy efficient and to think about the environment, you have to be in a certain section, usually the middle section, where you have the time and maybe the finance to concern yourself with it. If you are down there you are too busy surviving to think about things like that and if you are right up there, people I have come across, you know, 'let the world burn, I can pay', they can pay for anything. (Positive Greens, London focus group)

F: There's a lot of people in this country who can't read or write, so how do they assess [environmental] information? (Waste Watchers, Leeds focus group)

2) The value of energy efficient light bulbs in the grand scheme of things

M: It is a step, but there is so much more we could simply do on the light bulb front. 75% is fantastic [but it is] 'I have done my bit, I have put in a couple of light bulbs' and that is as far as they go and that doesn't have the big impact. (Positive Greens, Leeds focus group)

3) Whether the uptake of energy efficient bulbs was for environmental or financial reasons

F: It depends on whether you count fluorescent lights in those figures. Correct me if I'm wrong, but a lot of people who have council properties ... there's a superficial look to your household. Therefore, as energy saving light bulbs are not the nicest looking bulbs... So in the main I think it comes from council households

F2: Some councils actually give you them for free. I think it's Southwark and Lambeth. (Waste Watchers, London focus group)

F: I think it's probably true because, I mean, I know from our local Tescos they were giving them away free and in an hour they were gone. (Cautious Participants, London focus group)

F: I completely agree it could happen that they maybe got [them] free with something or it was buy one, get one free and they might do it on a whim and they might have them in the house. But then I don't know anybody who has a light bulb in their house that's energy saving. (Sideline Supporters, Leeds focus group).

It seems likely that some of the questioning of motivations and the value of actions can be accounted for by self-serving denial; that is a rhetorical device to protect the self from guilt. Both Positive Green focus groups denied the importance of the action and this would be a particularly useful strategy for this segment. Given that some people may use their environmentalism to differentiate themselves from other people through a sense of being more proactive than others, it would be a helpful defence strategy to suggest that common environmental behaviours (particularly those the individual was not undertaking) had little purpose compared to their more important actions.

However, something deeper appeared to be happening as focus groups naturally discussed whether actions were morally or financially motivated. Whilst we cannot comment on the implications for behaviour without action research, it does suggest that if people perceive others are acting out of financial necessity or in response to special offers, then the need to follow suit is diminished as it suggests it is not being conducted out for pro-social or co-operative reasons. This then would reduce the need for reciprocal behaviour to be a 'good' person or do one's bit for the environment. This could have implications for marketing the range of behaviours which are seen to be becoming more normal due to the rise in fuel prices. It may well be that without the strengthening of the injunctive norm, either through a clear statement that this is the right thing to do for the environment or sense of collective pro-social action, then those undertaking pro-environmental behaviours out of a sense of collective responsibility may not feel as much need to act.

Moreover, there may be an element of trying to understand whether this represents a group of people on whom the individual wishes to model their behaviour. It seems especially relevant that the segments with the strongest values brought into the conversation some stereotypical images of the disadvantaged: those who cannot read, live in council houses or are single parents. The nature of the discussions in response to the descriptive norm raises the question of whether it is enough simply to know what most people are doing. Instead, it appears the response to a descriptive norm is to analyse who is doing it and why. It may be that neighbourhood social norm campaigns or those showing images of similar people are inherently more successful than national campaigns when seeking to change behaviour. This is because actions will be compared to a social group to whom the individual affiliates or equates themselves, or has a shared set of beliefs about how to live. Without further testing, however, we can only raise some potential issues around descriptive norm campaigns. Further research comparing the power of different descriptive norm campaigns could prove fruitful.

Summary

We have used this chapter to suggest a range of processes of normalisation which could be utilised to promote pro-environmental behaviours. This includes working with cultural discourses to normalise new pro-environmental roles and ways of thinking about the environment. In particular, we recommend utilising emerging discourse about a shift away from profligacy and wastefulness to promote new social norms and moralities around resource efficiency. These can be complemented by the use of the media to produce shared language and patterns of action, and to highlight new lifestyle possibilities and moralities through role models.

Whilst these processes can help normalise a backdrop of pro-environmental behaviours, the need for shared meanings and descriptive norms suggests these have to be created and demonstrated locally or within peer groups. The use of local descriptive norm campaigns and introducing new products or pro-environmental behaviours through work or schools can assist this; however, these need to be supported by practice rather than simply in awareness raising. Finally, there is the opportunity to create new local norms through community action and appealing to pro-environmental behaviours which have local significance, such as locally grown seasonal food.

7 GUILT

Introduction

Whilst this study has mainly focused on the primary motivations of social norms and identity, we have also explored the extent to which people are motivated by guilt. Our focus on guilt in the methodological design included:

1. Exploring the role of guilt in relation to personal and social norm violation for the specific environmental behaviours;
2. Understanding how different segments and individuals made reparation in response to feelings of guilt;
3. Testing the responses of segments to different guilt messages.

From the analysis several deeper and more interesting findings began to emerge; specifically:

- Some people felt guilty about their overall impact on climate change, others just felt guilty about particular behaviours;
- Some people felt guilty about not recycling, others about a range of waste related behaviours;
- Some of the respondents were more predisposed to feelings of guilt than others;
- A few of the respondents talked about feeling guilty about the overall impact of Western lifestyles and economic systems on other people as well as the environment as a whole, with some individuals arguing that we are a 'spoilt' or 'privileged' society.

These findings have necessitated a return to the literature to position the findings within a theoretical context. Whilst we do not wish to include complex theoretical discussions within the body of this report, we feel there is value in presenting two key literatures here as they are central to understanding the findings. At the same time, since the inclusion of these literatures is in response to the empirical research, they have not been designed into the methodology. Hence we would like to clarify that the findings within this chapter are partial, and require a specialised study of pro-environmental guilt to substantiate and further develop the conclusions before they should be used for policy purposes.

We shall begin this chapter with a brief review of the additional theories to be used in relation to the empirical findings. This will underpin an analysis of the role of state, trait and moral

standard guilt in motivating pro-environmental behaviour. Finally we shall assess how different individuals make reparation in response to guilt and the implications for action.

Key additional theories

We have found it useful to separate guilt into the state, trait and moral standard guilt schema developed by Kugler and Jones (1992).

- Trait guilt endures over long periods of time. It can include the predisposition to feel guilty. For the purposes of this research we shall also include existential guilt within trait guilt. Here we shall use existential guilt to denote a sense of guilt about affluent or privileged lifestyles;
- State guilt is behaviour specific and felt in response to breaching norms;
- Moral standards guilt is related to more unifying values or codes of conduct, such as being frugal or concern about climate impacts. It is not behaviour specific, but encompasses a range of behaviours covered by the moral standard.

Whilst it is more usual for academics to focus on state and trait guilt, we shall argue here that moral standards are useful for understanding why some respondents are more likely to be concerned about overall impacts and, therefore, follow waste behaviours than others. Additionally, we shall incorporate existential guilt into our discussion of trait guilt.

Trait, state and moral guilt

As we have outlined above, the findings from the research have suggested a role for state, trait and moral standards guilt. These have different implications for policy and how guilt can be utilised to change behaviour. We shall examine these in some depth below.

Trait guilt

It became clear throughout the interviews that some individuals were more predisposed to general guilt about their behaviour than others. Once made aware of an issue they develop a guilty conscience and feel the need to make reparation. The clearest account of the role of trait guilt predisposition is demonstrated in the Paula case study.

Case study - Paula

Paula is a career woman, with a family. She has strong values across a range of ethical areas and is extremely proactive about pursuing an ethical lifestyle. She describes herself as an idealist and her priorities in life are largely non-materialistic.

Family, happiness and health and just, I don't know really, just bringing up the children and living life with sort of good morals and just treating people how you want to be treated yourself [...] Trying to do things in the kindest way possible, if you know what I mean. Like with doing the chickens and wanting to do the pigs and eventually just trying to live a bit more organically.

Paula's strongest values are around waste. She ascribes her anti-waste values to her upbringing, with her parents being 'very moralistic'. Because of her strong anti-waste ethics she buys everything second hand that she can. This has brought her some teasing from her friends, but it also provides her with a strong sense of satisfaction. Indeed, she feels more comfortable in her current lifestyle and neighbourhood than she had felt in her last home. There she said there was a definite 'keep up with the Jones' attitude. Indeed, some of the people in her neighbourhood are still of a different 'class' to her, but her more self-sufficient lifestyle gives her an alternative status.

Paula is very guilt driven and feels guilt across a range of different concerns and behaviours.

I do [feel guilty] about wasting electricity because I think it's just a thing that takes time. I do about the car, but then I can't see any way around it in my position. The locally grown food, yes I do feel guilty when I don't buy it but then sometimes it's like I haven't got enough money to be able to do...

She recognises that she is perhaps too guilt driven and relates it to her family and religious upbringing.

I was brought up in the church. If anything it has made me a little bit too... Certainly when I was growing up, you know if I did something that was a little bit naughty I was thinking 'oooh', which I don't think was very good. I think it had a bad impact on me, you know when you have your first boyfriend and all that sort of thing. I think it just, in many ways it wasn't good because it made me feel guilty, everything I did it sort of felt a bit, filled me with guilt in terms of, you know, is this classed as not being thoughtful enough or is it classed as a sin.

Because of this trait guilt, Paula tends to have to act on things which prick her conscience. When she becomes aware of an issue then she will add it to her other actions. She says the media has brought environmental issues to her awareness, aided by her husband's interest in them.

I mean my husband has made me a little bit more, you know sort of conscious about things as well. Because I think a lot of it is, I mean he got me into the programmes and once I watched the programmes then I had a conscience about it really. Before I suppose I never really thought about it. Then once I do start thinking about it then I start feeling bad about it.

Whilst both the media and her conscience present her with new actions, they are also a source of inspiration. In particular, programmes such as Grand Designs and River Cottage have offered her alternative visions of ways to live, ones which encourage her to be true to herself and her values.

However, Paula was not alone amongst the participants in being a guilt driven person. Indeed another example is a focus group participant who said that she had to act if she felt bad about anything because otherwise '*the guilt would condemn me*'.

It is less easy to be confident about recognising those with a low predisposition to feelings of guilt in this type of research. However, we can be certain that two of our interviewees claimed to be concerned about the environment and tried to adopt pro-environmental behaviours, yet appeared to be unmotivated by guilt:

James: I am quite conscious, I make an effort.

Q: So I can't make you feel guilty about anything?

James: No, I have no conscience on that.

The research was not designed to look at trait guilt, either from personal predisposition or existential anxiety. Indeed, in the Interim Report we dismissed the exploration of existential guilt because studies have shown that its overuse in advertising had reduced its efficacy (Cotte et al, 2003). Guilt is normally defined as the negative affect aroused by the violation of personal or internalised social values and norms, and viewed as being dependent on the extent to which individuals feel responsible for and in control of their impacts. Existential guilt is a more constant sense of guilt about having a perceived, unfair advantage over others or a privileged lifestyle. It is closely related to empathy through a knowledge that others are in a less fortunate position than one's self.

However, for some respondents these issues appeared to be so central to their motivations for pro-environmental behaviour that they inevitably became part of the discussion. Thus we have included them as a key part of our findings. Here we give two examples, Melanie and Amy.

Melanie's explanations of both her pro-environmental behaviours and those she could not negotiate were caught up in notions of a 'spoilt' and 'privileged' society, where our expectations and wealth had led to us being able to consume in a way which previous generations could never have imagined. This informed her distaste of wasteful behaviours and her personal norms around second hand clothes.

Amy similarly talks about notions of being 'rich' and 'spoilt'. Indeed, her feared identity was becoming someone who was too spoilt to have enough thought for others. Whilst she was not the most proactive member of the sample, she was 'doing her bit' partly because she recognised that she was in a relatively privileged position. Having worked in a poorer country she said she had been unable to avoid seeing poverty around her all the time and this had affected her views in life:

Amy: I don't know, you just carry on with your life and you just behave like you know is the norm, but when you are faced with [seeing how poor some people are compared to you] and I've been to stay with friends in Africa, so I've seen that as well, and it just brings it home to you. So it does make you think a bit more, it does open up your mind a bit, and you know you are doing something you... Yes it does change you I think, yes you have more thought for others I guess and you don't take what you've got for granted any more.

In addition to the above examples, several of the respondents mentioned how travel in poorer regions had made them think more about their privileged lifestyle:

F: I'm very, very careful about food wastage because I've travelled a bit and I've seen poverty around the world, so I'm very conscious about not throwing away food. I freeze it. (Cautious Participants, London focus group)

Unlike other forms of guilt where there is a relationship between your actions and the consequences of these actions for other people or the environment, existential guilt can be seen to motivate simply because you are aware of the disparity between your lifestyle and the lifestyle of others (Schmitt et al, 2000)². This seems to be particularly powerful for wasteful behaviours. Indeed, existential and equity concerns about wasting food transcended income levels for those who were motivated by it, with both our interviewees with the highest and the lowest incomes mentioning it. For example, a young single mother was particularly motivated through an internalisation of her mother's existential guilt:

Q: Do you ever feel guilty about any of those sorts of things?

Jenny: I hate throwing away food. [...] My mum always hated that 'don't waste food, there is children starving', when we was younger.

Possibly the likelihood of being motivated into action by existential guilt may depend upon to whom you compare yourself. For example, one interviewee feared being too rich and spoilt. Another feared being the type of wealthy person who only cared about their looks. It may be that they are positioning themselves against materialism, as we have discussed in the self-identity chapter. However, it could be that the level of importance of relative wealth and material possessions to a person affects existential guilt. Certainly Montada's (1989)

² Although a clear causal relationship between one's own privilege and others' disadvantage is most likely to motivate reparative action.

research points to the possibility that how important the gains from inequality are to a person will affect how likely they are to feel inclined to make reparation for that inequality.

Existential guilt then operates as a background recognition of injustice. It can be the motivation for many different behaviours which an individual feels are within their control. It is viewed as being a sense of 'privilege' or feeling of inequality from being overpaid, and is therefore the opposite of the sense of deprivation and relative underpayment (Schmitt et al, 2000). Hoffman (1990) named it the 'guilt of affluence'. In this it can be seen to correspond closely with Soper's work on citizen-consumers. Soper (2005) has argued that people, particularly more affluent individuals, are critical of the levels of consumption we have in consumer societies and enjoy an alternative sense of reward through acting in ethical ways. A recognition of inequality is not enough to determine behaviour. Instead Schmitt et al (2000) and Montada (1989) argue that several factors may determine whether someone is likely to intend to act or actually act on existential guilt including:

- Moral outrage about the injustice of discrepancy;
- A causal link between one's own privilege and others' deprivations;
- Levels of perceived control or sense of hopelessness;
- Contentment with own privileges and fear about losing those privileges.

Their research was about gender inequalities rather than pro-environmental behaviour. Because of this it is impossible to be certain that the same factors would apply. However, a specialised study of existential guilt, contentment with and attachment to the gains of privilege, and pro-environmental behaviour could prove to be enlightening. Certainly, our study (which did not aim to cover such findings) would suggest a link between affluence, existential concern and a need to undertake small pro-environmental or ethical behaviours to 'give something back'. Whilst the finding can only be indicative, this appeared to be particularly relevant for the citizen-consumer, 'doing my bit' interviewees recruited to the Positive Green and Concerned Consumer segments. For example, one successful and fairly affluent interviewee appeared to have become post materialistic in his values, suggesting he no longer needed to work to support his own needs. He introduced the subject of existential guilt himself, arguing that it concerned him at an international and community level. Furthermore, he was concerned about leaving the environment in good shape for future generations:

Michael: I hate to see, you know, sorts of articles and documentaries where we are ruining a part of the world just for our Western, just to service our western culture, our

western lifestyle you know what I mean. [...] living in a more rural location you get concerned about, you know, anything that might affect those people that are dependent on a life from the land, if you like. Which is not something that I have to think about, but I would be concerned if I didn't, if there was something I knew that I was doing or everyone else was doing that needed to stop because it was affecting those people who have to live their lives like that, and I would do that.

Whilst the above quote illustrates the impact of existential guilt on behavioural intention, it is worth noting that this is not to argue that it would inevitably create behaviour change. As we have suggested in other chapters, the concept of 'balance' limits how much many of the less proactive individuals felt obliged to do:

Michael: I don't know why we haven't [bought second hand]. I think we just kind of have always felt that we do enough already.

We will return to discuss the limits to action later in this chapter. However, here we wish to conclude this section on existential guilt by suggesting more research would need to be undertaken to understand the relationship between existential guilt, affluence, values and pro-environmental behaviour before policy makers considered using it. From our limited study it appears likely that it provides part of the motivation for behavioural uptake. However, how much behaviours actually change remains to be seen. For example, is it limited (as it appears to be) by the individual's sense of 'giving back a little bit' and how they perceive their role in pro-environmental behaviour? Or, given that existential guilt is about a whole system of global consumption and economic inequalities, would the individual's inability to remove guilt about the outcome of that system eventually lead to demands for systemic change or to such a sense of hopelessness that the individual would disengage altogether?

State guilt

State guilt is specific to a behaviour based on breaching a personal norm or internalised social norm for that behaviour. In both the interviews and focus groups we asked respondents if there were any behaviours they felt guilty about not undertaking. Across the sample there were large differences in the number of behaviours people felt guilty about. The most proactive, and especially the Positive Greens, listed a wide range of behaviours including flying, car use, water use and home energy use behaviours. Those with a waste focus tended to feel guilty about wasting energy, food and water or buying unnecessary products. By contrast, the least proactive respondents within the Sideline Supporters and

Cautious Participants segments had few feelings of guilt about any behaviours other than recycling:

M: I'm afraid none of them would make me feel guilty.

Q: No?

M: I wouldn't lose sleep over them. (Sideline Supporters, London focus group)

Recycling was the behaviour most respondents felt guilty about not undertaking, being established as both a personal and social norm for individuals across the sample:

Jason: I do feel, the major one, the recycling one I really do feel guilty on because I have always recycled, and my parents have always recycled for as long as I can remember really. So for me now to stop something that I've been doing for years does make me feel a bit guilty because I know how much goes in that bin. ...

Q: So how do you deal with feeling guilty about it?

Jason: We just try and recycle as much as we can really. I mean, as I say the problem is those bins downstairs, they're full after a couple of days, so you generally find we'll recycle for the first couple of days after bin collection, and then after that most of the stuff will go in the bin.

Q: Do you feel guilty to some extent?

M: I do with recycling. I mean obviously my green bin's outside and my normal bin's inside. It's easier to put it in the normal rather than walk outside ... you feel a little bit guilty I suppose. (Sideline Supporters, Leeds focus group)

Home energy use, particularly leaving appliances on standby, and unnecessary or single occupancy car use were also regularly listed as behaviours people felt guilty about. For some of the less active participants, their personal norms were still in the process of being created in response to campaigns, raised awareness or social pressure. The immediacy and visibility of the specific problem appeared to help support state guilt in prompting behaviour change to address it:

Q: What sorts of things might make you feel guilty?

F: Well, one thing I've been really, really conscious of lately is that I always seem to be chucking out packaging in the rubbish. I don't know why I am more aware these days, but I am [...] My DVD player goes on standby and I look at that orange light virtually

every day and I just feel really guilty as I'm looking and I think 'Oh my god, I must do something about that'. (Cautious Participants, London focus group)

Having a large engined car was a source of guilt for the female respondents more than the men in the sample. Rather surprisingly, locally grown seasonal food whilst being a desirable behaviour was not as often mentioned as guilt provoking. However, a few individuals felt guilty about not supporting local or small businesses or the impact on their carbon footprint from buying food that had been brought to their local stores over long distances.

Moral standards guilt

Analysis of the narratives around pro-environmental behaviours and guilt suggest that some individuals have unifying moral values which motivate behaviours. For example, a few of the Positive Greens were concerned about their overall impact on climate change through their carbon footprint. Waste Watchers and others with waste values can be concerned about all wasteful behaviours, either through a dislike of waste or a dislike of wasting money. For these individuals, it appears that guilt is motivated by a failure to adhere to a personal moral standard rather than a behaviour-specific personal norm.

Moral standard guilt has implications for how people will respond to different behaviour change initiatives. For example, those with high levels of concern and personal responsibility in relation to climate change tended to feel guilty about flying. However, those without a strong moral standard in relation to climate change were more likely to undertake smaller actions, possibly as internalised social norms, but to have less guilt about flying. It may be that both sets of people continue to fly; however, those with moral standard guilt will need to make reparation through what Collingwood (2007) calls 'internal carbon trading':

Sally: I think we do enough. The thing that's not always good is the fact that we do fly and I do feel bad about that. ... I don't know if it's enough to make me stop, but if you can do your bit in other ways. I do make an effort, put it that way, maybe I make more of an effort because I feel bad about flying.

M: I want to go to Australia and I want to do that; I don't need to - I can enjoy where I am. I'm making sure my carbon footprint [is kept low]. For the next three years I will do something environmentally friendly so that I can feel justified in going off. (Positive Greens, Leeds focus group)

Similarly, the Waste Watchers focus groups talked about how their central concerns were about waste, rather than climate change. We presented focus groups with two different guilt messages, one an empathetic image about the impacts of climate change, the other a waste based message (with a message about avoiding both wasting money and resources more generally). Whilst responses tended to be mixed in other groups, the Waste Watchers were clear that they preferred the waste message as this talked to their own moral standards. For those who appeared to have thrift or financial frugality as a moral standard, a money saving message was established as being in line with their moral values and standards:

M: I don't feel guilty about waste, I feel guilty about the cost of waste. So if you cook too much sort of thing and then you're throwing it away, I feel guilty about the waste of money as opposed to the food. (Waste Watchers, London focus group)

What this suggests is that the format of the awareness raising and guilt messages would be most usefully targeted in the most appropriate format for the target audience. Thus offsetting messages should be targeted at those with moral standards around climate change or carbon footprints. However, for those with strong waste values, carbon messages (and perhaps even carbon footprints) might have more impact if they are couched in terms of how much is being wasted rather than just used. Indeed, further research which established whether using carbon footprints enables the development of moral standards across all groups could help inform the best way forward with guilt based initiatives. It may be that it pushes individuals to think about their entire impact rather than doing a few small actions; or it could fail to resonate with those who have different concerns. As it stands, the focus on climate change can alienate some individuals who oppose the concept:

M: The problem is that the environment automatically adds up to global warming. If it was something else I might bother, but it doesn't do it for me. (Cautious Participants, Leeds focus group)

Guilt: a personal or social emotion?

The original specification for this project asked for an understanding of whether guilt was based on personal impacts or social expectations. From our findings we would argue that both can be sources of guilt. We do not have the level of results which would enable a robust comparison of different segments. However, we would tentatively suggest that the most proactive individuals recruited as Positive Greens or Waste Watchers tended to be concerned about their personal impacts on climate change or levels of waste, but most individuals in the total sample felt guilty about impacts in relation to particular behaviours.

Similarly, most members of the sample were affected by social expectations. However, some of the younger interviewees recruited as Sideline Supporters appeared to principally feel guilty in relation to social expectations.

Whilst some of these young Sideline Supporters did acknowledge feeling guilty about particular behaviours this was often in relation to pressure from friends or family, occasionally appearing to be a transient emotion rather than substantial enough to motivate behaviour. Indeed, one individual suggested that he only tended to feel guilt in response to discussions about the issues:

Brad: It is only when I am talking about it that I think about it. The car, yes, sometimes I do feel guilty about using it, I mean I do use it for stupid journeys and things, but it is not in the forefront of my thoughts.

This suggests an absence of personal norms and that social expectations have not yet been internalised. Indeed, some of the young participants appeared to be lacking a proactive social group who would provide the social expectations of behaviour, although they suggested that if the process of social comparison highlighted a failure to follow the descriptive norm they would feel guilty:

F: I think [seeing other people doing things] would work with me because I'm a little bit influenced by other people around me and I think if I saw other people do it, and I'm not doing it, then I do tend to feel a bit guilty. And then I will kind of copy them. (Sideline Supporters, London focus group)

Making reparations

Guilt is a distressing emotion (Miceli and Castelfranchi, 1998). Classified as an 'approach emotion', an individual who is feeling guilt has to make reparation to remove guilt and restore self esteem. For much of the time this reparation is to change behaviour to avoid the negative impacts and feelings. However, from the interviews it appears that feeling guilty about a behaviour does not mean it will be acted upon, even for individuals with trait guilt, such as the example below:

Q: Do you ever feel guilty about these sorts of things or are you quite happy with what you are doing?

Melanie: *No. I threw a couple of plastic containers away in the bin and I was thinking 'this is so not good'. And the other thing is if things were packaged better in cardboard and things. [...] but it doesn't stop me buying it, that's the problem, maybe I should make more of a conscious effort not to buy it which is not what I am doing. I am picking up the apples or whatever and putting them in a plastic bag.*

Habitual behaviours, behaviours which are too difficult or demanding, and behaviours which have too much meaning for the individual or important others, may also limit the likelihood of action:

Gill: *Yes, again, you do feel guilty that you should be doing that little bit more, and you get a burst of trying to be good, and then you slip back into your old habits.*

A range of devices allows the individual other ways to reduce their guilt or to restore self esteem which removes the need to act on a specific behaviour. These include:

1. Compensation, for example by offsetting impacts through undertaking different (and often easier) behaviours;
2. Denial of responsibility.

We will discuss these briefly below. Before that we wish to make the point that from our sample, social comparison appears to be central to the ability to negate guilt. Whether the interviewee was talking about compensating with other behaviours or denying they were the real problem, comparing one's actions favourably with other peoples' was often key to ameliorating guilt. The very notion of 'doing my bit' allowed many in the sample to see themselves as doing as much as, if not more than, other people. If everyone is doing their bit for the environment, then there is no need to do more than a few simple actions until others do the same. And whilst those with strong moral standards undoubtedly felt the need to do more than those with personal or social norms for individual behaviours, they could still repair self-esteem by recognising that they were doing more than others.

1. Compensation

Compensation can include offsetting guilt through other behaviours, as we have seen in the case of the Positive Greens and their attitude to flying. As we have suggested, possibly because of the conceptualisation of pro-environmental behaviour as 'doing my bit', people were able to do a limited amount to offset their conscience, including doing less of the problem behaviour.

Victoria: *I feel guilty if I have a bath.*

Q: Do you? Why?

Victoria: *Because again it's the water and the heating that's you know, energy efficient and it's much better to have a shower. You know, but having a bath is sort of my luxury now.*

Q: You still have a bath even though it makes you feel guilty?

Victoria: *I do, but less often and I make it, you know, very smelly and lovely and more of a treat.*

Debbie: *No, I don't feel guilty [about the sports car] to be honest because I only use the car when I have to and I car share with it.*

2. Denial of responsibility

The second major mechanism we identified for repairing guilt was to deny responsibility for the impact. Following Lindenberg and Steg's (2007) formulation of self-serving denial, we analysed the transcripts for the following phenomenon:

- Denying the seriousness of the problem;
- Suggesting personal impact is insignificant compared to others;
- Denying the ability to control the problem;
- Denying responsibility for the problem.

Whilst some of the sample undoubtedly denied they were the problem, particularly those in the Cautious Participants focus groups, it is less clear that it was a process of denial so much as a failure to accept personal responsibility for any environmental impacts in the first place. However, amongst those who had accepted some level of responsibility, the main process of denial appeared to be located around suggesting one's personal impact was insignificant compared to others.

Kevin: *I couldn't be called someone who kind of wilfully abused the resources of the earth. You know I don't think I am using up or wasting stuff...So I would say I think if everybody behaved like me, I suspect, immodestly, that the world would be in a better shape than it is.*

Helen: *I am not going to feel guilty for flying a lot because some countries and people do nothing and don't care at all and are ignorant and don't even think about it.*

There was some suggestion that particular groups of individuals deny behavioural control, thereby negating the need for guilt. Those interviewees, who were 'doing their bit' without strong personal norms, talked about how they tried to balance environmental needs with the needs of friends and family. So whilst they may feel guilty about their lack of pro-environmental behaviour, they would feel guiltier about having a negative impact on their family. Because of this, people described how they were not fully in control of their own pro-environmental behaviours:

Jeff: Guilt that I could be doing more, yes. But some of the decisions I don't feel are mine alone to make in as much as I've got a partner and having a happy marriage is more important to me than trying to push my ideas on cars.

Additionally, where people had tried to undertake more environmentally friendly behaviours and found that they had adversely affected their family, they were unwilling to repeat the behaviour. This reaction appeared to remove the need to feel guilty about it. Holidays abroad, for example, fell into this category.

Stuart: My two kids have been away every year since they have been born. They take it as normal that they are going away abroad, and to be fair to them we swapped our holidays around last year to take a holiday in the UK and we were so bored. Never again will I do that, it will either be we have a week or two weeks away.

Summary

We have argued that it is useful to recognise the difference between trait, state and moral standards guilt when encouraging pro-environmental behaviour. Whilst state guilt is held in relationship to particular behaviours for which an individual has a personal or internalised social norm, moral standards guilt relates to a range of behaviours which breach the individual's personal strong values or standards, such as not wasting money or reducing their carbon footprint. We have suggested that further work on moral standards might help to target campaigns at particular groups more effectively. For example, exploring whether a 'waste footprint' would be more effective for motivating those who hate waste.

We have highlighted trait guilt around the concept of existential guilt. We acknowledge that this requires further research in order to recognise its impacts on pro-environmental behaviours. Nonetheless, we have reintroduced this concept to our work in response to unprompted discussions about this sort of guilt in the interviews.

Finally we have suggested some key mechanisms that individuals use to alleviate guilt. We have argued that these are primarily comparative in nature, allowing the individual to feel that they have compensated for their impacts if they believe they have done their bit in comparison to others.

8 AGENCY

Introduction

We were asked to explore whether agency played a primary role in motivating or preventing pro-environmental behaviour. We did not ask about either of the two main elements of agency (self-efficacy and perceived behavioural control) directly. Instead we allowed interviewees and focus groups to introduce the subject so we could study when it appeared to be an actual barrier to action and when it was more of a rhetorical justification for inaction. The result was that the respondents did actually spend a lot of time explaining their perceptions of ease, difficulty and efficacy even though they were not responding to any specific questions on these subjects.

In the interviews, issues around self-efficacy and the individual's ability to make a difference were raised occasionally by interviewees. Certainly, for many of the interviewees, feelings of self-efficacy were caught up with their notion of 'doing their bit as part of a collective'. Hence, these feelings appear to provide the backdrop to the decision to engage in pro-environmental behaviours generally. However, they did not appear to be as important in the decision making process for the specific environmental behaviours that we studied. Concerns about the difficulty of performing the behaviour, and how much it would impact upon their chosen lifestyle, often created barriers to taking action. In the focus group discussions, self-efficacy issues were far more prominent, as participants debated whose responsibility it was to undertake different environmental actions, how effective they would be and whether everyone else would be doing their bit at the same time.

We will use this section to highlight a few key issues around agency and to suggest that different types of people react differently to considerations of self-efficacy and convenience, and that these considerations were often dependent upon the strength of their environmental values. We will discuss the primacy of convenience and lifestyle fit in many of the respondents' decisions about behaviour; highlight how a sense of collective action can be more important than self-efficacy concerns; and suggest that individuals need to feel empowered in the face of environmental issues.

Belief in making a difference

Perhaps the most surprising finding from this research project was the number of people who did not believe their pro-environmental behaviours would make a difference but who continued to act anyway. Mainly, it was the most proactive or pro-environmental members of

the sample who had little belief in the efficacy of their individual actions in the face of a failure of collective action. However, some of the least enthusiastic members of the sample similarly acted without a sense that they were making a meaningful impact:

Mark: I'm doing my bit. I'm using my energy bulb, I'm saving on water, I'm recycling. I'm doing my bit now, but I don't think it will have any impact.

M: Yes you can do a bit. I do do a bit. If everybody does a bit the world will be a better place. But unfortunately not many people do. (Cautious Participants, Leeds focus group).

Melanie: I would never not do something just because it won't make a difference.

The focus group discussions were full of stories about how local actions would be cancelled out by other countries, how recycling goes straight to landfill, how carbon offsetting is a con and green taxes are about making money. There is a genuine lack of certainty about the efficacy of personal actions, which cannot be explained away as merely the justification for inaction. Instead cynicism about the actions of other people, businesses, governments and even whole countries, and the logic of the economic system, left people questioning the likelihood of ever finding an effective solution to climate change.

From the sample, it appears that the most proactive Positive Greens will act even when others do not, and in the face of uncertainty about issues, because of the strength of their personal norms, acceptance of personal responsibility or as a control strategy. Thus, certainly for smaller actions, concerns about the inefficacy of their actions in a global climate do not prevent them from acting. However, when action is motivated by the need to enhance self esteem, questions about the efficacy of small actions do become relevant:

F: The general consensus of people is you get that self-gratification from thinking you are helping the planet, and you feel good about yourself. You think 'okay, I am doing my bit'. But are we doing our bit? It would be nice to get some feedback knowing we are. (Positive Greens, London focus group)

For the slightly less proactive members of the sample, acting in the face of uncertainty appears to be motivated when the appropriate structures are in place or from a sense of civic duty. This latter motivation seems to be essential to many of those in the sample who were acting out of a sense of shared responsibility and a feeling that everyone should 'do their bit'

for the environment. These respondents appeared to acknowledge that climate change is an issue requiring mass action. Unlike some of the inactive participants, they tend to have a social group who also undertake small behaviours, providing a sense of a supportive community that offers some optimism about the future. Thus for smaller actions, they are happy to take responsibility for doing their bit in the hope that others will act as well:

M: I think there is always a sense that, you know, whatever I am doing is not actually going to make a dent. Whereas if you know that other people are doing the same it may give you that better sense of it making that dent that will help in the future. (Concerned Consumers, London focus group)

Stuart: I am actually quite keen to try and do my little bit for the environment. Whether my bit is going to be enough long term I really don't know, but hopefully what will happen is that more and more people will buy into it.

It is possible that those 'doing their bit' could be further encouraged to adopt new behaviours if they see a large scale take up of that behaviour. Their belief in collective action probably goes some way to explain the positive response to popular campaigns, such as the switch from single use, plastic carrier bags to reusable bags.

As we have argued in the section on social norms, some of the individuals recruited as Sideline Supporters and Cautious Participants were lacking an environmentally active social network. For them, the sense that no-one else was acting was enhanced. The Cautious Participant focus groups and some interviewees talked about how they would only continue to do something if they thought others were doing it too. As soon as they saw others not acting they would stop. From this we can see that those 'doing their bit as part of a collective' are acting on the basis of 'I will if you will'. However, on the ground, for some Sideline Supporters and Cautious Participants this comes closer to being 'I won't if you won't'.

In summary, what we are arguing is that the pro-environmental behaviour we observed did not always appear to be affected by a sense of efficacy. Instead, often a sense of civic duty, shared responsibility and reciprocity underpinned the behaviours of those doing a bit; and personal norms and responsibility underpinned the behaviours of those doing a lot. Whilst this sense of personal or shared responsibility may drive many of the smaller behaviours, those behaviours which demand greater personal sacrifice are likely to require a demonstration of effectiveness. The general sense of uncertainty about how effectively the global challenges of climate change will be met cannot be ignored by those working to

increase pro-environmental behaviour. All sectors of society need to visibly demonstrate that they are prepared to undertake a step change in pro-environmental behaviour if wide scale public behaviour change is to be encouraged rather than enforced.

Desperately seeking leadership?

From the previous Defra 'Public Understanding' reports we had expected to find a strong degree of desire for political leadership for more pro-environmental behaviour. There was certainly discussion within all the focus groups around how government must provide better leadership and place business under more of an obligation to fulfil their duties. However, there were also subtle differences across the groups around the perceived willingness and ability of government and business to provide leadership.

We had developed a pen portrait of Sideline Supporters, which included mention of how they believed business has a responsibility to undertake pro-environmental behaviours. This pen portrait was presented to the focus groups. The less active Cautious Participants identified themselves with this pen portrait because of the focus on business behaviour. Largely this is because the participants had still not accepted individual action as a primary site for environmental responsibility:

M: I think government's got to get the organisations to set an example. If an organisation was not doing something what right have you got to tell me [to do something]. (Cautious Participants, Leeds focus group)

At the same time, some Cautious Participant focus group members had a high degree of scepticism about the willingness of individuals, business and government to act for the environment. Both the lack of acceptance of personal responsibility and a desire to see others act first meant that some Cautious Participants were not convinced of the need to engage in pro-environmental behaviours. Indeed, the Leeds focus group suggested that there was no point expecting them to act voluntarily for the sake of the environment without some social or financial incentive. They readily admitted that left to their own devices, they would do nothing. This suggests that this segment will require a high degree of leadership if they are to change their behaviour. Yet, they were sceptical of the willingness of government to do anything to intervene if it had negative impacts on the economy.

This scepticism was shared by one of the Waste Watchers focus groups. Here, the ability of government to provide leadership in the face of global issues, both environmental and economic, was called into question:

M: What more can we do? It boils down to the fact about these emissions coming out, as I mentioned before, from factories and things. But that's government, that's the government's problem. They're the ones that must deal with all this. We're trying, we're reducing waste, we're doing all this that saves money and energy etc etc. It's down to government to deal with the big organisations, and yet their hands are tied because it's down to money, it's all down to pound notes. [...] It's down to the upper echelons of power and other countries that are causing the bigger problems. (Waste Watchers, Leeds focus group)

The quote underlines one of the other main findings from this project: people understand environmental problems and solutions in the light of global capitalism. Many respondents felt personally locked-in to a damaging economic and consumption system, yet were uncertain about the possibility or desirability of change. They also acknowledged that other actors, including business and government, were locked-in to the same system which made them question the willingness of all agents to instigate any changes that might threaten their financial or political future.

Whilst this recognition of lock-in could create a drift towards inaction, the more proactive and environmentally concerned respondents counteracted this by viewing themselves as being in a position to offer some form of leadership. Other groups might argue that the responsibility for providing leadership rests with government and business, the Leeds Positive Greens focus group, which contained some very self-determined individuals with high levels of personal agency, took a different approach. In the absence of any meaningful political leadership they argued that they should push for more effective leadership:

M: Our elected leaders make a mockery of the efforts we are making.

F: I remember reading that the public are much more for green things than the politicians. You know, the politicians actually are just doing almost the minimum and it is probably up to us to get in touch with the council and say 'I am horrified, what are you going to do about it?'. (Positive Greens, Leeds focus group)

In summary, a general lack of leadership was recognised by many of the respondents across the sample. Some of the less engaged groups of individuals felt government must get business to provide more leadership. Others in the sample perceived that government was unable to provide leadership within a global economic system. Hence, the Positive Greens

emphasise the important role that the individual can play in creating the pressure that helps to establish clear leadership on issues relating to the environment.

Pro-environmental behaviour as self-empowerment and personal agency

It should be becoming clear that individuals differ in their response to a perceived lack of self-efficacy for environmental issues. For example, it could be anticipated that the level of concern Positive Greens had about environmental issues would leave them feeling disempowered in the face of global inaction. On the other hand, for some participants in the sample, the opposite seemed to be true. Indeed, they appeared to derive a positive sense of self-empowerment from developing proactive control strategies. For the less active end of the segment and those already 'doing their bit', this was closely related to their need to do something to reduce their own negative impact and legacy for future generations:

Jo: Yes, yes because then I feel like I'm doing my little bit at the end of the day we all have to live here don't we and we'll have grandchildren further on down the line and I'd like to think that further on that life's going to be a better for them environmentally.

Amy: On a larger scale I worry, you know, what's going to happen when we're not around and what world they are going to live in, so we try and do our little bit for sort of later on.

However, for the most proactive individuals, undertaking large scale pro-environmental behaviours created feelings of competence and provided a sense of personal control over the future. In particular, those engaging in a shift to self-sufficiency appeared to utilise it to create a sense of agency in the face of global problems. Indeed, for a few of the interviewees, improvements in their lifestyles meant that they had reduced concerns about the risks of climate change to their families:

Nigel: I do definitely [worry about my son's future]. I think I do, yes. How much do I worry about it? Perhaps I don't worry about it that much. In fact I think I don't you know, I worry more about his safety. Perhaps I don't worry enough about global warming and how it will affect him...because I firmly believe that there will be a planet here in millions of years to come until the sun burns out. So I think if we do go through some major global warming I might be the man to make it through with my [self-sufficiency] skills and everybody else on the computers is finished.

Whilst the above quote undoubtedly represents the extreme end of pro-environmental control strategies and feelings of empowerment, across the sample people talked about how doing nothing did not present them with a useful or self-enhancing option:

Sally: I do feel as long as I'm doing something I can live with myself easier than doing nothing.

Q: Why do you bother to make the effort to do these things?

Victoria: You have to really, don't you?

*F: Like you say, I mean a lot of it is probably too late, but you know rather than being defeatist about it, I think a lot of people are actually caring more about the environment rather than just trying to change it and actually just generally caring more. So maybe that's why people are now sort of doing little things that they can on an individual basis to try and make a difference, even though it is not going to affect the bigger picture.
(Cautious Participants, London focus group)*

One of the functions underlying self-identity is a feeling of competency to undertake a particular action or respond to a problem. Creating agency in the wake of a recognised problem is essential to self-esteem. It is likely that environmental action in part helps to create a sense of competency that helps model control strategies that can counteract feelings of disempowerment in the face of global climate change. The trend towards growing your own fruit and vegetables, and reducing reliance on external suppliers might also be driven by the need to control a small part of life and offset the negative feelings created by collective problems. All those in our sample who were moving towards self-sufficiency talked about the sense of community around gardening and growing your own food. People tended to swap food with friends and family, and some had been given livestock by other enthusiasts. However, at the same time some of the narratives around self-sufficiency suggest that it is an individualistic control strategy. As such it may represent the failure of collective action to provide a sense of efficacy for the more proactive members of the public, highlighting the need to ensure that people are not disconnecting from a shared sense of responsibility in favour of personal solutions.

Perceptions of the scale of the challenge

Within the literature it has been suggested that awareness raising and guilt inducing messages are at their most effective when agency has been clearly established. This means that the message needs to provide actions which the individual can undertake to relieve their

guilt and still feel sufficiently competent to carry them out. When testing this message format in the focus groups we provided two different images that were aimed at encouraging people to switch off unwanted lights. One showed stranded polar bears and the other a simple picture of a light bulb. Even though the images were highlighting the need to carry out a relatively simple action, one of the Concerned Consumer focus groups talked about how they still found the scale of the challenge disempowering:

F: I think this one, that makes it so simple to do. This one, it makes you feel like gosh, it is such a mammoth task and it is just so overwhelming.

M: Yes.

Q: And is that just because it does not tell you what to do? I mean it's still got 'please turn off unwanted lights' on it. Or is it the whole image too big a message?

M: There's so many other things involved with making that right. Whereas this is one thing, you can do it. (Concerned Consumers, London focus group)

This focus group was dominated by the 'doing my bit' type of citizen-consumers we have referred to throughout the report. The group agreed that they did not want to have to change their lifestyles significantly or give up the sort of services and goods they found meaningful in life (see below for further discussion). For this set of individuals, limiting the size of the task and scale of the challenge was essential to providing them with the perception of behavioural control.

In contrast, both Cautious Participants focus groups were sceptical about the notion that people could pick and choose small actions to address a problem as large as climate change. Whilst not undertaking much pro-environmental behaviour themselves, and rarely doing so voluntarily, the Cautious Participant groups suggested that the Concerned Consumer stance of 'doing my bit whilst still maintaining luxuries and holidays' was hypocritical. This underlines the challenge for policy makers. Some individuals, including those who are active and those who are not, believe that substantial behaviour change is required to address the scale of the environmental issues we are facing and so fail to see the efficacy of small actions. However, to propose the magnitude of change that would be required to address the problems effectively could risk alienating some of those people who are taking tentative steps towards environmentalism by 'doing their bit'.

Knowing what to do

A lack of awareness and information about pro-environmental behaviours has traditionally been cited as one of the main issues to be addressed by campaigners and government alike.

We did not set out to study the participant's levels of knowledge about environmental actions in detail but we do have some incidental findings from the different stages of the research. For example, each focus group was started with a general question that required them to name things they could do for the environment. Whilst we found that the Positive Greens and Waste Watcher groups named more behaviours than the other groups, we also found that all the groups demonstrated a very good appreciation of the key environmental behaviours which could be undertaken.

More specifically, in relation to the seven pro-environmental behaviours we studied, we found a generally high level of awareness about energy saving behaviours, both in the home and for transport. Loft and cavity wall insulation were clearly recognised as key behaviours for reducing energy consumption; though we did have the impression that there is still a lack of awareness about the levels of appropriate insulation, with most people believing it was a behaviour they had completed years ago. Sustainable fish stood out as being the one behaviour which had low levels of awareness and understanding, and there was a small amount of confusion about what constituted local food (for example two interviewees interpreted this as being about buying from their corner shop). In summary, a lack of information is unlikely to prevent people from engaging in pro-environmental behaviours generally, but may affect the interpretation and, therefore, the instigation of particular behaviours.

One additional point about knowing what to do refers to the problems encountered by individuals who had changed their behaviour only to find that they were suddenly in the wrong. Most of these anecdotes concerned the rapidly changing taxation system around road fuels and vehicle exercise duty. One of the most environmentally active of our interviewees had started towards self-sufficiency some years ago. Renovating an old house, having some livestock and holidaying in the UK by caravanning made owning a 4x4 a logical and practical choice. However, this attempt to live sustainably has led to higher taxation and a level of social stigma, showing how hard it is to get it right once you step outside what might be considered to be 'normal' behaviours.

Frugal consumers seemed to be particularly vulnerable to issues around 'knowing what to do'. The focus groups revealed that there are tensions in the decision making process for some Waste Watchers who were trying to balance their hatred of waste against the desire to reduce costs. Thus getting rid of an old car which was in working order to buy one with lower fuel consumption or road tax could be a lengthy decision for some. Partly this is based on their careful approach to financial decision making, but it is also related to the fact that this is

a group of people who do not tend to make regular changes to their lives. Indeed, focus group participants told us about how changing prices had caught them out in their car purchasing. Some had bought diesel engines because they were cheaper only to find diesel fuel prices increase even more rapidly than unleaded petrol. Another participant talked about how he had deliberately bought a car in the lowest road tax category, but then found it was not the cheapest category after the changes earlier in the year. Given their cautious and thoughtful response to price incentives, campaigns targeted at Waste Watchers or frugal consumers should treat them in the same way as they would business: setting out clear long term incentives which they can plan for, ensuring these incentives are kept consistent over time so that they know what to do and when.

Additionally, there were tensions between frugality or non-wasteful behaviours and thrift in relation to '2 for 1' offers. Whilst it could be assumed that those who were careful with money would be attracted by multi-buy offers, in fact those with waste or frugality concerns did not want to risk buying too much. Both Waste Watcher focus groups talked about how complicated they found decision making which challenged their waste minimisation values:

F: You can't always only buy as much as you need because they keep giving you three for two.

M: You've got to be disciplined.

F2: Just buy one.

F: I don't mind some of the offers, because you are going to get to use them up, but otherwise if I just get one it's going to cost me more money. But I do it because I don't want to waste food and throw it out.

M: Well you are of an age who wouldn't waste food.

F: No.

M: I would say the older generation, we were brought up on rationing. (Waste Watchers, Leeds Focus Group)

This suggests that any environmental multi buy campaigns targeted at this group of people will have to be closely tied to non-perishable products.

Ease, difficulty and convenience

The ease or difficulty with which a particular pro-environmental behaviour could be performed was central to the likelihood of the uptake of the behaviour for most of the participants in our sample. Thus public transport use in London presented itself as an easy behaviour choice for many of the sample. However, for those with children (see Karry case

study) or people in less well served parts of the country, the inconvenience of using public transport acted as a barrier to the behaviour. Even those who tended not to undertake actions for the environment would recycle when easy to use facilities were provided. In the absence of those facilities several members of our sample who had previously recycled had stopped because they suddenly found it to be too much of an inconvenience.

The simple message about agency from the research was that the easier the behaviour, the greater the uptake particularly amongst those people who lack strong pro-environmental norms or values. Moreover, people appeared to feel more of an obligation to undertake the behaviours which had been facilitated, and tended to feel guilty if they failed to undertake the simplest actions:

Amy: [Recycling] I think that's my biggest thing. It's sort of what we find easiest as a family to sort of take control of. The other things are a bit sort of, you know, further out of our reach really. And I leave the energy efficient stuff up to hubby, you know, it's more up his street really.

M: You do follow the campaigns because they're easy, you know what I mean. You can pick up things without having to make any specific changes really. (Sideline Supporters, Leeds focus group)

Case study - Karry

Karry has strong environmental values, and actively tries to live a more ethical lifestyle, although cannot achieve as much as she would like. She lives in a pleasant urban location on a fairly low income. She is politically aware and has concerns about a range of different consumer ethics. Her friends are very similar to her in this, and would find wasteful consumption of resources 'vulgar'. She has close friends who are active, political greens, making environmental concern a norm within her social network.

Karry has travelled widely, including parts of the Third World. She feels we live in a privileged society and that she is lucky not to have to live in a polluted or unsafe part of the city. When asked about behavioural norms she suggests her friendship group do not reflect the rest of society:

'I think there's such a significant difference between people I know and the population in general.'

She ascribes this difference to their relative ability to make choices away from the pressures to conform to consumer society or to prove one's status through consumer goods.

Karry has strong views about the relationship between consumption, society and social/environmental impacts. These are portrayed through her anti-materialistic values, which she puts into practice through her dedication to purchasing second hand goods. She is very sensitive to what she sees as being 'snob value' or marketing driven consumer desires. These anti-materialistic values are deeply tied up with her sense of self; she describes herself in opposition to consumption.

'I'm not very good at girly things like shopping. I don't look forward to shopping and I don't look forward to that kind of pursuit.'

Indeed, Karry suggested that rather than changing her lifestyle, pro-environmental behaviours appealed to her because they fitted with who she already was and how she saw the world. She says that she prefers antiques and second hand goods because they have belonged to someone else and have a history which makes them special.

'I just don't personally get the kind of culture of modern [society]. Obviously I am not very minimalist, but the idea of having everything new and everything has to be disposable - it frightens me. The more packaging there is, the harder it is to repair a white good, the more emphasis there is on throwing things away, the more frightened I get. And it is a feeling of fear actually, as well as a feeling of anger and a sense of being duped, because today's trend is tomorrow's embarrassment.'

So for Karry, part of her sense of authenticity is bound up with not being duped into unnecessary consumption. She likes products to have meaning, to know their ethical history and to be connected to a more meaningful society. Because of this, even when a product is marketed as being green, she is only interested if it does not appear to be 'packaged'.

She frequently expresses guilt about her lack of action and says that she is motivated because issues 'prick her conscience'. However, at the same time she often cannot achieve her ideal level of action, particularly now that she has children. She has strong discourses around the ease and difficulty of actions, sometimes talking about those behaviours she does not do in quite emotive language as well. So whilst she talks about the 'dreadfulness of driving', she also explains her choice to drive by saying she 'would not sacrifice weekends away' or put up with the 'horror and mass inconvenience' of taking her children by train

There did appear to be a close relationship between personal values and the importance of the environment to the individual, and how much inconvenience the individual was willing to countenance. Because of this, it is hardly surprising that some of the less motivated participants found anything which required effort to be off-putting. Indeed, even the highly facilitated activity of recycling was viewed as inconvenient by a few participants:

Gill: I think all of my friends feel the same, you feel you should do your bit and we want to do our bit, but sometimes it is not always convenient or it is too much like hard work. I don't know, I feel a bit like that.

Asha: Like recycling and that can be a bit boring, can't it?

Until social norms change to the point where they see it as being their duty to undertake particular environmental behaviours that are currently too difficult or challenging to their sense of self or their social identity, it is unlikely that most of the sample would be willing to put themselves out to any high degree. For many 'doing my bit' means quite literally a bit and needs to be achievable without threatening or compromising their lifestyles:

F: Flying is difficult to give up.

F2: That's difficult.

Q: How about you?

M: I wouldn't give up flying no. I love going on holidays and I look forward to them and it makes you feel great. I do so many other things...

F: It's a balance.

M: Yes, it is striking a balance. Unfortunately sometimes you can't do everything.

(Concerned Consumers, London focus group)

We have talked about the role of 'balance' in other chapters of this report. It is worth reiterating here that the notion of balance means that whilst smaller, simple behaviours will be undertaken by those who feel they should do their bit, they would not be willing to make major changes until they perceive that there is a widespread social pressure to do so or the price incentives are right. The younger members of the sample, recruited as Sideline Supporters, tended to be very honest about how they were unwilling to undertake behaviours which would negatively impact on their lifestyle:

Brad: *Yes, I feel like I do stuff, but I probably could do more. A lot of it is a change of lifestyle and do I want to change my lifestyle? No, not really. I am quite happy with what I do.*

So if an action has too much of an impact on lifestyles, an individual may stop doing it altogether. This is especially true for those without strong environmental values. If they sense that other people (and particularly within their social network) are not bothering, it makes it significantly easier to justify not doing anything themselves:

Q: And are you a recycler?

Bella: *Yes, I've got my recycling box on the window sill, but I tried recycling my food and it was disgusting and I realised I don't have enough food to make it worth it...*

Q: Do they collect food here then?

Bella: *They do, but I've noticed that no-one else does it any more either, so I think everyone gave up sort of trying. Yes, everyone tried at first and then it just got too grim.*

At the extreme end of inactivity, the type of behaviours which engaged the most cynical Cautious Participants had to be very simple. The 'Wash clothes at 30°C' campaign was mentioned by both focus groups as the sort of thing they would be willing to do. Indeed, this was the only segment to suggest actions which placed the individual in a completely passive role:

M: *I don't know if people are aware of it and whether it's a good thing. I think maybe like when the supermarkets introduce less packaging people don't resist it. Do you get what I mean? I don't know if that is an [environmental] action, but they're not resisting innovation when it happens. (Cautious Participants, London focus group)*

Whilst those with few pro-environmental values and no active involvement with a supportive community will need structural change, or very easy and low cost behaviours to encourage them into voluntary behaviour change, there is a much more positive story to be told about those with strong values and personal norms. The more proactive participants, whether motivated by frugality, concerns about waste or climate change tended to undertake a range of behaviours, many of which came at inconvenience or personal expense. Indeed, not only were they willing to make substantial lifestyle changes, but several of the sample talked about how they would engage in other behaviours outside the home, such as clearing litter from their local area or collecting recycling from other people.

Q: So you'd like to think you're reasonably kind of proactive?

Debbie: Yes, yes, so much that, I'll just quickly tell you about this. About 2/3 years ago I heard on the radio an old lady ring up and say that she wanted to recycle, but she couldn't recycle because the local refuse collectors didn't come to collect newspapers, tins etc. I got in touch with the radio station, this is serious, who got in touch with the lady and when I went and recycled my stuff I used to go to that lady and pick [her stuff up].

To end this section on a positive note, we found that several of the less active interviewees, particularly those recruited as Sideline Supporters, had introduced environmental schemes at work. Whilst these were predominantly to do with reducing paper use or recycling, it still suggests that where an individual with a strong sense of personal agency has developed a personal norm around a behaviour, they will work hard to encourage that behaviour in all spheres of their life. For one participant, who had strong personal norms about recycling even though he undertook little other pro-environmental behaviour, this meant not only introducing recycling at work, but taking responsibility for collecting it and taking it to the local recycling centre.

Summary

Across the sample, there was considerable uncertainty about the efficacy of personal action. There is a need for stronger messages about the difference that individual behaviour can make, although if those messages are challenged by other actors they will continue to create questions about efficacy in the mind of the public. In the meantime, those with strong environmental values and norms act out of a sense of personal responsibility, to feel good or empowered in the face of major concerns about the future of the environment. Others will continue to 'do their bit' out of a sense of being part of collective action to address environmental issues.

It is widely recognised that the easier and more convenient a pro-environmental behaviour is made, the more likely it is to be undertaken. Therefore changing structures to make behaviours more convenient, normal and practical will be essential to secure widespread action. Moreover, financial considerations were important in making decisions about appropriate behaviour. Those behaviours which are seen to demand too much of a sacrifice to people's ideal lifestyles, identities or purses will not encourage wide scale behaviour change unless people have the supporting personal values or social norms that will offer them the personal reward they are seeking.

9 MOTIVATIONS BY BEHAVIOUR

Introduction

Whilst the focus of this report has been on presenting our findings about the motivations under study, we here briefly summarise limited findings by behaviour where we think these provide interesting insights. The aim is not to establish a comprehensive set of meanings for the five segments studied (segments 1-5), but instead to reveal commonality across the interviews, especially where we think we have something new to add. As such, we talk here about the social insights from some behaviours more than others. The interviews were conducted at a moment of rapid price rises and many of the explanations for action revolved around cost and structures. However, we are not focusing here on economic motivations and shall focus on the personal and social meanings of the behaviours.

Some goods and behaviours hold strong meanings for the individual. These can be personal, social or moral. They are understood as conveying messages about the person socially; different behaviours have high or low levels of status and are more or less normal. When social norms of a reference group are breached the individual may be subject to social disapproval in the form of criticism, taunts or stigmatisation. Acting in line with the norms of the group can provide social approval or a sense of belonging. Adopting particular behaviours can provide the individual with a sense of authenticity, pride or self-reward when personally meaningful. They can reassure the individual that they are a good and caring person when they have moral meaning. Finally, people can feel the need to undertake behaviours in line with their personal values, norms and attitudes, and will feel good about themselves when they do or guilty if they do not. In this section we will outline some of the most common personal, social and moral meanings discussed in relation to the seven pro-environmental behaviours we studied.

As we have discussed within the theory section, there are two aspects to social norms: a descriptive and an injunctive component. The first refers to what a referent group does, the second refers to those behaviours that they approve of. We shall provide a general sense of who and how many people were perceived to be undertaking each behaviour. We will highlight stigma and status signifiers, as well as less commanding beliefs about what sort of actions 'people like me' undertake. We will introduce the conceptualisation of goods as being luxuries and the rewards for hard work. Finally we will talk about which pro-environmental behaviours carry moral values, both environmentally and in terms of doing the best for one's family and society.

Recycling

Recycling was not one of the behaviours we set out to study, although we did have the 'reduce, reuse, recycle' sign on one of the flash cards we used in the interviews. It was, however, possibly the behaviour that was the most talked about. We would infer from this that recycling has not only become the symbolic behaviour for environmentally friendliness, it is also used as a signifier by which to demonstrate and judge others' environmental actions³. Indeed for the less active individuals in the sample it can be used to signify the person is 'doing their bit' for the environment.

Only a few of the interviewees did not recycle, mainly where their council did not provide their flats with recycling facilities. Some of the members of the focus groups, particularly within those recruited to the Sideline Supporters and Cautious Participant groups, said their friends and neighbours did not recycle. However, the majority of the participants both recycled and believed most other people recycled. Recycling, therefore, can be viewed as becoming a descriptive norm for most people in the sample.

Additionally, recycling clearly carried with it an element of social expectation. Interviewees talked about friends, family and work in relation to recycling. Moreover, the facilitated and highly visible nature of recycling, with the associated neighbourhood pressure to recycle, was confirmed by the sample:

F: I've moved from a very poor area to just around the corner from here, so I haven't gone too far up in the world. But it's a much nicer area. It's a little close, you can see what everyone does. It's more like outside of London living and when I lived in Lambeth I lived on an estate with very high population density, a very poor street. They give you yellow plastic bags to put your recycling in. Did anyone bother doing it? 'Oh, lovely they have given us bin liners! Let's throw all our rubbish out on the street'. Whereas where I live now you wouldn't dare because someone would go 'God, have you seen what they've done at number 10'. (Waste Watchers, London focus group)

This was the one behaviour where many of the interviewees and focus group participants felt able to pressurise friends and their workplace to do more. Recycling then is approaching becoming a societal level social norm, both as a descriptive and an injunctive norm. It is the only behaviour we studied for which this is clearly the case. Additionally, recycling shows

³ People occasionally appeared to talk about 'recycling' as being synonymous with being environmentally friendly, even when being asked about other actions. This would suggest that policy makers may have to control for recycling as being an environmental signifier when trying to gain meaningful information about other behaviours and schemes.

signs of becoming a pro-social or altruistic norm. By this we mean that it is a behaviour the individual undertakes at a (small) personal cost for the greater good of society. Thus those not undertaking the action carry the stigma of being 'selfish' and 'anti-social'. Finally, it is the pro-environmental behaviour which shows the most sign of being a personal norm across the segments; that is it is one which people undertake because they personally believe in the value of the behaviour.

Sustainable fish

In contrast to recycling, sustainable fish had little social, moral or personal meaning to most of the interviewees. It was the one behaviour we asked about which individuals felt no obligation to talk about, often simply stating that they were not aware of it or had never thought about it. However, most were aware of over-fishing and there was a general acceptance of the need for sustainable fishing. This disjuncture between perceived need and lack of justification for inaction could be seen as suggesting that there is much more work to be done to establish both personal and social norms around sustainable fish.

However, a limited number of interviewees did attach some meaning to sustainable fish. In particular, those who associated themselves with Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall and 'The Good Life' had high levels of awareness about both the problems and alternatives, and were beginning to develop personal norms for this behaviour:

Q: How about buy more certified fish or fish from sustainable stocks?

Nigel: Fantastic. Yes, yes, I am a firm believer in that, but I do fall foul sometimes having fish and chips from the chippie and ordering cod ... We need to get pollock into the chip shops and processed fish stuff, you know. Cod can easily be replaced with other stuff that's exactly the same so, yes that's a passion of mine.

Loft and cavity wall insulation

Loft insulation is perceived to be a descriptive norm by most of the participants of the study. However, the interviewees were largely less aware of the adequacy of their own insulation, believing that this was an action they had already completed and feeling certain most other people had as well. Whilst there was a definite sense that most people had insulation, there did not appear to be any particular sense of social expectation around the behaviour, probably due to the inconspicuous nature of insulation. The action was positioned within being rational, making economic sense and being a responsible homeowner. Thus whilst people generally thought it was a good thing to do, it did not confer strong rewards of social acceptability or result in social stigma:

Sally: *You can get grants for loft insulation now, so you would have to be really dim not to have it done.*

Brad: *It is quite straightforward really, if you insulate your house properly your bills are lower. ... I don't want my money blown out of the roof. Yes, it seems crazy not to really.*

Cavity wall insulation was viewed as being less common, though most interviewees were open to the idea of insulating their walls. Because most of the participants had some insulation already, this was a behaviour which was perceived as being important for the environment and was not something people mentioned feeling guilty about. Indeed, in terms of stimulating better insulation, the issue has to be not 'are you doing it?' but rather 'are you doing enough?'

Better home energy management

This behavioural domain covers a wide range of behaviours. Our flash card did indicate turning down heating, energy efficient light bulbs and switching off appliances at the plug. However, we allowed interviewees to decide which behaviours to talk about. Most people appeared to have started to change their behaviour around some elements of this behavioural domain, partly in relation to rising fuel prices, but also with a definite sense that many people thought this was a good thing to do to address climate change. From the discussions it appears 'abnormal' heating levels, which are subject to easy surveillance by visitors to the home, are open to social disapprobation. Some of the more frugal interviewees, who kept their heating low, talked about how friends would comment on how cold the house was, recognising there was a pressure to conform:

Alan: *Some people wouldn't do it [not turn their heating on] because if people visited they would think they were miserly. Like if I don't want the heating then I won't use it, as simple as that.*

Indeed some, recognising the stigma involved, would even try to stave off possible criticism by turning their heating up before people visited. However, it is not only having the house too cold which attracts disapprobation. Enjoying a hot house can also lead to criticism from friends and family, with one interviewee talking about how her brother always turns her heating down when he visits.

Switching off lights was more subject to personal norms driven by environmental concern, with growing levels of guilt connected to saturation level campaigning and media coverage. There was a limited amount of evidence of some social disapproval of wasteful energy use, with pockets of social groups pressurising friends to use energy efficient lights or turn off unnecessary devices. One of our greener interviewees who had environmentally active friends talked about how her group's social norm was to disapprove of energy wastage at home:

Karry: Again, in the neighbourhood I've noticed that there are some people who are unashamedly wasteful with energy. There's a certain, again, almost sort of snob value. But most of my friends, my kindred spirit friends, would consider that to be a vulgar attitude.

In general the participants thought that the rising fuel prices and high levels of media coverage meant that most people were switching off lights and appliances on standby. However, whilst they were aware of campaigns and appeared to have changed their behaviour out of guilt or for financial reasons, some of the interviewees then situated the meaning of the behaviour within family values from their childhood. Home energy use values and behaviours were attributed to the influence of their parents. Moreover, they were continuing this generation to generation tradition with their own children. This was a primary behaviour for the role identity of 'being a parent' and the interviewees told stories about how they had to tell their children to turn off lights, unplug mobiles etc. It appeared to be an important behavioural issue for instilling certain values in children:

Jane: I spend my life telling my children off about leaving lights on.

Karry: I try to keep the heating down and I'm strict about the lights not being left on in rooms that are not being used. And I try and teach my children to do that.

Victoria: I even took the light bulbs out of one of my son's room because he was forever leaving lights on, so I just left one little one so he couldn't. It caused lots of problems.

Some of the interviewees talked about how their parents still advised them about home energy use or gave them energy efficient light bulbs, making the family the primary referent group for this behavioural norm. In this, it can be seen that whilst the motivation for reduced energy use can be social, financial or environmental, the meaning may be caught up in notions of doing the best for your family. This suggests that linking energy saving actions

with traditional parent-child roles could help situate and strengthen the meaning of certain pro-environmental behaviours, especially for those who grew up in more thrifty times.

Use the car less

This pro-environmental behaviour showed a high level of difference in uptake across the sample. Many of the interviewees talked about using the car less, particularly in response to the rising fuel prices, but there was less evidence that they had made a concerted effort to use alternative forms of transport or avoid travelling altogether. However, it was clear that recent price rises and climate change campaigns had led to many participants feeling guilty that they still relied upon using their car too much. Of the alternatives, taking public transport was seen as being relatively normal in London but in other areas it was considered to be unreliable and too expensive. Unsurprisingly, the rural interviewees found reducing car use problematic both structurally and socially. Some of these interviewees maintained perceptions of public transport as being dangerous, and of bus users as being part of an underclass. Moreover, it was still seen as being normal to use the car even where there were alternatives:

Sally: And people just expect, if you live where I live, they expect you to act in a certain way. But I'm always quite pleased actually when I let people know that, you know, actually I do watch what I spend and how I spend it and shop around for stuff and try to use the car less.

Cycling attracted a very positive response from interviewees in all areas. In particular, this seemed to chime with a sporty or active self-identity

Use more energy efficient vehicles

Fairly predictably, this behaviour generated the longest and most spontaneous discourses about identity and status. It is well documented that cars are status symbols in our society, but their meaning is beginning to be challenged by environmentalism, taxation and oil price rises. Thus individuals, particularly the more affluent, have to negotiate between conflicting norms, values and identifications. For some, performance cars or prestige vehicles remained a status symbol and source of pride. For others, smaller energy efficient vehicles were perceived to be more environmentally friendly and socially responsible offering a desirable choice to those who could afford to select what type of car they owned.

One of the most obvious things to be said about large cars is the gendered nature of the behaviour. Interviewees mostly suggested the choice of a powerful car was one made by the

man of the house. 'It's his thing' was the way the decision was described by several interviewees:

Sarah: It's his luxury, so I would hate to impose that on him by saying we've got to get a more energy efficient vehicle because I think we do a lot already and I think it is his one and only thing. If there was a really energy efficient car that he liked then we would probably go for that but I don't know much about them but they appear to me that they are not the flashy type of car that he likes.

High powered vehicles were often talked about in relation to work, mostly as a necessity but possibly also as a status signifier amongst the key reference group. Large vehicles were discussed as essential to several key roles or life choices including being self-employed in a skilled industry and having a large family. For some of the Positive Greens this had led to a conflict between lifestyle and environmental values, which they were hoping to resolve with alternatively fuelled utility vehicles when they became more widely available and affordable:

Nigel: If Land Rover could bring out a hybrid engine or a far more efficient engine...

Q: You'd go for it?

Nigel: God yes.

However, the main identity barrier to behavioural change is the role of the car as a signifier of social status. Some interviewees were particularly open about the fact that their family, friends and neighbours saw having a high powered vehicle as the norm. For example, one of the interviewees was a highly successful and wealthy business woman. She had strong environmental values and did actively try to use her cars less, but still had several performance vehicles. She felt that the most energy efficient cars were socially unacceptable:

Sally: I went to the beautician's the other week and there was this rather weird G-Wiz car outside... There was this woman came out and I said, you know, 'what is that car?' and she gave me a leaflet on it actually. She was a bit eccentric I have to say. Things like that tend to be done mainly by eccentric people.

Others appreciated their cars as social signifiers:

Melanie: *Vehicles are one of those things that, the problem with vehicles is it is a bit like class isn't it? It has got that stigma you know, the car you have got, it is terrible to even say that isn't it?*

Brad: *The car, yes exactly, without a doubt yes. Yes, that would definitely be the last thing I would change. I suppose I would class it as one of your luxuries having a car and stuff, so yes, I would definitely try everything else first before I gave up my car.*

Q: *How do you think your friends would react to you turning up in a small car or an electric car?*

Brad: *I think it would be 'wow, what are you doing? Have you gone mad?'*

Whilst social norms and status may be a hindrance to the uptake of energy efficient vehicles for some individuals, the increasing social stigma around 4x4s and other so called 'gas guzzlers' meant that others actively identified themselves as the sort of person who would never own one.

Karry: *I would rather die than have a 4x4.*

Bella: *A friend of mine bought a 4x4. I was so angry with him... I can't drive, but if I did get a car it would be a Smart car.*

Moreover, many interviewees had a positive reaction to small cars, particularly as the family's second car. For some of the female interviewees in particular, small engined cars had become the norm amongst their friends. This was a pro-environmental behaviour that interviewees suggested they ought to do if they were not already doing it, and the one mostly frequently picked as being the behaviour that would make the most difference to the environment. The clear relationship between the fuel consumption of cars and the environment meant that guilt about driving a high powered vehicle is becoming an issue. If fuel prices continue to stay at a high level, it is probably inevitable that average income consumers will find inefficient vehicles increasingly unappealing. Given the views expressed by many participants, it is possible to surmise that the car landscape may be beginning to change towards more fuel efficient cars.

Locally grown seasonal food

There was a general positive response to buying locally grown seasonal food, mostly related to the perception that this would be good for the environment. Whilst buying locally grown seasonal food was far from being perceived as a widespread descriptive norm, several of the

interviewees were part of social groups for whom buying locally had become the norm. An appeal to local identity has meant that this behaviour is suffused with a sense of belonging, local pride and duty to the local community:

Michael: Before we moved here [locally grown seasonal food] wouldn't have been on the agenda. Even if we could have gone to a farm shop, and we could have done, we didn't. But since we have moved here, we've really sort of taken that attitude. And maybe it's because our peers do it, do you know what I mean, and we want to.

There was also a sense that this made seasonal food a superior product and one for which many of our respondents showed a personal preference:

Fiona: The seasonal food, well certainly the people I know, the opinion is that, you know when you get it locally grown in season that it is superior. [...] The only problem is, it can be quite expensive. So we always try and do it for like, we always try and have a proper Sunday meal and we'll always get everything we can from the [farm] shop

Other positive meanings attached to locally grown seasonal food include:

- The idea of local food linking people back in with the seasons and nature, recreating a sense of the 'special treat' at certain times of the year;
- The notion that seasonal food was tastier and healthier, and therefore better for the self;
- And, for some, a feeling of support for small businesses particularly farmers and other local producers.

These discourses are exemplified in the feelings of Victoria, although they were shared by many of the interviewees:

Victoria: I'm actually very much trying to go back to having seasonal foods. I want to try and keep British growers going, because if you think Kent has lost a lot of its own produce. But secondly, it makes food, when you do have it, more of a treat.

This was not a product about which people talked about feeling guilt. Nor was there any sense of social pressure to conform (expressed as social disapproval). Instead this was a behaviour people affiliated to out of a positive sense of social meaning, personal treat and a desire to consume a better and more environmentally friendly product. Indeed, locally grown seasonal food shows signs of being a 'new luxury product' (Silverstein and Fiske, 2003).

According to Silverstein and Fiske, new luxury products have to have better functionality than similar products and to engage the consumer emotionally. This emotional attachment provides the consumer with a sense of authentic meaning rather than just operating as an indicator of status as old luxury goods do. TrendWatching (2008) also talk about the changing nature of the consumption of status goods, particularly around local produce. According to TrendWatching, a new interest in authenticity and consumer ethics means people are attracted to goods with a 'status story'. Local produce provides a great story about a quality product with an authentic sense of belonging and care for the local community.

Whilst it is clear many of the interviewees had the emotional attachment or sense of belonging which marks out seasonal food as a new luxury product or product with a status story, others saw it less complicatedly as a status item:

Karry: I don't know, it's almost being packaged and as a result it can be a bit of a rip off. Quite consciously sometimes. It's got snob value is what I am saying.

David: My friend would be that sort of person, because he likes the finer things in life.

Whilst we did not specifically ask about growing your own food, a surprising number of participants talked about growing their own and even shifting towards some degree of self-sufficiency. This appears to be in line with the recent trend, and provides those practising it with a sense of pride and personal satisfaction.

Reuse or buy second hand goods

As a behavioural domain this covers a massive range of goods, bought, sold or exchanged in a range of different ways. The interviewees acknowledged that everyone was likely to buy some second hand goods, but the social meaning was dependent upon the sort of goods, for example 'antiques' have status value, whereas second hand clothes from a charity shop have stigma for some groups of people. Because of the size of the behavioural domain, this is a remarkably complex area, offering a range of different social identity connotations, largely based on the perception of social norms and status for reference groups (largely friendship group or class). Perceptions of social approval and normality relate not to the behaviour itself, but to a combination of the product and place of purchase. Thus buying a second hand car is not unusual, neither is trying to pick up a bargain on e-bay (although more interviewees suggested they sold on e-bay than bought). Buying second hand books from a charity shop was uncomplicated, but buying second hand clothes required

explanation, even when they were for children. Moreover, several of the interviewees mentioned that second hand clothes had a social stigma attached:

Alan: I think people have a stigma, definitely people have a stigma about buying second hand they really do. Especially middle class mums.

Karry: It's kind of snob value, but it's also is a bit of a stigma. And you're suppose to be emulating Posh and Becks as an epitome of style and passion, and they don't dress their kids in hand-me-downs

However, children wearing hand-me-downs from friends and family was seen as perfectly normal. The rather vague rule appears to be that the more personal the item, the more it says something about the person. In other words, it has implications for self or social identity. Two issues appear to be key to understanding this phenomenon. The first is that giving away goods is much more acceptable than buying second hand goods. Indeed, several of the focus groups suggested giving away clothes to a charity as a pro-environmental behaviour; it was seen as positive and the right thing to do, enabling those less fortunate to buy something cheaply. Indeed, throwing clothes away is something a lot of participants found quite unacceptable. However, there was not the same level of social acceptability or moral injunctive to buy second hand.

The second is that buying new clothes and products was mentioned by several of the interviewees as 'the reward for hard work'. Indeed, for some of the interviewees who found it important to establish themselves as successful in their careers, there was a perception that buying second hand was for less successful people:

Jason: I just don't want to wear second hand clothes and things like that to be honest. It's not something that I need to do in the sort of situation that I am in, so that is a little bit more of snob value than anything else.

David: I spend my life earning and working, going to work, why should I buy someone else's second hand items? ... If I can afford it why should I buy second hand? I have spent ages earning the money, saving the money, I should buy what I want and what I feel I deserve. If I couldn't afford it it's a different story... It is image as well. I wouldn't want to be walking around in second hand clothes and people to know they were second hand clothes.

It seems people do not necessarily buy new because they subscribe to the concept of the throwaway society; it is more that they believe their right in a consumer society is to buy the best products they can afford. Moreover, some goods such as clothes and cars carry a high degree of personal meaning, often with an emotional content. This means that not only do the type of clothes you wear and kind of car you drive contribute to establishing status and social identity they also provide pride, self-esteem and a sense of authentic self. Second hand clothes can challenge this for some people.

However, this was far from the case for many of the consumers whose friends and family had values and norms which supported reuse and the purchase of second hand products. In particular there were a few members of the sample who gained high levels of enjoyment from using e-Bay or going to car boot sales. Finally, some of the more anti-consumerist or waste averse interviewees had personal norms which encouraged them to buy second hand wherever possible. For these individuals being true to their values or a sense of personal satisfaction outweighed any concerns about social stigma or status.

Discussion: Contested meanings and supportive discourses

As can be seen from the above, the products and behaviours studied have different meanings for different respondents. These contested meanings are partly dependent on what they signify to relevant others and partly on the meaning for self-esteem and personal values, although in practice these two meanings are likely to be closely interlinked. Here we will examine these different meanings to tentatively suggest that utilising the positive, alternative meanings individuals give to specific behaviours could provide supportive discourses to promote the further uptake of these behaviours.

Of all the behaviours we studied, buying second hand goods (particularly clothes) provided the longest and most diverse explanations about its meaning to the interviewees. It is worth reiterating that many of the interviewees suggested buying second hand clothing was a stigmatised behaviour. Even for those who felt the stigma did not apply to them and their social category/group, the awareness of the stigma appeared to necessitate complex justifications for undertaking the action.

The similarity of the discourses from people who bought second clothes was striking. They also talked about it in a very different way to those who would never buy second hand due to concerns about stigma or image. Those who stated that they would never purchase second hand clothes tended to focus on the outcome of the action for the self (see the section above for detailed quotes). Thus they were concerned about:

- Social image and other people's perception about the ability to afford new clothes;
- A lack of validation for being a successful worker if you cannot afford to spend your money on new goods.
- A lack of authenticity and personal statement provided by a piece of clothing which had previously belonged to someone else.

Additionally some interviewees were concerned about the history of the product, how clean it was and why it was being sold on.

By contrast, there were two distinct although by no means mutually exclusive types of motivations given for purchasing second hand. The first was about personal values around consumerism/materialism, a dislike of waste, or giving to charity. The second was more focused on the thrill of the bargain and second hand shopping as a social activity.

Of the two types of motivations, those in relation to personal values around waste and consumption were the least discussed. However, several of the interviewees held strong values in relation to second hand goods (see also the Karry case study). Here the meaning of the behaviour for the individual had little to do with social image. Instead interviewees challenged the purpose of buying new and replaced a focus on social significance of new products with social meanings around giving and caring:

Fiona: I couldn't buy more second hand goods. I don't see the point of going out and buying new. [...] like when I got married I bought a second hand wedding dress from a local charity shop and I paid quite a lot for my dress and I could have bought a new one, but I just felt it was important to go [a charity shop], and that's where it has gone back to, the bridesmaid dress has gone back.

Melanie: Even if you buy the odd video from there you don't mind so much because a) it has been given and b) the money is going somewhere and even if they play with it for a little while and you put it back to the charity shop.

The second set of motivations around bargain hunting tended to be talked about by all of the second hand buying enthusiasts. The narratives from the interviewees covered similar points suggesting potential ways to market the behaviour. The first obvious thing to say about second hand clothes buying is that the interviewees frequently talked about how they were either introduced to it by friends and family, or only went second hand shopping with friends and family.

Benjamin: *I always go with Margaret; I don't go on my own.*

Melanie: *I definitely do think it is a woman thing because as a student my mates and I used to love going to charity shops.*

Kevin: *I have been going to charity shops for a long time. A lady friend of mine introduced me to those about eight years ago and I think they're great. I think you can pick up marvellous things for a few quid, you're giving money to charity and things are getting recycled [...] She's always really bought all her stuff [from charity shops] and she's immaculate, always immaculately dressed.*

Possibly because of the awareness that second hand buying is a stigmatised behaviour, the interviewees felt the need to place it in a social context which suggested social acceptability of the behaviour by significant others. The social nature of the behaviour also positions second hand buying as a social activity rather than a strictly outcome based behaviour. Moreover, that social activity is talked about as something to be enjoyed; the word 'fun' was used repeatedly by interviewees when talking about charity shops and car boot sales.

Melanie: *I do quite like a rummage. You can get some quite nice things in charity shops so yes, definitely. I think that is great fun, I like doing that.*

Helen: *I think it's just really good fun and the kids love it you know. My son upstairs, he's got so much really good stuff from car boot sales. He's really good at finding stuff. I mean last time we went he bought a Dolce and Gabana shirt, a Versace short and another one at 50p each... You know once you have washed it and ironed it it's fine. It's quite exciting for them you know.*

Benjamin: *I like it, I enjoy it and it is good when you get a bargain. There is something about the ritual really. As I said, we do get various odds and ends we buy if they are a bargain and sell them on e-Bay. It is not a huge amount of money, but it is quite a fun thing to do really [...] If I see things I like I buy the odd shirt, trousers or pair of jeans. It is really gratifying. It is very pleasing and gives you an extra frisson of enjoyment when you put them on and think 'God, £2.50' and they are a really nice make and fit really well you know.*

As well as being fun as an activity, the narratives of the interviewees highlight how rewarding they find it because of the 'thrill of the bargain'. The interviewees are keen to point out that the clothes they find and buy are high quality. They are not, therefore, rejecting clothes as status goods, but merely negotiating how that status can be achieved. Indeed, this re-affirmation of status and personal rewards is crucial to the supporting discourses around second hand goods especially when friends challenge the acceptability of the action.

Fiona: Everybody teases me because everything, they say 'oh that's really nice, where did you get it from?' I say '£2.50' (laughter).

Q: It sounds like it makes you happy as well?

Fiona: Yes, I get a lot of satisfaction from, we've got some quite well off friends and I always get, I get satisfaction when they turn to me and say you look lovely and I go 'ummm'.

Many of these positive reasons for buying second hand probably account for the success of e-Bay which offers the thrill, the bargain and utilises the process of being a fun interactive activity that attracts a wide variety of users. Hardly surprising then that apart from some concerns about stolen goods, most of the interviewees thought e-Bay offered a good way of selling and buying second hand goods. Moreover, whilst there was less discussion about the benefits of riding a bike, the positioning of cycling by some interviewees as a fun, healthy activity suggested a similar process taking place. For them, their enthusiasm for cycling was stimulated because it offered a form of status and personal reward which made it an attractive alternative to using the car.

We are tentatively suggesting that the alternative discourses about behaviours could offer a different method of marketing pro-environmental behaviours. For those behaviours which have high levels of reward (unlike recycling, for example, where throwing things in the bin has little personal or social meaning), asking people to stop or reduce meaningful behaviours is unlikely to be the most successful strategy. In the absence of supporting ethical or anti-consumerist values, finding the positive ways people talk about the alternatives and marketing it in a way that emphasises how these activities can offer a life enhancing experience could prove more useful than a guilt driven, self-denial campaign.

Conclusion

We have used this chapter to sketch out a limited number of personal, social and environmental meanings for the pro-environmental behaviours we studied. We have suggested recycling as the only societal level descriptive and injunctive social norm. Having

some loft insulation is a descriptive norm, with better home energy management and more energy efficient vehicles showing signs of become more normal. Buying second hand clothes and having a cold home are still perceived as having something of a social stigma, whereas some people view locally grown seasonal food and large engined cars as status items.

Interviewees talked about different reference groups in relation to the pro-environmental behaviours. Recycling was subject to neighbourhood surveillance, but switching off lights and appliances could be more family based behaviour. Some areas viewed locally grown seasonal food as contributing to a local identity and sense of belonging. Most behaviours were discussed in reference to friendship groups. Across the behaviours as a whole there was a difference in perceptions of social norms and status in relation to the behaviours.

10 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Introduction

This report has detailed some of the findings from the interviews and focus groups held with five of the segments from Defra's segmentation model. Here we shall summarise the key findings and make specific suggestions for further research.

Key findings

The 'motivations' we have examined within this research project are complex and contested. For each individual, different motivations interact in a variety of different ways producing a unique pattern of behaviour. In assessing the relationship between motivations, behaviour and the environment, all findings within this report should be treated as being indicative. Nonetheless, we have sought to identify where there seems to be consistency and coherency in the relationship between motivations and environmental behaviour, and in doing so, we have tried to understand how these motivations operate for different groups of people and across different behaviours. In summary, we would suggest that:

Changing perceptions of pro-environmental behaviour

- In general, most of the individuals and groups in our sample felt that undertaking a small amount of pro-environmental behaviour was no longer seen as being unusual or the preserve of activists. For the most environmentally active segments, there appeared to be an expectation of some environmental action as normal, responsible behaviour. Indeed, not undertaking any pro-environmental behaviour was perceived to be lazy or selfish. This is particularly true of recycling.

Identity

- Our respondents were invariably negotiating their environmental values and identities alongside other rewarding sources of identity and self-esteem, such as work, family, home and a sense of self as a good person. How important these different sources of identity were to the individual affected the likelihood of environmental actions.
- Not all of the self-identities which supported pro-environmental behaviours were overtly environmental. Instead identifications with frugality, anti-waste, anti-consumerism and self-sufficiency acted alongside more 'green identities' to help stimulate behavioural uptake. Perceptions of the self as non-materialistic, unselfish

and thoughtful were facilitated through undertaking some pro-environmental behaviours, especially for those who perceived a social expectation of action.

- Not all pro-environmental behaviours carry the same kind of meaning personally, socially or morally. Some behaviours may enhance social status and self-esteem, others may hinder this. This is because people are negotiating a range of different self and social identities; and different behaviours can speak to those different identities. For example, some participants think that owning a small car or buying second hand clothes will not provide them with the personal and social rewards that they feel they deserve as a result of their hard work and successful careers. For others the car was essential to ensuring their children could attend the best school or arriving at work looking professional. Alternatively some smaller behavioural changes can enhance the perception of the self as a good person; larger changes may allow the more proactive environmentalist a sense of consistency or authenticity from living their values.
- The prevailing discourse of 'doing my bit' appeared as the predominant environmental position for many in the sample. More than just a rhetorical expression, this allows individuals to validate themselves as non-materialistic, unselfish or responsible whilst at the same time protecting other important identities and behaviours. It facilitates a sense of personal responsibility and action for the environment, in line with social expectations and the actions of important others, whilst not demanding that the individual has to do a lot or give up valued goods. This becomes played out through a notion of 'balance' between self and society, and between luxury and morality.

Social Norms

- People tended to position their behaviours as being in line with those of their friends, family or neighbours. For those participants with an active pro-environmental social group, some pro-environmental behaviours were supported by shared meanings of being a good person and a group norm that defines what is acceptable or valued behaviour. However, for others in the sample without such a social group, undertaking some pro-environmental behaviours had little social value and might even conflict with their social identities.
- Differences were apparent in the willingness and ability of individuals to undertake behaviours which might conflict with their desire to maintain or enhance their status

and membership within a social group, particularly those behaviours perceived to carry social stigma. Strong personal norms or sense of self in relation to a behaviour were the primary motivations for breaching social norms. However, a lack of resources could also lead people to breach social norms. Conversely, those less certain in their self or social identities seemed less likely to want to breach social norms or give up high status behaviours, for example by buying second hand goods or swapping a large car for a smaller one.

- A range of different actors appear to be working to create new social norms in relation to pro-environmental behaviours. Friends, family and local community influence seem crucial to changing norms. However, government, the media (including celebrity chefs as agents of consumer morality), and social institutions such as schools and workplaces are also influential. The workplace appeared as a useful source of new social norms for those without an active friendship group. At the same time, improvements in infrastructure that facilitate environmental action normalise changes in behaviour, reduce the justification for doing little or nothing, and can signal a wider change in social expectations.

Agency

- Not all action was premised on the belief that it would make a major difference to the environment or climate change overall. Indeed, for those with strong pro-environmental values and identities personal accountability appeared to be more important than the efficacy of small changes in behaviour. Moreover, doing nothing for the environment is not considered by some to be a positive or self-enhancing option. For those who saw their role as 'doing their bit' alongside others in society, personal responsibility as part of a collective effort appeared to be more important than worrying about what difference any single action might make in isolation. However, more will need to be done to convince people of the efficacy of large scale actions particularly if they require more people to make sacrifices to their current lifestyles or compromise their self or social identities.

Guilt

- Both the findings on self-identity and guilt suggest individuals are more likely to undertake actions which fit with specific moral standards. For example, those concerned about climate change were more likely to say they would feel good or guilty in relation to whether they undertook climate change related behaviours or not,

whereas those concerned about waste or strongly identified with frugality were more likely to say they would feel good from undertaking waste saving behaviours or guilty about wasting food, water, energy or money.

- Social comparison appeared to be a key process in managing guilt related to pro-environmental behaviours. Possibly because of the construction of personal environmental responsibility as part of a larger set of collective action, people offset guilt they might feel about not doing enough by comparing their actions favourably with other people's. So, some people may only recycle but they can reduce their feelings of guilt by pointing out that they are still doing a lot more for the environment than many other people here and in other countries.

Suggestions for further research

This research project has covered a wide range of motivations and behaviours. The findings have provided a number of interesting insights, some of which suggest the need for further research to establish their robustness. Those factors that we feel offer the most potential to influence behaviour change have been highlighted as proposed priorities for further research, particularly to establish the most appropriate format for policy initiatives. These areas are set out in the following paragraphs.

1. Across the research we have identified a range of identity related concepts which could have potential to drive further behaviour. For example, people appeared to use pro-environmental behaviours to help position themselves against 'selfish' and 'materialistic' lifestyles, and in line with responsible and caring ways to live; the workplace may prove to be a key site for changing the status of inefficient cars and engaging those without a proactive social group in energy efficient behaviours; gardening, DIY, dog walking and outdoor pursuits suggest themselves as activities which could provide a meaningful self or social identification to link to pro-environmental behaviours.
2. We have suggested that the economic downturn, in line with an increased awareness of the impacts of wasteful systems of production and consumption, offers an opportunity to encourage more buy-in to pro-environmental behaviours through a focus on wastefulness and frugality. We recommend further research into how people talk about a 'wasteful' or 'spoilt' society and how those discourses might be utilised to support the shift to a new era of efficient resource use and more frugal lifestyles.

3. We have tested the use of a descriptive norm to drive the uptake of a wide spread pro-environmental behaviour. The results were not conclusive. However, they do suggest that the types of people undertaking the behaviour and their motivations for so doing may affect other people's perceptions of the need to undertake similar behaviours; for example, a perception that a behaviour is being undertaken because people cannot afford to do otherwise will not encourage others to follow suit. We recommend further testing to understand the impacts of audience perception of financial and altruistic motivations for behavioural uptake.

4. A close analysis of the differences in narrative between those undertaking a particular pro-environmental behaviour and those who believe the behaviour has low status or carries social stigma could help to provide alternative methods for promoting behaviour change. Rather than directly targeting change by seeking to curtail a meaningful behaviour or increase uptake of a stigmatised behaviour, policies to promote socially acceptable or personally rewarding alternatives could be devised instead. For example, cycling as a healthy alternative to car use or second hand goods shopping as a social activity.

We have looked at the roles of self-identity, social identity, social norms, guilt and agency in this research project. We have concluded that these are all important factors in motivating pro-environmental behaviour. Whilst few of the pro-environmental behaviours we examined showed signs of being current social norms, many appeared to have the ability to become social norms. Overall, we concluded there is a growing perception of a need to undertake some pro-environmental behaviour as part of being a responsible person; this will help to support further environmental initiatives.

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APPENDIX A – THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The interviewee, their lifestyle, social groups and aspirations (20-25 mins)

(Please note, each of the following questions has an identified set of possible probes. Only explore these if they fit with the flow of the conversation and if the interviewee appears happy to answer. Avoid probing in a straightforward way. Where possible follow/direct the conversation to gain a sense of the answers. Do not feel obliged to collect all the information from any particular question, but instead keep a sense of what is being looked for and see each question as a potential opportunity for collecting the information).

1) Describe a typical week in your life

Probe to understand:

Work life, their job, their career

Home life, their family, their lifestyle

Important social groups and their social life,

What makes the interviewee happy/unhappy,

Levels of agency and self-determination (ie, how much room do the interviewees have to control their consumer decisions due to time, family or financial considerations?)

2) Please talk me through your social networks diagram

Probe to understand:

How the groups fit in their everyday life - e.g. who is most important to them and why.

The roles they play in their groups

Gently probe to see how they might be influenced by the groups if the opportunity arises - do not push if it would be unnatural (use questions such as 'who would they go shopping with')

3) What do you look forward to?

Use 'why' type questions to explore:

Aspirations

What makes the interviewee happy (e.g, holidays, shopping, relaxing etc)

Limits to their time, money, ability to control their life

Life priorities

4) Are there any particular things you own or do that you [are particularly proud of or] think best sums you up (e.g. for me it would be running or my laptop)?

Use to 'why' type questions to try to explore:

Self-identifications,

What offers them self-esteem, status, makes them happy

The importance of social groups etc.

5) Could you summarise what are the most important things in your life? Why?

Using the behaviours to probe for motivations (40 mins)

Introduce the seven behaviours without mentioning that they are about the environment. If they ask if this is about the environment, explain that it is.

'Given what we have already discussed about your life, I have a set of choices I would like to ask you about' (show the interviewee the cards)

The questions have been designed to probe particular aspects of motivations using Higgins self-discrepancy theory. Please use the specific probes listed under each of the four main questions. However, keep in mind the longer set of issues to be probed for listed later in this section. Do use the social groups diagram and information from the first section of the

interview to probe inconsistencies and understand how these behaviours and values fit in their everyday lives.

REMEMBER TO READ OUT WHICH PILE THE INTERVIEWEE PLACES EACH CARD IN FOR THE SAKE OF THE TAPE!

1) *Which of the suggested actions would you ideally like to undertake*

(allow the interviewee to sort the cards into groups they would undertake and groups they would not. Allow a third pile of actions they are already undertaking if necessary. It is likely that the interviewee might do some things they can think of for the behavioural area, but not all - follow through this discussion if necessary)

- Probe as to why they would like to undertake some behaviours and not others.
- Probe into the difference between the behaviours they are currently undertaking and those they would like to ideally.
- If 'agency'; type issues are introduced, probe further to test whether these are 'real' or 'perceived' problems.
- If possible, start to begin to probe conflicts between lifestyle and values; different role and the relationship to different social identities/groups

Which do you feel you ought to undertake?

- Why do they think they should undertake these actions?
- Why do they think it would be a good thing if they did?
- How do they feel about not undertaking them?
- Probe further if the interviewee mentions feeling bad, guilty, ashamed etc.
- *What makes them feel bad, guilty, ashamed?*
- How do they deal with the guilt, shame etc?
- Probe further about why they think they should not undertake certain actions.

Which do you think others are likely to undertake?

- Probe for which 'others' using social group diagram
- Probe for whole of society answers
- Why do they think this?
- Is it something they talk about with other people?
- How do they gain their impressions about non-visible behaviours?
- Do they think any of the behaviours are now normal/the norm? What makes them think this?

4) *Which actions do you think would make the most difference to the environment if you undertook them?*

- Probe gently for inconsistencies between which they would ideally do and which they think are important.
- Why do they think these are the actions that would make the most difference?

General issues to probe for as these become possible during the flow of the conversation

Refer to social groups diagram and learnings from the first section to work through social influence and identity issues.

Probe for conflicts between different roles and identities, and the expectations of others in their social network.

Probe for how the interviewees first learned about the environmental issues, if they did.

Look for sources of knowledge and motivations in relation to environmental issues.

Try to open up the conversation so that we can analyse for an understanding as to whether the interviewee sits in a 'norm process' for environmental issues- (ie awareness of problem/moral conversation, acceptance of problem, acceptance of behaviours, rejection of some and uptake of others)

- Subtly explore inconsistencies in behaviour.

Test why they would be willing to undertake some actions and not others. -e.g. exploring the 'meaning' of particular actions in their life, such as the meaning of second hand clothes or powerful cars.

Use 'other people' type questions to avoid potential difficulties in this line of questioning, but try to explore the impact of these behaviours on status, self-esteem, social image etc.

Probe for any differences between 'voluntary' consumer behaviours and 'imposed' behaviours (i.e the difference between choosing to do something for environmental reasons and having to do it for financial reasons - such as buying second hand or having to reduce energy use in response to rising prices). Do people still feel guilty? Do they feel positive about themselves undertaking them etc.

Explore when 'agency' issues are introduced, and if these seem to be explanations or justifications for inaction.

Self-identification with the environment and environmental values (20-30 mins)

Please ask the following questions if this information has not already been drawn out through the Higgins/behaviours section.

1. *Is the environment something you are concerned about?*
2. *What sort of issues are you concerned about?*
3. *Could you summarise your thoughts and concerns about the environment for me?*
4. *How long have you had environmental concerns (or not thought it is an issue - if that is the logic of the interviewee)*
5. *What sorts of other behaviours do you do for the environment?*
6. *When did you start doing things for the environment?*
7. *Given all the things going on in your life, as we talked about earlier on in the interview, why do you make the effort to do these things?*

- 8) *Based on the interviewee's answer so far suggest an identification using their own language (e.g. green, ethical consumer, 'waste not, want not', good person, good parent).*
 - Probe for whether the interviewee defines themselves in this way or relates to the definition (or rejects it strongly).
 - Ask them if they have their own definition/term of how they see themselves in relation to the environment?
 - Ask them to define what the term means and what environmental actions it involves.

9) How would you describe people who do a lot for the environment, and people who do nothing for the environment?

- What sort of people are these people?
- What do you think of them?

10) What do you think is the most important thing you think the government could do to make us be more environmentally friendly?

Thank the interviewee.

Collect the social networks diagram (please remember to mark these with the interviewee's name etc)

APPENDIX B – THE FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

1. Introduction	5-10 mins
<p>Give a brief introduction of the purpose of the focus group (academic research around individuals and the environment, will be used to advise government).</p> <p>Ask the group to introduce themselves, preferably giving their name, occupation and where they live.</p> <p>Explain the ground rules (only one person to talk at a time, respect everybody's views, say what they like, only one person to leave the table at any one time)</p> <p>Let the group know that it will be a busy session, but that it should be an enjoyable couple of hours.</p>	
2. Warm up exercises and norm/guilt testing	30 mins
<p><i>1. 'In the next 2 or 3 minutes I would like you to name as many things as you can think of that individuals and households can do to help the environment'</i></p> <p>Write each action down on a post-it - ask members of the group to perform this task.</p> <p>Obser-participant to keep note of order in which the actions are raised.</p> <p><i>2. Out of all of the actions, which do you think most people do?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check answers with the rest of the group to see if each action is generally agreed • Probe for why they think this (e.g. they do it; their friends do it, they have seen it on t.v or in campaigns). • Ask whether they think people do the action for environmental or other reasons, such as to save money. <p>If the group has chosen energy efficient lightbulbs or appliances, ask whether they think most people have them in their house; if they have not chosen energy efficient light bulbs introduce it as an action.</p> <p><i>3. Tell the group that 3 in 4 households in the UK have energy efficient light bulbs (these are self-reported statistics from Defra if the group asks).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for their reactions to this statement - are these positive or negative? Does it make the group feel optimistic or are they resistant to the message? Do they feel guilty about it? <p><i>4. Are there any of these actions that you feel guilty about if you do not do them?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for why they feel guilty 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for what makes them feel they should do them • Probe for whether they have to do something to stop themselves feeling guilty or if it is just a passing feeling. 	
Hand out Card 1 - guilt formats (refer to separate ppt file)	
<p>☞ <i>Motivation test 2 - guilt formats</i></p> <p>5) <i>Which of these three, if any, would be most likely to make you feel like you should do the action listed:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -We are all contributing to climate change - turn off unwanted lights -Leaving lights on is wasteful - turn off unwanted lights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for why - waste or climate change; money or empathy • Probe for guilt about being wasteful or affecting others 	
Quick fire Pen portraits O and L	5 -10 mins
Obs-part and moderator to read out one pen portrait each. Remember to clarify for the tape which segment is being talked about throughout the conversation.	
<p>A) <i>What are your impressions of these groups of people?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for positive and negative impression • Probe for which group they prefer and why <p>B) <i>Do you know anybody who fits into any of the groups?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for whether the group seems to have more friends of one type of segment than another • Probe for whether they recognise themselves 	
3. Hypotheses testing questions	20 mins
Hand out Cards 2 - which is more important	
<p>6) <i>Thinking about the way you live and what is important to you, as a group, I would like you to try and order the following as to which you think is the most important in relation to your life and the environment.:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing waste Being a good person Saving energy Saving money Living in balance with nature and the earth's natural resources Enjoying life Reducing your carbon footprint <p>It is likely that people will say that some of these are the same. Ask them</p>	

<p>to explain why and then keep the 'same' cards together as one unit.</p> <p>Obs-part: Note down the final order of the cards</p> <p>7) <i>We have talked about saving money and saving energy, I am interested in whether anybody around the table knows how much their last electricity bill was? Do you know how much your energy tariff is?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for whether people are very aware of the cost of energy and if this dictates/affects their behaviour • Ask the same question for petrol <p>8) <i>We have already talked a little bit about this when we were ordering the cards. So to follow on, I wanted to ask if you think that you need to do your bit for the environment to be a good person?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for why/why not • If the group feels that not everyone is able to do things for the environment, ask the question again, but based only on people who can afford to etc. <p>9) <i>Would you be willing to do things for the environment even if no-one else did?</i></p> <p>10) <i>Do you think it is possible to do a lot for the environment and still have an interesting life?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for what the balance should be between a fun/interesting life and taking care of the environment <p>11) Only ask this question if it makes sense in the context of the group's conversation to date. <i>Do you think it is easy for you to do some small things for the environment or does local and national government have to do a lot more to make it possible for you to act?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If necessary steer the conversation back to 'small things'. This is to test for those segments who do almost nothing for the environment, so if your segment is doing a lot and has talked about doing a lot do not ask or re-word as 'do you think it is easy for everyone to do some small things for the environment' 	
<p>Quick fire Pen portraits M and J</p>	<p>5 -10 mins</p>
<p>Obs-part and moderator to read out one pen portrait each. Remember to clarify for the tape which segment is being talked about throughout the conversation.</p>	
<p>A) <i>What are your impressions of these groups of people?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for positive and negative impression • Probe for which group they prefer and why <p>B) <i>Do you know anybody who fits into any of the groups?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for whether the group seems to have more friends of one type of segment than another • Probe for whether they recognise themselves 	

4a. Testing identity motivations	15 mins
Hand out Cards 3 - identity based statements.	
<p>12) <i>Which, if any, do you find most appealing?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for why (especially as to the difference between feeling good about the self personally or socially) • Choose one card as the most appealing. It may be that some segments do not find any appealing - that is okay. Probe for why not <p>13) <i>Which do you find least appealing?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for why <p>Obs-part to keep note of decisions</p>	
Quick fire Pen portraits L and K	5 -10 mins
Obs-part and moderator to read out one pen portrait each. Remember to clarify for the tape which segment is being talked about throughout the conversation.	
<p>A) <i>What are your impressions of these groups of people?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for positive and negative impression • Probe for which group they prefer and why <p>B) <i>Do you know anybody who fits into any of the groups?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for whether the group seems to have more friends of one type of segment than another • Probe for whether they recognise themselves 	
4b. Testing norm motivations	15 mins
Hand out Cards 4 - personal norm and social norm motivation based statements.	
<p>14) <i>Which do you find most appealing?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Probe for why • Probe for which is more important, their own values or ensuring they are doing their bit if others do • Some groups might argue about their organisation doing things for the environment, try to establish whether they are using this as an excuse because they have no environmental norms or if they truly are frustrated about 	

<p>their company.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose card as the most appealing (and put aside to re-test in a few minutes) <p>15) <i>Which do you find least appealing?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probe for why <p>Obs-part to keep note of decisions</p>	
5. Wrap up question	5 mins
Hand out Cards 5 - list of reasons to act	
<p>16) <i>Finally, to finish the focus group, given everything that we have talked about here today, which of the following would encourage you to do more for the environment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Being left alone to discover actions and products for myself from newspapers, t.v., the internet or companies -Other members of my household being interested in the environment -Seeing friends and neighbours doing their bit <p>Doing something with a local community group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -My workplace introducing environmental schemes -Local Government or Government making things easier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Probe for whether the group all agrees with one solution Probe for why they have chosen the solution they have. 	
Thank you and payment for the attending is in an envelope - need to collect in the psychometric test before payment though.	

Group O

They are concerned about climate change, waste and other environmental issues.

Protecting the environment is important to them and the way they live their life.

They have made changes to their daily routines and shopping habits to be more environmentally friendly.

Will encourage family and friends to follow their lead.

Often seek new information about environmental issues, and what else they can do to help.

Still feel guilty about their impact on the environment, and would like to do better.

Group M

They are concerned about environmental issues, have an interest in nature and are worried about changes to the countryside.

They are careful about how much money they spend and will always try to avoid unnecessary waste.

Are keen on recycling and reducing how much energy and water they use at home.

Consider buying and using only as much as they need as being sensible and the decent thing to do.

Are happy that they are doing their bit to help protect the environment.

Group L

They are concerned about climate change and believe that environmental action is part of being a decent person.

Respond to popular campaigns on the environment such as plastic bags, energy efficient products and recycling.

Think it's important to keep a balance between being environmentally friendly and maintaining a healthy, happy lifestyle.

Are frustrated by people who do little or nothing for the environment.

Would like to do more but are reluctant to sacrifice luxuries such as taking foreign holidays.

Group J

They have some concerns about the environment.

Environmental action is not a priority in their lives and doesn't fit well with their daily routines.

Feel that companies and organisations, including those that they work for, have a responsibility to undertake pro-environmental schemes.

Consider people who do a lot for the environment as being a bit boring, but think people who do nothing are selfish.

Would do more for the environment as long as it doesn't interfere with their current lifestyle.

Group N

They acknowledge that there are environmental problems but are less sure of the real causes.

Will recycle and save energy but will have reasons for not doing more to address environmental issues.

Have little interest in being green or being seen to be green.

Would like to see the government help to make environmental action easier and cheaper.

Would do more if they felt other people were also acting to protect the environment.

Group K

They are not interested in the environment and do not believe that there is an environmental crisis.

They are not trying to doing their bit for the environment.

Believe that any problems will be resolved without making changing to their lifestyle.

They are happy with their actions and do not want to do more to protect the environment.

Norm and identity test statements

Cards 3 - identity statements

Self Concept/identity

I think I'm a good person so I am trying to reduce how much energy I use at home and I want to do my bit to help protect the environment.

I feel good about reducing my energy consumption at home even if other people don't realise what I'm doing.

(Social) Identity

I would hate to feel that other people might think badly of me because I don't try to reduce my energy consumption at home.

I want to be green. It is the thing to do these days. So I am trying to reduce my energy consumption at home.

Cards 4 - Norm statements

Personal Norm

Reducing the amount of energy I use at home helps me to reduce waste, save money and protect the planet. It's common sense!

Social Norm (descriptive)

More and more people are now taking steps to reduce their energy consumption at home because they realise that it will help protect the environment, and I need to do the same.

The organisation I work for is now taking steps to reduce its energy consumption and I feel I ought to do the same at home.

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