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# UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR REGARDING THE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION OF CLOTHING

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy School of Engineering and Innovation, Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics of The Open University



FEBRUARY 2017  
OPEN UNIVERSITY  
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Many thanks!!

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## Abstract

In response to the rapidly growing consumption of clothing, environmental sustainability concerns have increasingly been expressed. While designers and industry have worked on responses, little is known about how ordinary consumers understand sustainability with regarding to clothing. A study by Defra in 2008 revealed a low awareness of sustainability and proposed sustainable fashion goals for consumers.

Research on consumer clothing purchase tends to be from a marketing perspective with the ultimate aim of increasing consumer sales. Much of the literature on clothing sustainability has focused on the buying of ethical/environmentally-friendly clothing and on younger consumers. By contrast, this thesis has focused on an in-depth study of ten mothers aged between 25 and 60 in and around Leicester. The women's clothing consumption was investigated through shopping trips, wardrobe sampling and a semi-structured interview about their shopping and ownership behaviour. Only at the end of the data gathering were the participants asked about sustainability in general before exploring their understanding of sustainability in clothing.

The research revealed that while the participants were concerned about environmental issues, their awareness of sustainability in clothing was low, even though their clothes buying and use behaviour was relatively sustainable. They bought a limited number of garments and wore them for many years, bought second hand clothes and passed their own unwanted clothes to charity shops. However, their clothes buying and use behaviours were shaped by their life circumstances and their personality. The participants had a strong sense of their own personal styles and selected clothes they know would suit them from a limited number of brands and locations. They showed little interest in fast changing fashion trends, but they were influenced by their peer group.

Any environmentally-beneficial behaviours were mainly a by-product of these core determining factors. A key contribution of this research is to show how more sustainable behaviour emerges

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when there is a good match to factors already embedded in people's daily consumption practices. Building on these core factors, and on how knowledge develops around them, might be an important part of promoting clothing sustainability.

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## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Clothing and Sustainability</b> .....	<b>13</b>
1.1	Introduction .....	13
1.2	The Rise of the Clothing Market .....	13
1.3	Rising concerns over clothing sustainability .....	15
1.4	The research questions.....	16
1.5	Overview of the Thesis.....	18
1.6	Definitions and understandings.....	20
<b>2</b>	<b>The Literature Review</b> .....	<b>21</b>
2.1	Introduction .....	21
2.2	A Critique of Consumption.....	22
2.2.1	Needs .....	22
2.2.2	Consumption: The Dominant Social Paradigm .....	24
2.2.3	Ethical Consumption .....	26
2.2.4	Attitude-Behaviour Gap .....	29
2.2.5	Consumer Types.....	32
2.2.6	Conclusion.....	34
2.3	Fashion and Clothing.....	35
2.3.1	Identity through Clothing.....	37
2.3.2	Social Expression .....	38
2.3.3	Peer Groups .....	38
2.3.4	Social Groups and Identity .....	39
2.3.5	Anti-Fashion .....	40
2.3.6	Conclusion.....	40
2.3.7	Clothing and Anxiety .....	40
2.3.8	Work.....	41
2.3.9	Social Norms .....	42
2.3.10	Families and Culture .....	43
2.3.11	Everyday Practices of Clothing.....	43
2.3.12	Former Selves.....	44
2.3.13	Expectations of Clothing .....	45
2.3.14	Usage of Clothing .....	45
2.4	Shopping .....	46
2.4.1	Experiences of Shopping.....	48
2.4.2	Price and Value .....	49
2.4.3	The Shopping Location.....	49
2.4.4	Shopping Decision-Making.....	51
2.4.5	Conclusion.....	52

---

2.5	Critique of Sustainability within the Fashion System .....	52
2.5.1	Sustainability .....	53
2.5.2	What Does Sustainability Mean for Fashion? .....	54
2.5.3	Issues of Sustainability in Fashion.....	55
2.5.4	Voluntary Initiatives .....	58
2.5.5	The Sustainable Fashion Goals.....	59
2.5.6	Slow Fashion .....	61
2.6	Sustainable Fashion Consumption .....	62
2.6.1	Prior Research .....	62
2.6.2	Understanding and Terminology of Sustainability.....	62
2.6.3	Awareness of the Issues.....	64
2.6.4	Information .....	65
2.6.5	Green Consumerism .....	65
2.6.6	Barriers, Price, Lack of Choice, Poor Fashionability .....	67
2.6.7	Not Buying.....	69
2.7	Conclusions and Research Gap .....	70
2.7.1	Conclusion of this Chapter .....	71
2.7.2	The Gap .....	71
2.7.3	The Research Questions.....	72
<b>3</b>	<b>Methodology.....</b>	<b>74</b>
3.1	Introduction .....	74
3.2	The Research Questions.....	74
3.3	The Advantages and Disadvantages of Potential Methods .....	75
3.4	The Mixed Method Approach .....	78
3.5	Case Studies .....	81
3.6	Methods in related work .....	81
3.7	The Philosophical and Ethnographic Approach .....	85
3.8	My Role as Researcher.....	88
3.9	The Participants .....	89
3.9.1	Recruiting the participants.....	91
3.10	Ethical Approval .....	92
3.11	Selected methods for data gathering .....	92
3.11.1	The approach taken .....	92
3.11.2	Data Collection Methods .....	93
3.11.3	The Shopping Trip .....	94
3.11.4	The Wardrobe Sample .....	95
3.11.5	Interviews.....	97
3.11.6	Variations in the process.....	98

3.11.7	The Interview Questions .....	98
3.11.8	The Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) .....	99
3.11.9	The DEFRA Test .....	99
3.11.10	Sustainable Awareness .....	100
3.11.11	Sustainable Clothing Goals.....	100
3.11.12	Preparation of the data.....	101
3.12	Analysis of the data.....	101
3.12.1	The Coding Steps.....	101
3.13	Validation .....	105
3.13.1	Focus groups .....	105
3.14	The Pilot Study .....	107
3.14.1	Pilot study purpose .....	107
3.14.2	The Pilot Study Activities.....	107
3.14.3	Reflection on methods used in the pilot study .....	108
3.15	Recording and Analysis of Interviews .....	109
3.16	Conclusions .....	111
<b>4</b>	<b>The Case Studies .....</b>	<b>112</b>
4.1	Introduction .....	112
4.2	Rationale for selection .....	113
4.3	Reflections on the Participants .....	115
4.4	Geography.....	116
4.5	Time .....	117
4.6	The Wardrobe Sampling Task .....	117
4.6.1	The T-Shirt.....	117
4.6.2	The Pair of Jeans .....	118
4.6.3	The Special Item.....	118
4.7	The First Group .....	118
4.8	The Case Studies .....	120
4.8.1	Ali – Case Study .....	120
4.8.2	Kathy – Case Study .....	122
4.8.3	Maria – Case Study.....	125
4.8.4	Xandra – Case Study.....	128
4.8.5	Cara – Case Study.....	131
4.9	The Second Group.....	134
4.9.1	Sam – Case Study .....	135
4.9.2	Philomena – Case Study.....	139
4.9.3	Sasha – Case Study.....	142
4.9.4	Gisela – Case Study .....	145



4.9.5	Jill – Case Study .....	148
4.10	Themes Emerging from All Three Items .....	151
4.10.1	Ambiguity in the Terms.....	151
4.10.2	Not Possessing the Requested Garment.....	152
4.10.3	Comfort, Fit and Practicality .....	152
4.10.4	Attachment to Clothing.....	153
4.10.5	Attitude to Spending .....	154
4.11	Conclusions .....	155
<b>5</b>	<b>Analysis of Protocol Questions .....</b>	<b>156</b>
5.1	Introduction to the analysis of protocol questions.....	156
5.2	The Consumer Styles Inventory (Sproles and Kendall, 1987) .....	156
5.2.1	The Scoring of the Consumer Styles Inventory .....	157
5.2.2	A Quantitative Overview of the Data.....	158
5.2.3	The Consumer Characteristics .....	159
5.3	Limitations of the Consumer Styles Inventory.....	161
5.3.1	Conclusion.....	163
5.4	The Defra Test on Pro-Environmental Attitudes .....	163
5.4.1	The Defra Segmentation Model Results .....	166
5.4.3	Critique of the Defra Test.....	167
5.5	Sustainable Awareness .....	168
5.5.1	Exploitation, Waste and Transportation.....	171
5.5.2	The Meaning of Sustainability.....	174
5.5.3	Sustainability for Fashion.....	174
5.5.4	Sources of Information .....	175
5.5.5	Reactions to Knowledge.....	176
5.5.6	Conclusion.....	178
5.6	Sustainable Fashion Goals.....	178
5.6.1	To Buy Second-Hand Clothing Where Possible.....	179
5.6.2	Spend More on Fewer, More Durable Clothing.....	181
5.6.3	Buy Clothing that is More Sustainable .....	182
5.6.4	Would You Spend £5 More on an Eco-Ethical T-Shirt? .....	185
5.6.5	Would You Hire Clothes? .....	186
5.6.6	Repair or adapt clothing to prolong its life. ....	187
5.6.7	Return or Recycle Clothing When No Longer Wanted.....	188
5.6.8	Wash at 30 degrees, and use eco-friendly washing powder .....	189
5.6.9	Washing Powder .....	190
5.6.10	Line-Dry as Much as Possible .....	191
5.6.11	Avoid Ironing as Much as Possible.....	192

---

5.6.12	Are you Aware of the Fibres that you are Buying? .....	192
5.7	Sustainable Awareness .....	193
5.8	The Sustainable Fashion Goals.....	194
5.8.1	Recycling .....	195
5.8.2	Repairing or Adapting Clothing .....	195
5.8.3	Avoid Ironing As Much as Possible.....	196
5.8.4	Buy Fewer, More Durable Clothing.....	196
5.9	Conclusions .....	196
<b>6</b>	<b>Clothing and the Individual .....</b>	<b>199</b>
6.1	Introduction .....	199
6.2	Life Stage .....	199
6.3	Clothing Needs.....	200
6.3.1	Purpose of the Garment .....	200
6.3.2	Practicality.....	202
6.3.3	Conclusion.....	203
6.4	Social Influences.....	204
6.4.1	Work.....	204
6.4.2	Professional Wardrobes.....	204
6.4.3	The Former Professional Roles .....	205
6.4.4	Social Occasions .....	208
6.4.5	Conclusion.....	209
6.5	Identity .....	209
6.5.1	Former Selves.....	209
6.5.2	Former Selves: The Major Influences.....	210
6.5.3	Cultural Influences .....	212
6.5.4	Attitude to Fashion .....	213
6.5.5	Current Influences - Implicit and Explicit Forces.....	215
6.6	Personal Style.....	216
6.6.1	Identity and Personal Style .....	216
6.6.2	What Influences Personal Style?.....	217
6.6.3	Elements of style.....	219
6.6.4	Image.....	221
6.6.5	Judgement on appearances .....	223
6.7	Clothing fulfilling needs .....	224
6.7.1	Physiological needs.....	225
6.7.2	Safety need .....	226
6.7.3	Belonging and love need.....	226
6.7.4	Esteem needs.....	227

6.7.5	Self-Actualisation .....	228
6.7.6	Critique of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs .....	229
6.8	Conclusions .....	232
<b>7</b>	<b>Shopping .....</b>	<b>234</b>
7.1	Introduction .....	234
7.2	The Shopping Activities .....	236
7.3	Attitudes to Clothes Shopping .....	237
7.3.1	Participant Needs .....	238
7.3.2	Shopping Tactics .....	240
7.3.3	Visual Filters .....	242
7.3.4	Retailers/Brands .....	242
7.4	The Experience of Shopping .....	245
7.4.1	Preferred Location .....	245
7.4.2	Internet Shopping .....	247
7.4.3	Dislikes .....	249
7.4.4	Help with Shopping .....	250
7.4.5	Effect of Emotions on Shopping .....	251
7.4.6	Children .....	252
7.5	Attitude to Spending .....	253
7.5.1	Shopping Sites .....	254
7.5.2	Main Attitudes .....	254
7.5.3	Spending More on Clothing .....	257
7.6	Priorities for Shopping .....	259
7.7	Conclusion .....	259
7.7.1	Needs .....	260
7.7.2	Style .....	260
7.7.3	Attitudes to Spending .....	261
7.7.4	Habits .....	261
7.7.5	Life Stage .....	262
7.8	Implications for Sustainable Behaviour .....	262
<b>8</b>	<b>Factors affecting clothing consumption and implications for sustainability .....</b>	<b>265</b>
8.1	Introduction .....	265
8.1.1	Purchasing garments .....	267
8.1.2	Use of Clothing .....	269
8.1.3	Disposal of Clothing .....	270
8.1.4	Consumption Habits .....	270
8.2	Hidden Sustainability .....	275
8.2.1	Attitudes to Consumption Behaviours .....	275

---

8.2.2	Shopping .....	278
8.2.3	Monetary Concerns.....	280
8.2.4	Needs .....	281
8.2.5	Ethical Behaviour .....	283
8.3	Implications for discussions on sustainable clothing consumption.....	285
8.3.1	Sustainable Clothing Goals.....	286
8.3.2	Slow Fashion .....	287
8.3.3	Eco/Ethical Clothing .....	288
8.4	Critique of the Sustainability Agenda .....	289
<b>9</b>	<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>294</b>
9.1	Introduction .....	294
9.2	Key Conclusions .....	294
9.3	Additional conclusions .....	295
9.4	Limitations of the thesis.....	296
9.5	Further Work.....	297
	<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>300</b>
	<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>318</b>
	A1: Information for participants .....	318
	A2: Participant Consent Form .....	320
	A3: Defra Pro-Environmental Attitudes.....	322
	A4: Participant Card for the Defra Test.....	331
	A5: CSI – Consumer Styles Inventory .....	332
	A6: Coding Table .....	333
	A7: Cara – Interview – 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2014.....	334
	First Section.....	334
	Final Section.....	345

---

## Figures

Figure 1.1 Overview of Thesis .....	19
Figure 2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Need (Maslow, 1943) .....	23
Figure 3.1 Data Collection Methods .....	93
Figure 3.2 Stages of the data gathering process.....	94
Figure 3.3 Coding steps.....	102
Figure 4.1 Diagram of participants' network .....	114
Figure 4.2 Ali's Polka Dot top .....	120
Figure 4.3 Ali's Jeans .....	121
Figure 4.4 Ali's Special Item .....	122
Figure 4.5 Kathy's T-Shirt .....	123
Figure 4.6 Kathy's Jeans .....	124
Figure 4.7 Kathy's Special Item .....	125
Figure 4.8 Maria's T-Shirt.....	126
Figure 4.9 Maria's Jeans.....	127
Figure 4.10 Maria's Special Item.....	128
Figure 4.11 Xandra's T-Shirt.....	129
Figure 4.12 Xandra's Jeans.....	130
Figure 4.13 Xandra's Special Item.....	131
Figure 4.14 Cara's T-Shirt .....	132
Figure 4.15 Cara's Treggings .....	133
Figure 4.16 Cara's Special Item .....	134
Figure 4.17 Sam's T-Shirt .....	136
Figure 4.18 Sam's Jeans .....	137
Figure 4.19 Sam's Special Items.....	138
Figure 4.20 Philomena's T-Shirt .....	140
Figure 4.21 Philomena's Jeans .....	140
Figure 4.22 Philomena's Special Item .....	141
Figure 4.23 Sasha's T-Shirt .....	143
Figure 4.24 Sasha's Jeans .....	144
Figure 4.25 Sasha's Special Item .....	145
Figure 4.26 Gisela 's T-Shirt.....	146
Figure 4.27 Gisela's Jeans.....	147
Figure 4.28 Gisela's Special Item.....	148
Figure 4.29 Jill's T-Shirt .....	149
Figure 4.30 Jill's Jeans .....	150
Figure 4.31 Jill's Special Item .....	151
Figure 5.1 Participants Scoring in the Consumer Styles Inventory .....	158
Figure 5.2 Sustainable Awareness Scores.....	169
Figure 5.3 Sustainable Awareness Scores by Issue .....	170
Figure 5.4 Proportion of Second Hand Clothing Owned.....	179
Figure 5.5 Buy Second-Hand Where Possible .....	180
Figure 5.6 Durable Clothing .....	181
Figure 5.7 Buy Clothing that is More Sustainable.....	182
Figure 5.8 Categories of Sustainable Clothing .....	184
Figure 5.9 Spend £5 More on an Eco-Ethical Shirt.....	186
Figure 5.10 Repair or Adapt Clothing.....	187
Figure 5.11 Return or Recycling Clothing When No Longer Wanted.....	188
Figure 5.12 Wash at 30 and Use Eco-Friendly Washing Powder .....	190
Figure 5.13 Line-Dry as Much as Possible .....	191

---

Figure 5.14 Avoid ironing as much as possible .....	192
Figure 5.15 Awareness of Mixed Fibres .....	192
Figure 5.16 The Sustainable Fashion Goals.....	194
Figure 6.1 Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943) .....	225
Figure 7.1 Three major shopping themes.....	234
Figure 7.2 Typical H&M Conscious Collection display [Source: www.hm.com/clothes] .....	244
Figure 7.3 internet shopping options.....	247
Figure 8.1 five key themes affecting clothing consumption.....	265
Figure 8.2 Major factors influencing the purchasing of clothing.....	266
Figure 8.3 The Barriers to Sustainable Behaviour.....	272

## **Tables**

Table 3.1 Methods in Related Research .....	83
Table 3.2 examples of coding from text .....	105
Table 3.3 Main areas of the pilot case studies .....	109
Table 3.4 Four Main Categories of Interest .....	110
Table 3.5 Contradictions .....	110
Table 4.1 Time and Place of the Activities .....	119
Table 4.2 Location of Shopping Trips and Items Bought .....	119
Table 4.3 The Dates of Activities and Shopping Locations .....	135
Table 4.4 Table of Items Bought .....	135
Table 5.1 The Eight Consumer Characteristics for the Consumer Style Inventory according to Sproles and Kendall (1987) .....	157
Table 5.2 The Results of the Consumer Styles Inventory .....	159
Table 5.3 The Defra Pro-Environmental Segmentation .....	166
Table 5.4 The Defra Segmentation Model Results .....	166
Table 5.5 The Questions for sustainable awareness .....	168
Table 5.6 Scores for Sustainable Awareness.....	168
Table 5.7 results for all the participants in sustainable awareness.....	169
Table 5.8 The sustainable fashion goals .....	179
Table 5.9 scoring tables .....	179
Table 7.1 Table of Participants Shopping Destinations .....	236
Table 7.2 Categories of Shopping by Participant.....	254
Table 7.3 Main Approaches Towards Spending.....	257

# 1 Clothing and Sustainability

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## 1.1 Introduction

“Buy me, and I will make your dreams come true.” “Hang on”, says the husband, “a dress alone cannot do that.” “You’re right”, sighs the woman, “I need the shoes and handbag as well.” This is the caption on a greeting card: underneath there is a drawing of a lavish dress with shoes and a handbag. It is a funny joke, and an all too common caricature of women as fashion-loving frivolous spenders of their husband’s money. Cultural expectations tend to link shopping with women. Consumer spending on clothing in the UK rose by 4% in 2015 to £53.5 billion and again by 4% in 2016 to £57.5 billion (Statista, 2017), with women’s clothing being the dominant category.

A booming consumer sector appears to be good news, but from an environmental perspective it is accompanied by some disturbing trends. This includes a waste crisis with approximately 1.8 million tons of clothing waste reaching landfill each year in the UK (WRAP, 2015). To understand clothing consumption behaviour, this thesis carried out an exploratory study that looked at the clothes buying and owning behaviour of ten women aged between 25 and 65 through in-depth ethnographically inspired case studies. This thesis will demonstrate that while the behaviour of the participants was, overall, quite sustainable, they actually had little awareness of sustainability issues in clothing. This research therefore indicates that to address issues of sustainability with regard to clothing requires an in depth understanding of purchase, ownership and use behaviours.

## 1.2 The Rise of the Clothing Market

The clothing market became a global mass market phenomenon with the introduction of mass produced clothing in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During this time, with the development of industrially produced textiles made of cotton, wool and flax, the price of textiles began to decline, a trend that has continued to the present day (Farrer, 2011). Despite this decline in price,

new clothing was a considerable expense for many people well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. People used to own a small number of clothes that they carefully looked after. Clothing was kept for long periods of time, adapted to changing uses and styles and mended when necessary. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century two fabrics have become dominant: cotton used in jeans and t-shirts and polyester which gave rise to easy-care clothing (Lee, 2007). Over the past decades there has been a very significant change in how clothing is valued. Clothing has very become a throwaway commodity. People buy an increasing number of clothing items which they only wear a few times before disposing of them. UK consumers spent £780 per capita purchasing 35 kg of textiles in 2004 (Allwood et al. 2006). The global clothing market today is valued at 3 trillion dollars, which accounts for 2 percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employed 24.8 million people in 2014 (Fashionunited,2017). When the international trade Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) and General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), which regulated import and export quotas between countries, came to an end in 1995, cheaper goods began to flood the market (Black, 2012). This led to a rise of 37% in the amount of clothes purchased per capita between 2001 and 2005 (Allwood et al. 2006).

The clothing market has always been dominated by fashion. Fashion is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “A popular or the latest style of clothing, hair, decoration or behaviour” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2017). Fashion is a phenomenon that goes beyond clothing to all aspects of life that are not subject to purely functional considerations. However, colloquially the terms ‘fashion’ and ‘clothing’ are often used interchangeable, such as “fashion retailers”, “fashion trends”, as their scope often goes beyond clothes. The rise of cheap clothing has also led to “Fast Fashion”. Fast fashion is about the reduced time taken from designs appearing on the catwalk to versions being sold in the stores, this being within weeks rather than taking a year or more for a traditional collection. Fast fashion is driven by consumer demand for celebrity inspired styles, catwalk trends and the need for newness communicated by the media (Barnes and Lea-Greenwood, 2010).



Many retailers are now offering new designs throughout the year rather than the traditional two or four fashion seasons in line with fashion shows. As clothing has become cheaper a “discount fashion sector” has arisen, characterised by low cost, short lifetime garments sold through supermarkets and other outlets. These garments can retail for as little as five pounds or less. The discount fashion sector, makes up one-fifth of the UK market (Defra, 2011). The largest player in fashion retail in the UK is still Marks & Spencers, followed by Next, both of whom are regarded as mid-market retailers, aimed at an older demographic (Intel, 2015a). Primark, is the UK’s third largest clothing retailer by value which highlights the popularity of low-priced fashionable clothing with young shoppers. Internet shopping is a growing sector as on-line only retailers are gaining a larger share of the clothing market. In 2017, Intel estimated that online sales of fashion increased to account for 24% of total fashion spend in 2017, up from 17% in 2013 (Intel, 2017). Another current trend is sports and leisure wear, with over 10% of the clothing market now through sports goods retailers (Intel, 2015b). This rise in leisurewear highlights a more casual trend in clothing.

### 1.3 Rising concerns over clothing sustainability

As the amount of clothing sold in the UK rises, the increased level of production of these garments are causing environmental and ethical problems, from production through to disposal. As garment production has moved to fairly unregulated countries, mainly in south-east Asia, there are rising concerns about poor working conditions in clothing factories, which came into sharp relief through the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh in 2013. This was a major tragedy, when 1,134 garment workers were killed when their building collapsed (Fashion Revolution, 2017). Allwood (2006) published the *Cambridge Report* which investigated the state of the global clothing and textiles industry, particularly the environmental impact of both global supply chains and garments use by consumers. This report envisaged potential future scenarios and provided an analysis of how to develop a more sustainable future. There have been other responses from government, industry and designers to tackle this growing problem. The Cambridge Report has

been followed by the Defra project on the *Public Understanding of Sustainable Clothing* (Fisher et al., 2008) where one of the recommendations was further research in this area particularly from the consumer viewpoint. This research was commissioned under the Labour government, now over ten years ago, and has not been followed up with any action or a new government commissioned study.

The last large-scale study on clothing waste was commissioned by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) who produced the *Valuing Our Clothes* report in 2012. This report investigated consumer behaviour around the major factors of purchasing, using and disposal of clothing. Opportunities to reduce environmental impacts, save money and cut resource use within the clothing life cycle, production, purchase, in- use and end-of life were identified. The report concluded with the key message that by extending the active life of clothes by nine months consumers could save around £5 billion per year and the carbon, water and waste footprints can be reduced by around 20-30%.

### 1.4 The research questions

These studies indicate that sustainability of clothing is a systemic problem which can only be addressed by all stakeholders working together. One important stakeholder is the clothing consumer. Research on consumer behaviour tends to be from a marketing perspective with the ultimate aim of increasing consumer sales. It addresses questions such as how to improve store design and visual displays or ways of advertising to target particular market segments (e.g. Solomon and Rabolt, 2004). Little is known about what happens with clothing after purchase. There are wardrobe studies such as Woodward (2007) who carried out an ethnographic study into the clothing habits of women to understand their clothing choices when getting dressed. Other wardrobe studies include Skjold's (2016) "Biographical Wardrobe" which studied how people interact with their clothing, and how their wardrobes connect their past, present and future ideas

of self. Other examples include Shove's (2003a) sociological investigation into the everyday practices of washing, drying and ironing clothes.

While the research for this thesis was undertaken, two other PhDs were published on sustainable fashion. The first was Elaine Ritch's exploratory study into professional mothers' experience of sustainable fashion consumption (2012). Her thesis involved interviews with twenty-eight professional mothers exploring how sustainable concepts are perceived and sustainability plays a role in their decision-making when buying clothes. The other was Alexander Hiller's (2016) thesis, who conducted interviews with twenty people who work in the field of sustainable fashion and analysed trade-offs between their knowledge and values (measured by using Schwartz's values) and their clothes shopping.

A key point is that much of the literature has concentrated on fashion and younger consumers, such as Morgan and Birtwhistle (2009), because the young are considered to be more interested in fashion and account for a disproportionate share of clothing sales. Kozar and Hiller-Connell (2015) claim that most research on sustainable clothing shopping is also based on findings gathered from a traditional college-aged sample. By contrast, this thesis has focused on ten mothers who were older than twenty-five years and selected through convenience sampling. A deliberate decision was taken not to screen for any pro-ethical or pro-environmental attitudes. Research literature revealed that few ethical consumers bought eco/ethical clothing for their sustainable properties alone (Carrigan and Atalla, 2001; Hiller Connell, 2010; Niinimaki, 2010), but had wider priorities for their clothing which is discussed further in Chapter 2.24. Ordinary consumers were selected to understand what was important to them in terms of their clothing and to investigate the barriers towards more sustainable behaviour. This research is built on earlier research by the author into attitudes to sustainability within fashion (Crommentuijn-Marsh, 2008) later discussed in Chapter 2.24.1.

Therefore, this thesis set out to answer the following research questions:

**Q1: What are the key factors that influence consumers in the purchasing, use and disposal of clothes?**

As Hiller-Connell (2010) and Butler and Francis (1997) suggest, the social and psychological dimensions of clothing in purchasing decisions may be more complex than for other products. As much of the marketing research focuses on market segmentation and is quantitative, the idea was to gain an in-depth knowledge of consumers so a clear picture of the key factors could emerge; and to see clothing consumption in the context of the participants' lives in a holistic way.

**Q2: In an individual's clothing consumption pattern what possible barriers towards more sustainable behaviour can be identified?**

By the identification of any potential barriers, the focus will be on the potential of changing behaviour. By understanding what barriers might constrict a consumer, future initiatives may be able to address these.

### 1.5 Overview of the Thesis

The strategic aim of this thesis is an in-depth understanding of consumer behaviour and potential barriers that exist to make fashion consumption more sustainable.

- Chapter Two will discuss the literature review, what the responses have been to the concern over sustainability from designers, industry, voluntary groups and the Government. Then the chapter focuses on the sustainable fashion goals for consumers as defined by Allwood et al., (2006) and Fisher et al., (2008) and the influences of fashion and consumption.
- Chapter Three will discuss the methodology and the reasoning behind the chosen mixed methods. It explains in detail the three-step approach taken in this thesis: the shopping trips, the wardrobe sampling and the semi-structured interview, along with the

Consumer Styles Inventory and the Defra Pro-Environmental Attitude Test. This chapter finishes by explaining how the analysis was conducted and the pilot study is presented.

- Chapter Four will give the background to the case studies, how the participants came to participate in this research, and the key factors of their lives.
- Chapter Five describes the first stage of results - the answers to the protocol questions covering the Wardrobe Sampling Task, the Defra Pro-Environmental Attitude Test, the Consumer Styles Inventory and the participants' reactions to the Sustainable Clothing Goals.
- Chapter Six examines the major influences on the participants' choice of clothing,
- Chapter Seven discusses participants' attitudes and behaviour during the shopping activities.
- Chapter Eight brings the conclusions of Chapters Five, Six and Seven together in synthesis to answer the two research questions, give the implications for sustainability, a critique of sustainability and the way forward.
- Chapter Nine gives the conclusion, the limitations of this research and the recommended areas for future research.

Figure 1.1 shows how the chapters answer the research questions.

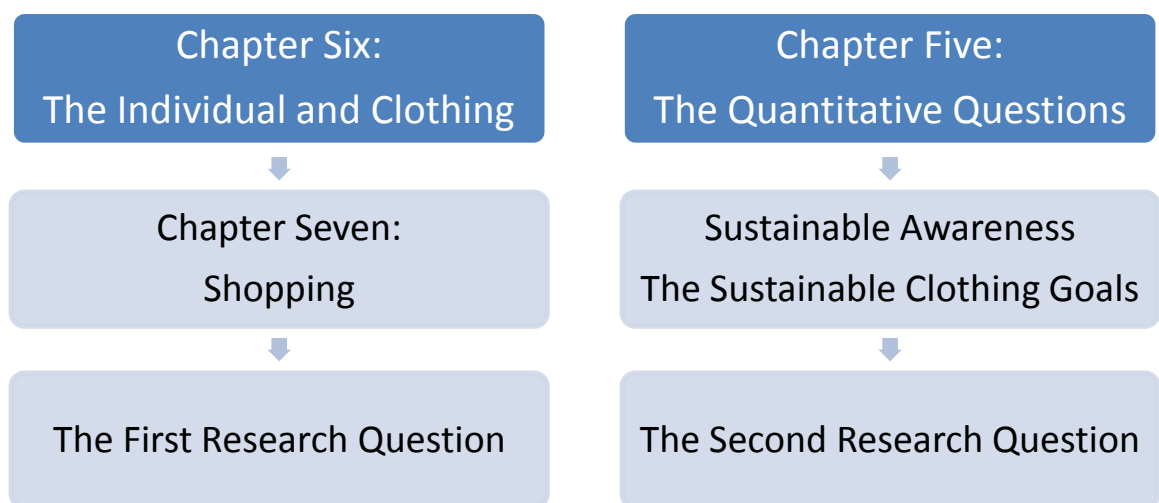


Figure 1.1 Overview of Thesis

## 1.6 Definitions and understandings

As Beard (2008) explains there are many definitions of sustainability within fashion. Hiller Connell (2010) uses a broad definition and also includes second-hand clothing and durable clothing. They differentiate between sustainable clothing and ethical clothing with the following definitions:

**Sustainable Clothing:** Clothing designed with environmentally preferable attributes, including garments made from environmentally preferable fibres (such as organically-grown cotton, hemp, or recycled fibres) or clothing manufactured using environmentally preferable processes (such as closed loop manufacturing cycles or reduced utilization of toxic dyes and other harmful chemicals).

**Ethical clothing:** Clothing that has been made by workers who have been fairly treated such as defined under Fairtrade. Fairtrade stands for paying craftspeople and farmers a fair price, giving them direct access to markets, bypassing corrupt local businesses and shady government officials along the way. The focus of Fairtrade is fighting discrimination, looking out for child welfare, and ensuring that artisans have access to the safe working conditions. (Traidcraft, 2018).

If clothing is referred as “sustainable” or eco/ethical then the clothing referred to encompasses elements of both the environmental and ethical aspects of sustainability.

## 2 The Literature Review

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### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter One has described the environmental and ethical problems that the clothing industry is currently causing, which has resulted in a focus on sustainability to address these issues. Whilst various initiatives within the clothing industry are beginning to address these problems, this thesis will focus solely on the consumer viewpoint. To understand the consumer's behaviour towards their clothing, multiple bodies of knowledge need to be drawn from as there are many societal influences which can impact on an individual's clothing choices. The specific areas of interest for this thesis are those of consumption, ethics, shopping, fashion and sustainability.

The chapter is structured as follows. Within the first section, the broader picture of consumption is considered as consumption patterns are shaped by wider societal trends, habits, physical constraints and individual preferences. At the beginning, there is a brief discussion about clothing needs featuring Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and the role of clothing which is a major theme within this thesis. A critique of consumption is then provided through the lens of ethical consumption. Ethics is one of the core components of sustainability and of particular interest is the so-called "attitude-behaviour gap" as there is much to be learnt about consumer behaviour from this phenomenon. The next section concentrates on fashion and how an individual's concepts of needs, identity and anxiety are expressed through clothing. Then other external forces are discussed: social situations and changes through life and how they affect choices of clothing. Next are the practicalities of clothing, including expectations of clothing, washing, disposal and shopping. The final part of this chapter discusses why the clothing industry needs sustainability, the issues of sustainability, the voluntary initiatives and the role of government. This section ends with the sustainable goals, and a summary of the major conclusions. The section also brings the two previous sections together, showing how and where sustainability and

clothing consumption might fit. Finally, the gap which this research addresses is brought into focus by the conclusions drawn from this chapter.

In this thesis, it is important to make a distinction between clothing and fashion as often these terms are used interchangeably throughout the literature. Fletcher (2008) posits that fashion and clothing are different concepts with different identities. One of the differences often highlighted between “fashion” and “clothing” is that fashion is based on desire rather than need, with clothing being more of a necessary commodity. Black (2011, p.11) argues, however that this ceases to be relevant in a consumer society where most people have far more clothes than required for their needs. Within this thesis, the focus will be on clothing, as for a research project such as this, the key consideration is determining the role that clothing plays in people’s lives. At the core of this role is the question of what “need” does clothing fulfil for an individual. It is to this idea of needs that the chapter now turns.

## 2.2 A Critique of Consumption

### 2.2.1 Needs

As Jackson (2005) points out, based on the definitions of Max -Neef (1991) and Maslow (1943), true human needs are finite, few and universal. Clothing is a necessity. A well-known and widely used theory of need is Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need, (1943), which comes from motivational theory in psychology. Once needs are fulfilled on a lower level, progression can take place to the next higher level. Potentially clothing can fulfil needs within all levels of this hierarchy.



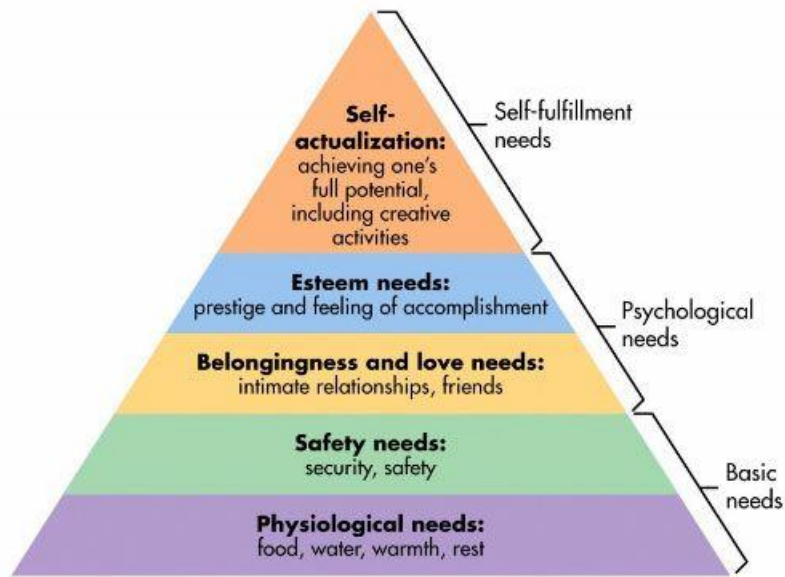


Figure 2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Need (Maslow, 1943)

This “need” in clothing is also acknowledged by Flugel (1966) who in his seminal work, stated that clothes served three purposes: decoration, modesty, and protection, with decoration as the primary purpose. Clearly on the basic lower level, clothes serve a practical purpose in preserving our modesty and protecting us against the elements. On the next level, clothes are used to enhance decoration but, as Maslow's Hierarchy demonstrates, clothing has evolved to be a more complex issue focusing far more on the individual and the social context in which he/she operates. Harris et al., (2016) posit that for many people clothing choices are motivated by their need for identity as identified by Max-Neef (1991) and esteem, (Maslow, 1943). Both Fletcher (2008) and Niinimaki (2010) refer to Manfred Max-Neef (1991) who identified universal human needs, regardless of nation, religion or culture. There are two broad categories:

- Physical or material needs, which are subsistence and protection.
- Psychological (non-material) needs, which are affection, understanding, participation, creation, recreation, identity and freedom.

Fletcher (2008) posits that many people use fashion and materialism as a means to satisfy psychological needs but that consuming materials gives a false sense of satisfying these needs and does not provide the happiness that people seek). Niinimaki (2010) disagrees with this view as she

views fashion as building an individual's identity, participation in social groups and class, as well as individuality and differentiation from others. Both Maslow's Hierarchy and Max-Neef's "needs" models demonstrate that on one level clothing serves functional physical purposes, and on other levels fashion can fulfil a variety of psychological functions, but they also show how differently such "needs" can be interpreted depending on the individual.

### 2.2.2 Consumption: The Dominant Social Paradigm

Clothing is all part of our general consumption patterns and is influenced by society around us. What we buy as consumers reflects how we feel about ourselves and how we would like others to view us. Warde (1994) posits that according to social theory, people define themselves through the messages they transmit to others through the goods and practices that they possess and display; in other words, they manage and manipulate their own "self-identity." In the nineteenth century Veblen (1899) coined the phrase "*conspicuous consumption*" to describe how the leisured class used clothing and fashion to display their wealth and their social status. This is equally applicable to people today where "conspicuous consumption" could include buying specific designer labels and expensive accessories such as watches. Status symbols, such as T-shirts with designer logos by for example Tommy Hilfiger, are used by some individuals as a kind of social positioning (Szmigin, 2010).

By contrast Eckhardt et al., (2015) argue that current economic and social trends point to the rise of inconspicuousness, so that luxury can be redefined by decoupling it from conspicuousness. In other words, luxury items today are designed to be inconspicuous. This is partly due to the desire for sophistication and to distinguish oneself subtly within a narrow group of peers. Fashion has traditionally been a way of uniting those of a social class and announcing to the world to which class an individual belongs. Fashionable clothing worn by the upper class was never identical to that of the lower class (Simmel, 1957), another example of how people wishing to differentiate themselves in terms of which social group they belong used luxury items to do so. As Allen and O'Riordan (2000) observe, consumption bestows identity, self-perspective, status and the

admiration of peers. Fletcher (2008, p130) identified specific consumption escalators which are below:

- Pressure to compare ourselves to others, through the accumulation and display of possessions
- The rolling replacement of things, as each new purchase requires the buying of another to match.
- The cultural obligation to experience everything and buy things accordingly.
- Constant consumption as part of a continuous process of identity formation.

Other influences form an individual's shopping habits and sometimes they find themselves stuck in unsustainable consumption patterns occurring through economic constraints, inequalities in access, and restricted choice. Habits, routines, social norms and expectations, and dominant cultural values can all play a part (Jackson, 2005). Therefore, consumption is a social act as much as it is an economic one. Throughout history, the symbolic role of consumer goods has been viewed as an essential feature of human societies. Any understanding of consumer behaviour not built on this insight is likely to underestimate the social and psychological importance of consumer goods and services (Jackson, 2005). This is one of the major arguments within the thesis that all these external factors affecting an individual's consumption play a vital role in their clothing choices.

A key influence on consumption is what is known as the Dominant Social Paradigm. Consumption takes place within the dominant social paradigm implying that companies have an almost universal emphasis on economic return, with consumption as the root towards profit maximisation (McDonagh and Prothero, 2014). Consumption has not only been accused of producing particular kinds of self-orientated individuals but, far more powerfully, of shaping entire societies and cultural norms around materialism (Humphrey, 2016, p.138, in Shaw et al., 2016). Consumption driven by consumerist and capitalist culture has social and environmental

implications, hence the rise of concerns about sustainability. Within the umbrella of sustainability, one of the three core components is that of ethics, and a challenge and a critique of the dominant social paradigm is that of political action, in particular ethical consumption.

### 2.2.3 Ethical Consumption

Barnett et al., (2005, p.21) have identified two forms of political action: “ethical consumption” and the “ethics of consumption”. The former, seeks to dismantle a dominant capitalist consumption system and the latter, less challenging one seeks to mobilize consumption choices for political and moral ends. Geels et al., (2015) discuss the “revolutionary” position by suggested that addressing environmental problems requires changes in the current economic system and shifting to a “better” or “fairer” society. This will involve fundamental personal, social and institutional change, rethinking the whole process of consumption impacts, and connecting nature, people and place in a more nurturing and satisfying way. Soper (2016, in Shaw et al., 2016) has a more detailed description of ethical consumerism. She argues that with the current consumer conception of the “good life” retaining its hold, this in turn has detrimental effects on global warming, intensifies competition for resources and richer societies defending their relative advantage. However, consumers are beginning to recognize that an affluent society focused on consuming has problems in terms of pollution, commuting, unhealthy life styles and generating vast amounts of junk. She argues for an “alternative hedonist” approach to consumption whereby alternatives are offered instead, such as a reduction of the working week and a slower pace of living, improving health and well-being. Forms of ethical consumption practices that both she and Barnett et al., (2005) refer to involve consuming less and focusing on other areas of life such as hobbies and interests. This is evident with consumers engaging in various acts of voluntary simplicity, sustainable consumption and/or anti-consumption (McDonagh and Prothero, 2014).

The other approach, the “ethics of consumption” (Barnett et al., 2005, p. 21), focuses on a dominant intellectual position labelled by Geels et al. (2015) as the “reformist” position. This focuses on firms pursuing green eco-innovations and consumers buying eco-efficient products.

Interest in consumption emerged from the increasing realization that many green technologies faced problems in market uptake (often conceptualized statically as “barriers”). Consumers are mostly viewed as individuals carrying around sets of preferences from which they select when making purchase decisions and clothing is no exception to this.

Much of the research into sustainable fashion and the consumer has focused on the market niche of “ethical” consumers. Consuming “ethically” depends on processing knowledge and information, and on explicit practices of acknowledged commitment (Barnett et al., 2005). The term “ethical” includes sustainability. The terms ethical and green are likely to come together, but sometimes are regarded differently by consumers. The ethical consumption debate is highly complex involving various inter-disciplinary issues. There are multifaceted studies of ethical consumerism that have attracted attention across multi-disciplinary fields which look at consumption ethics, the individual and societal context, creating a more holistic and connected perspective (Shaw et al., 2016). Consequently, this section gives a brief overview of the main approaches and why an understanding of consumer behaviour in this area is relevant to sustainable fashion. Consuming ethically may include the following: buying goods and services perceived by the consumer to have positive ethical, environmental or social properties, and not buying goods and services perceived to have negative ones; altering patterns of consumption, transportation, energy and water use, recycling or other aspects of lifestyle in ways the person takes to be ethically, environmentally or socially preferred. Ethical consumption encompasses a wide range of practices from using reusable bags, buying fair-trade to choosing sustainably produced foods. It can involve behaviour change such as switching from driving to cycling to work. It can also include consumer boycotts (Starr, 2016, p42 in Shaw et al., 2016). The range of practices that come under the term ethical consumption demonstrates how values held by the individual consumer affect their behaviour.

There are some basic philosophical approaches that are useful in understanding ethical consumption issues. “Deontological ethics”, or duty-based approaches, see right actions as

independent of their contribution to human happiness or other favoured goals. They contribute to understandings of moral obligation such as people's responsibilities to care for others, creatures, the environment or future generations. Examples may be the vegetarian who refuses to eat meat on the grounds of animal cruelty, or the parent who boycotts certain products if they perceive that child labour was involved.(Barnett et al., 2005). "Virtue ethics" on the other hand focuses on 'what sort of person ought I strive to be?' (Barnett et al., 2005, p. 17). Religion is regarded as one example that has come under the focus of ethical consumer research as faith groups have been established as an ethical consumers' cultural habitat (Newholm, 2005). Wenell (2016, in Shaw et al., 2016) gives an example of how a Christian individual sees support of Fairtrade as being part of her religious moral framework.

Moral frameworks are of course not limited to those of a religious background, and understanding moral models of human decision making used by researchers include theories of values and norms, such as the Norm Activation Model (Schwartz & Howard, 1981) and Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Stern, 2000) based on the assumption that that consumers act morally because of their moral norms about what is the right thing to do (De Groot et al., in Shaw et al., 2016). A moral norm may be a dislike of exploited labour within clothing factories that an individual consumer can then act upon. Political consumption for example, involves both boycotts (which punish companies for undesirable behaviour) and "buycotts" (which reward companies for desirable behaviour). Within globalization, individuals shift their attention from the state and towards corporations which have become more visible targets (Copeland and Atkinson in Shaw et al., 2016). Information about companies' behaviour that assist consumers in making ethical purchasing decisions is now more readily available. Humphrey (in Shaw et al., 2016, p.42) notes the development and use of digital ethical guides informing consumers about the ethical status of a product (an example being the Good Shopping Guide in the UK). Particular products are rated on the basis of company performance in relation to environmental, social, animal, and business ethics. When shopping, consumers can use these guides to make choices that look moral from a

certain perspective, whereby they position themselves in relation to a range of moral codes or schemes (Luetchford, in Shaw et al., 2016, p.155). Moral codes and schemes can vary as ethical consumerism displays a wide variety of behaviours with various ethical or environmental priorities. In terms of theoretical frameworks used to explain ethical behaviour choices, two of the most popular theoretical frameworks are the Theory of Reasoned Action (TBA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). De Groot et al., ( in Shaw et al., 2016) notes that the TRA/TPB have been successfully applied in a variety of studies examining green consumer intentions and behaviours, such as choice of travel mode, commuting, recycling and general sustainable consumer behaviour. Given that the ethical market is still so small, Starr (in Shaw et al., p 45, 2016) asked why consumers are ethical and puts forward the following three reasons:

1. The idea of the warm glow; the psychic effect from doing good as an individual views their actions as having good ethical or social properties.
2. Self-Identity. Some actions are done in ways that are readily noticeable by others suggesting that it sometimes matters to people to be able to signal to others that they have aligned their consumption with social and ethical values.
3. Some ethical products have attributes that are more desirable, for example organic food bought for hedonic reasons, such as freshness, taste, or appearance.

Though these three reasons resonate to some degree with other findings, the picture overall is highly complex and whilst consumers may have positive values or motives towards sustainability there are many barriers to enacting sustainable behaviours.

### 2.2.4 Attitude-Behaviour Gap

In case studies of ethical consumers, Newholm (2005, p.109) chose to view ethical consumers as seeking integrity in a complex and contradictory environment constrained by what they might achieve. In other words, although they may wish to purchase ethically, they face many barriers in

terms of affordability, lack of availability, lack of desired attributes and difficulties in decision-making over trade-offs. For example, buying fair-trade products may be deemed “ethical” but there can be a perceived environmental cost in transporting these goods from developing countries. This dissonant or inconsistent behaviour has been noted by others such as Carrigan and Attalla (2001) and Szmigin (2009). This forms part of what is variously called the Words/Deeds inconsistency (Newholm, 2005, p107), Intention-Behaviour Gap (Carrington et al., 2010) or the Attitude-Behaviour Gap, (Bray et al., 2011). Human behaviour is complex and this next section will explore some of the potential reasons behind this discrepancy.

Beliefs and lack of knowledge have been identified as a barrier. Kilbourne et al. (2002) tested a multilevel model of environmental concern on business and economic students from seven different countries which suggested that environmental attitudes are directly influenced by an individual’s position on the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP) and that individuals’ belief in the markets, political institutions and technology would stave off any potential environmental problems when they become severe enough. These beliefs mitigated against any willingness to change to more environmentally benign behaviours. Davies and Gutsche’s (2016) investigation on motivations behind mainstream consumers knowingly consuming ethical products found that participants not only displayed a lack of knowledge about their purchases but also demonstrated confusion over fair trade, local trade, organic products and eco-products. Even though participants had a positive association with fair trade, they were not interested in actively seeking information. For many, they felt good about what they were doing but did not want to face the potentially guilt laden position increased knowledge might give rise to.

Much of ethical consumerism focuses on consumers’ values and how these values influence their shopping. Within this focus on the attitude-behaviour gap, other values of the product became apparent that seemed just as important to individuals. Shaw et al., (2005) found that when consumers went grocery shopping there was evidence of the hedonistic value of “enjoying life” which centred on the pleasure of eating food, indicating enjoyment of the products there were



buying. In another study of fair-trade chocolate, taste was the top priority for consumers. Taste and feel-good factors were a bonus for consumers who could buy their favourite chocolate brand while contributing to some social good at the same time (McEachern 2015). Hiller (2016) found that participants could justify to themselves spending money on expensive purchases of certain ethical products that they wanted. Davies and Gutsche (2016) suggest that the role of altruistic values in the current literature is overestimated, while habit and egotistic values (self-satisfaction, belonging, health etc.) are considerably more dominant drivers of “ethical” behaviour than social justice. They further claim that ethically influenced consumers are open to alternative ethical products and they are happy to have retailers constrain their choice to the ethical alternative, just so long as they can perceive benefits to *self* through *peer* esteem, *accomplishment* and perceptions of *higher quality*.

Emotions play a role in the decision-making process, as investigated by Gregory-Smith et al., (2013). They found that whilst positive emotions encouraged future ethical consumption, negative emotions delayed or restrained consumers from making unethical choices. In the case of positive emotions, opposing hedonic functions were identified: some consumers actively sought purchases likely to give pleasurable emotions, such as excitement, which often resulted in repeat behaviour. However, they also rejoiced in the purchase of a cheap product or bargain. Despite making a purchase driven by economics that might be ethically questionable, the two types of hedonistic function seemed to cohabit. This would suggest that for ethical consumers, there is a strong hedonistic value while shopping. Chatzidakis et al., (2007) drew upon neutralization theory to explain these coping strategies that consumers employ which reveal more about the attitude-behaviour gap. Neutralization techniques include denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of victim, condemning the condemner and appeal to higher loyalties. Examples of this were that the informants denied responsibility on the grounds that they were uninformed, that distribution and promotion of Fair Trade products is inadequate or Fairtrade goods are too costly. The research of Carrington et al., (2014) indicated that perpetuation of the “attitude-behaviour gap”

arose through the employment of cognitive strategies by consumers to minimize remorse and to justify contradicting their ethical intentions, as confirmed by Szmigin et al., (2009). The ability to rationalize or neutralize their 'unethical' purchasing behaviour partially explains the absence of cognitive dissonance. Guilt is a commonly expressed emotion within ethical consumerism. Gregory-Smith et al.,(2013) explored the role of emotions in decision-making and the "attitude-behaviour gap". They developed a taxonomy of guilt where the most intense guilt was often induced by the self and driven by specific concerns for the welfare of humans or animals. However, individuals had specific strategies to manage their guilt which included ignorance, justifications, and promises of improved future behaviour. Regret was experienced in relation to the disregard of ethical options, the prioritization of convenience in consumption and prioritization of price/cost in shopping, which included buying cheaper clothing.

### 2.2.5 Consumer Types

This ethical market provides difficulties for consumers who are willing to purchase clothing as the eco-ethical clothing market is still very small, 0.4% of the total clothing market (Mintel, Feb 2009a). The smallness of the market hinders ethical consumers whose shopping habits are dominated by the major shopping chains (Hiller, 2016). Spending rose to reach £43.2 billion at the end of 2009, compared to £36.2 billion two years earlier (The Co-Operative Bank, 2010), but recently there has been a downward trend for the ethical clothing market. In 2013-2014 the total of ethical clothing sales shrunk by 4% from £134 million to £128 million (Ethical Consumer, 2015). Additionally, Barnett et al. (2005) claim that ethical consumerism tends to be the preserve of affluent consumers, those able to spend time, energy and money on buying organic, drinking fair trade and investing ethically. Solomon and Rabolt (2004) found that the pro-environmental consumer appears to be more educated, has a higher income than those not concerned and is more often female. Other research confirms this theory. The marketing organisation Mintel for example, has identified the ethical/green consumer as being well-educated middle-class professionals (Mintel, 2008a). Crane (2010) finds evidence that certain groups within the middle

class have a particular affinity towards the environmental movement. This applies typically to highly educated groups who participate in social networks of like-minded people and live in an urban environment where shops selling green food products are readily available.

Whilst research has focused on the demand side of moral attitudes of consumers as the dominant precursor to ethical consumption, other (usually external) constraints prevent actualization into behaviour such as poor information, price, availability and so on (Davies and Gutsche, 2016). Carrington (2014) also noted market barriers as consumers are not able to align their purchasing/consumption with their primary ethical concerns. This situation creates commitment and sacrifice issues whereby firstly the ethical choice has not been acceptable, and secondly consumers find they are trading-off between multiple primary concerns and are unwilling to permanently commit to purchasing choices aligned with one ethical concern at the expense of the other. Much of ethical and green consumer behaviour involves a moral dimension often acting against consumers' own short-term self-interest, such as the purchase of organic meat which tends to be more expensive and harder to find than conventional meat (De Groot et al., p.58, in Shaw et al., 2016). Other major barriers for ethical consumers were affordability and accessibility (Ritch and Schröder, 2012). Most people continue to have constrained access to sustainable/ethical goods and services. The increased expense of these products tends to render ethical consumption as attracting the better-off consumer (Humphrey, in Shaw et al., 2016). McEachern (2015) observed that whilst consumers may feel guilt at buying at cheaper items, their budget cannot allow them to do otherwise. Szmigin et al.,(2009) observed that participants referred to factors such as price, quality and convenience in the choices they made as often overriding the ethical brand with some participants voluntarily reflecting on their inconsistencies.

Some of the literature focuses on an individual's self-identity, arguing that having ethical attitudes or demonstrating ethical behaviour is important to an individual. Those who self-identified as ethical consumers felt obliged to purchase ethically (Shaw et al.,2005). Shaw and Shiu (2003) found that the measures of ethical obligation and self-identity, along with perceived behavioural

control, were more pertinent to decision making than the original Theory of Reasoned Action measures of attitude and subjective norm. Connolly and Prothero (2003) described an individual whose concerns for the environment existed to create a specific identity for himself. Being green is just one aspect of identity, along with being parents, carers and so on. Compromise and negotiation, which are involved in maintaining social relationships, can place pressure on an individual's moral beliefs and on their types of consumer practices. Smizgin et al., (2009) also highlighted the importance of family influences upon an individual consumer's choices.

There has been little work on social influence in ethical consumption and Davies and Gutsche (2016) posit that their research exposes the huge gap in the knowledge about both ethical consumption in the mainstream and the role of habit and social influence. Carrington et al., (2014) highlighted that plans and habits were used by consumers when shopping to avoid distraction and spontaneous purchases. For many consumers, buying fair trade goods was a *habit* that started purely based on *availability* (Gregory-Smith et al., 2013). Despite shopping being dominated by *habit* and *availability*, labelling of ethical products by retailers was still needed to remind consumers of their existence despite their awareness of ethical issues (Davies and Gutsche, 2016).

### 2.2.6 Conclusion

As was highlighted in section 2.3, Jackson (2005) identified concepts and barriers that led to consumers getting locked into unsustainable consumption patterns which included economic constraints, inequalities in access and restricted choice. Other factors were habits, routines, social norms and expectations. These barriers were evident within this exploration of the attitude-behaviour gap as issues such as price, lack of availability, habits, family priorities and inconvenience all had influence upon a consumer. Evans and Abrahamse's (2009) investigation into sustainable lifestyles found that attempting to be sustainable was far more complex and any attempt to motivate their uptake on a wider scale needs to understand the many facets, tensions and difficulties associated by attempts to live a sustainable lifestyle. Additionally, other concepts

identified in the literature as motivations for and barriers to sustainable consumption include wide a range of factors depending upon the individual: values, emotion, neutralization, identity, hedonic, desire. Equally Jackson (2005) argued that any understanding of consumer behaviour needed to appreciate the social and psychological importance of consumer goods and services. This notion of the gap assumes that the responsibility for making ethical choices in the market rests with individual consumers and that the capitalist system does have the ability to better itself by ethical consumption. Nonetheless, it would not be able to resolve capitalism's underlying contradictions that rest on creating insatiable desire and consumption excess (Carrington et al. 2016). Such tension is evidenced in the studies that showed how consumers, despite their good intentions were seduced by other values or other qualities of a product that were to their advantage. Consumer decision-making processes and ethical choices are complex and consumers are ambivalent and possess multiple value systems (Hiller, 2010). Cherrier (2005) argues that given the above, the difficulties of delineating consumers produced conflicting and confusing findings. Szmigin et al., (2009) argue that to gain sufficient insight into the role of flexibility within ethical consumption behaviours, a more holistic approach towards consumption must be/needs to be adopted whereby the consumer is viewed as a decision-maker whose decisions may be dictated by individual preferences (e.g. voluntary simplification, anti-consumption), situational influences (e.g. convenience, information availability) and/or social factors (e.g. family, community). As McEachern and Carrigan (2012) advise to gain a more holistic understanding of the demographical, psychological and sociocultural influences upon the eco/ethical consumer to incorporate more emphasis on what consumers actually do rather than plan to do and to incorporate the context of the individual. Consequently, this thesis has taken up a holistic approach toward clothing consumption to capture the major factors influencing individuals.

### 2.3 Fashion and Clothing

No discussion about clothing consumption can be complete without a consideration of the role of fashion. The phenomenon of fashion affects not just clothing but a range and variety of products

through society. Fashion buyers make similar aesthetic decisions about what clothes are “on trend” or “in fashion” that have far-reaching consequences for our choices as consumers (Entwhistle, 2016). Therefore, this phenomenon has an influence on the retailing of clothing as has already been discussed in section 1.2. Fashion influences not only what type of clothing is sold but also attitudes and taste. The vast majority of people will have to relate to fashion in one way or another in their dress (Klepp and Storm-Mathisen, 2005). People will be influenced as the clothing they wear is part of the “fashion system” (Entwhistle, 2000). Fashion is clearly a strong external force upon an individual’s choice of clothing which manifests itself in a variety of ways. As briefly mentioned in section 2.2, fashion can be regarded by individuals as part of their “needs” (Niinimäki, 2010). This section will explore more about the importance of fashion, and how aspects of fashion impact upon the needs of those purchasing clothing. Fashion can be defined in various ways. For the purpose of this thesis, we adopt the definition of Welters and Lillethun (2011, p.xxv):

*“Fashion as changing styles of dress and appearance that are adopted by a group of people at any given time and place”.*

One of the key elements is the concept of change over time, which nowadays can be very short with trends changing very quickly that are generally referred to as “Fast Fashion.” According to Joy et al., (2012), this phrase refers to low-cost clothing collections that mimic current luxury fashion trends which run their course with lightning speed. Thompson and Haytko (1997) posit that within the Western world, these rapid changes, proliferation of styles, the mass consumption of goods and the associated advertising, mass media and the fashion industry itself indoctrinate consumers into this ideology of consumption. As Kawamura (2005) claims, in postmodern cultures, clothing is conceptualized as a form of role playing, as consumers project images of themselves that are continually evolving. For each individual, the importance of fashion varies considerably. As fashion clothing means different things to different people, consumers form differing attachments to it, and an individual’s attachment may differ from their family or friends

(O’Cass, 2004). However, it is not just the prevailing fashion that influences choice in clothing. Self-image, self-concept and identity all play a part. What we wear can have social consequences, as other people judge us on our appearance, particularly on meeting someone for the first time: *“It is from their clothes that we form a first impression of our fellow-creatures as we meet them”* (Flugel, 1966, p.15). Judging others on how they are dressed is an activity that many people admit to doing. Given that what we choose to wear is so individual it is inevitable that people make decisions about us, as Stone (1962) has pointed out, *“a person’s appearance announces his identity, shows his values, expresses his mood or proposes his attitude”* (Stone, 1962, cited in Evans, 1989, p.10). Evans (1989) argues for a greater understanding of fashion consumers particularly within the context of a person’s self-concept, a combination of the physical and mental “self” applied to apparel since garments are worn “physically” for functional reasons (warmth, protection) and are also worn for emotional enhancement. He suggests that fashion consumption is often a manifestation of self-image and there is an increase in desire from consumers for self-expression. Evan’s argument about fashion consumers is an example of how individuals are fulfilling Maslow’s Hierarchy (section 2.2) on two levels, in terms of both basic needs and self-fulfilment needs.

### 2.3.1 Identity through Clothing

An individual can express their identity in their own unique way. Simmel (2007) describes individuality as a human trait with two dominant aspects. Firstly, it always means relating to the larger or smaller world in ways that can be either practical or ideal, negative or affirmative, ruling or subservient, indifferent or passionate; on the other hand, it also means that individuals comprise a world for themselves and are centred in themselves, as self-sufficient unitary beings. Part of a person’s individuality will depend upon the social networks they are surrounded by. Social structures, religious beliefs, kinship groups, gender, social class all influence the individual’s choice of dress and establish *“the relation of dress as a means of communication to the process whereby individuals establish identities and selves and attribute identities to others”* (Roach-

Higgins and Eicher, 1992, p.16). So while clothing is a key tool for expressing individual identity, there is often tension in clothing choices between individuality and the other social forces that shape identity.

### 2.3.2 Social Expression

The top part of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs that concerns self-fulfilment is reflected in the manifestation of identity or identities, which is an aspect of the clothing choices of an individual. As Entwistle (2016) posits, one's mode of dress forms an integral link between individual identity and the body, facilitating one's performance of identity within fashion consumption. Identity through clothing can be expressed in varying degrees between two main concepts: through an individual's own identity through social expression, namely an outward manifestation of belonging to a particular social group, which is a psychological need of belongingness. Thompson and Haytko (1997) conducted research into the perceptions and experiences of fashion of twenty consumers and found that consumers appropriate culturally shared fashion discourses to fit the circumstances of their immediate social settings and their sense of personal history, interests and life goals. One prominent use of fashion discourse is to develop a sense of personal identity through a contrast between their perceived fashion orientation and that of others in their social setting. Through this logic of self-identity construction, an individual creates their personal identity through the field of social relations.

### 2.3.3 Peer Groups

For some individuals the peer group will dominate their identity. Younger people tend to demonstrate a higher degree of fashion involvement than do older people (O'Cass, 2004). Klepp and Storm-Mathisen (2005) also found that fashion was seen as more important for teenagers. Within their study, young teenage girls describe fashion as a means of presenting an age-appropriate view of the future, social interests, social status, and role. The girls see failure to follow fashion trends as indicative of a lack of popularity and of low social status in the peer group. Abbot and Sapsford's study (2001) had similar findings about young girls and their



wardrobes, where style gives meaning, validation and coherence to their group identity, defining who is part of the group, and who is external to the group. Cox and Dittmar (1995) found that for female students (modal age 20) the symbolic expression of self is in within the context of relationships with others, because self-expression is tied to peer relationships, and the perceived need for new clothes is informed by concerns with social identity and membership in social networks. The more a student used her chosen clothes as a symbol of inter-relatedness with others and as a belonging to social networks, dissatisfaction occurred when favourite clothes are perceived as not being “up to scratch” in terms of quality, cost and so forth leading to an student’s perception of their own clothing needs. These three studies demonstrate, according to Maslow’s Hierarchy, how clothing fulfils the needs of these young individuals on all three levels, the basic needs, the psychological needs and self-fulfilment needs, as their self-esteem depended upon belonging to the social groups of peers, which was also a part of their identity.

### 2.3.4 Social Groups and Identity

People identify with a social group but like to be individual as well. Simmel (1957) suggests that individuals have a natural propensity to *imitate* each other. Through imitation the individual adapts to the social group. On the other side, individuals *differentiate* themselves from the crowd. Fashion is a battleground between these two tendencies. Belk (1989) has a similar viewpoint: clothing, accent, grooming and jewellery can distinguish an individual from others and express an individual sense of being, but they can also indicate group identity and express belonging to a group. Others, in mainstream social groups, appear to need to be social and individual at the same time, and fashion and clothing are ways in which this complex set of desires or demands may be negotiated. This is the paradox which Barnard points out that people to look like their friends yet be an individual at the same time (Barnard, 2002). So, fashion and clothing both establishes our own individual identity, yet also proclaims to a varying degree which social group we belong to.

### 2.3.5 Anti-Fashion

Abbott and Sapsford (2001) discovered that young girls fell into two distinct groups of women, the trendies who followed fashion, and the alternatives who tended to rebel against what they saw as a popular or predetermined youth culture, which included groups such as Goths. Despite expressing their individuality through dress, they still often identified themselves within a specific social group. Polhemus & Proctor (1978) note that for some people, not following fashion is a personal statement and that identification with and active participation in a social group always involves the human body and its adornment and clothing. Examples are beatniks, Hasidic Jews, Hell's Angels or hippies. When an individual agrees to identify with a particular social group, he or she automatically to some extent agrees to accept that group's ideas about what constitutes respectable, appropriate attire. Another aspect of "anti-fashion" is that of creativity. DeLong et al. (2005) interviewed five women who wore vintage clothing; a strong appeal of such clothing was creativity in different ensembles, satisfying personal desires, needs and motivation, and creating and recognizing a specific image of themselves.

### 2.3.6 Conclusion

This section has demonstrated that there is a delicate balance between an individual and displaying membership of a social group. The next section talks about how more specific social influences dominate clothing choice, and often form part of an individual's particular social role.

### 2.3.7 Clothing and Anxiety

What constitutes appropriate attire is a dilemma faced by individuals depending on the social occasion. As Entwistle (2000) says, social space is a crucial aspect of our experience of the dressed body, since when we get dressed we do so with implicit understanding of the rules and norms of particular social spaces. A formal dinner, a job interview, a shopping expedition, a walk in the park, to name a few situations, demand different styles of dress and require us to be more or less aware of our dress, and therefore make it more or less an object of our consciousness. Miller and Clark (2002) argue, based on their ethnographic studies of shopping, that it is the larger

social context that determines clothing choices. They suggest that anxiety determines what people actually wear. When choosing which garments to wear, anxiety about potential social embarrassment is the dominant emotion. Often individuals seek outside advice ranging from agents such as “Colour Me Beautiful”, and catalogues, to friends and family. Two examples of anxiety revolve around going to work and attending a specific family occasion. Other sources of influence apart from anxiety were work, social norms, family and cultural background. How individuals negotiate their way through clothing dilemmas differs.

### 2.3.8 Work

In some work roles, individuals have little or no influence over what they can wear. An example is the type of uniforms worn by staff in hospitals to indicate or define what social role the person has (Barnard, 2002). Styles of dress are regularly employed in the workplace as part of institutional and corporate strategies of management. Such practices are familiar to many office workers although the mechanisms for enforcing dress codes vary enormously. Particular discourses of dress such as “smart” or “professional” dress, and particular strategies of dress such as the imposition of uniforms and dress codes at work, are utilized by corporations to exercise control over the bodies of the workers within (Entwhistle, 2000). Clothing is part of an individual’s work persona, separating their own identity and the “performance” they put on at work as an individual to be taken seriously (Giddens, 1991). Entwhistle, (cited in Steele, 2010) spoke about power-dressing, a concept developed in the 1980s based on Goffman’s theory of Impression Management whereby women dressed in a certain “uniform” or “power suit” at work as a visual demonstration of themselves progressing to become serious career women. Woodward (2007) discovered that as women often saw work as performing a specific social role, not part of their core identity, and as being restricted in terms of behaviour, they consequently kept specific garments to be worn for work but not for any other occasion. Yet Miller and Clark (2002) and Klepp and Storm-Mathisen (2005) found differing attitudes to work clothes from mothers who were returning to work. For Miller and Clark (2002) the return to work and the search for

appropriate work wear was one of anxiety reflecting their uncertainty. Clothing catalogues are often used as less risky forms of purchase and used to mediate the transition from home to workplace culture. Women talked of consciously scrutinising passengers they identified as “career women” or non-mothers, while travelling on public transport, to re-acquaint themselves with the latest or most appropriate styles of dressing and sort advice from family and friends. This anxiety about clothing reflects their lifestyle change from being a mother at home to having a different social role at work. In contrast for Klepp and Storm-Mathisen’s (2005) participants this was a period described as a short-lived increased interest in clothing, which was one of the pleasures of returning to work. For these older women who operated in a greater number of different arenas and in various social settings, jobs constituted a key arena for clothing and were mentioned as having great influence on their clothing choices.

### 2.3.9 Social Norms

Whilst work environments may have explicit dress codes, Freeburg and Workman (2010) discovered that there were thirty-five social norms related to dress, the implicit understanding of the rules and norms of particular social spaces for different occasions and different situations. Whilst individuals may dress unreflexively some of the time, such as to do the grocery shopping or take the kids to school, at other times they are thoughtful, deliberate and calculating in their dress as in selecting an outfit for a wedding (Entwhistle, 2000). Women choose clothing as a semiotic “fit” to the outer environment, where clothing is selected to be appropriate to the occasion, (Woodward, 2007). Sometimes there are difficulties in choosing what to wear, as for the individual there are uncertainties as to what is acceptable attire. Hence the popularity of particular garments such as the little black dress which women’s magazines deem to be an important garment for women to possess as this item can be “dressed up” or “dressed down” as required by the occasion. For Miller (2004) the term “little black dress” is used colloquially rather than in the way it is employed in more academic circles of fashion history as it plays a major role as a cliché for women talking about clothing generally. For some women black is seen as a “safe”

choice for some social occasions as Clark and Miller (2002) explain, black fashionwear is understood to be less individualizing or expressive than some alternative choice, so that wearers are often both more secure in their sense of the approval of others, however they can be disappointed by their failure to attempt a more ambitious projection in the world. This demonstrates how the anxiety to be accepted by others can be more important than what an individual desires to wear.

### 2.3.10 Families and Culture

Both Miller and Clark (2002) and Woodward (2007) discuss at length examples of how family relationships affect clothing choices, particularly mother-daughter relationships. Mothers were seen to have an influence over their daughters' formative years which often continued when they were adults. Appleford (2014) found that women trusted the opinions of their mothers and posited that women may be more willing to accept their mother's comments and vice versa, because they share the same fashion capital and fashion habitus, and therefore the same perspective of what "looks good". Culture was also an important part of an individual's identity expressed through clothing. Woodward's (2007) ethnography of women's wardrobes found that for some participants there were clothes from their former selves, part of their biography which included cultural influences from their ethnic background.

### 2.3.11 Everyday Practices of Clothing

Klepp and Bjerck (2014) acknowledge that there is little information on how people actually dress and why. The focus on explaining clothes as fashion, and thus as change, has provided little critical distance to the industry that encourages people to continuously consume clothing. Little is known about use of clothing by the consumer, how long they keep garments, how many clothes they own and so on. However recent studies are beginning to fill this gap, such as Woodward's (2007) ethnography of women's wardrobes, Klepp and Bjerck's (2014) wardrobe studies and Skjold's (2016) concept of biographical wardrobes, a diachronic perspective on dress practice. All take an in-depth look into the everyday practices of the individual and their clothing. This research on

people's everyday practices, daily routines and aspirations, is centred on what could be called *the ordinary* (Skjold, 2016). These wardrobe studies are ethnographically inspired. Major themes that affected clothing behaviour emerged in these studies. Firstly, that there were major life changes throughout an individual's lifespan which resulted in clothing being discarded or not worn any more. Yurchisin and Johnson (2010), acknowledge this life cycle pattern: people's wardrobes come full circle as they reach retirement age, when they typically stop wearing professional clothing on a daily basis and start wearing casual comfortable clothing once again, similar to when they were young children. This is also acknowledged by Solomon and Rabolt (2004) and Arnould et al. (2004). Secondly, that individuals tended to develop their own individual "style", typically when they were teenagers, that, whilst it may have been influenced by the fashion at the time, tended to remain the same throughout their lives.

### 2.3.12 Former Selves

Woodward's (2007) ethnographic study of women's wardrobes found that women often kept clothing that represented their former selves, items that they rarely wore or would not wear again yet they were unable to dispose of. There were varying reasons why they did not wish wear the items again, an example being a change of style for one individual. Woodward (2007) describes in detail an individual whose mother bought clothing for her all her life until she married. Once she was married, her mother kept sending her clothing which she could not wear as she was struggling with finding her own style, and yet she was unable to get rid of the garments because of the sentimental value. Other individuals had clothing that they now deemed "too young" for them or work clothing that they no longer wore due to a change in circumstances, having become full-time mothers. Klepp and Bjerck (2014) discovered that individual style began in teenage years, giving the example of a pair of boots that the individual bought as a teenager as a rebellious act, and still wore despite being now in her fifties. In both cases the clothing centred on identity, former identities which were either discarded, held onto as a reminder, or continued throughout life.

### 2.3.13 Expectations of Clothing

Research by Ritch and Schroder (2012) established that the main criteria for garment selection for female shoppers are style followed by price. Eckman et al., (1990) had similar findings and described aesthetics– that is style, colour and pattern, fabric and appearance– as important for women when choosing their clothing. Abraham-Littrell et al., (1995) concluded that consumers considered/took into consideration styling, construction, fabric and colour, in that order. The clothing choices of older women are influenced by body changes. Motherhood itself can have an important effect on how women engage with fashion, because of the way in which it alters body shape and perceptions of appropriate dress. This too is an area that is under-researched (Appleford, 2012). Klepp and Storm-Mathisen (2005) found that for women aged between 35 and 46 the issues of comfort, of what was becoming on them, or their own style were more important. Style included particular colours, cut and shape of garments. This correlates to one of Birtwhistle and Tsim's (2005) findings on clothing and the mature woman of over 45, where quality was key, and factors such as styling and comfort were highly rated. Entwistle (2000) suggests that comfort is a person's "normal" experience of dress and its relationship to the body is that it becomes an extension of the body like a second skin, not really noticeable to the wearer.

### 2.3.14 Usage of Clothing

So far, the discussion has focused on clothing and the influences on individuals that affect their choices of garments. In terms of sustainability consideration of the other activities of clothing is needed, such as how a consumer looks after their clothing with regard to washing, drying and ironing and the resources used for these activities. Environmental commentators and policy makers routinely encourage householders to use less energy and to save water. There have been technological developments, such as more energy and water efficient washing machines, however, the focus within this research is on consumers and their washing, drying and disposal habits. Laitala et al., (2011) have observed the paradox that whilst textile cleaning technologies have improved greatly during the past century, the amount of time that consumers spend

washing has not been reduced, largely due to social norms and habits. With washing habits, people do not simply consume resources but seek the services of comfort, cleanliness and convenience that such resources provide (Shove, 2003b). In terms of clothing disposal, it has been highlighted that overall, there is concern about the environment, but there is no correlation between awareness of the environment and textile disposal behaviour and the attitude to textile reuse and recycling (Morgan and Birtwhistle, 2009).

### 2.4 Shopping

A major factor in an individual's consumption pattern is the activity of shopping. It is argued by Yurchisin and Johnson (2010) that shopping is often seen as a top leisure activity for women. Popular stereotypes link women with the modern-day cliché "retail therapy", defined by Warde (1994) as buying which acts as compensation for emotional stresses. Retail therapy can be viewed as consumption behaviours that individuals engage in to alleviate their negative moods (Kang and Johnson 2011). However, a contrasting view is that some people do not enjoy the activity of clothes shopping and would prefer to avoid it (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980; Westbrook and Black, 1985). Clearly, this is down to the individual. Various viewpoints have been employed in the understanding of consumers when shopping for clothing. As consumption is part of the Dominant Social Paradigm (2.4), much of the research about how consumers shop for clothing has come from a marketing angle, drawing on consumer psychology in order to design specific marketing strategies with the aim of persuading people to buy more clothing (Moisander et al., 2010; Blackwell et al., 2006). One method is visual merchandising in stores, in terms of display designed to spark consumers' curiosity and to increase sales (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; Jain et al., 2014; Cant and Hefer, 2014). Another method is the media encouraging shoppers to shop for status. Zukin and Maguire (2004) and Schmidt et al., (1999) argue that consumers are under pressure to create appropriate forms of "self" though engaging in consumption processes. Clothing is particularly pertinent to this display of identity and as Jackson (2005) argues many consumer tastes and preferences are informed by desire. The importance of fashion in shopping has been



noted earlier in 1.2. As O’Cass (2000) notes, consumers involved with high fashion have historically been important to marketers because they are seen as influential and the drivers and legitimists of the fashion adoption process. Carrigan and Atalla (2001) observe that for some consumers having the “right” brands is important for them in terms of social status. Consumers favour some brands over others due to their feeling about specific brands (Arnould et al., 2004). Brand-image can be an important aspect to shopping, with shoppers favouring some brands over others and demonstrating brand loyalty (Mitchell and McGoldrick, 1996).

In contrast an ethnographic approach to shopping was taken by Miller in *The Theory of Shopping* (1998) who linked shopping to other social relations, especially those based on love and care, particularly of family members. The routine activity of shopping for clothes may display elements of concern for a loved one in terms of the choice of garment, or often in the case of women explain their shopping activity as an act of love, a way in which they monitor their families’ needs and wishes and buy items for them. That based on what he observed in his ethnographic study, the dominant activity was the constant provisioning for the family as underlying shopping. It can be acknowledge that life stages have an effect on clothing choices which in turn affects shopping. In Thompson et al.’s (1990) study on the everyday consumption experiences of married women the participants regarded the demands of parenting as most central to their consumer experiences. Children affected the participants' consumer experiences in a multitude of ways: firstly, the hectic and exhausting nature of shopping with young children; secondly, children also had a more global influence on the participants' life-style; finally, in wanting to be fully present to the development and needs of their children, these participants chose to forgo the income and social engagement of professional careers. In their consumer experiences, all were highly attuned to the social dimensions of shopping and felt a responsibility to spend the family's money wisely and there were financial pressures due to lack of earning. Ritch’s thesis (2012) found that motherhood impacted significantly upon participants and their clothing consumption, whereby,

for example, one participant prioritized sustainability whereas another felt restricted to purchase ethically.

### 2.4.1 Experiences of Shopping

As Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994) argue, shopping experiences can have two important dimensions: utilitarian and hedonic values, which maintain a basic underlying presence across consumption phenomena. Utilitarian shopping can be seen in terms of provisioning or, as Falk and Campbell (1997) describe it, as practical, the shopping for necessities. One of the practical orientations for a shopping trip is the focus on a “need.” Blackwell et al. (2006, p.71) define need recognition as the moment, *“when an individual senses a difference between what he or she perceives to be the ideal versus the actual state of affairs”*. As mentioned earlier in 2. 2 needs depend very much on the individual. One example might be a product-focused consumer, (Nielson, 2014) who has identified exactly what they want and will search to find it. In contrast, others may display hedonic consumer behaviour, consumption that is directed at satisfying needs for fantasy, excitement and fun (Arnould et al 2004), which is more pleasurable. The hedonic type of shopping has been linked to impulsive shopping, and Wood (2004) posits that when reviewing consumer literature, there is generally negative overall tone regarding impulsive shopping, seeing this behaviour as a “failure”. Dittmar and Drury’s (2000) findings highlight that impulse buying is characterised by little deliberation and by psychological motivations such as desire and wanting overtaking financial considerations. This shift is captured by the stereotype of modern consumerism *“I shop therefore I am!”* Buying goods in order to bolster one’s self-image is probably a motivation that plays some role in most buying behaviour, and clothing is more likely to be purchased impulsively. These hedonic qualities are defined as labelling those traits of consumer behaviour that relate to the multi-sensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of a consumer’s experience with products (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982). A differing view is offered by Thompson et al., (1990) whereby an impulse buy was described as a spontaneous way of shopping in which an item is experienced as too captivating not to purchase. For these

participants, buying on impulse was marked by particularly strong feelings of perceptual attraction.

### 2.4.2 Price and Value

No discussion on shopping can be complete with consideration of money and affordability, as lack of money can be one of the most potent sources of consumer anxiety (Warde, 1994). As Solomon and Rabolt (2004) acknowledge, consumer demand for goods and services depends on the ability to buy and the willingness to buy. On the basis of the best available information, people choose the optimal course of action to maximize their welfare under existing budget constraints. As Gabriel and Lang (2015, p.1) point out, in economic theory, resources are scarce and human wants can be infinite, so choices must be made between competing alternatives. The centrality of thrift, that is the strategies by which shoppers attempt to save money while shopping, was also one of Miller's (1998) observations within his ethnography of shopping. One method of making choices identified by Mitchell and McGoldrick (1996) is price information, which can be used to decide which brand is the best value for money. Rational, self-interested consumers look for 'hot deals' and 'bargain prices' in making their purchases (Moisander et al., 2010). Bargain-hunting for expensive items is a type of thrift shopping identified by Bardhi and Arnould (2005) as a realization of consumer desires for luxury. The purchase of a luxury item at a cheaper price can give consumers a warm glow from their shopping experience in exchange for their resources of time, money, and energy (Andreoni, 1990, cited in Atkins and Kim, 2016). For Thompson et al.'s (1990) participants, monetary concerns are considered along with other factors. Their experiences of being deliberate take on a problem-solving quality in which purchases are made in accord with practical considerations, such as convenience, need, and monetary constraints.

### 2.4.3 The Shopping Location

Many of Miller's (1998) participants shopped in supermarkets. The combination of convenience and affordability was attractive, as has been noted by others such as Allwood et al., (2006). As Woodruff-Burton et al. (2001) recognize, over time shopping habits have been impacted with

major developments such as the original introduction of department stores and later on the proliferation of shopping malls. Some consumers prefer physical shopping, Birtwhistle and Tsim (2005) identified that mature women looked for shops with “staff who can give advice and help”, and who can “recommend garments” and provide a good service. Forsythe et al., (2001) also suggested that the consultative role of the surrogate may be more valuable to users than the purchasing role. However, as Kim et al., (2014) posit, the rapid evolution of information and technology is having a revolutionary impact upon the marketplace whereby consumers can access boundary-less information and globally available goods and services. More recently, with technological development, the rise of the internet and other remote shopping possibilities like interactive television ensures that this aspect of shopping is increasing. The growth of the internet and social media has led to changes within the shopping experience. Jang et al. (2012) describe how Zara, H & M and Uniqlo now use social networking to market their products to consumers. Consumers are increasingly drawn to shopping on the internet, which is able to provide them with products according to their personal desires and needs, and with the opportunity of delivery with much less time and lower cost (Eroglu, 2014). Online-only retailers such as ASOS, Boohoo and Amazon are recording significant growth in sales with on-line retailers taking approximately 24% of the market (Mintel, 2017). Park and Stoel (2005) suggest that shoppers may use a brand as a core internal source of information for judging and evaluating the quality of apparel sold on the internet. Some shoppers may use the websites of their high street stores since they are retailers and brands they know and trust (Jones and Kim, 2010). As the internet provides a different arena in which to shop, Nielsen (2014) has identified five types of E-Commerce Shoppers. They are as follows:

1. **Product focused** – These shoppers know exactly what they want, they want a replacement for something they already have, find the right product and buy it. Speed is essential for them.

2. Browsers – These are leisurely shoppers who go to their favourite sites to browse or kill time and stay up on the latest trends.
3. Researchers-- These are goal driven shoppers who are planning to purchase but are collecting information first and will visit multiple sites before making a purchase.
4. Bargain hunters – These shoppers want the best deal possible.
5. One-time shoppers – These may be product-focused, browsing, bargain hunting or researching; they are often just after the one product and will not visit the site again.

There are downsides to internet shopping; one clear disadvantage is the inability to examine a product before purchasing (Park and Stoel, 2005) and just like the visual merchandising in stores, how the look, feel and features of the online shopping context can affect the use and results of online shopping (Eroglu et al., 2001).

### 2.4.4 Shopping Decision-Making

With all these factors to consider when shopping, the Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) is a seminal source. Developed in 1986, it provided a measure of what characteristics were more prevalent in the participants in order to gain more insight into their consumer decision making. This is defined as a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making consumer choices (Sproles and Kendall, 1987). Decision-making styles are important for marketers in terms of estimating consumer behaviour, being applicable for market segmentation, and being helpful for profiling consumer decision-making characteristics (Yilmaz et al., 2016). Furthermore, Lysonski and Durvasula (2013) argue that the CSI provides arguably the most robust explanatory method that can be used by retailers and marketers as a segmentation technique within target marketing. In addition, clothing can have psychological and social dimensions, as noted by and discussed within the literature review 2.11 on identity, and the CSI is, in essence, a basic consumer personality, analogous to the concept of personality in psychology (Sproles and Kendall, 1987). This decision-making model will be further discussed within the methodology chapter.

### 2.4.5 Conclusion

An individual's clothing choice is dependent on many factors. From the basic level which covers warmth, modesty and functionality, clothing continues to play a strong role within psychological needs, the belongingness to a particular social group, all of which also boost self-esteem and form a crucial part of an individual's identity. At the highest levels of self-fulfilment clothing plays a creative part in constructing self-image which reinforces esteem. Fashion is thread that winds through all these needs levels. Clothing also part of an individual's social roles, which again is part of their identity enabling them to present themselves to others. Miller and Clark (2002) posit a theory of fashion that is rooted in social practice, that it is the larger social context that determines clothing choices. They argue that social pressure appearing in the form of anxiety manifests itself through clothing dilemmas concerned with potential social embarrassment. The anxiety to fit in with others is enforced through major life style changes, and clothing reveals former identities and wardrobe biographies. Habits in acquiring, caring for and disposing of clothing demonstrate a wide variety of behaviours. In particular shopping and consumption patterns can encompass a range of emotional and decision-making factors including spending, recreation, hedonistic, impulsive, and loyalty to brands. These factors are highly dependent upon the *individual*, so a methodology would have to take into account an individual's response to determine how important each of these different factors are.

### 2.5 Critique of Sustainability within the Fashion System

Fletcher (2008) critiques fashion in terms of its concept as one of change, and the process of change generally produces waste. Fashion includes the generation and consumption of products which then go out of fashion. Many people move towards overconsumption and desire to pay the least amount of money for the most possible goods. Hawley (2011) also critiques the fashion system, how fashion marketers entice consumers to buy something new every season, to satisfy their whims, thus overburdening their wardrobes and credit cards. The result is clothing accumulation that stems from planned obsolescence, the core of fashion. Companies follow the

dominant social paradigm of growth with retailers producing up to fifteen seasons a year. This has produced what is termed the fashion paradox:

*Fashion's inbuilt obsolescence is intrinsically unsustainable, but the desire for fashionable renewal is an inherent cultural construct: fashion is also a powerful economic driver, sustaining global industry and employment – a contradiction at the heart of contemporary fashion consumption which has been termed "The Fashion Paradox".* (Black, 2008, p.1)

Black does point out though that despite the fashion industry being unsustainable, it does provide employment throughout the world and fashion itself satisfies consumers' desires for newness. Consumption in today's society is complex and we have more choice and more channels than ever before urging us to buy more things, which are powerful influences.

The question of how to enable consumers to become more sustainable is an extremely complex issue, which this thesis attempts to explore.

### 2.5.1 Sustainability

Clothing is an area that is beginning to attract attention as concerns about the environmental and ethical impacts of the clothing industry are beginning to be taken seriously, mainly by designers, retailers and the government. The meaning and scope of sustainability is subject to ongoing discussions. The most widely used definition of the term is from the Brundtland (1987) who states that sustainability "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Sustainability concerns the impact of society's consumption habits, as resource consumption is a key driver of environmental and social degradation (Connolly and Prothero, 2003). As discussed within Chapter One, this overconsumption of fashion is causing environmental issues within the developing world, hence the call to consider sustainability. The following part of the literature review seeks to define sustainability and the issues around sustainability and fashion are outlined. Major responses from companies, voluntary initiatives and the government are discussed finishing with Fisher et

al., (2008) and Allwood et al., (2006) on the sustainable goals for fashion. Then the third section of the literature review concentrates on responses to sustainable fashion consumption.

### 2.5.2 What Does Sustainability Mean for Fashion?

Sustainability within the world of fashion has been coming to the fore in recent years. A discourse on how to change the clothing industry to behave more sustainably has been taken up by the design community with a variety of publications over recent years examining different ways to interpret sustainability. The conversation on sustainability encompasses a wide variety of topics, as there is a wide variety of meanings, but there are some common themes. One aspect of the discussion is on the various ways of producing, sourcing and manufacturing sustainable materials or clothes (Black, 2012; Gwilt and Rissanen, 2011; Hethorn and Ulasewicz, 2008). Designers, including Katherine Hamnett and Eileen Fisher, discuss their ideas for eco-design and incorporating sustainable practices (Black, 2012). Case studies are given of pioneering designer-led small companies in eco-fashion, such as the People Tree and Patagonia, and the challenges of putting ethical and environmental considerations into practice (Black, 2012). There have been studies examining production and economic processes that limit the impacts the production of clothes has on the environment and that involve changes to present-day institutions and practices to bring improvement (Fletcher 2008; Hethorn and Ulasewicz, 2008; Gwilt and Rissanen, 2011). Life cycle issues are discussed in several studies, including the processes of reducing waste, re-using clothing and recycling them (Black, 2012; Gwilt & Rissanen, 2011; Hethorn & Ulasewicz, 2008; Fletcher, 2008). The Waste, Resources and Action Programme, more commonly known as WRAP, are now concentrating on the cradle to cradle system (2012), and designers have embraced new methods such as including technology integration and spray-on fabric (Black, 2012). Other approaches include incorporating the end user into the design process of the garment. One such approach is Considerate Design (Black and Eckert, in Black, 2012), whereby the garment is customized by the end user with their individual preferences. By having a personalized garment, the aim was that the end user would be more attached to the garment, therefore



keeping it for longer, and being made with more sustainable materials, would also be more durable. Hirscher (2013) did some experimental design workshops within this area with participants and these were favourably received, the participants enjoying having a garment personalized to their style. Both Harris et al., (2016) and Cho et al., (2015) argue that having clothing that is tailored to an individual's style, can lead to more sustainable behaviour in terms of the individual, keeping and cherishing the garment for longer.

### 2.5.3 Issues of Sustainability in Fashion

The rise of fast fashion has raised many issues both environmentally and ethically, mainly within the developing world where most of the production takes place well out of sight of UK consumers. When sustainability is discussed within fashion the major issues tend to be the following:

**Waste:** Clothing is now disposed of so frequently that it leads to approximately 1.8 million tonnes of clothing waste each year. Over half of textiles that have been collected for recycling or reuse are exported, though some clothes collected for re-use and recycling are not fit for purpose and therefore ending up in landfill (WRAP, 2015a). Sending textiles to Africa has also attracted criticism as this practice has a negative impact on local clothing industries. (Corner, in Black, 2012).

**Production impacts:** The use of pesticides, particularly for cotton growing, causes ecological upsets including reduced soil fertility, loss of biodiversity, water pollution, and severe health problems. The final finishing of fabric is the major cause of environmental impacts within the production phase using significant quantities of water, energy and chemicals and substantial amounts of effluent. Some of the chemicals used contain toxins which can cause health problems and pollution (Fletcher, 2008).

**Water depletion:** Intensive crop growing for textiles is causing problems with water shortages in several parts of the world. The most extreme example is the Aral Sea, where years of diverting

water for cotton production have resulted in the Aral Sea shrinking by over 80% of its volume causing an environmental disaster (WWF, 2008,).

**Non-renewable resource depletion:** Synthetic fibres such as nylon, polyester, olefin, acrylic and spandex are the big five manufactured fibres crucial to fabric production. They use petroleum-based raw materials, a non-renewable source (Baugh, 2008).

**Transport:** The globalisation of the fashion supply chain means that textiles are grown in one country, made into fabrics or yarn in another, transported to factories in another country where they are made into garments and are then finally transported to the UK. Journalists investigating a pair of Lee Cooper jeans found that the jeans were on a global journey of over 40,000 miles (Black 2008). As with food, there is concern over the impact of “clothes miles” and the carbon and other emissions subsequently produced.

**Animal Welfare:** The use of animal skins in clothing industries, for example fox, mink and chinchilla, leading to these animals being bred specifically for the fur industry has been highlighted by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) Foundation. This foundation is a UK-based charity dedicated to establishing and protecting the rights of all animals (PETA, 2017).

**Care:** Another aspect of clothing sustainability is the care of clothing which has environmental impact with significant energy consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions from the heating of water (washing) and air (drying) often quoted as approximately 80% of the use phase energy impacts (Defra,2011). WRAP estimates that washing clothing accounts for 200,000 litres annual water consumption per household (WRAP, 2015a).

This is a brief overview of the main issues as they are not always as straightforward as they seem. For example, Allwood et al. (2006) state that conventional cotton agriculture requires intense use of toxic chemicals in growth and prior to harvesting, so switching to organic cotton would greatly

reduce this impact. However, the issues are more complex than a simple swap: for example, organic cotton uses more water than conventional cotton so may cause water shortages. Using GM cotton might be the answer in some parts of the world, but using GM causes controversy, with allegations of decreased annual yields of cotton compared with conventional varieties, along with seeds costing ten times more than conventional cotton seeds leading to greater debt for the farmers (Lee, 2007).

**Labour:** As 90% of clothing consumed within the UK is imported, that leaves a substantial footprint within the developing world (Defra, 2011). There have been concerns over the treatment of clothing workers. As clothes become cheaper there are allegations of exploitation of workers. Many have to work excessive hours just to get the minimum wage set by their governments and cannot earn enough wages to properly feed, clothe, house and educate their families (Labour Behind the Label, 2017). The Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 prompted calls for major changes to the garment industry. In this disaster 1,134 garment workers in Bangladesh were killed when their factory building collapsed due to lax building regulations. Fashion Revolution Day was created (Fashion Revolution, 2017) in direct response to this disaster and is a global movement in over 80 countries fighting for reform of the fashion supply chain. The movement is behind the “*WhoMadeMyClothes*” social media campaign, designed to raise awareness of these issues and for all stakeholders to work together. Whilst as mentioned earlier in 2.5.2 some consumers may choose to boycott companies for exploiting clothing workers in the developing world, boycotting may not be the answer as there may be unintended consequences such as contracts cancelled, jobs lost and homeworkers disadvantaged. (Clouder and Harrison, in: Harrison et al., (2005). Additionally, some consumers take a very different view of the situation and feel that western standards of employment should not be forced onto developing countries, which is pointed out by studies such as Iwanow et al., (2005).

### 2.5.4 Voluntary Initiatives

As well as campaigning groups against labour abuses, there are other voluntary initiatives from within the clothing/fashion industry both within the UK and globally. One such voluntary group is the Ethical Fashion Forum established by Tamsin Lejune in 2006, dedicated to all aspects of fashion and sustainability. Within industry itself, major retailers have signed up voluntarily to the Ethical Trading Initiative ([www.ethicaltrade.org](http://www.ethicaltrade.org)), an alliance of global companies, trade unions and NGOs with the aim of promoting workers' rights around the world.

Two European initiatives include the Retailers' Environmental Action Programme (REAP) established by European Commissioners in 2009 (REAP, 2017) and MADE-BY, a non-profit organisation with a mission to "make sustainable fashion common practice" (MADE-BY, 2017). With consumer awareness and concern over issues like sustainability and ethical production growing, retailers are beginning to react to this pressure (Intel, Feb 2009a). The economic importance of the rise of ethical purchasing for corporate strategy, retailing, and policy makers is well established and likely to grow (Barnett et al., 2005). Marks & Spencer have been a leader in this respect, but other retailers are also beginning to take action. Representatives from the RITE conference (2011) from John Lewis, Boden and Sainsbury admitted that this interest comes from consumer expectations of certain environmental and ethical practices on their behalf. Morgan (2015) conducted research into Marks & Spencer's Plan A, which is about sourcing responsibility, reducing waste and helping communities (Marks & Spencer, 2017). Morgan notes that retailers' approaches and business model innovations for sustainable consumption, as described in their own reports, have rarely been investigated. Hence, their effectiveness relies on companies self-reporting their progress. Therefore, it is not easy for the ordinary consumer to know exactly what is happening, given that a lot of these discussions and actions are taking place within the industries themselves. Some initiatives are designed more to attract consumer attention, such as H & M's "Conscious Collection", clothes made from more sustainable materials such as organic cotton. Such company initiatives have attracted criticism; green fashion has been labelled an

oxymoron as its inherent focus on consumerism is seen as antithetical to the core values of environmentalism and sustainability. It has been characterized as a marketing ploy — “greenwashing”— without any alteration of the fundamental character of the industry or any substantial internalization by any major segment of the industry of the principles of sustainability. (Bardecki & Kozlowski, in Wehr, 2011). These green initiatives reflect what Geels et al., (2015) deem the “reformist” position, whereby companies pursue green eco-innovations and consumers respond by buying them. But, as Kilbourne et al., (2002) discovered this is not quite a straightforward position, people’s belief in the current political and market systems may be misplaced. Overall, what business models within companies tend to reflect however is the Dominant Social Paradigm (DSP), meaning companies have an almost universal emphasis upon economic returns, with consumption as the root towards profit maximisation (McDonagh and Prothero, 2014).

### 2.5.5 The Sustainable Fashion Goals

The sustainability issues associated with clothes consumption raise the question as to whether and how government should play a role, it has done with policies and interventions to improve sustainability in other sectors of the economy. Morgan (2015) believes that government should play a role helping businesses initiate sustainable changes. One of the key responses from the Government has been the *The Sustainable Clothing Plan*, which was announced in February 2007. This was a collaborative framework and voluntary commitment with the aim of reducing the social and environmental impact of the clothing industry. The Sustainable Clothing Roadmap was launched in 2007, and from 2011, Defra’s delivery body, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), formally took over the running of the roadmap (Defra, 2011) and is now a charity. Given that so far the focus had been very much on retailers and clothing producers, attention did become finally focused on the consumer with *The Public Understanding of Sustainable Clothing* in 2008 (Fisher et al., 2008).

Fisher's report examines the system of clothing consumption and sought to clarify the general public's understanding of sustainable clothing and to explore people's aspirations and motivations towards its purchase and use, including their expectations of government and industry. The remit for the report is to explore *"how acceptable the public would find measures to lessen the sustainability impact of clothing production, use and disposal in the context of Defra's Sustainable Clothing Roadmap"* (Defra, 2008) and the likelihood of such measures changing people's behaviour. Within this report the Defra goals of sustainability are as follows:

- Repair or adapt clothing to prolong its life, and return/recycle it at the end of its life/when you no longer want it.
- Wash clothes at 30°C and use eco-friendly cleaning technologies.
- Line dry clothes whenever possible and when using dryers reduce the drying time and separate synthetic and natural fibres.
- Buy clothing that is sustainable.
- Buy clothes that last for longer.

The Defra report was influenced by Allwood et al.'s report (2006) *"Well Dressed?" The present and future sustainability of clothing and textiles within the United Kingdom*, hence the goals are very similar. Allwood et al.'s consumer goals read as follows:

- Buy second-hand clothing and textiles where possible.
- Buy fewer more durable garments and textile products.
- When buying new products, choose those made with least energy and least toxic emissions, made by workers paid a credible living wage with reasonable employment rights and conditions.
- Hire clothes that would otherwise not be worn to the end of their natural life.

- Wash clothes less often, at lower temperatures and using eco-detergents, hang-dry them and avoid ironing where possible.
- Extend the life of clothing and textile products through repair.
- Dispose of used clothing and textiles through recycling businesses who would return them for second-hand sale wherever possible, but otherwise extract and recycle the yarn or fibres.

Within the two reports the aims for changing consumer behaviour are very similar, tackling the three main areas of clothing consumption producing the most environmental impacts: consumer choice and the buying of garments, the usage of garments, and the disposal of garments. These two reports give a more holistic view of clothing consumption, a key aspect/approach that this thesis will argue needs further examination.

### 2.5.6 Slow Fashion

There has been discussion about sustainable fashion consumption from more holistic viewpoints too. Fletcher (2008) also argues for consumers to choose more environmentally-friendly clothing. Fletcher (2008) also discusses sustainability in a radical way, taking a more “revolutionary” position as discussed by Geels et al., (2015). She suggests that addressing environmental problems requires changes in the economic (capitalist) system and shifts to a “better” (fairer, egalitarian, happier) society involving fundamental personal, social and institutional change, rethinking the whole process of consumption impacts, and connecting nature, people and place in a more nurturing and satisfying way. Fletcher’s (2010) vision of Slow Fashion is rooted in a vision of sustainability in the fashion sector based on different values and goals to the current ones. She hopes that slow culture will help to initiate a long-overdue dialogue about the rules and goals of the fashion sector and will challenge values and economic priorities head on. Based on the Slow Food movement which started in Italy twenty years ago, Slow Fashion posits three “lines of reflection”: valuing of local resources and distributed economies, transparent production systems, and sustainable products that have a longer usable life and are more highly valued (Clark, 2008).

Though there are different interpretations of Slow Fashion, one key element is to foster stronger links that the individual has with their clothing and to lever a deep and lasting change in fashion (Fletcher, 2010). Fletcher's vision of Slow Fashion sees the consumer as the key to changing the fashion system. Fletcher's stance is a key argument of this thesis, that a consumer's way of thinking and their relationships to their clothing is critical element of encouraging sustainable consumption.

### 2.6 Sustainable Fashion Consumption

Within the exploration of the attitude/behaviour gap there was evidence of similar themes that also run through sustainable fashion consumption. Similarly, as in sections 2.5 -2.9 of this chapter that discussed ethical consumption, much of the literature here concentrates on specific aspects of sustainable fashion consumption, particularly in buying eco/ethical clothing. Within this section several themes about what is known within this field are given.

#### 2.6.1 Prior Research

Firstly, as mentioned in the introduction, the research in this thesis is built on the findings from the author's MSc study (Crommentuijn-Marsh, 2008) in Climate Change and Sustainable Development. The research was conducted over four months, and 14 people were interviewed, mostly within the region of Leicester, and a questionnaire was compiled and distributed with over 98 full replies.

This prior study helped identify a number of key issues that are explored further within this research project. Some of the key findings from the MSc correlated with those of other research in the following areas/ways:

#### 2.6.2 Understanding and Terminology of Sustainability

People's understanding of sustainability regarding clothing was very limited. Exploitation of garment workers in the developing world was the one issue that participants were familiar with (Crommentuijn-Marsh, 2008). The Defra report also revealed that levels of awareness and



understanding of the sustainability impacts of clothing amongst the public are low (Fisher et al., 2008). Geels et al., (2015) posit that the meaning of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) is unclear, with the term acting as an umbrella concept for a heterogeneous set of concepts and approaches, for example sustainable product service systems, eco-labelling, new economics, community grassroots innovation. There is also confusion from consumers about the use of phraseology “eco”, “green”, “ethical” and “sustainable”. The true meaning of these branded emblems and terminology within the context of the fashion industry is not always transparent or understood (Beard, 2008). Shen et al., (2013) found eight broad categories of clothing that could be deemed “sustainable”. These were:

1. Recycled
2. Organic
3. Vintage
4. Vegan
5. Artisan
6. Locally- made
7. Custom –made
8. Fair-trade certified.

All these categories of clothing incorporate aspects of sustainability; from organic fibres, second-hand clothing (vintage), avoiding animal cruelty, (vegan), repurposed, clothing made from existing garments, (recycled) ethical clothing (Fair-trade), clothing that has travelled very little distance to get to the consumer (locally-made) and finally clothing made by skilled artisans or made specifically for the consumer. Though, as Harris et al., (2016) acknowledges, retailers are aware that explaining sustainability to consumers is complex, because of the issues involved. The range of terminology confuses even environmentally-conscious consumers, as identified by Hiller-Connell (2010). Participants demonstrated limited awareness of environmental issues and apparel production, with many unable to articulate the effects beyond broad generalizations. Scepticism

from consumers about retailers' sustainability claims is another issue identified by Harris et al. , (2016).

### 2.6.3 Awareness of the Issues

Kozar and Hiller-Connell (2013) carried out research into the relationships between social and environmental responsibility, knowledge, attitudes and purchasing behaviour among students with the majority of participants being female. Their findings suggested that when consumers were more knowledgeable about clothing environmental issues, and when they held stronger attitudes about these issues, they were more willing to pay more for environmentally responsible produced goods, were more likely to boycott firms because of environmental abuses, and had a stronger inclination to research a company's policies on environmental responsibility prior to making a purchasing decision. Yet conversely, Hiller-Connell and Kozar (2012b) found that even when students had followed a sustainability-focused Apparel Textiles (AT) curriculum and knowledge of sustainable issues had increased there was no significant modification in sustainable apparel purchasing behaviour. This was attributed to the complexity of sustainable clothing purchasing, with personal and contextual barriers limiting willingness with this behaviour. This finding would indicate that despite increasing awareness of sustainable issues, the students within this study clearly had other priorities for their clothing. So this would indicate that there is a seemingly lack of interest from some consumers in sustainable clothing. Labour issues were the topic where there was the most awareness, while how clothing was made and the environmental consequences of artificial fibres and intensive cotton production were poorly understood concerns (Crommentuijn-Marsh, 2008). Other consumers lacked knowledge about the environmental impact of the apparel industry (Hiller-Connell, 2010). However, Valor (2007) discovered that there were still very low or moderate levels of awareness around the issue of labour abuses despite ten years of reports within the media about these concerns. Birtwhistle and Moore (2007) concluded that there was a deficiency of awareness due to lack of media coverage.

### 2.6.4 Information

Providing more information to consumers would seem to be an important tool for increasing ethical consumer behaviour, preferably issued by a trustworthy and reliable source. This was one of the conclusions reached by Hustveldt and Dickson (2009) and also Shaw et al., (2006), who also concluded there was a lack of information regarding the brands or retailers that are sweatshop-free. Yet knowledge did seem to have some effect for others. Diddi and Niehm (2016) in their survey of US consumers found that, whilst there was no significant relationship between consumers' knowledge of social issues and their patronage intentions, nevertheless there was support for the proposition that consumer inherent values, moral norms, and *knowledge* of ethical issues are key factors that lead to greater ethical behaviour expectations and positive attitudes toward retail apparel brands engaged in CSR. Conversely, Iwanow et al., (2005) found that despite knowledge of ethical issues, other factors were more important. Their research was conducted on consumers, the majority of whom had visited a Gap store within the past year. This research discovered that despite consumers' high level of awareness of ethical issues, factors such as price, quality and style have a greater influence on their clothing purchasing behaviour than the ethical practices of the supplier. For this particular group (students) belonging to a specific "peer group" was also important (Valor, 2007). Young people also feel strongly about wearing the "right clothes and brands" (Carrigan and Atalla, 2001) which outweighs the ethical message for this particular group of consumers.

### 2.6.5 Green Consumerism

For other consumers it is not quite so clear cut as to what the barriers are. Consumer intentions on the surface seem to be good, but there are similarities to the "attitude-behaviour gap"; their behaviour is a different story. Butler and Francis (1997) noted a discrepancy between attitudes and behaviour, consumers believed that the environment should be considered when purchasing clothing but rarely did so. Equally Solomon and Rabolt (2004) reported that one study found that although participants felt that the environment should be considered when buying clothing, they

did not actually consider the environment in their purchasing situations. Hustvedt and Dickson (2009) though found that there was some transfer of behaviour from natural food consumers towards buying organic clothing, particularly if the consumers had a strong self-identity as a sustainable consumer. Hustvedt and Bernard (2008) discovered that participants were willing to pay more for organic socks and locally produced fibres. Equally for other consumers eco-clothing did have a certain attraction. Dodd et al.,'s (2016) study examined two different approaches to product design for environmentally linked clothing: a visible message on the outside of the garment versus an environmental certification inside the garment, and found that both approaches significantly increased willingness to pay for the T-shirt. Participants in this study did not express environmental awareness but did express pro-environmental intent. Gam (2011) explored fashion orientation, shopping orientation and environmental concern and eco-friendly behaviour that might influence consumers' intentions to purchase eco-clothing in the future. 25% of participants had bought eco-clothing and the most common reasons given for purchasing were based on fun, newness, design, and quality as well as environmental protection. However, most participants did assert that they planned to purchase eco-clothing in the future because they wanted to be eco-friendly consumers and to support companies that implement environmentally friendly strategies alongside having fun and excitement when shopping. So it would seem that being environmentally conscious is potentially part of their identity, and also indicates that there were hedonistic values for consumers when shopping for eco-clothing. It seems important for eco-clothing to have other qualities attractive to consumers too. Jang et al.,'s (2012) study of five sustainable social programmes for fast fashion partly involved a consumer survey of 166 participants, the majority of whom were female and who were mostly in their early twenties and undergraduates. Within this study they believed that consumers would be more likely to participate in sustainable social programmes if there was a direct benefit to the consumer commensurate with a consumer's environmental consciousness.

### 2.6.6 Barriers, Price, Lack of Choice, Poor Fashionability

Participants' cited reasons for not purchasing eco-clothing included that it was not available, it was too expensive, or had an undesirable design (Gam, 2011). Cost was another barrier (Hiller-Connell, 2010). Butler and Francis (1997) suggest that the social and psychological dimensions of clothing within purchasing decisions may be more complex than for other products. Despite behaving ethically with other products, such as buying fair trade coffee, purchasing ethical clothing involved having to compromise consumers' "self-identify" and style. Another constraint faced by consumers was the lack of eco-friendly apparel with the desired attributes, particularly for business wear and formal, intimate and outdoor apparel (Hiller Connell, 2010). Only a small hardcore of ethical consumers committed to buying clothes for ethical reasons only, and the availability of cheap clothes, as Niinimaki (2010) notes, confuses consumers, preventing them from buying more expensive clothes and investing in better quality and sustainable items. Hassan et al. (2014) agrees with this conclusion in terms of market conditions defeating consumers with real barriers such as lack of information, lack of choice and poor fashionability in the restrictive number of clearly sweat-shop-free clothing ranges available for purchase. Shaw et al., (2006) revealed that with clothing, ethical/ environmental concerns were a low priority in comparison with consumer needs for fashion and availability. Lack of fashionable clothing forces consumers into trade-off decisions between their ethical and fashion- led desires. Consumers frequently felt they were unable to marry their ethical identity and their fashion identity due to the poor selection of ethically produced clothing. Limited availability was one external barrier constraining eco-friendly consumers, both in terms of finding eco-friendly clothing in local stores and quality second-hand clothing stores (Hiller Connell, 2010). In addition, eco/ethical clothing has a "hippyish", unfashionable image. This was a finding in the author's previous research (Crommentuijn-Marsh, 2008) and in that of Harris et al., (2016). One of the main criticisms of ethical/eco fashion is the lack of desirability for the consumer, its negative image. Miller (2015) gives an example of this thinking in a pair of eco-jeans that he bought for himself that were made

from organic cotton and real plant indigo. In his own words they were “incredibly shapeless trousers” that his wife found “unacceptable” and so they were given away. Hiller Connell (2010) found that eco-friendly clothing was perceived to be too “counter-cultural” in style. Moreover, two characteristics, fit and comfort, were also barriers. Fit as defined as very loose-fitting clothing or too baggy, and comfort with regard to the fabric hemp, which was considered to be uncomfortable. Additionally, participants felt societal expectations in terms of their appearance, needing to appear either as “professional” or “regular”. Harris et al., (2016) also argue for the normalization of eco/ethical clothing design. Joergens (2006), Iwanow et al., (2005) and Hiller (2016) conclude that price, style and quality are the primary influences on clothing purchases. Overall, it would seem that there is a negative image of eco-clothing, but there are exceptions. Gam’s (2011) study demonstrated that consumers who liked shopping and who have a higher interest in being well dressed have a stronger purchase intention of eco-friendly eco/ethical clothing. Jagel et al.,( 2012) found that for ethical consumers, there were five dominant perceptual patterns for eco/ethical clothing. These were the following:

1. Quality, in terms of durability and maintaining shape. These qualities were linked to saving money in terms of the garments lasting longer and also being value for money.
2. Preference for a style and design that makes them look good, thus creating a better self-image, and to convey a certain image to others, expressing their self-identity.
3. Concepts of comfort and fit and natural materials. Consumers want to feel comfortable in their clothes and feel good. Some feel the wearing of eco materials is good for their health.
4. This centres on consumers’ environmental concern. Recycled clothing, reducing waste, highlighting the interrelatedness of clothing acquisition and disposal. Also, there is awareness of eco-friendly materials and modes of production, caring for the geographic origin of their clothing.

5. Aspects of consumers' social concern. Avoiding involvement in the exploitation of others, consumers seek to avoid feelings of guilt, want to live up their values of social justice.

For other consumers the shopping environment needs improvement for consumers to buy more eco-clothing. Chang and Wong (2012) acknowledge that whilst the eco-clothing product features were important for consumers, they found that the customer service, store design and store environment, along with providing more information to consumers can positively influence eco-fashion consumption, though this can be weakened by higher prices. This approach might work for second-hand stores too. The clothes shopping experience within second-hand stores was another barrier, being described as not "very pleasurable" (Hiller Connell, 2010). Three issues identified by Peattie and Crane (2005) in market research showing that consumers were willing and able to buy green products, were that the market research was based on hypothetical situations with too much scope for respondents to give unrealistic, socially desirable answers; much of the research was based on general environmental concern whilst in practice it is concern about specific environmental issues that drive markets for specific green products. They acknowledge that extensive market research is needed to ensure a specific product's success, to understand what type of products consumers want and what kind of price-performance trade-offs they may be willing to accept, but that there was also a mistrust of green marketing and confusion over different logos (Peattie and Crane, 2005).

### 2.6.7 Not Buying

Much of the literature concentrates on the buying of sustainable clothing. Armstrong et al.,'s (2016) experiential learning research study on the other hand, concentrated on not buying clothing. This study had 97 student volunteers abstaining from clothing acquisition for 10 weeks and reflecting about their experiences. For this particular group it was suggested that fashion was an important component in their lives. During this educational experiment, there were some significant barriers to reduced consumption. Individuals experienced a yearning for new things, an inability to satisfy specific clothing needs and an emotional deflation from the lack of recreational

shopping. Additionally, participants were distressed by the prompts from the fashion system, such as marketing and social media. There were though some positive outcomes from this experiment with participants reporting more self-regulation and that they had made more creative use of their existing clothing. This study highlights some of the difficulties in reducing consumption of clothing. Woodward (2015) found in her ethnographic research into clothing practices that individuals were “accidentally sustainable” particularly in relation to garments such as jeans. Individuals had long-lasting relationships with their pairs of jeans, did not wash them as often as other garments and in terms of fashion jeans were seen as a street style which persisted over time. Additionally, she observed that individuals often wore new items in conjunction with other items that were already owned, so there were elements of current consumption patterns that were commensurate with sustainable fashion practices.

### 2.7 Conclusions and Research Gap

In summary, despite some contradictory conclusions about sustainable clothing consumption there were some clear themes coming across. Firstly, lack of awareness and confusion about the term “sustainability”, the terminology used, and the sustainable issues that affect the industry. Overall, this would suggest a low awareness of sustainability in general, which would indicate this is a potential area to be investigated. If consumers knew more about the issues, would it prompt more sustainable behaviour? So far, knowledge does seem to have some positive effect in influencing sustainable behaviour and shopping for eco-clothing is hedonistic for some consumers. Conversely, people may have the knowledge, but they are choosing not to act upon it. What does seem evident is that for consumers, other qualities of clothing are more important. Style and “fashionability” were qualities that were deemed lacking in eco-ethical clothing, and given that the “fashion system” dominates the clothing industry this can be viewed as a valid concern. Fashion and the associated marketing is a strong force within society as demonstrated by Armstrong et al., (2016) in the discussion of section 2.27.1. The importance of fashion to an individual could be another area of investigation. Fashion aside, as explained in section 2.22.6 for



those wishing to purchase sustainable clothing, the selection on offer was not seen to be as relevant to a consumer's particular needs. Additionally, another significant barrier is the smallness of the ethical market 0.4% (Intel, 2009) so this type of clothing is not easily available to consumers, as acknowledged by Hiller, (2016).

### 2.7.1 Conclusion of this Chapter

The conclusions from both the "attitude-behaviour gap" as discussed in section 2.6 and sustainable fashion consumption are both remarkably similar. Firstly, ethical consumer habits are a complex and wide-ranging group of phenomena (Harrison et al., 2005). Secondly, there are barriers to more ethical consumption particularly around the areas of unaffordability, lack of choice, and availability. Additionally, there are consumer habits, social contexts, implicit and explicit influences, and the dominance of fashion which all inhibit sustainable fashion consumption. As Carrigan (2017) acknowledges despite being ethically informed, it will not change people's consumption behaviour. Overall, there are indications that whatever ethical or environmentally-friendly values or intentions an individual possesses, the above factors tend to be far stronger and are more important for consumers. As described in sections 2.10- 2.15 there are varying social-psychological issues related to clothing and appearance. This viewpoint is shared by Kozar and Hiller-Connell, (2013) who recommend that future studies address both external and internal influences affecting social and environmental practices.

### 2.7.2 The Gap

As much of the sustainable fashion consumption literature focuses on specific aspects such as the buying of eco-ethical clothing (as seen in section 2.22), there is no overall picture of sustainable clothing consumption. Both the Cambridge report (2006) and the Defra report (2008) gave a clear sustainable fashion framework so it was decided to base the research on these consumer goals. These goals represent the desired behaviour of consumers to make a difference, in the sense of the radical change that both Fletcher (2008) and Geels (2015) were arguing for in sections 2.23.1

in rethinking the whole fashion system. Additionally, having a more holistic view of a person's clothing consumption may give further insights than might be the case if the research just concentrated on the one aspect.

### 2.7.3 The Research Questions

Kilbourne and Mittelstaedt (2012) argue that further exploration is needed into what conditions are required for society to engage with the "less is more" philosophy. Research is needed that examines the what, why and how much of consumption and consumption practices. As the conclusions of this chapter illustrate, there are significant social-psychological factors which seem to be greater than an individual's attitudes and personal values so the research design needs to take these into account and capture them for analysis. The ethnographic research by Miller and Clark (2002) and their theory of anxiety being the dominant factor in clothing choice (see section 2.13) gave an alternative view to other fashion theories. Equally, Klepp and Bjerck's (2014) wardrobe studies and Skjold's (2016) biographical wardrobes which focused on ordinary consumers and actual practices indicated that an ethnographically-inspired study would yield rich data. Klepp and Bjerck (2014) acknowledge that there is little knowledge about how women and men, young and old, actually dress and why. The focus on explaining clothes as fashion, and thus change, has provided little critical distance to the industry which urges consumers to buy something new. There is therefore little capacity to recognize stability and problems with developing perspectives on sustainable clothes consumption.

All these influences combine to pose the first research question which is as follows:

**Q1: What are the key factors that influence consumers in the purchasing, use and disposal of clothes?**

Clothing consumption refers to an individual's clothing acquisition decisions and the use of clothing by the individual. This definition encompasses acquisition, storing, using, maintaining and

discarding of clothing products (Hiller Connell and Kozar, 2014). Building an understanding of a consumer's clothing consumption patterns then leads to the second question.

**Q2: In an individual's clothing consumption patterns what possible barriers towards more sustainable behaviour can be identified?**

As can be identified from the conclusion, the major barriers are the following: the lack of information, confusion over sustainability, the smallness of the ethical market, the cost and the image of eco/ethical clothing and an individual's priorities for clothing being more important. There may well be other barriers as not yet identified. However by understanding a consumer's pattern of clothing consumption there could be potential points of interference that could be addressed in future research.

To answer both these questions, there will be a discussion on methodology which will be the focus of the next chapter.

## 3 Methodology

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### 3.1 Introduction

The key argument of the literature review within Chapter Two was to take a holistic view of an individuals' clothing consumption to gain a clearer picture. Additionally, the focus is on the "ordinary" consumer rather than any who defined themselves in any way as an ethical consumer. A mixed methods approach was chosen to collect the rich data needed. The methods chosen encompass involves:

- an accompanied shopping trip,
- a wardrobe sampling task
- a semi-structured interview.

Whilst quantitative methods are used at end of the semi-structured interview in the form of the Defra test, the Consumer Styles Inventory and the Sustainable Clothing Goals (as described in section 2.23) overall there is more of an emphasis on the qualitative nature of this research. The structure of this chapter is as follows: the research questions are given, the advantages and disadvantages of the methods are discussed, the mixed methods are explained and the philosophical underpinnings of the research is given. The methods are then described and how they worked in practice.

### 3.2 The Research Questions

The strategic aim of this thesis research is to identify barriers in consumer behaviour towards sustainable consumption of fashion. From this, the following two research questions will be explored, which build on the preliminary findings and conclusions from the both the author's master's thesis and the literature review:

- ***What are the key factors that influence consumers in the purchasing, use and disposal of clothes?***

There are two aspects to this question, understanding an individual's consumption pattern and how they buy their clothes, and considering their usage and disposal of garments.

- ***In an individual's clothing consumption pattern what possible barriers towards more sustainable behaviour can be identified?***

In order to address these questions information will be needed on the key points below as these are the major conclusions of both the preliminary findings and the literature review.

- Awareness of sustainability issues within the clothing industry
- Awareness of what eco/ethical clothing is and how to source such garments
- The role of other factors, colour, style, price in consumer choice of garment
- The role of fashion, materialism, and identity in clothing

Arguably the last point is potentially the most important one as the influences that affect an individual's choice of clothing are multi-contextual.

### 3.3 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Potential Methods

As the two research questions require answers directly from consumers to explore their attitudes and behaviour, there is a need to gain primary data from clothing consumers. The data collection methods needed to ensure that appropriate methods are used to provide the consumer insights needed. As the research concentrates on understanding the clothing consumption of individuals with the focus being on the consumer, one way to obtain such data is an in-depth study of a small group of people to build up a picture of purchase, use and disposal behaviour for each consumer. Within the literature review, a method that worked well, and yielded in-depth information was ethnography. This in-depth qualitative approach is based on intensive study of as many features as possible of one of a small number of phenomena and seeks to build understanding by depth (Miller and Brewer, 2003). Fieldwork was regarded the more likely method in order to talk to consumers face-to-face and observe their behaviour, and case studies were decided upon in order

to build up an in-depth study of clothing consumption. As well as using an ethnographic approach to shopping, other forms of data gathering provide a wider holistic view of the individuals concerned. These were a wardrobe sampling task and a semi-structured interview which centred around observations made during the previous two tasks. These established methods enable the research to identify different patterns of behaviour and how these may vary for different types of consumer/garment. As this research used mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative approaches, there were various research methods considered which included the following: experiments, action research, questionnaires, interviews and focus groups (Blaxter et al., 2001). The data could have been gathered in a different way and other methods were considered. A field experiment could be conducted, using available possibilities and structured observations (Denscombe, 2007, p.58). The problem with this approach is that the research needs answers to specific questions and to explore a person's viewpoints and behaviour around those questions. An experimental approach would not really be able to explore this. Because clothes can be an emotive issue, it is necessary and important to probe deeper into people's thoughts and feelings as was established in the literature review (Chapter 2. 12). A controlled experiment could be a possibility (Rugg and Petre, 2007) but there is no specific hypothesis to test. This might involve taking each individual to a particular shop and testing their reaction to eco/ethical clothing, but as discussed within the literature review 2.8.1 the smallness of the ethical clothing market meant that this would not be an easy task. Additionally, clothing and the individual, as discussed within the literature review 2.11 were of interest and this is method did not tackle this. Another possible method would be action research that involves co-research with the participants to explore their attitudes towards sustainability and how it affects clothing. This approach has the advantages of offering a research design which links the research process closely to its context and is predicated upon the idea of research having a practical purpose in view and will lead to change (Blaxter et al., 2007, p.69). However, this method was deemed too resource intensive and my role too influential as a researcher. Hirscher (2013) has demonstrated the value of participatory action research

within her case studies of clothing design workshops where users were actively involved in the making of their garments. However, action research would place the issue of sustainability at the forefront of the process and since part of this research focused on understanding what people's knowledge and perceptions of sustainable clothing were without prior input, this method was deemed not appropriate. Surveys are another possible method: they are a well-established method involving the collection, analysis and use of information about consumers. Dodd et al., (2016) used a survey asking respondents about a hypothetical purchase of environmentally-friendly clothing, however the participants were not given the opportunity of actually purchasing the clothing. There is an important gap in that people may say one thing but in practice may do another, so my research wanted to focus on what people actually did. In my previous research for my MSc, I used a mixed method of both questionnaires and interviews, but I found there were limitations with questionnaires as the issues could not be explored in depth in comparison with the interviews. For example in the interviews, an issue which emerged was information about the manufacture of garments, particularly information that could be trusted, as some participants were wary of the information provided by retailers. Moreover, in questionnaires it is difficult to validate what the respondents are saying as you have no evidence of their actual behaviour. Other disadvantages include the pressure to make the questions asked in survey questionnaires as simple and straightforward as possible, thus reducing the depth to which topics are pursued. Most importantly, surveys rarely permit an exploration of the social environment of the phenomena being studied; they tend to extract opinions, thoughts and ideas away from their social settings and contexts, leading to artificial impressions (Layder, 2014). Questionnaires may provide a lot of data but this is not best suited to identifying the links between purchasing (motivations etc.) and use of clothes (contextual and situational factors) and social influences (peer group, fashion etc) and personal capabilities and habits (such as where people shop) as discussed within the literature review. As quantitative methods are concerned with the collection

and analysis of data in numeric form (Blaxter et al., 2001), they were not appropriate for the main approach to data gathering.

Focus groups were also another option that was considered. However, there are clear disadvantages with using this method which include less control over what is discussed, groups are difficult to organize, people can speak at the same time so the data is difficult to analyse, and some people may not speak at all (Bryman, 2012). This was indeed the case when I used focus groups to validate the results. This is discussed further in section 3.13 of this chapter.

#### 3.4 The Mixed Method Approach

Mixed methods were chosen as this approach offered an appropriate amount of data, blending both qualitative and quantitative methods. One of the advantages of mixed methods was of completeness; the notion that a more comprehensive account of the area of enquiry could be obtained and corroborated by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods (Bryman, 2012). Within the mixed methods, a convergent design was used (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011, p.151) whereby the quantitative and qualitative data was collected concurrently within the semi-structured interview and independently analysed.

As the two central research questions require answers directly from consumers to explore their attitudes and behaviour, there was a need to gain primary data from clothing/fashion consumers. In order to gain these primary data, fieldwork is the more likely method for talking to consumers face-to-face and observing their behaviour. These revelations are not easily measured or put into the form of numbers and tend to have a breadth of study rather than a depth of study. There is a need to study a group of people and identify variables that are not easily measured. This detail can only be established by talking directly to people and going to their homes and allowing them to tell their stories and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and a participant in a study. Particularly, such an approach helps to understand the contexts and settings in which participants in a study address the issue (Cresswell, 2013). Essentially the



sustainable clothing goals cover the major aspects of an individual's clothing consumption, so given the range of phenomena, a qualitative approach was decided upon, firstly to encompass the data required but also to allow as many variables from the participants as possible. An ethnographic approach was deemed to be the most appropriate. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out that whilst "ethnography" does not have a standard, well-defined meaning, ethnographic work usually comprises most of the following features:

1. People's actions and accounts are studied in everyday contexts, rather than under conditions created by the research; in other words, research takes place "in the field."
2. Data are gathered from a range of sources, but participant observation and/or relatively informal conversations are usually the main ones.
3. The focus is usually on a few cases, generally fairly small-scale, like a group of people. This facilitates in-depth study.
4. The analysis of data involves interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in local, or wider contexts. What are produced for the most part are verbal descriptions, explanations or theories; quantification and statistical analysis play a subordinate role at most (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.3).

Though the research took an ethnographic approach, it was not true ethnography in the sense that the researcher did not live for an extended period of time in any particular community, observing day-to-day interactions and contexts. Rather it was more the approach and context that took clothing consumption as part of normal everyday life. The sustainable fashion goals are within a particular area of social life and the ethnographic approach also had the advantage of being a relatively open-ended process (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

Though there were the particular areas of interest which would be the focus of the questions and on which information was required, the data collection method was flexible enough to allow

variations on this to be taken into account. For example, whilst there was at least one shopping trip with each participant, there were many variables within a shopping trip such as location, time, garments sought, influences surrounding choices of garments and money spent.

Another key hallmark of ethnography is that ethnographers must become intimately involved with members of the community or participants in the natural setting where they do research. Involvement means building trust between the researcher and the participants and often calls for a special kind of friendship (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). As the research aim was to build up a picture of clothing consumption of an individual, part of this picture included discussing the social influences that affect the purchasing and wearing of clothing. In addition, the activities included looking at a participant's wardrobe in their bedroom, which is an intimate space, so trust between the researcher and the participant was crucial (in one case this involved looking at a participant's corsets!). The researcher worked on building trust and friendship between the researcher and the participant to gain a more honest picture, and to enable participants to feel more relaxed and so in turn to disclose more data.

By carrying out the shopping trip and wardrobe sampling first and leaving the sustainable clothing goals until the very end, a reasonably unbiased picture of their shopping and consumption habits could be obtained. It also meant that the quantitative and qualitative data could be triangulated. The study overall utilized a qualitative priority with the emphasis being on the qualitative methods and with the quantitative methods used in a secondary role. The quantitative methods used were as follows: The Consumer Styles Inventory, the Defra test and a questionnaire centred firmly around the sustainable clothing goals. Concurrent timing was used; this occurs when the researcher implements both the quantitative and qualitative strands during a single phase of the research study (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

### 3.5 Case Studies

The need for an in-depth approach led to case studies being chosen as the preferred research method. In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon in some real-life context (Yin, 1989).

The case study method provides a focus on each individual (who constitutes a ‘case’) and allows for exploration of the complexities of sustainability and clothing. With each individual as a case study, the phenomena can be studied to provide the in-depth data required to answer the research questions. The methods deployed in this research are derived from the central research questions above and data were gathered to answer these questions. As the research concentrates on understanding the clothing consumption of individuals, to obtain such data an in-depth study of a small group of people was used to build up a picture of purchase, use and disposal behaviour for each consumer.

### 3.6 Methods in related work

Chapter 2 reviewed research in other studies relevant to this PhD project. The following table provides an overview of the focus of these studies and the research methods used.

Author	Focus/aim of Research	Methods
Kozar and Hiller Connell (2013)	To examine the relationships between social and environmental responsibility, knowledge, attitudes and purchasing behaviour.	325 questionnaires of which 89.9% are female.
Hiller Connell and Kozar (2012)	To analyse changes in undergraduate student knowledge of sustainability relevant to the apparel and textiles industry.	55 students, two sets of questionnaires.
Gam (2011)	The purpose of research is to identify whether fashion and shopping orientation are determinants of environmentally-friendly clothing purchase intention.	329 questionnaires from females aged 18-25.
Hiller Connell (2010)	To expand the knowledge base of eco-conscious apparel consumption and question the limited participation by identifying barriers that constrain	Semi-structured interviews with 26 eco-conscious

	consumers.	consumers.
Valor (2007)	Study proposes a model to explain the influence of information about labour abuses on consumer behaviour when buying clothes.	Grounded Theory Approach
Hustveldt and Dickson (2009)	To contribute to a better understanding of the organic apparel consumer.	422 questionnaires of health and natural food consumers.
Diddi & Niehm (2016)	To develop and test an integrative model based on macro theories of human behaviour. Exploring consumers' personal and normative influences on patronage intentions.	407 surveys of US consumers.
Birtwhistle and Moore (2007)	To investigate how consumers dispose of fashion products and how to increase sustainable consumption of textiles	8 consumer focus groups, 6 consumer interviews, 4 in-depth interviews with charity shop managers
Carrigan and Atalla (2001)	To examine whether consumers do care about marketing ethics in relation to consumer attitudes and ethical purchase behaviour.	Two focus groups each involving 5 participants.
Butler and Francis (1997)	To focus on purchasing behaviour relative to clothing and to examine influencing factors in a sequential manner.	402 questionnaires from adult US females Stephens (1985) Theoretical Framework
Iwanow et al. (2005)	To explore the extent to which consumers' ethical concerns impact upon apparel purchase decisions and highlight the value of The Gap's corporate code of conduct in meeting these concerns.	200 face to face questionnaires with customers in street.
Hustvedt and Bernard (2008)	To examine consumer willingness to pay for three credence attributes of fibre: origin, type and production method.	Experimental auctions
Jang et al. (2012)	To develop sustainable social context for fast fashion.	8 Interviews and 166 questionnaires.
Niinimaki (2010)	To contribute to a better understanding of eco-fashion consumption and consumer purchase decisions.	246 online questionnaires
Chan and Wong (2012)	To examine the relationships between product and store-related attributes of eco-fashion and fashion consumers' eco-fashion consumption decisions.	216 questionnaires to fashion consumers.
Shaw et al. (2006)	To examine consumers' ethical intentions to avoid purchasing sweatshop-produced clothing and their actual purchase behaviour, as well as the constraints impacting consumer behaviour in	262 telephone semi-structured interviews from ethical consumer questionnaires

	this context.	
Jagel et al. (2012)	This study explores consumers' desired consumption outcomes and personal values that drive ethical product preferences.	98 ethical clothing consumers through a semi-qualitative laddering approach
Armstrong et al. (2016)	A research study whereby fashion-orientated students experienced life where they abstained from clothing acquisition for 10 weeks and reflected upon the experience.	The Experiential Learning approach. 97 students completed the experience. (92% aged between 18-23), 97% female.
Hassan et al., (2014)	To contribute to the debate on the intention-behaviour gap by reviewing the TRA/TPB studies that have assessed both intention and behaviour in ethical contexts.	894 Questionnaires targeted at subscribers of Ethical Consumer. 262 telephone interviews.

Table 3.1 Methods in Related Research

This table shows that these research studies are overwhelmingly quantitative in nature. Within the sustainable fashion consumption field, many of the previous studies concentrated on consumers buying behaviour, and tended to focus on single issues such as eco-clothing, fair trade clothing, socially responsible businesses and so forth, as discussed within section 2.22. Valor (2007) finds that previous studies within the area of ethical consumer behaviour have used quantitative methods, frequently experiments where a few variables were introduced, which implies an oversimplification of the purchase process. She further argues that by asking participants to rank a variety of ethical concerns alone without traditional economic features meant that the importance of ethical dimensions may have been overstated. There are studies included that are not of UK consumers, such as Valor (2007), Hiller Connell (2010) and Niinimaki (2010). In setting the research in comparison with those studies, there could potentially be variations in the results given that this research took place within the UK.

Despite the preponderance of quantitative studies, it is argued that qualitative methods give more in-depth insights into consumer behaviour. Hassan et al., (2014) observe that many studies in ethical consumption employ a qualitative design which are highly valuable and can provide insights into factors that might assist in reducing the intention-behaviour gap. Similarly,

Armstrong et al., (2016) agree that the attitude-behaviour gap imbued by personal values, beliefs, needs, socio-cultural forces, past experiences, and so forth is difficult to capture via quantitative measurement. Additionally, Lea-Greenwood (1999) argues that researching consumer opinions and attitudes regarding the ethical sourcing of clothing is particularly difficult as either consumers are aware of the issues, or they may say what will be socially acceptable/politically correct to the researcher. Although the intention-behaviour gap will not be addressed within this thesis, nor will participants be pre-screened for ethical values, it would indicate that the qualitative approach provides insights that quantitative research cannot achieve.

The Defra study, one of the key documents that influenced this research (Fisher et al., 2008), used qualitative research: focus groups, home tasks and workshops with 99 UK participants. The sample represented different groups of consumers in relation to their sustainability behaviour. It was suggested within this report that future research in this field could incorporate quantitative methods or in-depth interviews. Other research within this area has used qualitative methods. Ritch's thesis on "Mothers' Sustainable Fashion Consumption" (2012) used phenomenological interviewing, and Bray's thesis (2011) exploring factors impeding ethical consumption, used both quantitative and qualitative methods, focus groups, interviews and questionnaires. In addition, research using an ethnographic approach to shopping was carried out by Miller in North London and the results provided the construction of a theoretical perspective published in *The Theory of Shopping* (1998). Miller's research methods included participant observation relating to both formal shopping and informal provisioning, and supplementary interviews (Miller,1998). Moreover, Miller and Clark's (2002) theory of anxiety over potential social embarrassment was generated from ethnography, as discussed in section 2.13.

The wardrobe studies discussed within section 2.16.1 were qualitative in nature. Skjold (2016), who focused on the day to day routines, in other words on the *ordinary*, took a qualitative approach through what has been termed the "wardrobe method". Central to this method is the idea/concept of the wardrobe as a space where people manage their self-perceptions through the

act of getting dressed, and yet at the same time they prepare themselves to take part in social life. The wardrobe method has revealed new insights into how people navigate through societal norms, ethics, morals and values through what they wear. Skjold's method was to hold qualitative interviews with participants, taking all items from their wardrobe and putting them in piles depending on whether they liked them or not and how much they used them. By having dress items present, matters of comfort and style could be addressed and putting items onto a timeline of when they were bought helped to form the concept of the biographical wardrobe. Klepp and Bjerck (2014) define wardrobe studies *“as a method developed within an understanding of practice where materiality is at the core”*. Essentially the wardrobe study consists of an inventory of clothes with the goal of looking at the relationship between the individual item of clothing and the larger material totalities. The method includes qualitative research interviews, field work, inventories and laboratory testing, referring primarily to the ethnological tradition. Woodward's (2007) wardrobe study was ethnographic in its orientation, incorporating a variety of methods including the following: detailed documentation of every item within the wardrobe, semi-structured interviews, life histories, clothes diaries and observation of how women select clothes from the wardrobe and how they are worn.

There are sociological studies on behaviour such as laundry (e.g. Shove, 2003a) and recycling (e.g. Morgan and Birtwhistle, 2009). The latter research tended to use quantitative methods such as questionnaires. Overall, taking other methods within the sustainable fashion consumption field into consideration, the methods chosen here/for this study reflected the mixed methodological approach in order to obtain the rich data required.

### **3.7 The Philosophical and Ethnographic Approach**

Underpinning this research are views on the nature of the world, reality, and the way in which knowledge is understood, which has profound implications for the methods used to conduct the research. There are two main philosophical positions, also called paradigms, underpinning social science research:

Positivist social methods, which resemble methods of the natural sciences, as tools for understanding society and which are usually characterized by quantitative approaches that test hypotheses (Byrne, 2017). Hiller (2010) notes that studies of ethical consumerism have predominantly adopted a positivist position, where the ethical decision-making processes are defined by objective judgements.

Interpretivism, is the epistemological position which is concerned with the empathic understanding of human action rather than with the forces that are deemed to act upon it (Bryson, 2012, p.36). This is often described as Social Constructivism. In Social Constructivism, individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. The goal of research then is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation. In other words, their views are not simply imprinted on individuals but are formed through interaction with others (hence social constructivism) and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives (Cresswell, 2013).

As this research was following a more qualitative approach and given that it seeks to interpret the behaviour of people, a constructivist approach would seem appropriate. Subjective evidence is assembled based on individual views and this is how knowledge is known – through the subjective appearances of people (Cresswell, 2013, p.20). Within qualitative research social events and phenomena are understood from the perspective of the actors themselves, avoiding the imposition of the researcher's own preconceptions and definitions (Sumner, 2006). This is the approach that was taken in this research project: to understand the motives and the reasoning behind people's clothing consumption, and to understand the choices that affected their actions, following in the interpretivist tradition that assumes that the meaning of human action is inherent in that action and that the task of the inquirer is to unearth that meaning (Schwandt, 2007). Emerging from this interpretive tradition within the social sciences is ethnography, and this perspective takes greater account of the reflexive and highly variable nature of human existence as well as seeking to understand the motivations, thinking and ideas that generate the mosaic of



social life (O'Reilly, 2009). The research took an inductive approach rather than a deductive one, drawing generalized inferences out of the findings rather than from theory (Bryman, 2012). Also, as there are no hypotheses or theories to test, and as there is not enough research within this area, the research followed an inductive approach whereby the research seeks to make sense of the data collected (Kawamura, 2011).

Whilst, overall, the study took a qualitative approach, the research also uses quantitative methods too, recognizing that there are some elements of positivism. Plowright (2011) argues that a mixed method approach relies on an alternative and more recently developed philosophy that is more appropriate in underpinning principles and processes of mixed methods, that of pragmatism. Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy or reality, so allows for a freedom of choice over methods, techniques and procedures of research that might best meet the needs and purposes of the researcher. Truth is considered to be what works at the time; it is not based in a dualism between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. The pragmatist researcher looks to the "what" and "how" of research based on its intended consequences – where they want to go with it (Cresswell, 2013, p.28). This view suits this research given it is an exploratory study with a multitude of stakeholders seeking information to understand the fashion system of clothing. This pragmatic approach, whilst not using any theoretical structure, may have implications for theory and is useful and practical. The results from this research can be sorted into a number or could be open to any intervention that others may wish to make. This study has a design background given that much of the sustainable clothing research has focused on various methods and design techniques to increase sustainability within clothing design. This research is consumer-orientated, and a key element is establishing/ understanding/ finding out what consumers require from their clothing. Design research has two dominant characteristics: firstly, that it is inherently multi-disciplinary, and secondly that it is driven by the twin goals of understanding the process of design and improving it – two goals that require very different research methods. Design researchers need to see the bigger picture

concerning complex heterogeneous human activity (Eckert et al., 2003). This research also requires the bigger picture, using mixed methods to achieve this, so pragmatism would be the appropriate philosophical approach.

#### 3.8 My Role as Researcher

As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) advise, a good qualitative researcher should make their position explicit, using the concept of reflexivity, to acknowledge the biases, values and experiences that I as a researcher bring to this study. I accompanied each of the participants as a friend during the research activities, and during the experience tried to act as normally as possible, sympathizing with their frustrations for example, or, from my own experiences of shopping with children, empathizing with them over the challenges of shopping with children.

As noted above, one of the potential pitfalls of concentrating on a small number of people is the possibility that the researcher could influence the response of the participants. This is particularly a matter of concern regarding environmental responses. There was a need to be sensitive around the issue of potential bias. As discussed in section 2.6 of the literature review, there is a much-reported gap, the Attitude behaviour Gap, between people's attitudes towards ethical issues and their actual purchasing behaviour. Therefore, there was a need within the design research to mitigate against Social Desirability Bias. This is a well-known phenomenon: when individuals within interview situations are asked to give reports about their own behaviour, attitudes or valuation of certain goods or amenities, it is likely that their responses are triggered not only by the question but other factors such as their current mood, social and cultural norms and the presence of the interviewer, all of which might influence them. (Bryman, 2012, p. 55). As I discovered in my MSc research, people felt that there was a certain amount of social pressure to care for the environment and so provided answers that they thought I should or would like to hear (Crommentuijn-Marsh, 2008). Almost all participants assured me that they cared about the environment, yet further questioning elicited that some of them did not reflect this stated

concern in their behaviour. So, from the beginning there was awareness of this potential problem and the research was designed to be sensitive to it. Clearly the presence of a researcher could affect the events and the person whom I am observing, as suggested by Wisker (2001). It would be best if a relationship could be developed (or already exist) with the participants, reducing the likelihood of them changing their behaviour. However, as a participant observer there was an acceptance that I would be part of the activity. On many shopping trips I was seen as a friend, and so I acted as such, providing as natural an experience as possible. This would be making a normal contribution that anyone else might make in that situation, as advised by Graziano and Raulin (2007). Keeping the whole experience as normal as possible would be advantageous in terms of obtaining good data. One of the strengths I brought as a researcher was by being a good listener and being very comfortable talking to people, probing them for more information which proved to be a good asset in the interviewing process. By being empathetic, the aim was to put people at ease, to enable them to open up and talk honestly. As the case studies were recruited from my own social grouping this was seen as a strength in building rapport with individuals. In many cases I was able to empathize with their difficulties and was able to remain impartial throughout the whole process. At all times, I acted according to the principles of confirmability, to be objective and to act in good faith, not allowing any personal values to sway the conduct of the research (Bryman, 2012).

### 3.9 The Participants

Kozar and Hiller Connell (2015) claim that most research on sustainable clothing shopping is based on findings gathered from a convenient population, namely, a traditional college-aged sample. They call for future research to examine and compare the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of middle-aged and older consumers, as consumers with more purchasing experience and knowledge of sustainable issues may be more motivated to buy sustainable clothing. Therefore, for this research, it was decided to recruit participants from a demographic of older women in a particular location. Recruiting friends within my social circle as participants was deemed not

appropriate due to their knowledge of myself and of the focus of the research on sustainability might potentially bias their responses. The individuals were therefore intentionally chosen from those who were friends of my friends following Newholm's approach. For his PhD thesis Newholm studied ethical consumers, and participants for his research were friends of friends using the snowball approach (Newholm, 2000). Snowballing is a technique in which the researcher obtains participants initially from a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these participants propose other participants who have the characteristics relevant to the research (Bryson, 2012, p.424). The participants for this research were recruited in and around the City of Leicester using the snowball technique. However, in practice, it was difficult at times finding participants who fitted this criteria and who were willing and able to take part. So, for practical purposes recruitment of participants ended up being convenience sampling. For example, the participant Sue, being retired and with grown up children, was older than the target demographic but having been recruited by the pilot study was able and willing to take part. Convenience sampling is the means by which participants are simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility (Bryman, 2012, p.201). Although Bryson acknowledges that convenience sampling would not be representative so generalizations cannot be made, nevertheless convenience sampling would potentially offer a different view to young female, students. As it was a big imposition to take part in this research, I took the position of accepting people who offered themselves for this study. It was originally decided to focus on fifteen case studies. However, the data gathering stopped before then as the richness of data provided adequate information once ten case studies were completed. A relatively small number of participants gave the opportunity to concentrate on obtaining the depth of data required to answer the research questions, yet enough were needed to give a variety of different responses in the data gathered. This proved to be the case.

It was decided not to seek overtly ethical consumers for this research as there has been much academic discussion attempting to delineate consumers to identify those most sympathetic

toward ethical issues. As discussed within the literature review sections 2.30 the decision not to target ethical consumers was based on several factors. Some of the participants did have ethical values pertaining to clothing but I did not pre-screen participants for this. As the research in this thesis was focusing on a few case studies, concentrating on just one group would, for the reasons already described, provide enough variety within itself, which indeed was the case. Women with children were chosen as participants for the following reasons:

- Women were likely to buy ethical clothing as described by Mintel (Mintel, 2009a);
- Women generally buy more clothing than men;
- Mothers with children tend to have the central household role buying food and clothing (Carrigan and Szmigin, 2006);
- The researcher is female.

#### 3.9.1 Recruiting the participants

In recruiting participants, I either spoke to them directly when I met them or if someone had recruited them for me then I sent an email, details of which are below.

Hello\_\_\_\_,

My name is Philippa Crommentuijn-Marsh and I have been forwarded your name by \_\_\_\_ as someone who might take part in my research.

I am doing a PhD at the Open University and my research is essentially about clothing consumption, focusing on the individual.

What does this involve? Well, participation in this research will be involved in two different shopping trips (e.g. one in Leicester, one on-line), a discussion about your wardrobe and an interview. I am attaching a leaflet with further information on this.

If you wish to take part please let me know and we can get going, I am free mostly within the hours of the school-day and possibly some evenings and weekends if that is convenient to you?

I do hope you will be able to take part, if you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me,

Many thanks,

Philippa

Once they had replied, the first activity was then arranged; they decided what times and where, whatever was more convenient for them.

### **3.10 Ethical Approval**

Prior to studies, I gained ethical approval. The Open University Ethics Committee were contacted for their advice and permission was given advising a prior meeting with participants before collecting data in a neutral territory such as a café. This advice was followed, and all participants were met at least once before starting the research within a neutral territory. In terms of ethical behaviour, it was discussed with each participant what would be done with the data and how it would be used. A copy of a pro-forma was given to each participant so that they had a record of what was agreed. Participants were assured of complete confidentiality that their data would be anonymous and not passed onto anybody else. They also had the option to leave the research if they so wished at any stage and their data destroyed. Fortunately, none of them did so. (Both a copy of the Information for Participants and the Consent Form are in the Appendices, A1 and A2). The names of the participants have been changed in order to provide anonymity.

### **3.11 Selected methods for data gathering**

#### **3.11.1 The approach taken**

The considerations in identifying a data collection method have led to seeking a research design that does not in itself raise environmental issues, but provides the opportunity for them to be reported if they are of importance to the participant. Thus, a key feature of the data gathering structure was that it was built around clothes choice, purchase and use rather than around

environmental concerns. This is why the research is designed to understand people's identity and putting environmental/ethical factors in the context of clothes buying and use behaviour, and not putting environmental/ethical factors to the forefront. So, the first two activities in data gathering concentrate on consumer behaviour when purchasing clothes and consumer behaviour in maintaining their clothes. Sustainability was not raised until at the end of the third activity, the interview. The advantage of using the mixed methods was that sustainability could come up as an issue within the data gathering, however given the low awareness of sustainability and that the participants were not screened for any ethical/environmental positive attitudes, there was no certainty that these issues would arise. Therefore, the final section was on sustainable awareness and finished with the sustainable goals. As Bryson (2012) explains, the mixed methods can explain the gaps that are generated by the data. This was the case, as sustainable issues did not arise much during the activities however the two activities at the end established both the participants' low awareness and revealed their attitudes towards sustainability.

#### 3.11.2 Data Collection Methods

The three methods of data collection have been chosen to be followed in this sequence:



Figure 3.1 Data Collection Methods

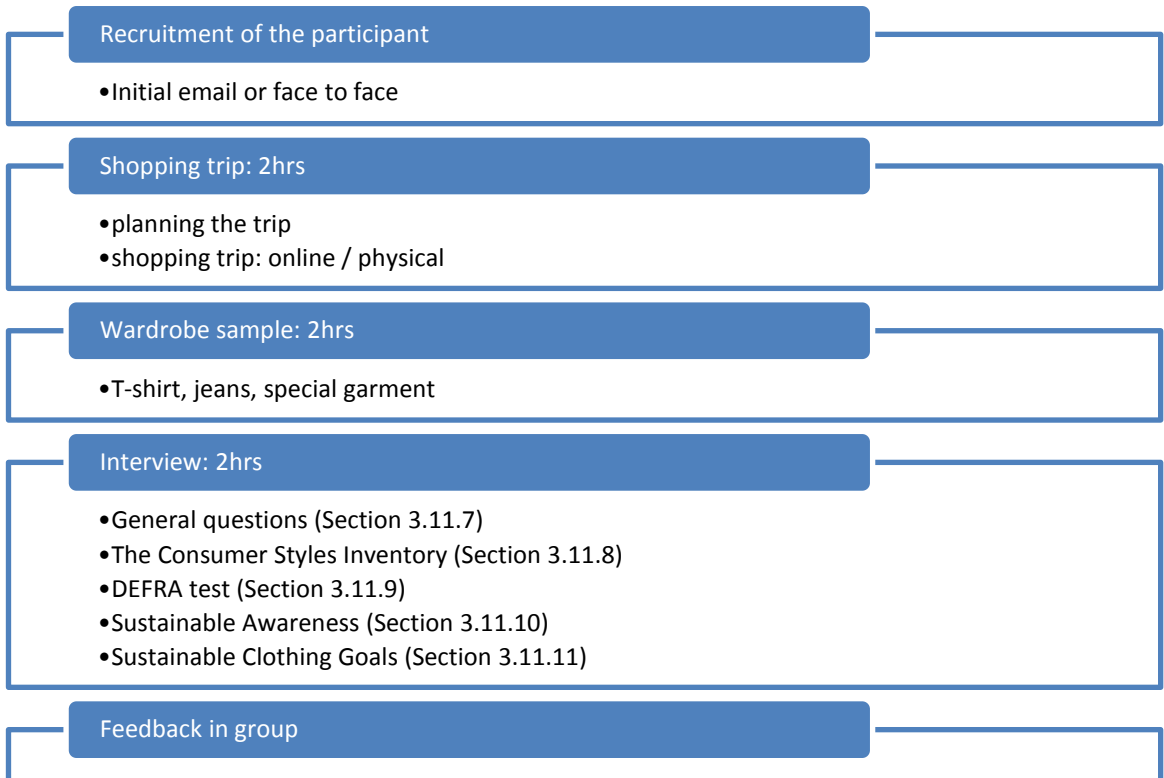


Figure 3.2 Stages of the data gathering process

#### 3.11.3 The Shopping Trip

There were two main purposes to the shopping trip. Firstly, this was to observe shopping behaviour as people acquire the information that influences their clothing choices during the activity of shopping itself, as well as from media or other influences (Fisher et al., 2008). Secondly, to establish what influences there are on the consumer and to gain a picture of how the participant choose what clothes to buy. Observational methods can be invaluable in discovering actual behaviour, in retail contexts. Regardless of a consumer's intentions or beliefs, there may be various barriers to these intentions being translated into action, and observational methods coupled with interviewing techniques can help to uncover these differences (Hiller, 2010).

By beginning with the shopping trip, participants' style was observed, how they shopped, what influenced them and so forth. However, observation alone cannot tell us why people do the things they do or what the particular activity means to them (Darlington and Scott, 2002). To



reduce intrusion and influence during the actual shopping trip, and also to record as much accurate information as possible, there was a pre-shop and post-shop discussion. Generally speaking this was fairly short, just to establish the priorities and motives in the shopping trip and any additional thoughts about the activity afterwards. During the shopping trips, observations were recorded and details given of which locations were frequented and what garments were looked at and tried on. Sometimes there were discussions with the participant about shopping issues which again were recorded. Observations or events of interest were asked about in the interview later.

#### 3.11.4 The Wardrobe Sample

(Note: The word “wardrobe” is used to describe the participant’s entire clothing collection rather than items kept in that particular piece of furniture).

The wardrobe sampling task demonstrated what clothes people keep in their wardrobe before moving on to the interview. Though this task would not be a wardrobe study as such, the wardrobe sample is inspired by the methods used by Woodward (2007), Klepp and Bjerk, (2014), and Skjold (2016). A similar technique was used by Miller who asked people stories about how objects in the living room and kitchen were obtained and came to be in the place they now occupy. This “goods audit” provided narratives not only of how people came to own these goods but the subsequent issues over how these goods should be consumed in the longer term (Miller, 2001). A context would have been provided in which they would discuss their choices and could provide rich data on the real position of environmental factors in their purchase and use decisions.

The purpose of this sample is to look at three items of clothing. As this research concentrates on the whole holistic picture of clothing consumption, a full wardrobe study could not take place. However, by choosing three items as a “sample” some insights could be gained. The three categories were: a T-shirt, a pair of jeans, and an item for a special occasion such as a suit. The T-shirt and jeans were chosen because it was believed that all participants would own these items,

given that huge numbers of T-shirts are bought every year (Allwood et al., 2006) and jeans are seen as ordinary, ubiquitous garments (Miller, 2015). Finally, the item for a special occasion, such as the suit, would be an opportunity firstly to see the variety of items chosen and, as it is likely to have been a more expensive item, how long the item has been kept and how often it is worn. These three items represent contrasting environmental, purchase and use patterns. So, by concentrating upon these, a good range of responses were obtained. Furthermore, by concentrating on three basic items this simplified the comparison of individuals' wardrobes and gained a clearer picture of clothing use. Being a wardrobe sample, the aim of this exercise was to gain an overview of the participant's wardrobe rather than using the wardrobe "method", as that was deemed to be too long given the shopping activity and interview.

Below is a table of questions which were asked of all participants. Whilst these questions were not always asked of each participant verbatim, the questions were pretty similar.

These questions focused on the environmental activities surrounding clothing which were identified by the Sustainable Clothing Goals. (section 2. 30.1)

- How do you wash your clothes?
- At what temperature?
- What washing powder do you use?
- How do you dry your clothes?
- Do you iron?
- How do you dispose of clothes?
- Do you repair/make clothes?

For the three items the following questions were asked which were based on Fisher et al., (2008):

- Where did you buy this?
- Can you remember how much it was?

- What is the material?
- How long have you had this item?
- Do you have any feelings/any story about it?

#### 3.11.5 Interviews

The interview formed the final part of the process. In this interview the researcher was able to probe more deeply into the participant's shopping habits, discuss the influences that there are on their clothes wearing behaviour, and their clothes' care and disposal. Using the knowledge gained from the previous two activities the interview was personalized and their attitudes and behaviour in acquiring, wearing, looking after and disposing of clothes were discussed in depth. However, the most important part of the interview was examining the barriers to sustainability. This was not explored until the very end of the interview, after finishing the more neutral activities. The reason why the three activities are in this order is to manage the data gathering so as to avoid, as far as possible, the participant responses being overly influenced by what they think the researcher wants to hear. Though there were some precise questions within this interview, these questions centred around central issues from the shopping activity in order to clarify certain actions, or motivations. As Professor Claudia Eckert was present, there was a more flexible approach allowing the discussion to flow in a natural way as advised by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007). Questions were on the whole, relatively open-ended allowing for further questions to clarify issues. The interviews were semi-structured as advised by Hiller (2010). All accounts were examined as social phenomena occurring in and shaped by particular contexts (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.120).

### 3.11.6 Variations in the process

Essentially the research was designed to have three activities, a shopping trip, wardrobe sample and an interview. However, during the pilot study there was an opportunity to have a second shopping trip. This shopping trip was in a very different area from the first and it was observed that the participant had a very similar shopping style, despite being in two contrasting shopping areas. After the first five case studies, this was reviewed and it was decided to discontinue the second trip as this was not producing any extra useful data. Consequently, for the second set of case studies, only one shopping trip was observed.

It was emphasized to participants that it was not necessary to buy any garments on a shopping trip as the aim of the exercise was to observe their shopping style, so some shopping trips were browsing rather than buying. As Professor Claudia Eckert attended the interviews, at the beginning it was explained what had happened with the previous activities.

### 3.11.7 The Interview Questions

The first part of the interview was semi-structured and this part concentrated on the first two activities. Points of interest that had come up were clarified and further questions sometimes asked depending on what the participant said. As discussed within the literature review there were various points of interest that the interview focused on. Firstly, on clarifying the shopping activities as a typical activity for participants:

- How typical was our shopping trip?
- How accurate would you say it was?
- Was there anything that was a little bit different?
- What are your shopping priorities? Style, colour, price, etc.?

This last question came from section 2.16.3 to ascertain what an individual's priorities when buying garments were.

Secondly, the questions focused on areas of potential influences for their clothing choices as discussed in Chapter 2. 10- 2. 16.3. This included the importance of fashion, changes over the years, identity and outside influences.

- How would you describe your clothing style? And has it changed over the years at all?
- Are you concerned about the image that you are projecting?
- Would you say that there are any outside influences on you, in the way that you dress? For example, magazines, friends etc.
- Does fashion influence you at all?

And finally, looking at potential influences on buying habits as discussed in section 2.18.

- Does emotion affect your clothes shopping at all? Do you shop to cheer yourself up or anything like that?
- If you had an unlimited budget, would your wardrobe look any different?

#### **3.11.8 The Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI)**

Within the second part of the interview there were two tests. The first was the Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI). The CSI measures eight characteristics of decision-making, a mental orientation characterizing a consumer's approach to making choices. In essence, it is a basic consumer personality, analogous to the concept of personality in psychology (Sproles and Kendall, 1986). This was chosen as the test to corroborate the shopping style of the participant but it also gave an insight into their personality. Further discussion of the Consumer Styles Inventory will be in Chapter 5 and in Chapter 8. A copy of this test is in the Appendix. (A5)

#### **3.11.9 The DEFRA Test**

The second test was the Defra test, which came from the Fisher et al., (2008) report, and this was used to classify the participants' pro-environmental attitudes. It was chosen to investigate whether pro-environmental attitudes did have any effect on behaviour. The Fisher et al., (2008) report seemed to indicate that there was a link between pro-environmental attitudes and

behaviour. However, from the discussion in section 2.22.5 it seemed to be more unclear whether there is a link between pro-environmental attitudes and clothing consumption. Therefore, this test was included to ascertain if there was a link or not. This will be discussed later in the Chapter 5. A copy of this test is in the Appendix. (A3 & A4)

#### 3.11.10 Sustainable Awareness

The third part of the interview concentrated on participants' awareness of the sustainable issues within the clothing industry. The reasoning behind the questions came from the main sustainable issues identified section 2.21, and secondly the questions about the information were inspired by section 2.22 as there was inclusive evidence about whether it made a difference or not to consumers. The questions are below:

- Do you know what sustainability means?
- Do you know what it means for clothing?
- Are you aware of any environmental issues?
- Water issues such as the Aral Sea?
- Are you aware of any issues such as chemicals in your clothing?
- Pesticides, used in cotton growing in the developing world?
- Waste issues?
- Are you aware of any ethical issues?
- What do you know about sweatshops?
- How did you hear of these issues?
- Is there a lack of information on these issues?
- Do you read newspapers at all?
- What newspaper do you read the most?
- Where did you find the information?
- If there was an issue that you have heard of, did you think the source was trustworthy?
- On these issues, do you think some brands or retailers are more trustworthy than others?
- Do retailers/brands have a responsibility to deal with these issues?
- Is there any one issue more important than another?
- Would these issues influence you at all in your clothes buying?

#### 3.11.11 Sustainable Clothing Goals

At the end, the Sustainable Clothing Goals were finally discussed.

1. Buy second-hand clothing where possible
2. What proportion of your wardrobe do you think is second-hand?
3. Buy fewer, more durable garments, i.e. ones that last longer?
4. Buy clothing that is more sustainable e.g. eco or ethical.
5. Categories of Sustainable Clothing.
6. Would you be willing to pay more for an eco/ethical fashion, e.g. paying £5 more for a T-shirt?
7. Hiring clothes?
8. Repair or adapt clothing to prolong its life.
9. Return/recycle it at the end of its life/no longer wanted.
10. Wash clothes at 30 degrees and use eco-friendly technologies.
11. Line-dry as much as possible?
12. Avoid ironing as much as possible?
13. Are you Aware of the Fibres that you are Buying?

#### **3.11.12 Preparation of the data**

All activities were recorded by a portable recorder and then the participants' responses were transcribed in full. The researcher's questions and responses were not transcribed in full purely due to a lot of these responses, generally very brief ones, not being relevant to the discussion. The transcripts were then checked through again for accuracy. A copy of Cara's interview is available in the Appendix (A7).

### **3.12 Analysis of the data**

#### **3.12.1 The Coding Steps**

The essential activities that are necessary in all qualitative data analysis are identified by Miles and Huberman (1994, pp. 10-12), who suggest that there are three concurrent flows of action, see figure below:



**Figure 3.3 Coding steps**

Firstly, data reduction was done at the same time as the coding. Not all the data produced was coded as it was deemed irrelevant and so omitted. For example, if there was a conversation that was not related in any way to the data gathering or had any relevance for the data, such as a contextual influence, then often the decision was taken not to transcribe the conversation due to the irrelevance of the data – for example discussions about family pets . As advised by Saldana (2014), long selections of interview transcript data were divided into shorter stanzas, manageable paragraph units for coding and analysis. This process was followed through for all the transcripts. The basic analytic strategy used in thematic analysis was *coding*, a process of closely inspecting text to look for recurrent themes, topics, or relationships, and marking similar passages with a code or label to categorize them for later retrieval and theory-building (Lapadat, 2010). Coding is a heuristic, a method of discovery of the meanings of individual sections of data (Saldana, 2014, p.8). Code segments can be used to describe information and develop themes. These codes can represent information that researchers expected to find before the study, represent surprising information that researchers did not expect to find and information that is conceptually interesting or unusual to researchers and potentially to participants and audiences (Cresswell, 2013 p.153). There were three types of coding used, in terms of categories of information (open coding), interconnecting the categories (axial coding) and building a story that connects that category (selective coding) and this was clustered into four major themes to write the narrative as advised by Cresswell (2013) in the discussion, Chapter Eight.

The coding began with a start list, focusing on the interview questions as advised by Lapadat, (2010). As seen earlier in section 3.11.7 there were some common questions that were asked of



each participant, so coding started with those categories. Examples included the question about “fashion” which became one of the open codes used in Chapter Six. This coding was done by hand, in order to understand what is happening within the data and what concepts are emerging (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). A sample coding scheme was developed starting with one interview, then it was extended to two interviews being coded using the same scheme. After the other two interviews were coded the original coding system was evaluated. Minor changes were made but essentially it stayed the same. After that all the interviews were coded under the same system. The coding system was evaluated after each interview had been coded and just a very few minor changes were made. After the interviews, the wardrobe samples were coded and finally the shopping trips.

The second stage involved putting the codes together into a template. The codes were then reformed into a hierarchy, as suggested by Gibbs (2007), and any duplication was combined into one code. The coding table can be viewed in The Appendix, A6. The data were then grouped into two categories, the quantitative data arising from the set questions and the qualitative data that arose organically from the rest of the data gathering. As advised by Yin (2009) the quantitative data were organized first. Therefore, the second category was data that grew organically from the three activities. Tables were organized for all the quantitative data, including the one for the sustainable fashion goals, so answers across the case studies could be easily compared. All the quantitative data was organized into Chapter 5. This included the following: the wardrobe sample, the Consumer Styles Inventory, the Pro-Environmental Attitudes test, sustainable awareness and the Sustainable Fashion Goals. The qualitative data was organized into two: Chapter 6, Clothing and the Individual, and Chapter 7, Shopping. Using thematic analysis as advised by Miles and Hubermann (1994), the codes were grouped into the various themes of the two chapters and analysed. The four major themes which Cresswell (2013) recommended to have as a basis were identified through the coding process and were then discussed further within Chapter 8.

An example of the coding is in the table below:

Codes	Emerging Themes	Examples of Sam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shopping Experience</li> <li>• Reduced</li> <li>• Style</li> </ul>	Preferred Location	<p>I like it because it's a really nice shopping experience and it's not like um, I don't know, I feel relaxed when I come here whereas if I'm going round town or Highcross or somewhere where there's lots of fashion, lots of fashion places, er I don't, I feel really quite pressurized and I'm not, and that's not how I like to shop normally. So I do like coming here. But it's for the whole experience, like having a cup to tea first. Then looking round generally um but also the clothes, I do tend to find clothes that are styles that I think will suit me, very often don't and obviously they are at a reduced price which you will see when we get down there.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need</li> <li>• Holiday</li> <li>• Requirements</li> </ul>	Rationale for shopping	<p>No, I've got all my holiday stuff out yesterday especially, and um, yeah, there's nothing specific, I have a white skirt that I have that is like a, um, like a, it's gathered at the waist so it's a very loose skirt to wear, it's actually, I quite like wearing it which is actually more of an off-white now instead of a white um so I might keep my eye open for something like that. Or I could probably do with some white trousers.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality</li> <li>• Reduced</li> <li>• Aesthetics</li> </ul>	Priorities for Selection	<p>I have to say, no I'm very pleased with that. Both things, I'm pleased, I like the weight of them as well because they are very very light-weight and so a) for packing and b) for wearing they're ideal. I think I'll get a lot of wear out of them actually but they do look as if they've very well made, look at that sewing... This was the more expensive, this one was £45, £45. Should have been £65.... Got about a third off...These were cheaper, these were um, £25 I think, yeah £24.99.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Restraint</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Former Selves</li> <li>• Social occasion</li> </ul>	<p>Attitude to Spending</p> <p>Purpose of Garment</p>	<p>Yeah, I'm much more. Yeah its funny actually because our disposable income is greater than it's ever been but I think now I'm even more, um, careful's the wrong word but I won't buy things unnecessarily because um like as I showed you I've got all these blimming evening gowns, that I'm never, they're going to have to go because I know I won't, the only reason, I've got loads of things in my wardrobe that I don't wear but I've hung onto them because there are a couple of them are things that Georgina (daughter) has borrowed in the past. Because of Peter (husband) being in the Police we had a lot of formal</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Partner</b></li> </ul>	Life Stage	occasions to go to but I can't, really there might be the odd occasion, I might keep one of them, just as a stand-by because that is something I don't like doing, I don't like buying something for the sake of one occasion. For me, it's got to be something that I'm going to be able to wear again. I wouldn't buy, to be honest if it was a one-off occasion I think would even consider hiring because I can't see the point of buying something and then it's just sitting in the wardrobe.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Not Buying</b></li> <li>• <b>Hiring</b></li> </ul>	Sustainable Behaviour	

Table 3.2 examples of coding from text

Within this example of coding, the open codes are seen emerging as important factors for participants. In the first example, the shopping experience, the reduced clothing and styles all added together to the emerging theme are seen in the middle column, the preferred location. All participants had their favourite location for shopping as discussed later in Chapter 7, for various reasons such as demonstrated. Two similar patterns can be seen within the next two examples with the open codes coming from similar factors identified in the text, so the open codes do not come specifically from this participant alone but from all. In the final example, the several themes are coming together to form the central argument of this thesis, the sustainable behaviour comes from various factors but not from sustainable awareness.

### 3.13 Validation

As recommended by Cresswell (2013) and Bryman (2012) validation of the data was carried out through focus groups, whereby I consulted participants on my preliminary conclusions, reporting back findings, to confirm or revise findings in light of their comments. Validation of data was concluded at the same time as the coding. With the Sustainable Fashion Goals, a table was made of all their answers to the same questions. In addition, validation of data was part of the focus groups. I did a validation exercise with two focus groups which confirmed the results.

#### 3.13.1 Focus groups

These took place after five case studies were completed. In the first group, four of the five participants came for an evening of discussion about the results. In the second group, only three

of the participants were able to come and discuss the results. The discussions in both groups did confirm the findings, as in they did not contradict anything that they had said or done during the activities. However, there was little new information and unfortunately three were unable to attend. Overall, some did not speak much, in both cases the discussion was dominated by one person, Ali in the first instance and Gisele in the second, so it was hard to balance the discussion. Within the first group, the discussion focused firstly around the low awareness of sustainability within clothing and how people do not think about the production of their clothes. For example:

*Kathy: People don't think of the history of their item of clothing before they come to own it. You might go to one of these sites that sell organic clothing, organic cotton for children. That seems to be the trendy thing, what is it?*

*Maria: Frugi? I personally never bought anything from them but people start with the purchase and then think right I'm buying my child an organic cotton shirt, and I'm going to wash it like this and I'm going to treat it like this but they're not going to really think about the history of the shirt. The other fact that it's organic cotton they don't think about where it came from, who made it, where the cotton grew, who picked it, it starts with the purchase so in terms of um, the ethics, that's what it is really. The starting point is the purchase. It doesn't go, it doesn't go any further than that.*

The other two major themes that were discussed were how clothes reflected aspects of themselves (which was discussed in Chapter 6) and the difficulties of drying clothing within the UK, particularly if you live in rented accommodation (discussed in Chapter 5). Within the second focus group, much of the discussion focused around how little they knew about sustainability within clothing. None of them had suspected that sustainability was part of the research agenda. As Gisela said, *"I felt that it had come from absolutely nowhere!"*

There were two reactions to this, firstly that generally they accepted that it was a good thing that the true purpose of the study had been kept quiet as they might have skewed their answers. This

vindicated the research design; by keeping sustainability at the end it did not bias the participants. The second reaction was that they did not know anything about sustainability. That they had thought of themselves as well-educated people yet it had not really impacted on them. There was a small discussion on how to raise awareness and finally they compared themselves with others that they knew who shopped a lot more than they did and had more clothing.

### 3.14 The Pilot Study

#### 3.14.1 Pilot study purpose

To develop and refine the method used in this research, a pilot study was undertaken. The thematic analysis used was developed later in the research and the pilot concentrated on data gathering and identifying the nature of the data generated.

For the pilot study I recruited a participant from my social circle who was a married woman in her early 30s with two school-age children. She is currently a full-time mother who is not in paid work. She is British, born in the UK, with an Indian background and has been married to a white British man for approximately 11 years.

#### 3.14.2 The Pilot Study Activities

**The Shopping Trip** – There were two shopping trips. The first was to the Asda and Sainsbury superstores in a large shopping centre on the outskirts of Leicester. The trip took approximately two and a half hours and observations were made using a voice recorder. The first trip was a planned activity; however, another shopping trip took place after the first to a different retail area. This was to the Belgrave Shopping Centre which is located to the north of Leicester and consists of predominately independently-owned Asian-style shops.

**Wardrobe Sample** – Three items were sampled as planned. These were as follows: a black T-shirt, blue cotton jeans and a 'chaniya choli'. The latter is a special garment that was tailor-made for her

in India. The items elicited different responses as to how she felt about them and built up a picture of how clothes were cared for and disposed of.

**Interview** – The interview took approximately two hours, in which questions were asked about the participant’s clothing consumption habits and her answers generally corroborated what had been established about her shopping style and care of clothing.

#### 3.14.3 Reflection on methods used in the pilot study

**Shopping Trip.** As planned, there were pre- and post-shopping trip interviews. This worked well as in addition to the observations made during the shopping there was much useful information elicited on her shopping style and priorities. The unplanned trip to a different retail area seemed to confirm she had a similar shopping style in both retail environments which would corroborate what she was saying in her interviews. Using a voice recorder for the observations was at first a little embarrassing but I overcame this by pretending it was a mobile phone. If she had used it, I think this would have disrupted her thought processes and would have distracted her.

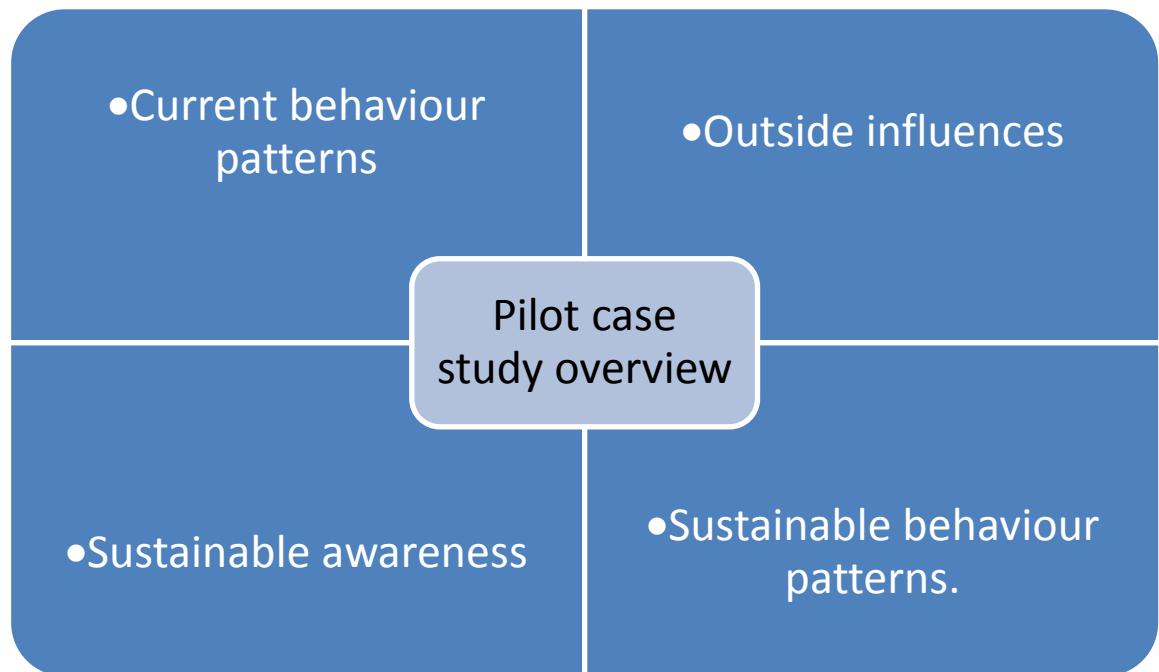
**Wardrobe Sample** – Although three items elicited three different responses there were very strong similarities between the T-shirt and the jeans, which was to be expected, given that they were chosen for being everyday items. I felt that as a result of the pilot study this was too narrow, however it was decided to keep to these items.

**Interview** – By spreading the questions throughout the whole process discrepancies could be observed as illustrated above. Sustainability was left to the last issue of the interview which confirmed it was an issue not previously considered. If it had been, it would have surfaced in the previous activities. I was unable to classify her as either a Cautious Participant or Stalled Starter according to the Defra Model.

### 3.15 Recording and Analysis of Interviews

The interviews were recorded, then transcribed later. All interviews were recorded in the participant's home which was quiet and there were no distractions leading to fairly accurate and considered answers. In terms of analysis, I read through all transcriptions, then picked out what I considered to be the most important points.

The Table 3.3 on the next page illustrates the main points identified in the pilot case study. These are divided into four main areas, see figure below:



**Table 3.3** Main areas of the pilot case studies

The reasoning behind the four main areas is to demonstrate both the shopping habits and the sustainable issues together so that a clear overall picture of the case study is obtained. From this main picture the various sections can then be broken down to make it easier for further analysis. Possible inconsistencies and contradictions are also flagged, for example what the participant said about Marks & Spencer. This is to see how it would be if contradictions were put together, though only having one case study at this stage is limiting but it gives an idea of an area of potential analysis.

Main categories of interest		
1. Current Behaviour patterns	a. Shopping Style	cheap and cheerful spontaneity Order of priorities – Price, colour, style Knows what she likes short focused trips
	b. Habits	Asda Sainsbury's Belgrave shopping centre
2. Outside Influences	takes no account of fashion doesn't read any magazines does feel social pressure – to be jazzy	
3. Sustainable Awareness	no awareness of any issues except labour source of information – TV programmes not aware of trusted sources of information – campaign groups	
4. Sustainable behaviour patterns	special item kept forever / cheap items downgraded to rags doesn't buy eco clothing – image problem does wash at 30-degrees Celcius – Marks & Spencers campaign	

Table 3.4 Four Main Categories of Interest

Contradictions	
Marks & Spencers	won't shop here despite location near Asda and Sainsbury's perceived to be for older women perception that quality in M&S has gone down

Table 3.5 Contradictions

Within these four main areas, see Table 3.4, are the five points of interest as identified by the second research question:

- 1. The participant's level of sustainable awareness.** Her awareness was very low, the only issue she really knew anything about was the exploitation of garment workers.
- 2. Ethical/eco clothing is not something she really considers when shopping.** The image associated is with a mutual acquaintance, someone who is seen as slightly on the fringes of society with more extreme views towards the environment such as being a vegan and refusing to have a car.
- 3. A participant's priorities when shopping.** As a full-time mother she does not see the need to have more expensive clothing. This was clearly discussed and observed in both shopping trips; the shops that were visited were ones that were known to have cheap clothing and she clearly favoured certain colours.



- 4. The role of information and what constitutes a trusted source** - This was discussed at length in the interview and campaign groups were seen as more trusted than the retailers. What suggestions are there for changes in consumer behaviour? She didn't really have any.

For this research it was very important that these five points were covered and the activities and discussions did indeed answer these questions. The pilot study confirmed that the research methods worked well and provided the data being sought for the main study.

### 3.16 Conclusions

Overall data gathering went very well, although there was a compromise in terms of participants where there was a bigger mixture of ages and cultural backgrounds than ideally I would have liked. However, the methods did work well; no participant was able to guess that sustainability was on the agenda and I was able to obtain the rich data that was required.

## 4 The Case Studies

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### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with the rationale for selection along with reflections on the methods used. Descriptions of the geographical locations and the time taken for the activities are also given. Before the summaries of the first five case studies, there is a table of their shopping trips showing where the participants went and what they bought. Then the same is given for the next five case studies. As discussed in Chapter Three, the analytical strategy followed the descriptive approach (Yin, 2003), whereby there is a description of the case studies. Cresswell (2013) also argues that the analysis of case studies starts with a detailed description of the case, along with the setting, followed by a few key issues so that the complexity of the case can be understood. The first function of a case study is to understand the case within its situation and then relate it to other cases (Stake, 2006). Therefore, in describing each case study, the same background information is given on each participant in terms of age, nationality, profession, age of children. Along with the background information are reflections on the participants. These reflections are based on participant observation, one of the key sources of information in a case study as described by Yin (2009). These summaries are the overall impressions gained during the activities. As described earlier within section 3.11.4 the format for the written case studies consisted of the composition of questions and answers from the formulated questions (Yin, 2003), in this case the Wardrobe Sampling Task. Whilst, as described in the methodology in Chapter 3, the other quantitative elements of this research – the Consumer Styles Inventory, the Defra test, Sustainable Awareness and Sustainable Consumer Goals – are all discussed in Chapter 7, the Wardrobe Sampling Task is described here. The reasoning for this is because it reveals much about the relationship that individuals have with their clothing, a relationship which then naturally affects their shopping habits. Additionally, as discussed within the literature review (2.25.2), the first research question is all about the major factors for people’s clothing habits. Starting with Wardrobe Sampling task

enabled the cross-case analysis themes to be identified and the chapter ends on these themes. These themes are then picked up and discussed within the following two chapters: Clothing and the Individual and Shopping.

### 4.2 Rationale for selection

As discussed already in the methodology participants came from my social networks, convenience sampling. The snowballing technique was used to find participants for the research as discussed in 3.9. However, on examination of some of my social activities, there was realization that there were some acquaintances that whilst they knew me to a certain degree, they were ignorant of my area of research as it had never been mentioned. The pilot study had been recruited in this manner: she was an acquaintance who was sufficiently uninformed about the sustainability angle of my research. Similarly, this was how a further three of the participants were recruited: Kathy (Participant Two), from a book group, a regular monthly meeting of like-minded individuals where books are discussed. Cara (Participant Five) from a regular exercise class, where she is the instructor, and Philomena (Participant Seven), from the local primary school where we are both members of the Governing Body. When I asked Kathy she readily agreed to participate and not only was a willing and able participant but she actively recruited others for me. She was able to recruit three other participants for me, and actively tried to recruit more. The first participant she recruited for me was Amy, (Participant One) then there was Maria, (Participant Three) and then Sasha (Participant Eight). Amy had met Kathy through a mother and toddler on-line group and through the same group Kathy had met Maria, (Participant Three), so all three knew each other. I did play my own part in recruiting Maria, as I met her in a café with Kathy by chance, though it was Kathy who introduced us and helped me to persuade her to participate. Xandra, (Participant Four) was totally unknown to me when we met and when she agreed to take part. I had met her through a church group for mothers which I was attending with the hope of finding a participant. Cara, (Participant Five), was recruited through a Christmas social event at the exercise class and was at first very enthusiastic about taking part. The sixth participant came through my pilot study,

Moira. Moira thought that her friend and neighbour Sam would be a suitable participant, so she introduced us. After Sam, there was a certain difficulty in recruiting participants. Kathy had introduced me to two of her other friends, both were willing, however did not take part for various reasons. I had previously asked all participants to find someone else to take part but unfortunately had no success. At this point, through a chance encounter, I spoke with Philomena and she became Participant Seven. Kathy then successfully recruited Sasha, Participant Eight, whom I had met very briefly before at a family event of Kathy's so we vaguely knew each other. Gisela (Participant Nine) and Jill (Participant Ten) were recruited through dinner at the house of a mutual friend.

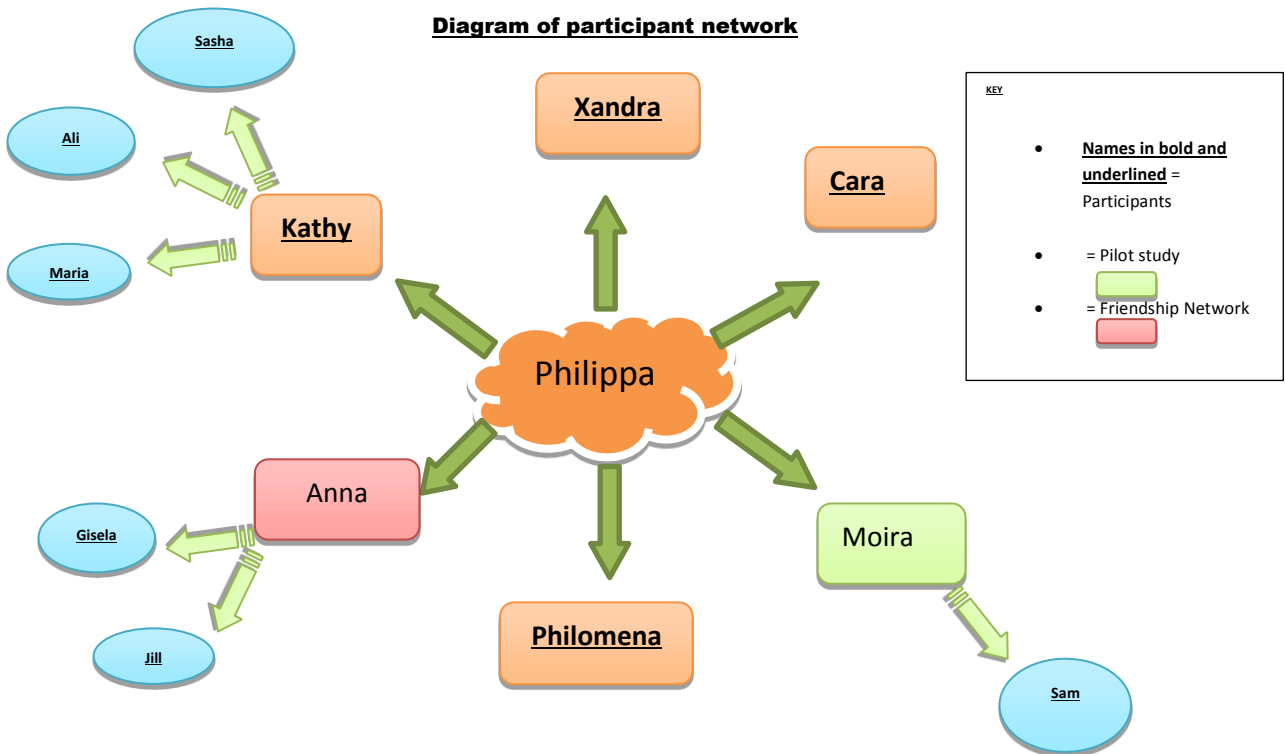


Figure 4.1 Diagram of participants' network

### 4.3 Reflections on the Participants

Within ethnographic research, there is a need to build rapport with participants for them to feel more comfortable and relaxed in the presence of the researcher. On my part I dressed normally, as I did not feel that I had to represent myself differently and worked hard at building rapport by discussing areas of common ground between us, principally about children. There were many subjects discussed around children ranging from illnesses, sleeping problems, schooling and extra-curricular activities. These discussions often led to what Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) would describe as unsolicited oral accounts about aspects of their clothing consumption. These oral accounts provided additional data about items of their clothing, their attitudes and habits which added to the rich picture gained of each participant. Though I had met all participants at least once before we started the activities, some participants I knew better than others. As the research methods used the ethnographic approach, the activities were an intensely personal experience, however during the first activity, the shopping trip, the experience embedded the ethnographic approach as rapport and trust was built with each participant during this trip. This was the most successful element of this method as overall the shopping trip did not produce much data and what the activity really established was a relationship of trust between the researcher and the participant. Overall, there were a number of reasons for the lack of data from the shopping activities. First, the primary method of data collection within this activity was participant observation, so within many of the transcripts there were descriptions from me on what activities were happening and comments repeated from the participants. The reasoning for repeating what they had said was because in the overwhelming majority of shops there was background noise, mostly loud music or other people talking nearby. Many of the comments from participants revolved around the clothing offered within stores and their reactions to the garments, sometimes positive or in many cases negative. During all shopping trips though there were short conversations, generally about shopping, which gave the researcher the opportunity to react to their comments, acting as a friend to enable the participant to be as relaxed as

possible and on my part to potentially elicit further information. Reflections on the shopping experience were included within the questions in the semi-structured interview. These questions were in part to corroborate the shopping activities and establish the normalcy and accuracy of them. Overall, the participants confirmed that in general the shopping activities had been normal, with the only difference being my presence. Observations from the shopping activities formed the basis of the questions, gently probing for further information such as the reasons why they disliked a particular shop or what style of clothing they preferred. The questions within the interview then not only produced further information but were also able to validate the data. The wardrobe sampling task focused on three items, the T-shirt, the pair of jeans and the special item. These methods worked well as the garments that the participants gave enabled comparisons to be made and for themes to begin to develop. Though I had asked if there were any special stories associated with the garments, some participants did not have any. The responses provided a contrasting view in regard to different garments, and for some to clothing in general. The themes that developed from the wardrobe sampling task formed the basis of the themes that are then developed further in the next two chapters.

### 4.4 Geography

The participants lived within roughly a fifteen-mile radius location-wise and geographically speaking the area was around south Leicester and two surrounding towns within Leicestershire. The two towns were semi-rural, prosperous areas, and the areas where the other participants lived did vary slightly from prosperous suburbs, to a more inner-city run-down area. However, the two main shopping centres were the same, the city centre of Leicester and Fosse Park, the out of town shopping centre. The two exceptions were Boundary Mills which was near Melton Mowbray, at least twenty miles away, and Market Harborough, a town, twelve miles south of Leicester. Not all shopping trips were physical ones, almost half were internet shopping trips and the sites varied widely from the mainstream stores to more specialized clothing retailers.

### 4.5 Time

Time taken during the activities varied widely depending on the participant. In terms of shopping, the shortest shopping trip lasted about forty minutes, the longest took several hours. This was because we had gone to a specific shopping centre and included a pre-shopping coffee stop and lunch. On average the shopping trips were about an hour to an hour and a half. The wardrobe sampling activity took about one hour or less, the longest being about an hour and a half whilst the shortest was about forty minutes. The interview lengths also varied, from between one and a half hours to over two and a half hours.

### 4.6 The Wardrobe Sampling Task

The wardrobe sampling task focused around three items of clothing: the T-shirt, a pair of jeans and a special item.

#### 4.6.1 The T-Shirt

UK consumers buy around eight T-shirts a year (Allwood et al., 2006). The T-shirt is today one of the most universally worn items of clothing worn by people of all social classes and ages. Therefore, this research made the assumption that every participant was likely to have one and this would enable a straight forward comparison between all the T-shirts. However, this caused difficulty for some participants as it became apparent that the definition of a T-shirt varied from individual to individual and a couple of participants thought that they did not actually possess such a garment. There was no definitive definition of a T-shirt within the Allwood report (Allwood et al., 2006), however there was a picture of a T-shirt, a garment with short sleeves and a round neck, so the definition was based on this picture. As a consequence, it was explained to each participant what attributes the garment should have and the participant selected a garment that they considered bore the closest resemblance to a T-shirt. The question about the T-shirt revolved around the style, how much it cost and the length of possession. In addition to the protocol questions each participant gave a personal story to their garment; T-shirts being both garments

that people can have emotional attachment to, but also overall low-cost items that people replace frequently.

#### 4.6.2 The Pair of Jeans

The pair of jeans was chosen because again it was believed that jeans would be a very popular item of clothing, as according to Miller and Woodward (2007), jeans have become the single most common form of everyday attire. The assumption was therefore made that everyone would have a pair of jeans which would make for easy comparison of answers.

Each participant had a different story about their pair of jeans, but with one participant not owning a pair, it was difficult to make comparative coding, so the discursive answers were analysed and merged together with the common themes from all three items in section 4.11.

#### 4.6.3 The Special Item

The participants were also asked to select a special item of clothing. This was clothing which had a special emotional meaning for them, and they could choose whatever garment they wanted.

### 4.7 The First Group

The first group of participants consisted of Ali, Kathy, Maria, Xandra and Cara. The activities took place over a time period of eleven months in total. Below in Table 4.1 is the list of when and where the activities took place. This is followed by Table 4.2 giving the location of shopping trips and what items were bought.

Participants	Location	Dates	Wardrobe Sample	Interview
Ali	Internet	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2013	13 <sup>th</sup> January	3 <sup>rd</sup> February 2014 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2014.
	City Centre	3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2013	2014	
Kathy	Internet	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2013	18 <sup>th</sup> January	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2014
	City Centre	4 <sup>th</sup> December 2013	2014	
	City Centre	27 <sup>th</sup> December 2013		
Maria	Internet	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2014	12 <sup>th</sup> May 2014
	Market Harborough	29 <sup>th</sup> March 2014		
Xandra	City Centre	16 <sup>th</sup> April 2014	11 <sup>th</sup> June 2014	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2014



	Internet	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2014		
<b>Cara</b>	Asda	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2014	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	26 <sup>th</sup> September 2014
	City Centre	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2014		

Table 4.1 Time and Place of the Activities

Participant	Location	Retailers
<b>Ali</b>	Internet	Urban Outfitters, Brand Alley, Pinterest, Net-A-Porter, Coggles, Unidays and ASOS.
	Highcross	John Lewis, Topshop, Zara, H & M, River Island, Next, New Look, Miss Selfridge and Debenhams.
	Items Bought	H & M: a polka dot blouse for £12.99. Debenhams: a black and red dress for £16.
<b>Kathy</b>	Internet	E-Bay
	Leicester City Centre	Sue Ryder-Vintage, Age UK, Oxfam, White Stuff, FatFace, La Senza and H & M.
	Items Bought	Two tops from Fat Face: A red top for £15 and a purple top for £18. H & M three t-shirts at £3.99 each, maroon, a blue v-neck and a plain grey one. A basic white top for £5.
<b>Maria</b>	Internet	H & M, Next and E-Bay
	Market Harborough	Joules, FatFace and White Stuff.
	Items Bought	White Stuff: a blue sweater and a top which came to £52. The sweater was later returned back to the shop.
<b>Xandra</b>	Leicester City Centre	Fenwicks, H & M, Zara, River Island, and New Look.
	Internet	Yoox, Gap, Ted Baker
	Items Bought	Fenwicks: A Sprite T-Shirt for £12. H & M: Two white tops and a pair of blue and white shorts for about £44.
<b>Cara</b>	Fosse Park	Asda
	Leicester City Centre	Discount store, Primark, H & M, Top Girl and Voodoo.
	Items Bought	Primark: Two long skirts, (pink and yellow), a vest top and a floaty top and some tights. About £45.

Table 4.2 Location of Shopping Trips and Items Bought

## 4.8 The Case Studies

### 4.8.1 Ali – Case Study

The participant is 26 years old and is of white British background who has grown up in Leicester and has lived there most of her life. Originally, she studied fashion, firstly at Leicester College and secondly at the London College of Fashion. Currently she is also an Open University student of sociology and is working two days a week as a Cover Supervisor at a secondary school, so she can combine working with her studies and her home life. She lives with her partner, who is of Asian Sikh background, and their toddler daughter in a rented ground floor flat.

#### 4.8.1.1 The T-Shirt

At first there was difficult finding a T-shirt as generally she did not wear them, preferring vest tops instead. Her choice was a scoop neck, both back and front, low, tight-fitting,  $\frac{3}{4}$  length sleeves to elbow with a polka dot pattern. She had bought this for £7.99 and had owned it for about two months.



Figure 4.2 Ali's Polka Dot top

### 4.8.1.2 The Pair of Jeans

These jeans are low-rise skinny and were bought about ten years ago and were originally black. She has worn them so often they are now grey. Ali cannot remember how much they were though she thinks she bought them from Topshop.



Figure 4.3 Ali's Jeans

### 4.8.1.3 The Special Item

She saw it originally in Birmingham, in Selfridges. The dress is from All Saints and she really wanted it but it was about £160 and she could not afford it although she just loved it. Luckily, she saw it again, this time in the sale and it had been reduced to about £40. She has had it now for about seven years and has worn it a number of times, including to her own engagement party and for a fancy-dress party. It still fits her and though she is not normally sentimental about her clothes, she will keep it even if it ends up in her daughter's dressing up box.



Figure 4.4 Ali's Special Item

### 4.8.1.4 Observations on Ali

Ali was clearly interested in clothes as demonstrated by the variety of sites that we visited, and over the activities I got a strong sense of her style, the types of dresses she preferred and her favourite colour, black. In both shopping activities there were many sites that were visited both on the internet and in the shopping centre, partly because of her strong sense of style– she knew what type of clothing she wanted – but also as she was a keen bargain hunter. She preferred internet shopping, as shopping generally was difficult with a toddler, using specific sites such as Pinterest where not only could she keep an eye on garments that she liked and might buy in the future, but also for when they would be reduced.

### 4.8.2 Kathy – Case Study

**The Person.** The participant has an Israeli/American background and has lived in both countries for substantial periods of time and more recently has lived in the UK for approximately fourteen years. She is 41 and has an Honours degree in English Literature from the University of Jerusalem and a Master's Degree in Geography from the University of Leicester. She described herself once as not having a career but rather as having jobs. She works part-time in a shop which sells vegan/vegetarian food, and she also runs a small cake business from home supplying various delicatessens/cafes, a business she has started herself. She is divorced and has three sons aged

12, 10 and 4 who attend local schools, and her close family live in America. Apart from being a passionate vegan she has an active interest in environmental issues, and does not drive a car, instead she cycles everywhere. She is also a firm believer in Fair-Trade and will buy Fair-Trade food products when she can. She lives in a rented three-bedroomed Victorian terraced house, though it is a temporary measure as she hopes to buy another house within the next year. She has been at home for some years because she has prioritized looking after her three children, the youngest only just starting at school. She is a trained breast-feeding counsellor and runs a voluntary group collecting baby clothes for vulnerable parents

### 4.8.2.1 The T-Shirt

This T-shirt, with round neck and short-sleeves, she bought for about £5 she thinks in about 2007. This T-shirt was a Fair-Trade one from Marks and Spencer; she sometimes buys these though she feels the quality is not as good as it used to be. She had a sad story attached to this T-shirt: she was wearing this item when she had a late miscarriage; the skirt she was also wearing on that occasion she gave away but kept the T-shirt as it was a useful garment and when showing wear could be worn in lieu of pyjamas.



Figure 4.5 Kathy's T-Shirt

### 4.8.2.2 The Pair of Jeans

Kathy likes the low-rise boot cut style of jeans. Her current pair cost about £3 or £4 plus shipping from E-Bay and she has owned this particular pair for about three or four weeks.



Figure 4.6 Kathy's Jeans

### 4.8.2.3 Special Item

Her special item was a black velvet dress bought when she was shopping with a favourite aunt, the only member of the family she would go shopping with as her aunt made the expedition fun. She bought it with her aunt from a store in America for about \$10 reduced from \$60 about fifteen years ago, the Aunt persuading her to buy it as it would last for about twenty years. On average she wears it about once every three or four years for special occasions (however it was apparently too “dressy” for her eldest son’s Bar Mitzvah). She likes the style and will keep it for as long as it fits.



**Figure 4.7** Kathy's Special Item

### 4.8.2.4 Observations on Kathy

The first shopping trip was totally dominated by the search for a pair of jeans. She does not buy them new but generally from internet sites such as E-Bay, as she knows exactly what type of jeans she is looking for, namely two brands either Levi or Gap. She wears jeans most of the time as they are convenient for all aspects of her life including work, home-life and baking. In shopping with her in the sales looking at other garments, it became apparent that there was a certain style that she favoured for tops, the empire-style line in principally two colours, grey and purple. She was very focused on what she felt her wardrobe “needs”, namely items that she felt she would wear regularly, and her main spending sprees were in the end of year sales.

### 4.8.3 Maria – Case Study

The participant is 35 years old, and was recruited to this study via a previous participant in the same mother and toddler group. She is American and has lived most of her life in California, though she lived for a short time in France when she was a young adult. She moved to the area with her husband for work a couple of years ago. Her husband works for an international company, and she does not know how long they will be living in the UK. She went to university in the USA and trained as a French teacher. She was a teacher in American High Schools for several

years and currently she is not in paid work, and is full-time at home with her toddler son, though she had a small temporary job teaching business French for a few weeks. She is very keen that her son grows up trilingual, speaking English, French and Spanish (her husband is a fluent Spanish speaker). She was also hoping to have another child within the next year or so. (She later had a baby daughter). Her husband is a professional engineer and so she does not have to seek paid work.

### 4.8.3.1 The T-Shirt

Her T-shirt had a round neck and short sleeves with flowers and a pattern on it. She has owned it for about two years. She bought it from a second-hand shop that she likes in the USA, where she paid \$10 for this item; it would have cost about \$30-35 had it been new.



Figure 4.8 Maria's T-Shirt

### 4.8.3.2 The Pair of Jeans

In the same second-hand shop where she bought her T-shirt and exactly at the same time Maria bought her pair of jeans (two years ago). They are a designer brand and had cost her about \$20-30 they would have retailed new at \$200.





**Figure 4.9** Maria's Jeans

### 4.8.3.3 Special item

The wrap dress that she bought on her honeymoon, about seven years ago was from a designer shop that normally she would not buy things from. The designer was Nicole Miller and it was a good deal, maybe \$300 or \$400 she thinks, and her husband bought a man's dress-shirt from the same shop which is the same sort of colour scheme. She has worn it to her ten-year high school reunion and to a couple of weddings. It is 100% silk but it is quite a bold pattern for her and she finds it hard to find an undergarment that works, so she cannot wear a standard bra underneath it. She wore a Nicole Miller gown for her legal wedding (she had two weddings), so the association with her weddings and her honeymoon all contribute to her liking this dress.



**Figure 4.10** Maria's Special Item

### 4.8.3.4 Observations on Maria

Maria's shopping was dominated by the need to find tops that were suitable for breast-feeding. She was also very ambivalent about shopping, not familiar with the UK retailers and unwilling to spend money. She selected a few items in the first shopping trip and wanted her husband's approval before she bought anything and in fact she did not buy any items. In the second shopping trip, she bought two items and returned one, which is a typical pattern for her. Though her current style of clothing was dominated by the practical element, she had a large wardrobe of clothing that she will wear again, some more formal clothing for when she returned to work and other styles including what she called the "mod" style.

### 4.8.4 Xandra – Case Study

She is in her thirties from Colombia and her husband is British and works in Leicester, I believe part-time, for a governmental agency that provides training/jobs for the unemployed. She had previously studied Marketing and Advertising in Colombia and consequently worked as a Marketing Manager for many years. Currently the participant is a mother at home with two boys, one is at school, the other is a toddler. However, she also runs a coffee importing business from home, importing Colombian coffee into the UK and selling it to retailers and both she and her

husband work in her coffee import business. She explained that though she and her husband originally lived together in Colombia when they first married, they moved to England because they thought they would have a better life. She is planning to spend more time on her business once her youngest has started school.

### 4.8.4.1 The T-Shirt

Her T-shirt was more of a top than a T-shirt. It was white with embroidery on it which she bought for £12. It was a T-shirt that had been bought on the first shopping trip and she felt very pleased with it as she had bought it specifically for her summer holiday.



Figure 4.11 Xandra's T-Shirt

### 4.8.4.2 The Pair of Jeans

Xandra has owned this pair of jeans for about two years. They are low-waisted, skinny style and they had cost her about £38-40.



**Figure 4.12** Xandra's Jeans

### 4.8.4.3 Special item

Her special item was her favourite dress which she loves and which she bought in a very nice boutique. She thinks it cost about \$ 110 and she bought it thirteen years ago. The dress was bought for a religious confirmation, as everyone was very elegantly dressed, so she wanted something very special. It makes her feel very well dressed and she has since worn the dress to a couple of weddings; she does not mind that she has worn the dress twice. Unfortunately, it is too small now, but she is determined that one day she will fit back into it. The dress label is Maria Bonita and there is a long scarf that goes with the dress.



**Figure 4.13 Xandra's Special Item**

### 4.8.4.4 Observations on Xandra

On the first shopping trip there were definite brands and retailers that she liked, mainly because she felt they offered her the styles that she prefers. She likes to look feminine and glamorous and has a self-imposed dress code for her appearance. On the second shopping trip she did not buy anything at all, she was reluctant to participate in this activity as she did not “need” any items for her wardrobe. She does not have a lot of wardrobe space for all her clothing so she limits her purchases, partly because of this and also due to financial reasons she has to really “need” an item before she buys one.

### 4.8.5 Cara – Case Study

The participant is in her early thirties. She was introduced through a friend, who had introduced me to her exercise class that she runs on a Friday. I have known her for some years as my exercise

instructor but our acquaintance was fairly casual. Her background is Afro-Caribbean and she was born and brought up in Leicester. She studied Sociology at the Royal Holloway College in London and has also studied for a Master's degree in Diversity and Inclusion, I believe from the University of Central Lancashire. One of her previous job roles was that of a Diversity Officer. She is a single parent with two children, one is at primary school and the other at secondary school, and from the little information that she had given me it seems that she has brought them up very much single-handedly. She is working part-time with a charity helping troubled families and wishes to build up her specialized exercise classes in her spare time. She is a keen church-goer and takes an active interest in health and fitness.

### 4.8.5.1 The T-Shirt

Cara did not have a T-shirt, instead she prefers vest tops; this is a favourite one of hers with leopard-skin print. This item cost about £20 and she has owned it for about two years.



Figure 4.14 Cara's T-Shirt

### 4.8.5.2 The Pair of Jeans

Again, Cara did not have a pair of jeans as she did not like them as she felt that they were not cut out for her body shape. Instead she prefers treggings; she has owned this pair for about two years and they cost about £18.



Figure 4.15 Cara's Treggings

### 4.8.5.3 Special Item

She saw this item in a little designer shop that she visited with a friend of hers when she was about 21 or 22. They were shopping in Liverpool where her friend lived and she saw this long evening gown with a low back. It was really expensive, she thinks it cost about two hundred and twenty pounds. The dress had no labels on it and she does not know what material it is made from. We discussed it and thought it was a very thin knitted jersey-type material. She tries to wear it once a year, to find an occasion where she can wear it as she loves the dress. She loves the dress so much that she said she might get buried in it. She thinks it is old but does not care about that, she is more pleased that every year she takes it out and wears it and is still able to fit into it.



Figure 4.16 Cara's Special Item

#### 4.8.5.4 Observations on Cara

Overall her main clothes shopping takes place at George at Asda so she is able to buy items when she does her food shopping. This is convenient and she likes the clothing there. She has a strong sense of her own style, really liking leopard-skin print, bright colours, skirts, dresses and tight, short jackets. Financially she is restricted, and all the clothing retailers she prefers are at the cheaper end of the market.

### 4.9 The Second Group

The second group of participants consisted of Sam, Philomena, Sasha, Gisela and Jill. Data gathering from this group took place over seven months. In Table 4.3 below are the dates of the activities and the location of the shopping trips. In Table 4.4 below are the locations visited for shopping and the items bought.

Participant	Location	Date	Wardrobe Sample	Interview
Sam	Boundary Mills	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2015	13 <sup>th</sup> April 2015
Philomena	Fosse Park	11 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	11 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	29 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
Sasha	City Centre	14 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2015



<b>Gisela</b>	Internet	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2015
<b>Jill</b>	Internet	6 <sup>th</sup> July 2015	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2015	17 <sup>th</sup> September 2015

Table 4.3 The Dates of Activities and Shopping Locations

<b>Sam</b>	Boundary Mills	Boundary Mills.
	Items Bought	A white skirt from Steilman for £45 and some white trousers from Bassini for £24.99
<b>Philomena</b>	Fosse Park	Next, Wallis, Dorothy Perkins, Monsoon and River Island
	Items Bought	Next: Two white tops for £32
<b>Sasha</b>	Leicester City Centre	Marks & Spencer, H & M, Top Girl, TK Maxx, Primark
	Items Bought	H & M: An olive-green jumper for £7.99 TopGirl: Pair of gold gloves
<b>Gisela</b>	Internet	Hobbs, Marks & Spencer, East, Phase Eight, 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Foxy, Lindebopp and Bettylicious.
	Items Bought	Bettylicious: A swimming costume for £65.
<b>Jill</b>	Internet	Next, Marks & Spencer, Long Tall Sally and Joules.
	Items Bought	Ordered two dresses and a beach wrap from Joules and a top from Marks & Spencer. She sent back three items as they did not fit, keeping the top, which cost about £32

Table 4.4 Table of Items Bought

#### 4.9.1 Sam – Case Study

The participant is in her late sixties and retired. I had met the participant a couple of times before the research, at my friend's house. The participant lives with her husband and both are white British who have lived and worked in Leicester for many years. The participant's husband is retired, and previously had a senior managerial role within the Police Force. They have two grown up children who are live in different parts of the country. Currently her husband's elderly aunt lives with them, who has mild dementia and they wanted to look after her, though it was made clear to me that she required a lot of care and that this resulted in the participant not having as much free time as she would have liked. The participant studied occupational therapy and worked as an occupational therapist in the health service for many years working her way up through management until she retired in 2009. She then worked as a self-employed gardener for six years before stopping work, though not entirely. She now acts as a part-time trader for Phoenix, selling

cards and other stationary. Interestingly she was attracted to work for Phoenix in part because it was a small family company with ethical standards. She also likes the Fairtrade brand and does try and choose Fairtrade items when food shopping. She was clearly enjoying her retirement despite the responsibility of caring for the aunt.

### 4.9.1.1 The T-Shirt

She bought this T-shirt, with v-neck and short sleeves about three years ago in a sale. She does not like buying anything at full price and bought this T-shirt for about £10.



Figure 4.17 Sam's T-Shirt

### 4.9.1.2 The Pair of Jeans

These are her favourite brand of jeans, Michele's Magic Jeans, which she bought recently for £75, reduced from £100.



Figure 4.18 Sam's Jeans

### 4.9.1.3 Special Item

The special item was a black and white suit from Jaeger. This item had been bought especially for her to wear at her daughter's wedding and she had bought it at Boundary Mills about six years ago. She absolutely loves this outfit and even though her husband has since said that he does not like it on her and her daughter has since divorced, it does not seem to diminish what she feels about this outfit. She says it is really comfortable, she feels very smart and womanly wearing it. She has worn it again for another wedding but apart from that occasion she will probably never wear it again unless there was a suitable occasion. She had given herself a £300 budget for her entire outfit for the wedding which she achieved, the suit costing about £130. The rest of the outfit, hat, handbag and shoes were bought from John Lewis. She did not want to spend any more than £300 because, despite the occasion, she would not be wearing it very often. The material is 79% cotton and 21% silk and dry-clean only. She had bought the suit with a friend who has really good dress sense, as she feels she is hopeless about what suits her and what does not. The suit was nearly the last item she tried on after possibly fifty items. The other item with it she bought for her son's wedding, again from Boundary Mills, this time for £70, but this she does not like as

much partly because the item does not fit as well and partly due to the fact it is 100% polyester and she prefers natural fibres in clothes, however she does like the colour.



**Figure 4.19** Sam's Special Items

### 4.9.1.4 Observations on Sam

Sam's shopping trip was a day trip to a particular retailer; she likes this store as firstly it stocks discounted clothing, particularly some of her favourite brands, and also for the experience, the relaxed atmosphere and because it has a café for refreshment breaks. Her favourite brands tend to be German as she feels they are aimed at the older woman. She likes to wear a particular brand of jeans as they are extremely comfortable and practical for her retirement, she wears them until they have worn out then will buy an exact replacement.

### 4.9.2 Philomena – Case Study

The participant is in her forties, contacted through the local primary school where we are both members of the school's governing body. We have known each other for a number of years, having met and worked together on various school occasions, though we knew little about each other's personal lives and consequently the participant did not know about my research. The participant is white British and has lived in the local area all her life, her mother worked for many years at the same primary school where we are governors. Previously she was a PA for many years in a local accountancy firm but now is a stay at home mother with a small home business baking cakes for special occasions, a business she had developed from a hobby. Philomena had been a single mother for many years with a child who is now in her early twenties before she married and had two further children who are six and eight. Her husband works for an electronics firm and earns enough for her to decide to stay at home. She does not have the income that she used to but she is clearly enjoying her life as a full-time mother, making four cakes a week on average, and her voluntary activity at the primary school.

#### 4.9.2.1 The T-Shirt

Philomena struggled to find a T-shirt explaining that she did not really wear the garment. Consequently, her T-shirt is more of a top than a T-shirt. This grey garment cost £2 and she has owned it for about a year. She bought it in the Next staff shop where her eldest daughter works.



**Figure 4.20** Philomena's T-Shirt

### 4.9.2.2 The Pair of Jeans

Philomena bought this pair of jeans on impulse. She was passing a shop in town when she saw these jeans in the window. She went into the shop and tried them on, liked them so bought them. They cost £65 and she has owned them for two years. She did not know how to describe their style.



**Figure 4.21** Philomena's Jeans

### 4.9.2.3 Special Item

The participant actually struggled at first to think of a special item, but when looking through her wardrobe, saw this and remembered a funny incident she will always associate with this dress. She bought the item about two years ago, for a night out and it was from the Next staff shop. She cannot remember how much she paid for it, but dresses in the shop tend to be priced at around £15–£20, so she thinks it would have been no more than £20. The Next staff shop has discounts of up to 75% so she thinks the original price probably would have been between £80–£100. The good price was definitely part of the attraction. The dress is blue with sparkly bits and is 100% polyester fabric. It was purchased for a night out with some friends and she was rather drunk on this particular evening and next morning woke up with a black eye which she could not remember how she acquired. After talking to her friends, she thinks she may have accidentally bumped herself in the taxi coming home. Her husband and her friends found the incident hilarious; we both had a laugh about it. She will wear this dress again, probably in the summer but did not seem to attach any particular emotions to this dress and did not specify how long she would keep it.



Figure 4.22 Philomena's Special Item

### 4.9.2.4 Observations on Philomena

She was a very visual shopper who had no real plan of what she wanted to buy; she was deliberately like that so that she could not be disappointed. She explained that if she planned

what garment she wanted to buy then she would not be able to find it. Consequently, she was an impulsive shopper who went to the shops and bought something that caught her eye and this is exactly what happened in the shopping activity. She saw an item, liked it and bought it, then passing a shop window, liked a garment better so bought that. In contrast to some of the other participants she gave no overall impression of any particular clothing style.

### 4.9.3 Sasha – Case Study

The participant was introduced via a previous participant in this research, who thought this person had a most interesting wardrobe so she persuaded her to take part in this research project. These two participants know each other through the local primary school where their children are friends. She is in her early to mid-forties and had studied at university in Leicester, staying on in the city, and so has lived there for about twenty years. She used to work as a French teacher in the local secondary schools but gave it up when she had a stroke and has not worked full-time since. She gave me the impression that she has health issues but did not specify what they were. Currently she is looking for office jobs and works part-time as a mystery shopper and a freelance writer. About once a month she takes part in a burlesque dance show so she has a number of garments for this. She also has five children, been married three times, and has recently got engaged for the fourth time to her live-in partner who is a chef. Her eldest child is nearly an adult and the youngest has just started primary school. There was one child, a teenage boy that she mentioned frequently as she described him as a “bit of a clothes horse”.

#### 4.9.3.1 The T-Shirt

This T-shirt had a round neck and short sleeves and featured The Cure. She bought it in 1985 and could not remember how much it cost. She had wanted to go to their concert but her mother did not let her so she bought this T-shirt instead. She has had offers from other people to buy it from her but she wants to keep it for a long time.





Figure 4.23 Sasha's T-Shirt

### 4.9.3.2 The Pair of Jeans

Sasha had bought this particular pair of jeans a few months ago. She had bought them from a website where every garment is £5. She seemed quite happy with them even though on one of the first occasions she wore them, they had got wet and the dye had run.



Figure 4.24 Sasha's Jeans

### 4.9.3.3 Special Item

She chose a dress as her special item. This had been bought on the internet from Mango. This is slightly unusual because she does not often go in their shop but every now and then she looks on their website and they had a sale on. She is not sure when she got it but probably about 2012, and she thinks it was between twenty and thirty pounds. She does not know what the material is but she thinks it is a kind of knitted jersey. The material is quite heavy and the dress is lined. She thinks it is possibly a mixture of material including viscose. She met her current partner wearing this dress on their first date so there is a happy memory associated with the dress. She has also worn it for another special occasion, an expensive meal out for her son's fourteenth birthday. The dress is very much the style that she favours; she prefers dresses as they are just one item of clothing so the top and bottom are already matching.



Figure 4.25 Sasha's Special Item

### 4.9.3.4 Observations on Sasha

Of all the participants, Sasha was the one who seemed to be in no hurry. She seems to like shopping, and mentioned that she liked looking in shop windows, even in shops that she could not frequent as they are too expensive for her. Her favourite shops were either the cheaper retailers, charity shops or an internet website where every garment was £5. Yet she had a very varied wardrobe, reflecting her “multiple selves”, with many different garments for different occasions and particularly corsets for burlesque dancing, a favourite activity of hers.

### 4.9.4 Gisela – Case Study

The participant was contacted through a mutual friend linked to a mother and toddler group. The participant is in her fifties, has one child and has lived in Leicester for many years. She is of white British/German background, her father was British and her mother is German. Growing up she had dirndl dresses from her relatives in Germany and she believes that this influenced her dress style as an adult. She has a degree in geography and for a few years she worked at Marks & Spencer, an experience that she referred to a few times during the activities. She has worked for many years in Human Resources and works at the local university as a Change Consultant. She is married to a driving instructor, they own their own home and her child is at primary school.

### 4.9.4.1 The T-Shirt

This was a round neck with short sleeves, white/blue with red detail. She has only owned it for a few weeks and had bought it on impulse in Sainsburys as it was a reduced item, costing only £3.



Figure 4.26 Gisela 's T-Shirt

### 4.9.4.2 The Pair of Jeans

The pair of jeans Gisela owned were high-waisted 1950s style. After noticing a similar pair at a themed event, the owner had told her where they had bought them so she went to the specialist website, found these jeans and had bought them for £40. She had owned them for about three years.



Figure 4.27 Gisela's Jeans

### 4.9.4.3 Special item

The special item that she chose was the impulse dress that she had bought recently. She was at her local shops and passing by a dress shop when she saw this dress on the model, and although it looked like a size ten, she went in because she thought they might have a bigger size. She saw the dress and thought it really looked nice. She explained that the dress was home sewn, that you could see that it was home sewn but she knew that the lady who ran the shop made many of the dresses. Gisela showed me a fault with the dress that the actual waistline was not quite lined up and explained that had she made such a mistake when making a dress, her sewing teacher would have made her rectify it. But as a casual observer would not see this, Gisela felt that it did not really matter. She had bought the dress for £65, which she thought was cheap for a dress, and she thought she would really enjoy wearing the colours. There was another dress at the shop that was very similar which had black and white checks but she did not like it at all, she was more attracted by the colours and the piping on this dress. She has since worn the dress to a wedding, with American tan tights and some Fly-London wedges that she likes to wear which are slightly chunky so giving her a slightly vintage look. She did not know what material it was, it did not say, but she showed me how the material was quite stretchy which she did not like at first but has since changed her mind.



**Figure 4.28** Gisela's Special Item

### 4.9.4.4 Observations on Gisela

Gisela did not like shopping but wanted to look for a vintage-style swimming costume so, given that she had a purpose, consented to a shopping trip. She much preferred the internet as she had a few favourite sites that she liked and she really disliked going into town. On the rare occasions that she did go clothes shopping she liked the charity shops in the nearby suburb. Her clothing style was quite mixed but overall, she liked vintage style clothing, particularly the 1940s and 1950s as she liked going to themed events that featured these periods. She had a lot of sewing skills and this used to be a favourite hobby of hers so she could talk quite competently about clothes-making and materials.

### 4.9.5 Jill – Case Study

The participant is in her early forties, is married with two children, one who has been at primary school for some years, the other child is just about to start school in the autumn. She is a full-time mother and is clearly enjoying it though she plans to return to work in the future. She has a

degree in Social Science from the University of Nottingham and has also got a Marketing Diploma. She previously worked as an Exams Officer in a college until the arrival of her children. Though she would quite like to go back to work, she does not want to go back to her previous profession but would like to do something different.

### 4.9.5.1 The T-Shirt

Jill did not have a T-shirt, instead she offered a blue top with lace trimmings. She does not wear T-shirts so she had no other garment to offer. She has owned this garment for about a year and it cost £10.



Figure 4.29 Jill's T-Shirt

### 4.9.5.2 The Pair of Jeans

Jill has had this pair of jeans for at least ten years. She cannot remember where she bought them but thinks she paid about £30 for them. She calls them her gardening jeans as they are so worn they are only fit for jobs around the house. Her friends laugh at them and try to persuade her to throw them away. However, she does not want to throw them away as they are so comfortable, they have moulded themselves to her shape.



Figure 4.30 Jill's Jeans

### 4.9.5.3 Special Item

The special item was a dress bought especially for the participant's fortieth birthday celebrations. She calls it her happy dress as it is a nice bright red, described as a cherry red rather than a pillar box red. She finds it easy to wear, not too frilly or fussy with a nice bit of detail on the dress with the lacy bits. She bought it in John Lewis, and is a brand she is not familiar with, Somerset by Alice Temperley. She bought it in the sale for about £60, she thinks it was reduced from £110, and she feels she possibly would not have paid full price for this dress. On reflection she might have done because when she tried it on, it fitted really nicely and she liked that. She is slim and the skirt gave her a bit of a flare at the bottom which she feels gave her a bit of shape. She had a lovely fortieth birthday celebration and so there are very nice memories associated with the dress. She thinks she will keep it forever; she tends to keep dresses that she likes whereas other items she does not like as much do not tend to last very long before she gets rid of them. Although she plans to hang onto this dress, she may pass it onto her 14-year-old niece instead. She has sons so when her



niece visits, she says they tend to do what she described as female activities together, such as shopping. The niece has tried the dress on and has liked it but it does not fit her yet.



**Figure 4.31** Jill's Special Item

### 4.9.5.4 Observations on Jill

Jill's shopping habits were dominated by her size, she is six-foot tall so struggles sometimes to find clothes that fit. Although she has her favourite retailers, she has no loyalty to any of them and feels that there is a gap in the market for women her age. She struggles with shopping as she is not quite sure of what styles suit her and so sometimes needs some help. She also cannot find what she is looking for and is easily distracted. She brought up the subject of exploited workers in the garment industries during the wardrobe sample as she feels clothing is so cheap that the workers cannot be paid a fair wage.

## 4.10 Themes Emerging from All Three Items

For all three garments, despite the variety, a number of common themes started to emerge which are discussed below. Some of these themes will be explored in more detail in the thematic analysis within the next chapter.

### 4.10.1 Ambiguity in the Terms

Whilst the terms 'T-shirt' and 'jeans' seemed unambiguous at the out-set of the research, the terms proved problematic for some of the participants, resulting in some varying definitions of

both jeans and T-shirt. The term 'T-shirt' was used to refer to different garments which did resemble each other to a degree and which were made from cotton fabric. 'Jeans' has been used both to describe a type of fabric and a type of garment; there was less variation within this definition than with the T-shirt. The special items ranged from floor-length evening gowns, to smart dresses and simple dresses, which were generally precious to their owners.

### 4.10.2 Not Possessing the Requested Garment

Some participants did not possess a T-shirt as they did not like the garment, they preferred vest tops, or thought T-shirts were too fitted or too plain. Consequently, they provided a top with the closest resemblance to one. However, they all did possess a top which could be classified as a T-shirt albeit a very wide-ranging definition of one. In terms of the jeans, every participant owned a pair except for Cara. She does not wear jeans at all as they are not "comfortable" for her. She has problems with sizing and fit and she feels that jeans are not designed for an Afro-Caribbean body, so she prefers wearing leggings or in this case, treggings, as they are much more comfortable for her. Having explained her reasoning she then expressed her attitude that she was not bothered by not possessing a pair of jeans anyway.

### 4.10.3 Comfort, Fit and Practicality

These were three key themes which emerged from both the T-shirt and the jeans, particularly the latter. Given the sheer variety of different cuts of jeans, participants preferred different styles as they "fitted" better and were deemed more "comfortable". Some of the items had been purchased specifically as their body had changed thus requiring a different size. The right kind of "fit" was crucial to having a "comfortable" pair of jeans, as discussed by a few of the participants. Longevity of possession was also a factor in the comfort of the jeans, as with Ali and Jill who had both possessed their particular pair for ten years; fit and comfort were the two main qualities of their jeans which they felt had moulded more to their shape.

Sam's particular brand, Michele's Magic Jeans, are the brand that she wears most of the time. She described them as "*the most comfortable jeans you will ever wear*" (S2).

The jeans were also very flattering and gave her a slimmer shape, as did Xandra's. They were the only two participants to mention how the clothing emphasized aspects of their figure which in turn would affect how they might be viewed by other people. This did not seem to be a concern for the other participants as they did not mention it. Along with comfort and fit came practicality: four of the participants, who are based mainly at home, wore jeans most of the time due to their practical nature for their multiple roles in life, such as looking after children, working from home and multiple household tasks within the home.

T-shirts were described slightly differently. They were mentioned by some as being "comfortable" but it was more their function as practical garments that was emphasized. Essentially many of the T-shirts were seen as accessories to other more important garments, garments that were more expensive or garments that participants had more personal attachment to. In general, however, perhaps the more important characteristic that both T-shirts and jeans shared was that of being an essential item; namely being seen as garments that would "go with" or "match" a multitude of other garments. This was important for the participants, something that is termed the Diderot effect, when items match together (Yurchisin and Johnson, 2010).

### 4.10.4 Attachment to Clothing

Attachment to their clothing varied enormously between participants and between the different items. The special items were clearly "special" to most of the participants, with participants stating that such garments would be kept for ever. Currently many of them were not being worn and had not been worn for a long period of time, mainly for lack of occasion although a couple of garments did not fit as the participant had changed shape. The attachment to the garments came from the style of the garment, the colour or pattern, how the garment gave positive emotions to the wearers and the happy memories associated with the garment. Though the strongest attachments were mainly for the special items, there were exceptions, such as the T-shirt which had been owned the longest. This T-shirt had been bought in 1985 by Sasha when she was in her teens and featured the music band The Cure, and despite a recent offer from someone who

wanted to buy it she is determined to keep it as it was a reminder of her teenage self. Another exception is Gisela with her 1950s style jeans. Her style is very much who she is, an individual who is a little bit “different”.

Generally speaking, though, the participants were not attached to their T-shirts and jeans, although some wore items until they fell apart, others downgraded them to clothes that could only be worn at home or doing dirty work such as gardening, then some would be turned into rags or recycled. There was one participant, Philomena, who had no attachment to her clothing at all regardless of the item, whether it was a T-shirt, expensive jeans, or dress; once she had enough of a particular garment then she disposed of it and seemed to keep no item forever.

### 4.10.5 Attitude to Spending

The attitude of participants to spending is a key theme discussed in more depth in Chapter 7, however glimpses of how they viewed spending on clothes began to emerge during these discussions and are worth briefly outlining here. The special items tended to be more costly and were described by some of the participants as expensive and possibly the most money they would ever spend on an item. Yet other garments were bought in sales or at a reduced outlet and, despite the participants’ attachment, gave some indication of how there were limits to spending within their minds: that no matter how much they wanted an item, they would spend no more than a certain amount. This common attitude was evident in terms of the jeans and particularly in terms of the T-shirt, was that they were not perceived as especially valued garments. Reluctance to spend was not just confined to these garments, some of the participants deliberately targeted sales, second-hand clothing or reduced outlets for buying clothing generally. There was a perceived reluctance to pay full price for clothing, partly because of budget, of clothing being over-priced and because clothes buying was not a priority for particular participants so they declined to spend more than a certain amount.

### 4.11 Conclusions

From these three activities the emerging themes were as follows:

Firstly, that neither T-shirts nor jeans are universal as first believed, additionally there was confusion over what a T-shirt actually was. The qualities of the garment in terms of style, colour, practicality, and comfort were also coming across as very important to individuals. Clothing style, in terms of what an individual wears, with a particular item and how their clothing reflects their own individuality and their personality can persist over many years. Body issues, such as the fit, and bodily changes due to children, demonstrate how these requirements affect the clothing choices of the individual. The individuals' attitude to spending: the "reduced" purchases, the second-hand clothing purchases, and the concern over cheap clothing indicates that possibly cheap clothing does not hold much of an appeal for most of these participants, and that there may be potential for more sustainable behaviour. The longevity of clothing because of an individual's attachment to that item, is also a key aspect of sustainable behaviour, though usually sustainability is not the reason an item of clothing is kept for a long time.

These themes will be explored in further depth within the discussion of the next two chapters.

## 5 Analysis of Protocol Questions

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### 5.1 Introduction to the analysis of protocol questions

Following on from the description of the case studies in the last chapter, this chapter moves onto the actual data analysis. This follows the third analytical strategy as described by Yin (2003) in which analysis of the case studies encompasses both quantitative and qualitative data. The chapter then focuses on the first part of the strategy, analysing the quantitative data from the protocol questions within the descriptive framework described in 3.11.8 - 3.11.11. The data analysis from this chapter and the following two will inform Chapter 8, making sure as Yin (2003) advises, that all the evidence will be attended to in order to answer the research questions. This chapter describes in essence all the data from the protocol questions, the Consumer Styles Inventory, the Defra Test for Pro-Environmental Attitudes, Sustainable Awareness and the Sustainable Fashion Goals. Firstly, the data analyses the participants' initial results for the Consumer Styles Inventory. This is followed by the Defra test for Pro-Environmental Attitudes with the key information for each participant and their segmentation given. Participants' awareness of sustainable issues within the fashion industry is then discussed and compared. Finally, the chapter ends with the Sustainable Fashion Goals as defined by Allwood et al., (2006) and Fisher et al.,(2008) and comparisons between these and the answers given, drawing out the key conclusions from the analysis.

### 5.2 The Consumer Styles Inventory (Sproles and Kendall, 1987)

As explained in the methodology, within the semi-structured interview the shortened version of the Consumer Styles Inventory (CSI) was given to the participants. The shortened version (Sproles and Kendall, 1987) was used as a basic profiling of participants rather than as an in-depth consumer study on decision-making. This version, which was originally developed for use in an educational setting, was chosen since the semi-structured interview was deemed to be of

sufficient length and there was concern that the full-length version of this test would require too much time within the interview.

Within this version, just sixteen statements were given: two statements for each of the eight mental characteristics of decision-making as defined by Sproles and Kendall, (1986). The participants selected from the Likert scale of items, with 1 point = strongly disagree, through to 5 points = strongly agree. The scores for each of the eight mental characteristics of decision-making were then added together giving a score between 2 and 10.

### 5.2.1 The Scoring of the Consumer Styles Inventory

1. **Scores of 9–10** = You are **HIGH** on this consumer characteristic.
2. **Scores of 6-8** = You are **MODERATE** to **AVERAGE** on this consumer characteristic.
3. **Scores of 2-5** = You are **LOW** on this consumer characteristic.

Categories	Explanation
<b>1. Perfectionistic Consumer</b>	“Measuring the degree to which a consumer searches carefully and systematically for the best quality in products.”
<b>2. Brand Conscious Consumer</b>	“The brand conscious, price equals quality consumer, or one measuring a consumer’s orientation to buying the more expensive, well-known brands.”
<b>3. Fashion Conscious Consumer</b>	Identifying consumers who appear to like new and innovative products and gain excitement from seeking out new things.”
<b>4. Recreational and shopping conscious consumer</b>	“Measuring the extent to which a consumer finds shopping a pleasant activity and shops just for the fun of it. “
<b>5. Impulsive, Careless Consumer</b>	“Those who tend to buy on the spur of the moment and appear unconcerned how much they spend or getting “best buys”.
<b>6. Confused by Over-choice Consumer</b>	“Those consumers perceiving too many brands and stores from which to choose, experiencing information overload in the market”
<b>7. Habitual Brand Loyal Consumer</b>	“Indicating consumers who have favourite brands and stores and who have formed habits in choosing these repetitively.”
<b>8. Price/Value Conscious consumer</b>	“A characteristic identifying those with particularly high consciousness of sale prices and lower prices in general.”

Table 5.1 The Eight Consumer Characteristics for the Consumer Style Inventory according to Sproles and Kendall (1987)

Figure 5.1 and Table 5.2 below shows how the participants scored on each of the eight consumer characteristics and how they compared against each other.

### 5.2.2 A Quantitative Overview of the Data

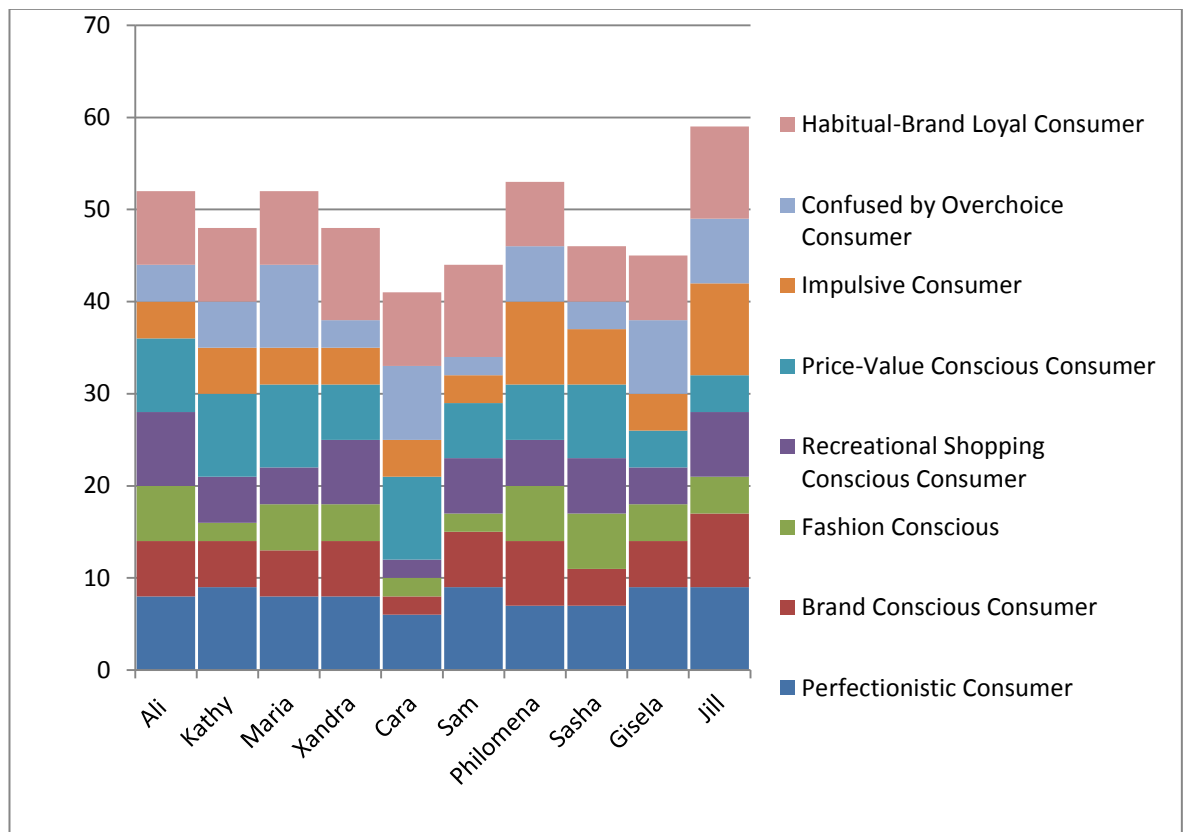


Figure 5.1 Participants Scoring in the Consumer Styles Inventory



Issues	Ali	Kathy	Maria	Xandra	Cara	Sam	Philomena	Sasha	Gisela	Jill	
<b>Perfectionist Consumer</b>	8	8	8	8	6	9	7	7	9	9	<b>79</b>
<b>Brand Conscious</b>	6	5	5	6	2	6	7	4	5	8	<b>54</b>
<b>Fashion Conscious</b>	6	2	5	4	2	2	6	6	4	4	<b>41</b>
<b>Recreational shopping</b>	8	5	4	7	2	6	5	6	4	7	<b>54</b>
<b>Price value</b>	8	9	9	6	9	6	6	8	4	4	<b>69</b>
<b>Impulsive</b>	4	5	4	4	4	3	8	6	4	10	<b>52</b>
<b>Confused</b>	4	5	9	3	8	2	6	3	8	7	<b>55</b>
<b>Brand loyal</b>	8	8	8	8	8	10	7	6	7	10	<b>80</b>
	<b>52</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>59</b>	

Table 5.2 The Results of the Consumer Styles Inventory

### 5.2.3 The Consumer Characteristics

#### 5.2.3.1 Perfectionistic Consumer

As Sproles and Kendall (1986), explain, this characteristic measures the consumer's search for the highest quality. Every participant scored six or above, which would indicate that high quality was important for all the participants with most of them scoring "Moderate" on this characteristic and with Sam, Gisela and Jill scoring "High" on this characteristic.

#### 5.2.3.2 The Brand Conscious Consumer

None of the participants seemed to orientate particularly towards buying brands. Cara, Kathy, Maria, Sasha and Gisela were all scored "Low" on this characteristic whereas Ali, Xandra, Sam, Philomena and Jill were scored "Moderate". Ali and Sam were particularly fond of expensive brands, yet this did not appear within the test, an indication that there was a problem with this characteristic. The focus on the "well-known national brands", had caused confusion for two of the participants. Ali and Sam, both questioned which "brands" the statement was referring to. Sam disagreed with the statement as she thought she bought international brands rather than

well-known brands. Ali stated that she bought both expensive and cheaper brands, depending on what type of garment she was buying.

### 5.2.3.3 The Fashion-Conscious Consumer

Fashion and novelty were not prime considerations for the participants as high scorers on this characteristic tend to be fashion conscious and there were no participants like this. The majority, Kathy, Maria, Xandra, Cara, Sam, Gisela and Jill, all scored “Low” on this characteristic with Ali, Philomena and Sasha scoring “Moderate” on this characteristic.

### 5.2.3.4 Recreational Shopping Conscious Consumer

There were no high scorers on this characteristic, which would indicate that participants did not find shopping a pleasant or fun activity. Kathy, Maria, Cara, Philomena and Gisela all scored “Low” on this characteristic and Ali, Xandra, Sam, Sasha and Jill scored “Moderate”.

### 5.2.3.5 Price-Value Conscious Consumer

Kathy, Maria and Cara were scored “High” on this characteristic, which would indicate they have a high consciousness of sale prices and lower prices in general. Ali, Xandra, Sam, Philomena and Sasha were scored as “Moderate” and Gisela and Jill were scored as “Low” on this characteristic. During this test however, both Ali and Sam queried the statements as one referred to “sales” and the other referred to “low-priced products”. Both felt there was a distinct difference between buying at reduced prices rather than buying at low price.

### 5.2.3.6 Impulsive Consumer

Philomena and Jill scored “High” on this characteristic, as individuals who tend to buy on the spur of the moment. Ali, Kathy, Maria, Xandra, Cara, Sam and Gisela all scored “Low” on this characteristic, which indicated that they tended to plan their shopping, whilst Sasha was scored as “Moderate”.

### 5.2.3.7 Confused Consumer

As the only “High” scorer, Maria is a consumer experiencing too much choice in the market, therefore becoming confused. Cara, Philomena, Gisela and Jill scored “Moderate” on this, with Ali, Kathy, Xandra, Sam and Sasha all scoring “Low” on this characteristic,

### 5.2.3.8 Habitual-Brand Loyal Consumer

Xandra, Sam and Jill all scored “High” on this, indicating they have favourite brands and habits, with all the rest scoring “Moderate” on this characteristic.

The results of the CSI so far demonstrate the following:

- The scorings for each consumer characteristic do not vary hugely; some score similarly but the patterns for each are different
- Quality is seen as important to some degree by all participants.
- There are some interesting inconsistencies: brand consciousness is ranked low by participants yet brand loyalty ranks highly.
- Shopping as a recreational activity is not ranked highly by the participants.
- Fashion consciousness is not a high priority for any participant.

## 5.3 Limitations of the Consumer Styles Inventory

Although this was the shortened version of the Consumer Styles Inventory (Sproles and Kendall, 1987), the test proved to be useful in triaging behaviour in terms of the test itself, the shopping trip and the questions in the interview. For example, the importance of quality for clothing, the lack of interest in clothes shopping and preferring style over fashion featured highly within the qualitative nature of the research and will be discussed further in Chapter 6. The test also highlighted inconsistencies; for example, the scores for Sasha are quite interesting, in that her life is dominated by shortage of money, yet she scored low on price conscious shopping. For her, buying everyday clothing was a necessity that she dealt with as efficiently as she could. The score

could also point to an underlying inconsistency between her self-perception and her actual life situation as her answers were more in line with her former self as a teacher.

One of the weaknesses of the test was that participants displayed different behaviour for different types of garments. For example, Gisela bought her business clothes in high-street stores, vintage-style leisure clothes in specialized outlets and her everyday clothes on the high-street or in supermarkets. Others bought special occasion clothing in specialised stores and kept them for long periods. None of this heterogeneity within one customer's behaviour, (see Section 7.2) is reflected in the CSI. The range of behaviour might have also biased the respondent scores depending on whether they factored in that their behaviour was different for other garment types. Another weakness of the test is confusing wording, as Ali and Sam pointed out about brands, (see section 5.2.3.2). When using the CSI, Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) altered the wording to aid UK respondents as the test used American English. In hindsight this idea could have been adopted for this study. The need for modification is also a reflection on the many changes since the test was devised. Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) also acknowledge the technological/socio-cultural/economic and retail changes that have occurred within the last ten to twenty years. An example of the changing shopping landscape is the emergence of the discount retailers, such as TK Maxx or Boundary Mills. This affected the Price Conscious – Value characteristic where several participants drew the distinction between “sales” and “low-priced”. It also does not cater for shopping in charity shops or on eBay, which for many was an approach to getting high quality clothes cheaply. Both Bakewell and Mitchell (2003) and Mitchell and Bates (1998) have refined this Consumer Styles Inventory. Bakewell and Mitchell (2003)'s method included linking CSI decision-making traits together to form segments. One such segment was both shopping and fashion uninterested, with these two decision-making styles strongly linked together. This segment would make sense for the participants given the lack of interest in both. Mitchell and Bates (1998) added an extra factor to the CSI which was that of Shopping Avoidance,

Sacrificing Style which again would be appropriate for these participants given their disinterest in shopping as demonstrated by the CSI.

### 5.3.1 Conclusion

Overall, the results of this study gave to a certain extent a useful characterization, enabling participants to think and discuss through the dimensions of the different decision-making factors. Many of the answers given were confirmed earlier by their behaviour, particularly where the test was given right at the end so they could offer a different story. However, there were contradictions in applying this test, causing confusion as demonstrated with the brands as discussed earlier in 5.3. Whilst the test rated particular decision-making skills in clothes shopping, overall it gave no further insights into behaviour. The CSI was developed for marketing purposes, and in the context of marketing quantitative data is interested in correlations not causality or any reasons for behaviour. Studies such as Park et al., (2010) and Lyonski and Durvasula, (2013) have employed the CSI in just such a quantitative way to examine shopping behaviour in order to target marketing. This study on the other hand, was interested in gaining a rich data picture of the consumers themselves in order to understand their behaviour, and what is known from this research is that important socio-cultural factors have more of an impact upon participants; and that is something which the CSI is not able to fully pick up or understand.

## 5.4 The Defra Test on Pro-Environmental Attitudes

Following on from the Consumer Styles Inventory and as discussed in the methodology section 3.11.8, the participants were segmented according to Defra's Environmental Segmentation Model. The segmentation model works by respondents being asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, neither agreed or disagreed, disagreed or strongly disagreed with various statements. The statement that begins the whole test is the following: "Environmental issues are a low priority for me compared with other things in my life," Depending on whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement participants were then directed to the various segmentations.

For each segmentation participants had to code a minimum of highlighted answers. Each participant did code enough answers within their segmentation to be categorized as such. However, in addition to the coded answers, there was a participant card with a variety of statements in a box and they were asked to pick a statement which they agreed with the most. This method produced dilemmas for some of the participants as some did not choose the appropriate statement for their participant segmentation; because they felt the statements were too prescriptive, and some chose more than one of the responses, as they felt several statements reflected both their attitudes and their life circumstances. There was no guidance within this method on this situation. This emerged as one of the major flaws of this segmentation mode: that it was too simplistic and too rigid and did not take into account the context of certain behaviours, a view echoed by Poortinga and Darnton (2016). In addition, this method may not have produced the more accurate or truthful answers from the participants. The defining question of this method “Environmental issues are a low priority for me compared with other things in my life” essentially established the context of this method and potentially alerted the participants to the general direction of the test. However, this question along with the Likert scale confused one of the participants, Philomena, and she seemed to fail to understand how it worked properly despite explanations and therefore her segmentation is not necessarily an accurate reflection of her attitudes. If the participants agreed with the defining question they were then directed to the statement, “For the sake of the environment car users should pay higher taxes,” and a surprising number of car owners willingly agreed that they should pay higher taxes, which again, produced some doubt over the validity of the answers. Despite these issues, this method did provide an indication of the participants’ pro-environmental views as Table 5.3 displays.

Segments	Definitions	Segment Profile
Positive Green	<b>“I think we need to do some things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest.”</b>	The Positive Greens are segment number one, the group that assesses themselves as acting in a more environmentally friendly way than any other segment. Additionally, they are the most likely group to want to live a more environmentally friendly life than they already do and they are the ones more willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products.
Waste Watchers	<b>“Waste not, want not, that’s important, you should live life thinking about what you’re doing and using.”</b>	The Waste Watchers are doing more than any other to help the environment. However, this behaviour is driven by an urge to avoid waste rather than seeking to reduce environmental impact.
Concerned Consumers	<b>“I think I do more than many people to be environmentally friendly, but I think it would be hard to give up some things like flying.”</b>	This group hold broadly pro-environmental beliefs, although with less conviction than groups 1 and 2. Members of this group are particularly sympathetic to the concept of “climate change,” acknowledging their personal impact and seeing taking action as important. They rate themselves as environmentally friendly in their behaviours and two thirds of the group claim they would like to do more.
Sideline Supporters	<b>“I think climate change is a big problem for us. I suppose I don’t think much about how much water or electricity I use, and I forget to turn things off...I’d like to do a bit more.</b>	This group has a generally pro-environmental worldview, although these beliefs are held relatively weakly across the board. Members of this group are second only to group 1 in anticipating an imminent crisis; however, they are more likely to think that humans (possibly other people) will find the solution. Their green beliefs have not translated to their behaviours – this is the group where the attitude action gap is most evident.
Cautious Participants	<b>“I do a couple of things to help the environment. I’d really like to do more...well as long as I saw others were.”</b>	This group’s environmental worldview is close to the average for the population: members of this group tend to agree there is a pressing crisis, and that there are limits to growth. They report more barriers to pro-environmental behaviour than groups 1 and 3, including the need to fit with current lifestyle and difficulty in changing their habits and they are more likely to feel guilty about harming the environment (with group 4).
Stalled Starters	<b>“I don’t know much about climate change. I can’t afford a car so I use public</b>	This group present somewhat confused environmental views. Mostly the views are strongly negative: members of this group have the

	<b>transport..I'd like a car though"</b>	highest level saying climate change is too far in the future to worry about.
<b>Honestly Disengaged</b>	<b>"Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. Makes no difference to me, I'm just living my life the way I want to"</b>	This group's ecological worldview is predominantly shaped by a lack of interest and concern. Members of this group are also sceptical about the current environmental threat.

Table 5.3 The Defra Pro-Environmental Segmentation

<b>Positive Green</b>	9/9 Ali	6/9 Maria	8/9 Xandra	8/9 Kathy	
<b>Waste Watchers</b>	8/8 Sasha				
<b>Concerned Consumers</b>	7/8 Gisela	7/8 Jill			
<b>Sideline Supporters</b>	6/8 Cara	8/8 Philomena			
<b>Cautious Participants</b>	6/9 Sam				
<b>Stalled Starters</b>					
<b>Disengaged</b>					

Table 5.4 The Defra Segmentation Model Results

#### 5.4.1 The Defra Segmentation Model Results

The above table, 5.4, shows the results of Defra Segmentation Model for all the participants. The colours represent that particular segment. The numbers indicate how many coded the highlighted answers within their segmentation. So, for example within the Positive Green category, it would infer that Ali is the highest scoring within that particular segment and Maria the lowest. The Defra Segmentation Model has seven segmentations; however, the participants' results were all within the first five segmentations indicating that there is a relatively high overall pro-environmental attitude, particularly as four of the participants were classified as Positive Greens which is the highest pro-environmental segmentation. Sam, has been classified as the Cautious Participant, the fifth out of the seven clusters which indicates that there are some pro-environmental attitudes as opposed to none at all. Gisela, Jill, Cara and Philomena demonstrate varying degrees of pro-environmental attitudes. None of the participants were in the lowest two categories, the Stalled Starters and the Disengaged.



### 5.4.3 Critique of the Defra Test

The positives of the Defra classification included that it was a tried and tested method and readily accessible. It was included primarily because the conclusion within the literature review was inconclusive about whether there was a link between environmental attitudes and clothing behaviour so this potential link between attitudes and behaviour could be explored. There were some positive aspects of this method. In the case of Sasha, the classification of Waste Watcher was a good description which matched her attitudes and behaviour elsewhere in the activities. It was insightful as there were differences in responses which gave the differing attitudes to the environment. As pointed out earlier though the test started with a leading question giving participants the opportunity to realise what this test was really about. The statements used were biased and were subject to criticism by participants who questioned what some of them meant. Furthermore, the structure of this method was rather rigid which did not fit well with the participants. When participants were choosing the final responses, they reflected on their own behaviour which was sometimes restricted by barriers. For instance, Maria would rather not fly and is aware that flying causes environmental problems but with her family scattered through the world, she puts her attitudes to one side in order to visit her family. There was a very similar response from Xandra who also flies back when possible to see her family in Colombia. These discussions came from the recordings when participants were considering their final responses, but the test of course does not capture this. These are classic examples of the attitude-behaviour gap as discussed within the literature review (2.25) as according to the test, they were both Positive Greens and had good attitudes towards the environment. For another Positive Green, Ali, the results proved to be contradictory. She had excellent attitudes towards the environment yet within the Sustainable Clothing Goals, proved to be very conversant about barriers to more sustainable clothing behaviour. Equally in the cases of Maria and Xandra there was awareness of their own Attitude-Behaviour Gap, the barriers proving to be too difficult to be overcome. In

conclusion, overall, this test did not prove any link between favourable attitudes towards the environment positively influencing clothing behaviour.

## 5.5 Sustainable Awareness

As discussed earlier in this thesis (Section 2.22.2-2.22.3) and Fisher et al., (2008) revealed the very low level of public awareness concerning sustainability. Therefore, a section of the semi-structured interview following on from the CSI and the Defra test, focused on how much sustainable awareness participants had about clothing production issues. The participants were asked eight questions about sustainability and the issues affecting the clothing industry, that centred around the key questions below shown in Table 5.5.

<b>The Questions for sustainable awareness</b>	
1.	Do you know what sustainability means?
2.	Do you know what it means for clothing?
3.	Are you aware of any environmental issues?
4.	Water issues such as the Aral Sea?
5.	Are you aware of issues such as chemicals in your clothing?
6.	Pesticides, used in cotton growing in the developing world?
7.	Waste issues?
8.	What do you know about sweatshops?

Table 5.5 The Questions for sustainable awareness

The key issues discussed arose from the literature review in (Chapter 2.22). Table 5.6 demonstrates how the participants were marked.

<b>Marks</b>	<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>0</b>	Never heard of issue	<b>Score (8*3) = 24</b>
<b>1</b>	Has heard of issue	
<b>2</b>	Some knowledge of issue	
<b>3</b>	Has good knowledge of issue	

Table 5.6 Scores for Sustainable Awareness

Issues	Ali	Kathy	Maria	Xandra	Cara	Sam	Philomena	Sasha	Gisela	Jill
<b>Sustainability</b>	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
<b>Sustainability for Fashion</b>	2	2	0	3	1	0	0	3	1	3
<b>Aral Sea</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
<b>Pesticides</b>	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
<b>Chemicals</b>	2	0	1	2	0	3	0	3	1	1
<b>Waste</b>	2	1	2	3	1	2	0	2	1	2
<b>Sweatshops</b>	3	2	2	3	1	2	1	3	2	3
<b>Other Issues</b>	3	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>

Table 5.7 results for all the participants in sustainable awareness

Table 5.7 shows the results of all the participants for each of the issues and their combined score.

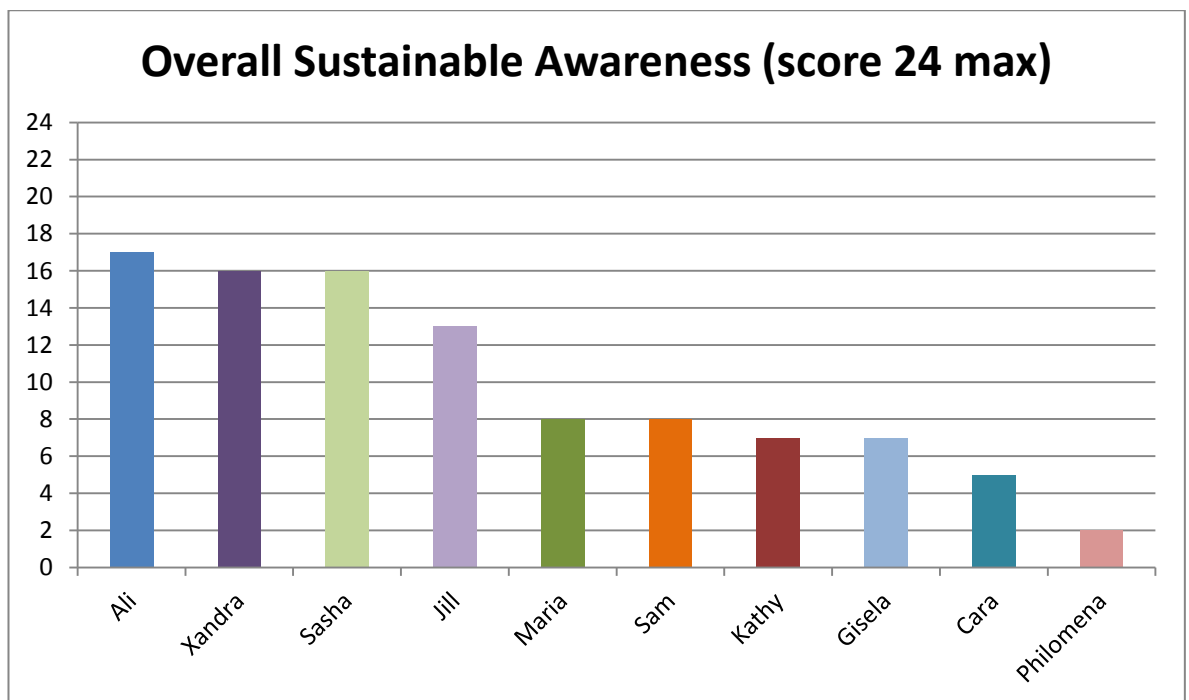


Figure 5.2 Sustainable Awareness Scores

Figure 5.2 demonstrates how low the levels of sustainable awareness are, given that the highest score was 17 out of 24 and the lowest scoring just 2. This graph also demonstrates the wide variety of awareness between participants. Comparing this graph with the Defra Segments, there is a certain degree of correlation between the segments and Sustainable Awareness. Ali scored the highest scores on both, for sustainable awareness and as a Positive Green; Xandra, who scored the second highest for awareness, was also classified as a Positive Green, the group

expected to have the most pro-environmental attitudes and knowledge. Sasha, who was also scored as the second highest, is classed as a Waste Watcher, the second segment with a good knowledge of environmental issues. The lowest two scores were Philomena and Cara, both of whom were categorized as Sideline Supporters, and that particular segment is expected to have a low knowledge of environmental issues. Maria, who was classified as a Positive Green, probably obtained a low score because whilst she was aware of some of the environmental issues themselves, she was totally unaware that these environmental issues were defined as “sustainability”. Sam, who scored the same as Maria, had been classified as a Cautious Participant, the segment regarded as average in terms of pro-environmental knowledge. Kathy the other Positive Green who scored an even lower mark, was very aware of other ethical and environmental issues, particularly in regard to veganism, but her pro-environmental knowledge had not extended as far as the clothing industry.

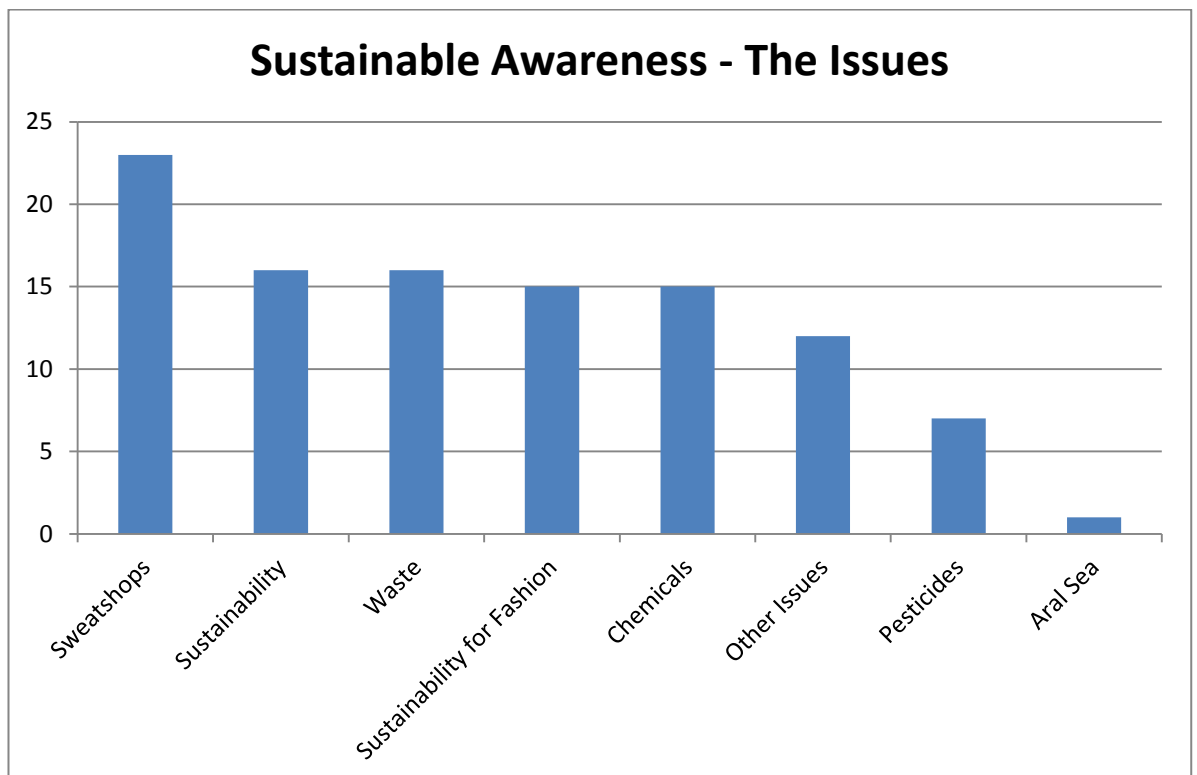


Figure 5.3 Sustainable Awareness Scores by Issue

Figure 5.4 shows how the sustainable issues are ranked in terms of awareness.

### 5.5.1 Exploitation, Waste and Transportation

Figure 5.3 shows how the sustainable issues were ranked in terms of awareness. In terms of issues, every participant was aware to some degree about exploitation of clothing workers, “slave labour”, “child labour”, “unsafe conditions”, and sweatshops in various parts of the world including Leicester. Knowledge ranged from all of the above issues being mentioned to the acknowledgment that sweatshops existed or at the very least the suspicion that they existed. However, though all had some knowledge, when questioned there was little to add from many of the participants. Both Gisela and Kathy acknowledged the history of the clothing industries and the historic low pay and poor conditions of clothing factories:

*“Cos of, in terms of the globalisation of things and you’ve got these awful things that happen, they are as awful as the industrial revolution here weren’t they? So I’m not trying to rationalise it, but its kind of cycle in terms of where people are, trying to make money out of people and paying them a pittance which is exactly what they were doing in the cotton, in the wool factories” G3*

Whilst historic conditions were mentioned, more recent events such as the Rana Plaza disaster (section 1.3) had not been heard of and generally hardly any details were known of this. Valor (2007) discovered that there were very low or moderate levels of awareness of the issue of labour abuses despite ten years of reports within the media about these issues.

#### 5.5.1.1 Waste

There was little awareness of the waste issue within the UK, of how much of clothing ended up in landfill, but some participants spoke about how they occasionally speculated about what happened to unwanted clothing from individuals and to unsold clothing. Maria had a concern about the over-production of clothing at an ice hockey world cup event in North America:

*“The final match between team A and team B they’re already produced all of the clothing that says Team A is a winner and Team B is a winner, but as soon as the match is over they only sells Team A winner’s clothing....What happens to Team B winner’s clothing?...Because you can buy at the site of the match, where the team won the whole thing, on site the shirt that says the team won.” M4*

Maria, Sasha and Gisela speculated that unwanted clothing whether from sports events or unsold clothing from charity shops ended up in Africa but were unsure what happened to it after that:

*“I think they’re sent to other people to wear but I would imagine that my bubble will be burst quite quickly because I thinking that in some climates some of these things wouldn’t be wearable anyway they would be the wrong things so I’m sort of now thinking they’re probably dug into the blinking earth somewhere aren’t they?”G3*

Whilst the participants in general were unaware of what happened to discarded clothing, overall they all had various practices in reducing their own waste, preferring to recycle as much clothing as they could.

### 5.5.1.2 Transportation

The protocol questions only cover the major issues within sustainability, but some of the participants were aware of other issues, mainly concerning transportation, and they had more knowledge of this than the issues they were questioned about. Generally, they were aware that the garment industry was mainly located in the developing world. They expressed concern over how many “clothing” miles, garments had travelled. Maria based her concern on what she had observed when living near Los Angeles port, where huge container ships came in from China.

*“I suppose I’m quite conscious of how far things travel if everything’s made, if something’s made in China then the environmental impact of those huge cargo ships bringing over huge amounts of clothing, that’s got to be quite high?” M3*

There was no specific source of information for the concern over transportation, in the main it was an issue that the participants had worked out for themselves based on what they observed.

Overall the participants had limited awareness of the following four issues:

- 1. Chemicals.** Only five participants had some awareness, and Maria was the only participant who mentioned this issue during one of the shopping trips when looking at organic clothing for her toddler. She did not know much but felt this was worthy of investigation. The other themes in this section were chemicals and dyes causing pollution for the local environment, the manufacture and the finishing of clothing, the production of man-made fibres, and the assumption that there were proper regulations for ensuring that the levels of chemicals within clothing were safe.
- 2. Pesticides.** These were associated more with food than with clothing. Participants knew, or assumed, that there were pesticides involved in growing crops, but were unaware of the potential hazardous health effects it would have on farmers. Sasha had heard that land was being used for growing cotton rather than for food. Xandra, who bought organic cotton for her children, bought it because of their eczema rather than for ethical and environmental reasons.
- 3. Aral Sea.** None except a single participant had heard of the Aral Sea, and the one who had, Sasha, knew nothing else about it.
- 4. General Environmental Issues.** Whilst some of the participants expressed concern over artificial fibres, particularly Gisela and Xandra, there was very little knowledge about what impacts they might have on the environment. This would correlate to the findings of Birtwhistle and Moore, (2007), Hiller-Connell (2010) and Gam (2011) that there was a deficiency of environmental awareness due to lack of media coverage. Consumers agreed on a lack of knowledge of how clothing was made and the environmental consequences of artificial fibres and intensive cotton production were poorly understood concerns. (Birtwhistle and Moore, 2007).

### 5.5.2 The Meaning of Sustainability

Every participant had a vague idea of what “sustainability” meant, believing that the term mainly referred to environmental issues or “keeping things sustained”; in terms of acknowledging that current lifestyles are “not sustainable.” However, the clearest definitions came from Ali, Xandra and Sasha, the three participants who scored the highest for sustainable awareness.

*“That doing the things in a way that, that um could carry on without the like a doing badly to the environment and helping communities and at the same time, profitable for them allowing them to earn a living without damaging the environment.” X4*

All three identified minimizing the impact of human activities upon the environment and not overusing resources as being the major issues for sustainability. Overall, the varying definitions focused almost exclusively on the environment, with ethical issues rarely mentioned by the other participants.

### 5.5.3 Sustainability for Fashion

Ali looked at this question with regard to her own interpretation of her own actions towards her clothes.

*“The actual words sustainable for me in clothing, I think often of durability and the length of time that things will last for, so an item that will last for a really, really long time and then even when it isn’t fit for its original purpose, it could be repurposed or fixed. Fixed or put to another use.” A4*

None of the others were able to give such an answer, and when asked about what they thought sustainability meant for fashion, some of the participants thought that they were totally unaware of what this meant. However, on further questioning they were aware of exploitation of workers and of some of the environmental issues. What was apparent was a general ignorance about the meaning of “sustainability” with regard to the clothing industry. Maria had a fair picture of what it could mean from her own observations:



*“Um, I think having lived so much of my life in Southern California you know by the port of Los Angeles and Long Beach where you see these some massive shipping containers.. you see these ships coming in from China primarily and you think how much is in those containers and how much is going to waste and what will be thrown away and the clothing is just cheap, fast fashion that is not going to last very long and you know that leads to just people buying more things which are produced cheaply somewhere else and shipped across and ruining the environment with the shipping and there’s a snowball of horrors.” M3*

Whilst Maria worked out the various connections, she was unaware that these issues came under the umbrella of sustainability. Equally with other participants, when specific environmental issues were mentioned there was some knowledge, but the participants had not made the connection to sustainability which is why some of the participants scored very low on awareness. This is a key point: that once confusion over the definition of “sustainability” is recognized and addressed, it can be seen that there is more awareness of environmental and ethical issues amongst participants than originally thought.

### 5.5.4 Sources of Information

Whilst some participants, principally Maria were working out sustainable issues from their observations of activities, others such as Xandra and Sasha had experience of exploitation first hand. Xandra through her business, importing coffee from Colombia, reports that she is under pressure from buyers to reduce prices, something which she feels is unfair to the coffee growers.

*“It’s crazy, now that I am in business and now that I’m approaching the big retailers I can understand how they work backwards, the prices coming down and I have to say to them, what do you want me to do? Just throw them, the coffee growers to give them a good price, that wouldn’t be fair and I wouldn’t do it at all because it’s my country or so, I think that sometimes people don’t care because it’s not profitable for them” (X4)*

Sasha, living in a poorer area of Leicester, knew of a nearby factory that exploited illegal immigrants, and was aware that were many women working from home sewing clothes, who

were being paid very low wages. Overall, the most common source of information was either the participants' own experience either further afield or within Leicester, particularly pertinent given the city's past as a centre of the textile industry or the experience of a person within their personal network.

Other sources of information varied considerably, but documentaries on the television focusing on exploitation of labour within garment factories within developing countries were cited as the second most common source of information. Sam on the other hand felt that there was a lack of information in the news about these issues, whilst at the same time admitting that she rarely read the newspapers. Ximena claimed that there was plenty of information if people choose to look for it. With access to the internet being generally readily available, people can inform themselves on what is happening.

### 5.5.5 Reactions to Knowledge

However the ways in which the participants reacted to their knowledge of exploitation proved to be examples of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap as discussed in section 2.25 Sam and Jill feel uneasy about a major retailer because of their cheap clothing, though they had no specific information:

*“Sort of, sometimes ethically, I’m not sure about you know I went into Primark and they’re selling you know T-shirts and tops in there for about £2 or £3 as you know sort of I can see that’s an average selling point for some of the tops, like some of the vest tops and stuff that certainly that price but how can you make and sell a top for that price and give people a, err, a fair? ...Fair wage at the end of it so I’ve got a slight I know that often, you know even if you pay more that doesn’t necessarily mean that reflects you know. So, I was thinking, I’m not quite sure about this, ....And just you know, that, just it seems a shame that clothes are so disposable.” (J3)*

The cheap clothing makes them both feel uncomfortable; the fear that the workers making these clothes are being exploited. Consequently, they do not buy clothing from this retailer. Even

though both of them feel that more expensive clothing does not necessarily mean that the clothing workers are better treated and they have no idea whether this is the case or not they do not seek further information, but rather are content with boycotting the cheaper retailers. Cara, who does frequent the cheaper retailers, was deliberately keeping herself ignorant of ethical issues. She explained the situation:

*“I suppose I keep myself blind on purpose because I know it’s that whole morality of it there’s a shop and it’s got all these clothes for such a bargain when I know I can’t afford other clothes but at the same time it’s like you know there might be children my daughters’ age in there, you know working for pennies in horrible conditions oh I feel so bad now.” (C4)*

Although her conscience suffers, she ignores her negative emotions because of her constrained financial circumstances. Employing blocking tactics to allow one to purchase ethically questionable products has also been observed with consumers who would otherwise describe themselves as ethical (Hassan et al., 2014). Sasha, holds a different view: she was similarly aware of Primark’s reputation for exploiting garment workers; however, she continued to shop there because of her limited income. Sasha believed that comparing income in this country to a country within the developing world was not possible because the cost of living would be completely different. She views this as imposing western values on people within the developing world. Ali agreed with this statement too, based on her personal experience of working in Thailand as an English teacher where she had students, teenage girls who worked part-time at a shoe factory. From the UK point of view their conditions of employment could be seen as exploitative, but these Thai girls valued their employment. Both Sasha and Ali’s viewpoints were similar to Joergen’s (2006) findings that economically, companies provide jobs and common welfare which consumers see as socially responsible behaviour. Similarly, Iwanow’s (2005) research showed that a majority (69%) of consumers asked, felt that western companies should not impose western employment regulations to those in developing economies. Xandra felt that as there was plenty of

readily available information on exploitation of workers in clothing factories, generally people did not care.

### 5.5.6 Conclusion

Though the lack of sustainable awareness was not surprising, this section provided details on what was known by the participants and consequently how they acted upon it. It was clear that there is confusion about how the term “sustainability” is defined, in terms of the ethical and environmental issues that the term covers, and its effects on the clothing industry. Generally speaking, participants felt that their particular source of information was trustworthy. This is despite the lack of trustworthy information being considered an issue (Hustveldt and Dickson, 2009) regarding the brands or retailers of clothing that are sweatshop-free. (Shaw et al. 2006). Though overall the information had come mainly from their own experiences or from their personal networks or documentaries, mainly on television. None of their information sources had come from any retailer.

## 5.6 Sustainable Fashion Goals

The final part of the semi-structured interview centred around questions on the sustainable goals, and marked the end of the whole process with the participants. As discussed within Chapter 2.30.1 both the Fisher et al., (2008) and the Allwood et al., (2006) reports had set very similar goals for sustainability for clothing consumption. Together, these two sources were merged to include the following major approaches as set out in Table 5.8

<b>The Sustainable Fashion Goals</b>	<b>Allwood</b>	<b>Fisher</b>
Buy second-hand clothing where possible	x	
Buy fewer more durable garments	x	x
Hire clothes that would otherwise not be worn to the end of their natural life	x	
Wash clothes at lower temperatures and using eco-detergents, hang -dry them and avoid ironing where possible	x	x

Buy clothing that is sustainable	x	x
Repair or adapt clothing to prolong its life, and return/recycle it at the end of its life/when you no longer want it	x	x

Table 5.8 The sustainable fashion goals

The questions centred on the above key goals with a few amendments. For each of the Sustainable Fashion Goal statements, there was an added sub-question. These questions were added to elicit further information, either to clarify the Sustainable Fashion Goal for the participant, or to establish what their actions were or might be in relation to the goal. For each of the questions, the scoring was given as below in Table 5.9. The vast majority of questions were marked from 0-3, as demonstrated below depending on the context of the question. There were two exceptions, the question about washing at 30 degrees and using eco-power, these two questions were joined together and marked out of 6. The other exception was the categories of sustainable clothing for which all the participant’s marks were added together.

<b>Scoring Table A</b>
0 = Never
1= For Specific Items
2= Often
3= When Possible

<b>Scoring Table B</b>
0 = Never
1= Occasionally
2= Often
3=Always

Table 5.9 scoring tables

### 5.6.1 To Buy Second-Hand Clothing Where Possible

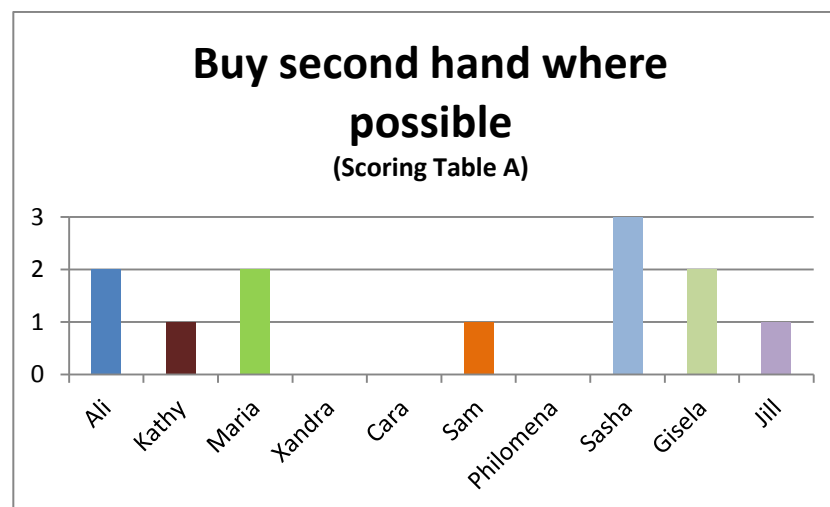


Figure 5.4 Proportion of Second Hand Clothing Owned

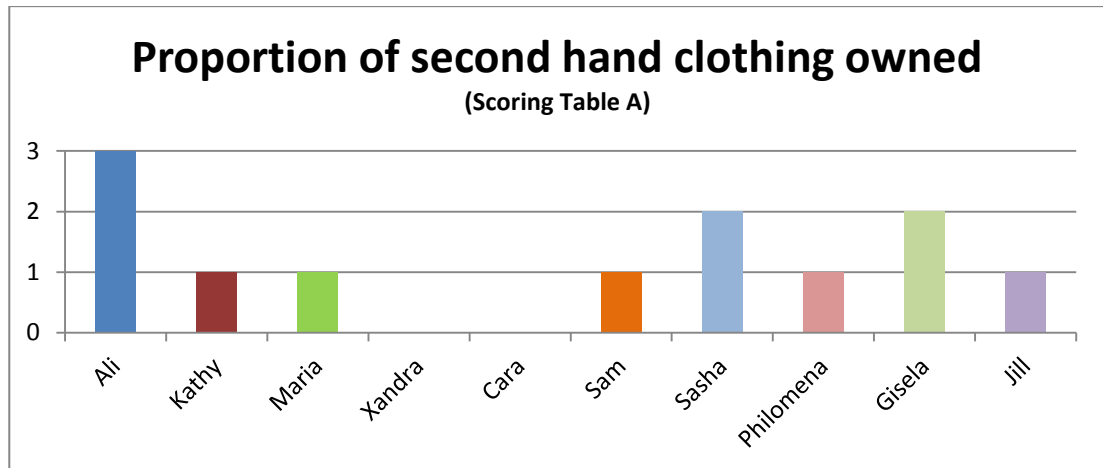


Figure 5.5 Buy Second-Hand Where Possible

The participant scores are shown in Figures 5.4 and 5.5. Ali's attitude was very positive in favour of second-hand clothing and she estimated that about 70% of her wardrobe consisted of second-hand garments. Similarly, Sasha estimated that a third of her wardrobe was second-hand and claimed to have "brain-washed" her children and that her two eldest owned many second-hand garments. A good quarter of Gisela's wardrobe is second-hand clothing, bought by her along with vintage garments that relatives have given her. These three participants were most enthusiastic about second-hand clothing. Kathy only bought second-hand jeans purely for monetary reasons. She did not express a willingness to buy any more. Maria remarked that she did this already, buying items from e-Bay and that 25-30% of what she wore regularly was second-hand; second-hand clothing consisting of 5% of her actual wardrobe. Sam said that only 1% of her wardrobe was second-hand and these were garments that were bought from charity shops purely for when she was working as a self-employed gardener. Jill has only just recently discovered charity shops and is enthusiastic about buying items including clothing from them. However, she dislikes rummaging, does not shop on e-Bay, she feels that charity shops ought to get together and have just the one shop not several to make it easier for people to shop there. Cara and Philomena had not really thought about the issue at all. Cara is thinking of going to car boot sales to buy clothing for her children, equally Philomena accepts second-hand clothing for her children as they grow so quickly, it did not matter. Both had negative attitudes towards charity shops: Cara felt it was too

much hassle, that she would not be able to find what she wanted and that it was easier to shop in supermarkets; and Philomena assumes that charity shop clothes are old-fashioned, that they would not have a selection of sizes so unless she saw something in the window then she would not bother. Xandra has the most negative attitudes toward second-hand clothing. She would not buy it at all, unless there was a tax on new clothes then she might consider it. She pointed out that if people bought more second-hand clothing it would have a negative impact on the clothing industries. Ali had a similar attitude feeling that people should do a lot more with finite resources: however, she acknowledges that even in a worse-case scenario, such as no new clothes being available at all, people will still want new clothes. From the reasons given, nobody bought second-hand clothes for sustainability reasons. It was because either second-hand has become acceptable for participants, or they were buying them for reasons of cost. And there seems a bit of a split in the participants between those groups of reasons.

### 5.6.2 Spend More on Fewer, More Durable Clothing

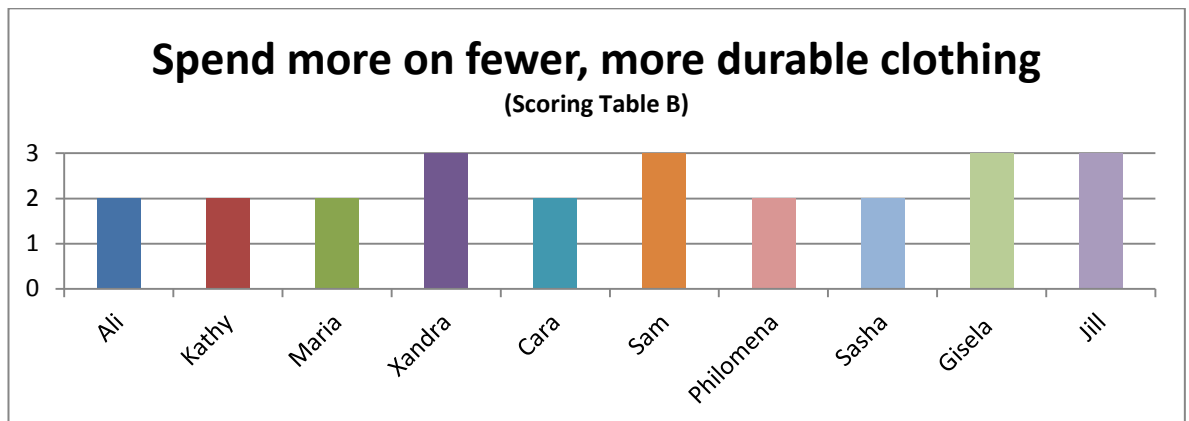


Figure 5.6 Durable Clothing

Participants were asked if they were willing to spend more for a garment to be more durable. (Figure 5.6). Overall, this goal had a fairly positive response. Xandra, Sam, Gisela and Jill strongly agreed with this goal and claimed that this was their style of clothing purchase behaviour. Jill thinks that this is possibly age-related behaviour, as this is what she does now, rather than when she was younger. She feels that though this works for her, price tends to be paramount so she is

not sure about how this would work for other people. Price was a consideration for both Kathy and Cara. For Kathy, if she had the choice of two garments that she liked equally she would choose the one that lasted longer and would pay ten pounds more. Overall, she felt that she generally made considered purchases. Cara felt that she tended to wear her clothes for a long time anyway and did not want to pay much more. Philomena expressed satisfaction with Next, her favourite retailer; she bought mainly from them as they fit well, wear well and are a reasonable price. Sasha agreed in principle to this goal, adding that when she buys a garment, if it looks too flimsy she would not get it. Only two participants questioned this goal. Maria asked how she would know if the garment was more durable or not and commented that durability would not be in the retailer's interest. Ali did not agree with the concept of more money being spent on a garment meaning better quality; she disagreed because mark ups on garments are too high, which is why she buys reduced. Quality for her is good design: if it is the right style for her then she will wear the garment more. She also buys end of line garments, claiming this is more ethical behaviour.

### 5.6.3 Buy Clothing that is More Sustainable

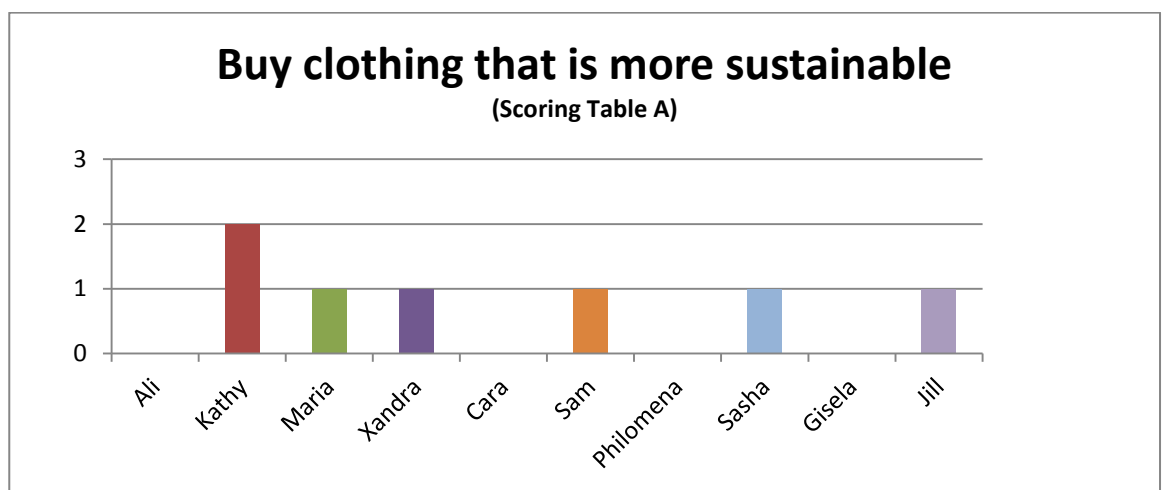


Figure 5.7 Buy Clothing that is More Sustainable



This question revealed the participants' perceptions of sustainable clothing, in particular the image of such clothing but also again highlighted the lack of awareness, of exactly what sustainable clothes actually are. Generally, as shown in Figure 5.7, the participants tended to think of sustainable clothing as Fairtrade clothing. Ali won't buy from the Fairtrade shop as it's not "her style". Sam thinks the image of Fairtrade clothing is "wacky!" She is prepared to consider it now, but on the provision, that it "ticked all her boxes." Cara also thought that Fairtrade was not her "style" either: she thought it was "too Bohemian." Gisela did express her willingness to buy such clothing but would not buy a garment purely on ethics alone. She had the dilemma of whether she would look good wearing such clothing; she feels that it is probably not her style but it also that such clothing has an image problem:

*Well, I'm seeing sandals, I'm seen different coloured hair, I'm seeing sort of the hippy effect, Glastonbury, that's what I'm seeing. (G3).*

Sustainable clothing not only had an image problem, but there was a clear barrier as well to the purchasing of garments as discussed in 2.67. Firstly, the lack of awareness of what exactly these garments are: most participants were aware of what ethical or Fairtrade clothing was, but showed little awareness of what other categories there might be within sustainable clothing. There was the additional barrier in that apart from the Fairtrade shop in Leicester, participants were unsure as to where else they might buy it. Xandra bought organic cotton for her children's school uniforms as they have eczema, but would not necessarily buy organic cotton for herself as she does not have this skin condition. Sasha used to buy organic cotton for her children when they were small, some of which she re-sold. Usually organic clothes are not the sort she wants to wear. Maria is aware of H & M organic cotton, but said that this information was hard to find unless you looked at the label. She also did not know whether this covered production too or just the crop growing. Neither of them knew what other categories there might be of sustainable clothing, with Maria and Cara saying they did not know quite what they were or where to find them. Jill felt that she needed to understand what this means, she had bought organic cotton for her children when

they were babies but had not really understood why. Ali and Sasha expressed doubts about this goal, Ali does not trust the eco-ranges within the major retailers and thinks this is “greenwash. Sasha feels that buying from charity shops is better than buying fair-trade because the clothes already exist rather than having to be produced. Kathy had the only straightforward response to this question: she already bought sustainable clothing and would continue to do so.

Anticipating the low awareness of “sustainability” and what it meant for fashion, and having noted the participants’ unprompted responses, a more structured response was sought by using the eight dimensions of sustainable clothing which came from Shen et al., (2013). These were given as a starting point for discussion about which category of sustainable fashion they were more likely to buy. These eight dimensions were adapted after Ali, the first participant understood differently the dimension “recycled”. This dimension was adapted to “second-hand clothing”, as this was much more widely understood. In addition, the “recycled” dimension defined by Shen et al. (2013) as products created with reclaimed materials from used clothing, is a category of clothing that is not easily available or generally known about.

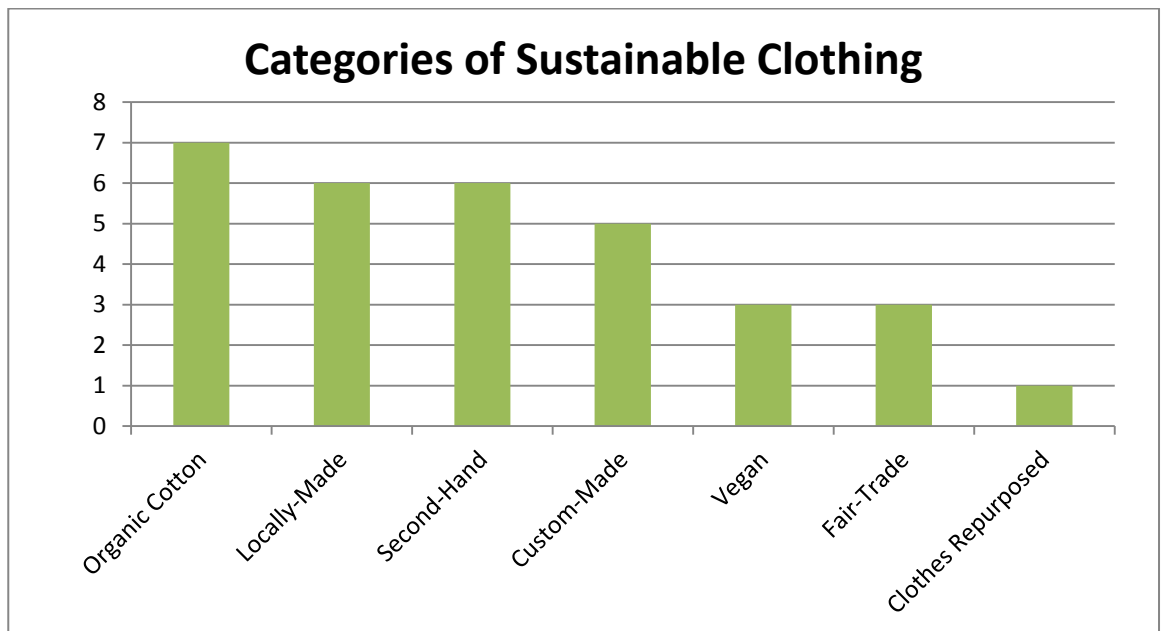


Figure 5.8 Categories of Sustainable Clothing

For each category in which participants gave a positive response there was just one point given, so this chart (Figure 5.8) displays all the points collected and added together, meaning the maximum score for each category is 10. Having already discussed second-hand clothing and organic fibres, unsurprisingly these were the most popular categories. Participants were more willing to consider organic fibres now they knew more about the pesticides and also were beginning to consider the rationale behind why they bought organic fibres for their children but not for themselves. However, there were certain conditions. Generally speaking, participants were willing to consider purchasing organic fibres, locally-made, and Fairtrade as long as they were “nice” or in their “style”, which are opinions expressed earlier. Custom-made was popular, though Sam and Gisela would only do so if they were in Hong Kong or India, because they perceived the cost to be lower. As custom-made was assumed by participants to be expensive, those willing to consider it would only purchase custom made clothing for a special one-off occasion. Those participants considering vintage gave the 1950s as a style that they liked; Gisela has a very 1950s style already as this is a look she favours. She pointed out that although she wears the styles of the 1950s and 1940s she actually buys her clothes new from specialist websites as vintage clothing tends to be too small for her, and not always in good condition. Both Gisela and Sasha felt that “vintage” was loosely interpreted with many copies of original garments within shops and Sasha additionally feeling that by labelling second-hand clothing as “Vintage”, a higher price could be commanded. There was little awareness about what vegan clothing might be, though Kathy being a very committed vegan extended her vegan principles to her bedding. Repurposed clothing was only mentioned by Ali. Fairtrade clothing was not very popular, which is unsurprising given their opinions about it earlier, yet in contrast, in terms of sustainable awareness, the unethical treatment of workers was the issue most known about.

### 5.6.4 Would You Spend £5 More on an Eco-Ethical T-Shirt?

This question was intended to establish whether they were actually willing and able to spend extra for an eco/ethical product. Within my earlier research, the overwhelming response has been

that people were willing to spend £5 extra for an eco-ethical T-Shirt but that was the most they were prepared to pay.

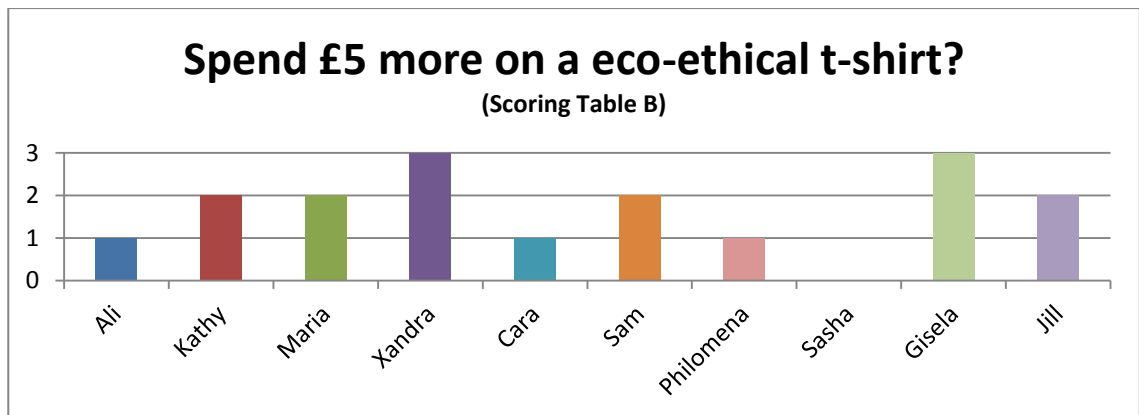


Figure 5.9 Spend £5 More on an Eco-Ethical Shirt

Xandra and Gisela were willing to pay extra for such a T-Shirt, hence as shown in Figure 5.9, they achieved the maximum score of 3. Kathy, Maria, Sam and Jill were willing, but this came with certain conditions. The T-shirt would have to be more durable and last longer, additionally their style what they wanted or not cost too much to begin with. Philomena would not buy purely for eco-ethical reasons only, Cara did not know as she is very thrifty and Sasha would not buy one at all. Ali does not like T-shirts; it would have to look right and she would not buy for ethical reasons only.

### 5.6.5 Would You Hire Clothes?

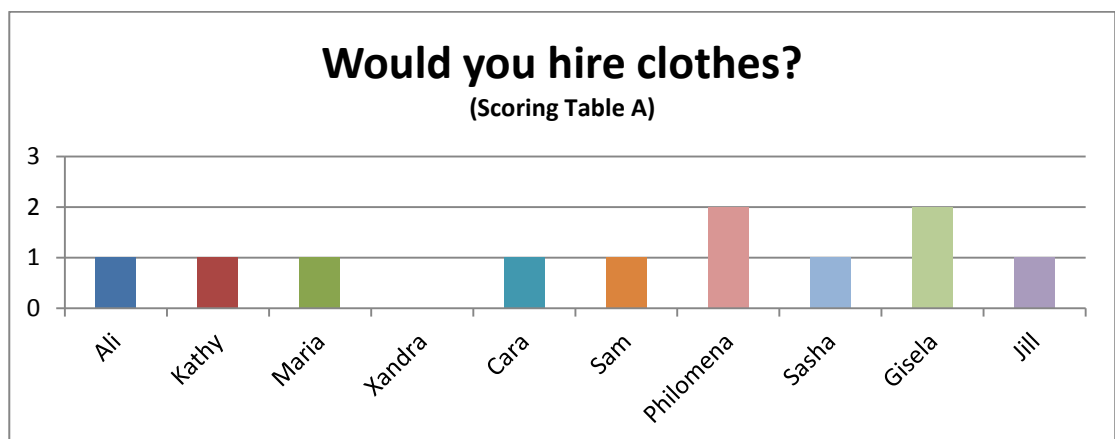


Figure 5.10 Would you Hire Clothes?

Both Philomena and Gisela had hired clothing before: Gisela would consider hiring an evening gown rather than buying it however, Philomena thinks she will probably buy a garment next time as she would like to keep it and get more use out of it, possibly adapting it. Most of the rest of the participants (Figure 5.10) would consider hiring but for special occasions, one-off occasions such as a Prom or for fancy dress. WRAP (2012) had similar findings that formal wear and fancy dress are the most popular categories for hiring with a high interest in both. Kathy and Maria would not hire but they would consider borrowing or lending dresses within their friendship group.

### 5.6.6 Repair or adapt clothing to prolong its life.

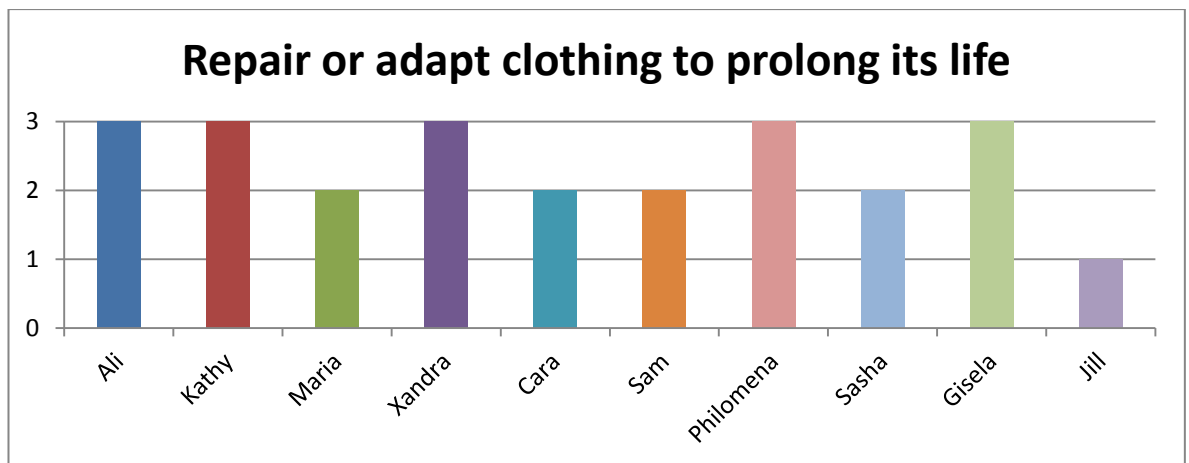


Figure 5.10 Repair or Adapt Clothing

On this chart (Figure 5.11) there is a high score for repairing and adapting with five participants registering the maximum score of 3. With the exception of Jill, who admitted she could not repair or alter much except perhaps sewing on buttons, the other participants were well skilled in clothing repairs, and even dressmaking. In earlier discussions Ali, Kathy, Sam and Gisela had all described making an item of clothing. In the case of Sam and Gisela they had made several garments. Sam had described making her own wedding dress; however, she did not really do much repairing now, only tears and breaks, but generally she wears clothes until they fall apart. Despite their dressmaking skills, they did not make garments any more, mainly because of time. Ali is able to make clothing from scratch, as she has all the skills and the equipment. This is something she enjoys doing, but again, she currently does not have the time and her machine was

broken. Gisela rarely makes anything now because she said it was not worth it, as fabric was more expensive now and she could buy garments cheaper than buying fabric. Maria shares this sentiment that clothing is so cheap that it is not worth making clothing unless it is for a fancy-dress occasion. Participants Cara and Sasha both had mothers who had made garments for them; Cara admitted she still gave her mother items to mend occasionally. Sasha had bought a sewing machine as she wanted to make garments but was too “nervous” to actually use it. Both participants Xandra and Philomena had made minor alterations, such as altering and letting out garments and gowns and making jeans into shorts. Maria had bought a small sewing machine to repair clothing and do minor alterations. Overall there was a high level of skills and access to skills, but they were not being fully utilized mainly because they did not want to.

#### 5.6.7 Return or Recycle Clothing When No Longer Wanted



Figure 5.11 Return or Recycling Clothing When No Longer Wanted

The participants had been asked earlier how they disposed of clothes, and during this discussion essentially all participants gave the same information they had given in the Wardrobe Sampling task. As shown in Figure 5.12, every participant recycled their clothing, though in different ways. The vast majority of recycling went to charity shops, or to the clothing banks at the dump. Maria put hers in the charity bags that come through the door, although that was in part due to not really knowing how to recycle clothing within the UK. She spoke of a group of Mums that she knows and how they were organizing a clothing swap; she liked that idea and would take part. No-

one sold their clothing on e-Bay or anywhere similar. Ali said that unless the garment was likely to sell for a lot of money it was not worth the effort in time and money. Sometimes clothes were passed on to friends or family; Xandra sent some of her clothes home to Colombia to a family. Kathy, who wears jeans most of the time, gives her jeans and her children's jeans to a lady who lives locally who will then use them to make into handbags. Sam recycled almost every garment:

*“Nine times out of ten to charity shops, if I can't, if I think that they're not really worth charity shops then they go into the clothing bin at the tip. Never throw, well I, apart from knickers, even bras, Yes, they can send them to Africa, we try and recycle everything that we have in the house, never mind the clothes so the clothes, go the same way, I'm afraid.”*

(S3).

For some participants, not all items of clothing were recycled, for some items that were beyond repair, Kathy, Sasha and Jill would throw them in the dustbin. Xandra and Gisela would use them as rags to clean bikes or cars. Ali and Xandra spoke about prevention, that both bought clothes that they liked and that they were going to use and keep for a long time. Gisela discussed the return schemes of M & S and H & M, she did not use either and felt that the M & S scheme with Oxfam, where people returned their unwanted M & S clothes to Oxfam and received a £5 M & S voucher in return, was a bit unfair; she felt Oxfam should have the money. In general, she felt that retailers should be doing more on this issue. Overall, recycling seemed to be a normal, ingrained habit for them all, helped by suggestions from friends and family that they do this, by the local council taking recycling bags from homes, and prompted by the feeling in general that this was “the right thing” to do.

### **5.6.8 Wash at 30 degrees, and use eco-friendly washing powder**

How the participants washed clothing was discussed beforehand within the Wardrobe Sampling task. Therefore, this section discusses issues that arose from the earlier discussions about the participants' thoughts, and reasoning, behind their washing habits.

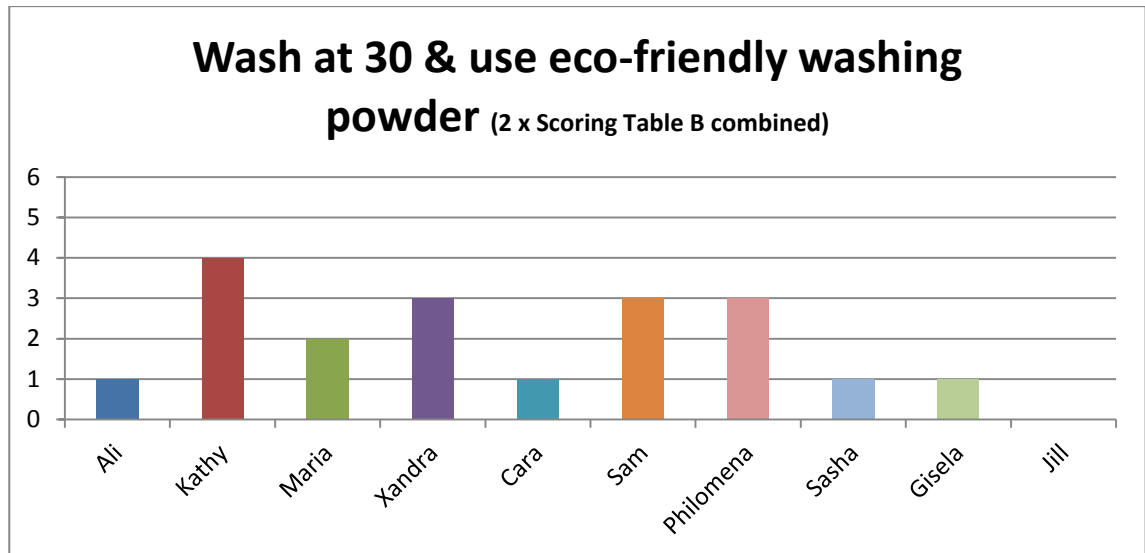


Figure 5.12 Wash at 30 and Use Eco-Friendly Washing Powder

This was scored out of 6, giving the maximum of 3 points for each activity (Figure 5.13). Kathy, Sam and Philomena already washed mainly at 30 degrees. Xandra and Gisela would consider washing at 30 degrees but Gisela felt that washing at 30 degrees did not get the clothes so clean, a concern echoed by Maria. Ali and Jill had problems with their washing machines. Ali did not think that her washing machine had a 30 setting, it was a very old machine that was already there in the flat. (she lives in rented accommodation). Jill had a fairly new machine but did not understand how to use it properly so ended up washing everything at 60 degrees. Sasha occasionally washed at 30 degrees, but preferred hotter washes as her partner is a chef and she has small children so she felt that the clothes needed to be washed on a higher temperature.

### 5.6.9 Washing Powder

There were two major themes that emerged from the washing powder. Firstly, that most of the participants had tried eco-friendly washing powder but expressed dissatisfaction with it, and secondly, that the washing powder that the participants chose was also influenced by skin problems, particularly eczema. Kathy was the only person who used eco-balls and seemed to have no problems with them; she used nothing else. Ali had an eco-egg but did not particularly like it; her partner refused to use it and used conventional washing powder. Maria also had an eco-egg, that was bought primarily to wash nappies. She also had another powder from the USA that was



environmentally-friendly, non-bio, gentler and was thought to be safe for babies, the negative aspect of this powder is that it did not wash well at 30 degrees. Sam, Gisela and Jill had all tried Ecover but felt it did not wash well so had stopped using it. Cara and Philomena would now consider an ecological washing powder but it would have to clean clothes to their required standards.

In terms of skin problems, Xandra used a special washing powder for her children as they have eczema/skin irritations as did Sam and Philomena and Sasha. They had tried an ecological washing powder before and eco-balls but neither had worked for the family. Jill and Sasha had tried to make their own detergent, but no longer did so because what they had made had not worked.

### 5.6.10 Line-Dry as Much as Possible

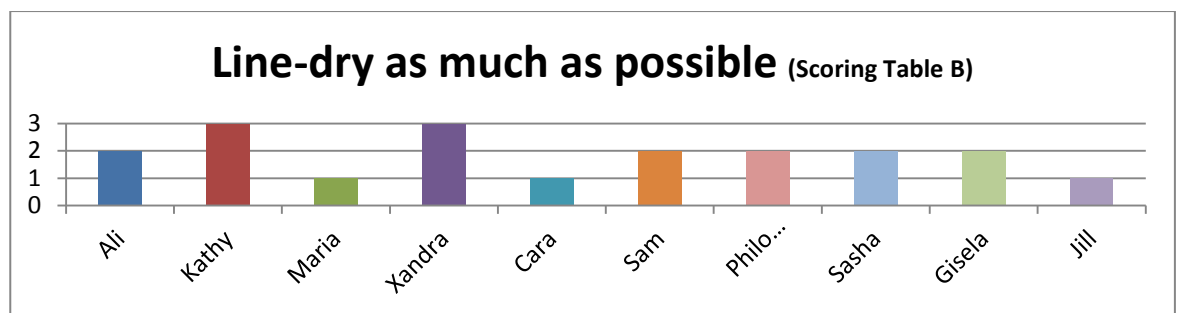


Figure 5.13 Line-Dry as Much as Possible

As shown in Figure 5.14, Kathy and Xandra did line-dry as much as possible. Sam, Philomena, Sasha, Gisela and Jill all had a tumble drier but also had other means of drying. Philomena and Sasha avoided the drier as much as possible as it cost too much money. Gisela tended to use hers in the winter only and Cara preferred using the radiator. Ali did not have a tumble drier although she wanted one; she used the launderette occasionally as her flat tended to be damp so when she had to dry inside this made the problem worse. Ali claimed that tumble-drying your clothes saved on ironing and that a tumble-drier saved on both labour and energy. For the rest of the participants the findings correlated to Fisher et al., (2008) report which also concluded that people were aware of the cost of tumble drying in economic terms more than energy terms, using line-drying as much as possible.

### 5.6.11 Avoid Ironing as Much as Possible

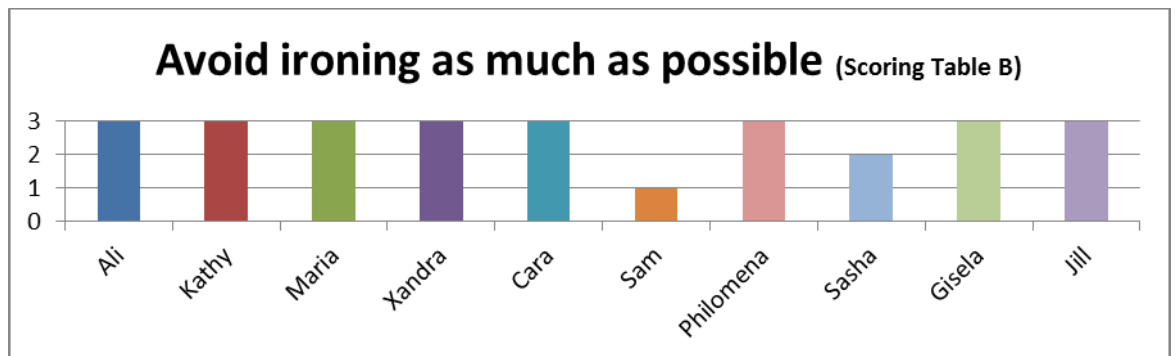


Figure 5.14 Avoid ironing as much as possible

This was a very popular goal (Figure 5.15) the overwhelming feeling was very negative towards this activity. Comments such as the following were made:

*“I hate ironing, it’s a waste of life” and “it makes me feel ill, it makes me feel dizzy”.*

Jill said she only ironed on demand. Sam was the only one who ironed everything, because although she did not particularly like ironing she enjoyed the feeling of ironed clothes and sheets.

The rest of the participants actively avoided it altogether.

### 5.6.12 Are you Aware of the Fibres that you are Buying?

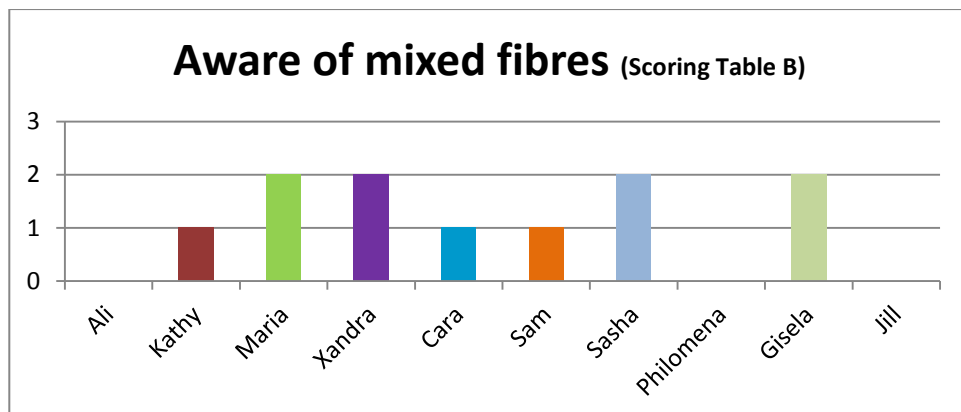


Figure 5.15 Awareness of Mixed Fibres

This question was directly linked to the recycling question to ascertain whether participants were aware of the difficulty of recycling garments with mixed fibres. Therefore, they were asked if they looked at the label, displaying what fibres the garment is composed of before buying. There was very low awareness of what fibres they were buying (Figure 5.16). Generally speaking there was a

preference for natural fibres over synthetic ones and a dislike of “itchy” fibres, but participants were unaware of the difficulties that mixtures of fibres caused for recycling, apart from Ali. The issue was discussed with her and she was aware that even garments that were 100% cotton according to the label, were not because the stitching within that item would not be cotton. Despite this level of awareness, she rarely checked the label when she was buying clothes as it was not a factor in her decision as to whether to buy the garment or not.

### 5.7 Sustainable Awareness

As discussed earlier, sustainable awareness was low amongst participants and it was very evident that the sustainable issue which had most awareness overall, was the exploitation of workers. The participants were more aware of this issue because either the subject had come to their notice or they had suspected from the low prices of clothing that garment workers were probably being exploited. Yet this knowledge did not have seemingly have any effect on participants wishing to buy ethically-made clothing, as within the categories of sustainable fashion; just three were willing to purchase such garments: Kathy, Xandra and Jill. There were clear barriers against such behaviour. Firstly, the negative image associated with ethically-made clothing, then that such clothing was not “their style”, along with the views that it was too expensive and not knowing where to buy them. Just one shop was identified in Leicester that sold such clothing but again, Leicester city centre was either not a preferred location for their shopping, or they knew of the shop but rarely or never went there. In discussions with participants in general there was an unwillingness to purchase such clothing as their style and shopping preferences were more important. Similar findings can be seen in Carrigan and Attalla (2001) who discovered that consumers are unwilling to undergo any extra inconvenience in order to purchase ethically, and price, value, trends and brand image remain the dominant influences over purchase choice. These barriers towards the purchase of ethical fashion have already been discussed extensively within the literature review (2.22). Given that the term “sustainability” caused confusion with participants, breaking the term into separate distinct issues gave the participants more clarity and

awareness and gave more robust links to specific types of sustainable clothing. Another observation was the participants' lack of knowledge about the clothing industry in general: there was very little specific information about any aspect of the clothing industry. Finally, despite any awareness that the participants did possess, the knowledge was having little if any, impact upon their actions within their clothing consumption. Their own personal considerations and motivations were more important; these themes will be explored more in depth in the next chapter.

### 5.8 The Sustainable Fashion Goals

Figure 5.17 displays each sustainable fashion goal with all the participants' results. This is a highly complex diagram demonstrating the considerable variety of behaviour. Within this Figure, there are suggestions that some sustainable fashion goals are more achievable than others. In particular, there are four sustainable goals that proved the most popular: Recycling Clothing, Repairing and Adapting Clothing, Avoid Ironing and Buying Fewer, More Durable Clothing.

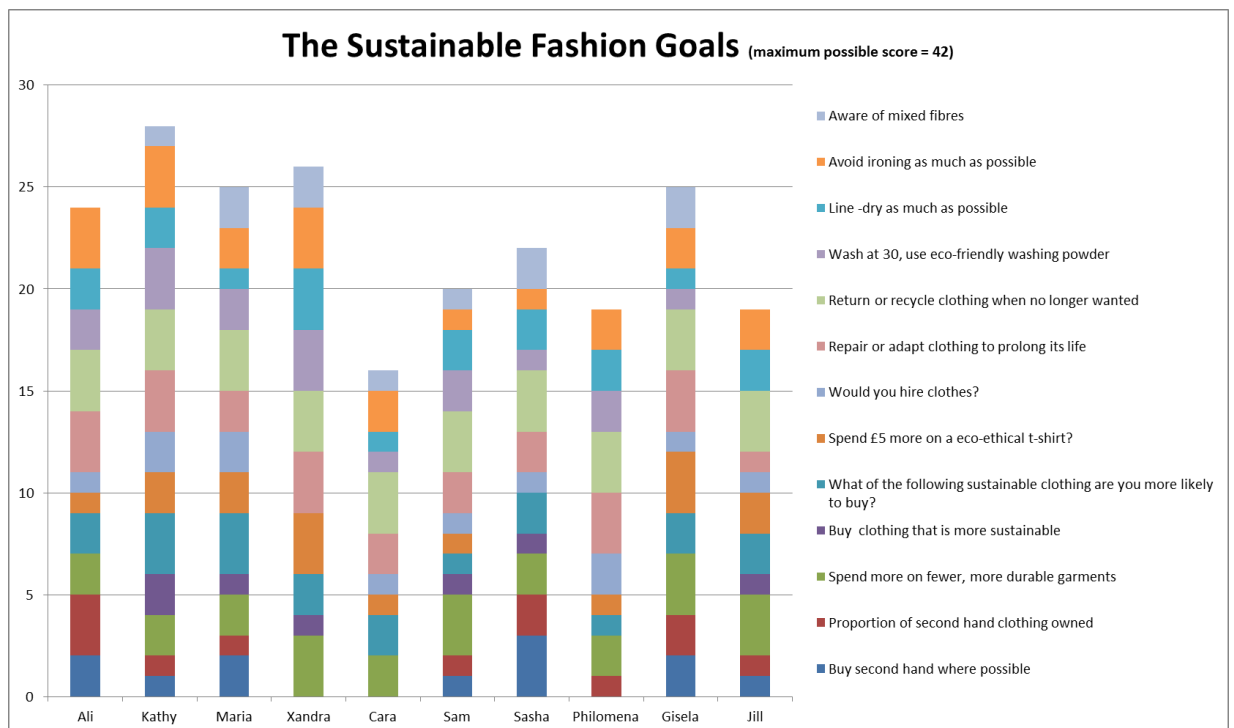


Figure 5.16 The Sustainable Fashion Goals

### 5.8.1 Recycling

Recycling is the clearly the most achievable goal for all participants. Fisher et al., (2008) found there was evidence of participants in segments 1-3 displaying a greater desire to recycle and reuse, but no substantial behavioural difference between segments. This both correlates and contrasts the recycling behaviour from the participants. All recycled their clothing so there was no behaviour difference between the segments; however, the biggest recycler, Sam, came from the Cautious Participant. She commented that she recycled everything, and though she was sceptical as to whether all items were properly recycled, she did acknowledge that this was outside her control. The lack of knowledge of what happened to recycled clothing was also highlighted by Fisher et al., (2008) whilst clothes are routinely disposed of to charities, there is a good deal of ignorance about what then happens to them. There was very little questioning from participants of what happened to recycled clothing. The prevailing attitude was that clothing was given to friends, charity shops, charity bags that came through the door or taken to the tip, with little curiosity over what happened next. No-one mentioned performing this behaviour for either ethical or environmental reasons though they did mention that this was the “right thing” to do. This would infer that recycling is not necessarily seen as a “green” behaviour, requiring the right pro-environmental attitudes, but participant’s actions reflected a more pragmatic view, that it was seen as the “norm”, which according to Thomas and Sharp (2013) is how they often become habits or habitual behaviours. Habits are not just a result of the frequency of past behaviours but also because we have done it in the same context and it has automaticity and lacks conscious intent or awareness of action.

### 5.8.2 Repairing or Adapting Clothing

The majority of participants were highly skilled in both making and repairing clothing or had access to others with the requisite skills. The clothes making skills were very under-utilized mainly due to fabrics costing more than ready-made clothing, and to issues of time, the disinclination to spend time making garments or indeed repurposing them. There was a high level of repair though

which seemed to extend to all their clothing. This is in contrast to the participants as cited by Fisher et al., (2008) where repair to clothing is no longer undertaken as a normal, regular activity due to lack of skills and equipment at home, and who are more likely to want to mend clothes on which they had spent a lot of money.

### 5.8.3 Avoid Ironing As Much as Possible

This was a very achievable goal because the majority of the participants simply hated this activity and would find any reason not to do it. Although one of the participants clearly regarded ironed clothes as important, with Sam ironing all items including.

### 5.8.4 Buy Fewer, More Durable Clothing

The third most achievable goal was buy fewer, more durable clothing which participants agreed with in principle far more than buying sustainable clothing or buying second hand clothing, their own “style” and their own requirements for clothing being more important considerations. Whilst the acquisition of clothing and personal style will be examined in more detail within the next chapter, the reasons why the participants liked this option were varied: they all had their own interpretations of what durable clothing was linked to their own style and preferences, with only Maria and Ali actively challenging this goal.

## 5.9 Conclusions

Within this chapter, three common themes are beginning to emerge. Firstly, the reoccurring theme is the definition of “sustainability” itself. There is very low awareness of what this actually means in terms of the environmental and ethical issues. Once separated into their different issues, there is more understanding particularly as there is wide acceptance of the terms “organic” and “Fairtrade”. This also correlates to Fisher et al., (2008) in that participants did not spontaneously use the terms “sustainability” and the issues where they demonstrated knowledge were “sweatshops”, and to a lesser extent, organic and Fairtrade. Overwhelmingly the major theme was that the research results and analysis presented within this chapter indicates that

sustainability issues do not drive behaviours for the purchase, use and disposal of clothing. The participants did talk about sustainability and they come from a demographic that is well educated and keep themselves informed. However, although they talk about sustainability their actual understanding of this regarding clothing is very patchy and its influence upon their behaviour very slight. This finding is reflected in other research in the literature that has informed the work in this thesis, such as Fisher et al., (2008) whereby even among consumers with a positive general orientation to pro-environmental behaviour and some understanding of sustainability impacts, clothing choices most often derive from considerations of identity and economy rather than of sustainability. What the results of this chapter show is that the participants do exhibit what could be classified as sustainable behaviours, but these behaviours are predominantly a side effect of other, deep-rooted, clothes purchase and use factors. These were factors such as cost, changing social acceptance of secondhand clothes, or preferring organic for medical reasons. It is notable that the one factor where all the participants scored well was reuse/recycling. This is a sustainability agenda that has emerged and grown outside of the clothing sector. Clothing is included within it but is not the main area that has driven recycling. All participants display sustainable behaviour to some degree but overall have little awareness of sustainability in fashion.

The analysis within this chapter has helped to identify where there are links between sustainability and the key factors involved in clothing purchase, use and disposal. This raises the question, as with recycling, of what the potential is for sustainability to become a part of other agendas, rather than a side effect. Are there other areas of clothing behaviours in which sustainability can find a role and through this develop the consumers understanding and attitudes? So, rather than seeking to market sustainability in itself to consumers, are there established aspects of clothing behaviour into which a sustainability aspect can be introduced?

Clearly there is a need to examine in more detail the other factors involved with clothing and the individual, and this will be discussed within Chapter Six where there will be a thematic analysis of the individual's relationship with their clothing.



## 6 Clothing and the Individual

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### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the considerations that emerged as important for the participants over the issue of their clothing. Therefore, the focus is on reporting what the participants said about their clothes with the emphasis being on what Skjold (2016) terms as “the ordinary”, the everyday practices of participants and the issues arising from what was discussed within the three activities. Through the Wardrobe Sampling task and from the other activities, there were various aspects of clothing that emerged and the themes that emerged from the coding were grouped into three major areas as advised by Miles and Huberman (1994). Firstly, the various personal “needs” that clothing fulfilled for participants: these being the purposes of garments and the social influences that bear upon these needs, such as work and social occasions. Secondly, an individual’s identity, and the formation of this identity expressed through clothing, encompassing former selves, cultural and current influences. Finally, personal style is discussed, the elements that form this style and a person’s image. As Skjold (2016) claims, by examining clothing practices through the lens of design research there is a potential to go across and beyond general ideas about fashion and dress practice. By understanding what a consumer requires from their clothing sustainability can be increased, for if a garment is designed in accordance with what a consumer “needs” this will result in the garment being more sustainable in terms of longevity, the owner cherishing a garment, and less wastage, as is seen with Fletcher’s vision of Slow Fashion (2010).

### 6.2 Life Stage

Life circumstances are not a simple static state and the interviews captured this fluid situation. Many reflected that they were at a particular point within their lives, a life stage which affected their clothing consumption. Phrases such as “*when I was younger I used to*” kept repeating themselves as the participants referred to certain styles that they used to wear as their former

selves or as part of former behaviours, particularly in the area of work. The key theme was a major life event: in nine cases out of the ten, this was becoming a mother, and in Sam's present case it was retirement. Motherhood had a big impact upon their lives. Phoenix et al., (1991) note that women now have fewer children and participate in the employment market more than they did. All participants were mothers and some had part time jobs, yet none was in full time employment, and only Gisela, who has only one child who was older, had a "career" rather than casual employment. With the exception of Sue, motherhood continues to occupy a large proportion of their lives, is a major part of their responsibilities and is central to their perception of themselves. The practical circumstances of their day to day lives were driving their clothing choices, indirectly in terms of changes in working patterns and directly, particularly exemplified by Maria, who was most restricted in her clothing choices by her breastfeeding and nurturing a toddler.

### 6.3 Clothing Needs

Within Chapter Two, there was a discussion on the literature on "needs" as this was seen to be a key element in addressing more sustainable fashion consumption (Fletcher, 2008; Niinimaki, 2010). Additionally, "needs" was how the participants expressed their requirements for various types of garments, and how a particular garment addressed a particular "need" whether it was for a physical function, (modesty, warmth) or for a social "need".

#### 6.3.1 Purpose of the Garment

In Chapter Four, the major theme that arose from the Wardrobe Sampling task in terms of the jeans and particularly in terms of the T-shirt, was that they were not perceived as especially valued garments: the participants, would not, and did not, spend very much on them. For specific garments within the wardrobe sampling task, for both the jeans and the T-shirt, there was an emphasis on the purpose of the garment. With the exception of Sasha, who cherished her T-shirt for sentimental reasons, the other participants did not cherish their T-shirts as much; they were

mainly garments that were worn with other more important garments, as for Kathy whose plain T-shirt “*matched*” a more important item, a long multi-coloured skirt, or they were worn under garments for extra warmth, such as in Ali’s case who wore more vest-type garments for this purpose. Consequently, many of these T-shirt garments were not cherished or kept for very long. As Philomena says of her T-shirt purchase, it was

*Fairly recent because I don’t keep things for long particularly t-shirts and stuff, I wear them perhaps for a year on and off and then they go. (P3)*

Equally, Ali stated that her winter coat, which she designated as being “sensible”, was bought purely to keep herself warm although she describes it as looking “horrible”. Whilst jeans were equally viewed as garments which had a specific purpose, there were more differing opinions about them. As Miller (2015) identified within his ethnographic research, most people have a pair of jeans, an ordinary pair, as jeans never go out of fashion; they are ordinary, last longer than other garments and are available to buy everywhere, including supermarkets. Miller’s reasoning was evident in the participants’ attitude towards jeans, as they were frequently worn, every participant except for one owned at least one pair bought from a variety of different retailers and some participants owned more than one pair. Firstly, for most of the participants, they were functional garments:

*Not favourite but necessary. I wear them daily, pretty much mostly. So I go through quite a few, they’re a real practical buy for me. (K1)*

As Miller and Woodward (2007) observed, denim, which has its roots in working attire for American men in agriculture and industry, is now the most ubiquitous textile in the world. They go on to say that it has become the most personal and intimate of all items of clothing, and that in some areas, it has become the secure base of most women’s anxious relationships to their wardrobe and a common solution to the task of getting dressed on a daily basis. Jeans were a very

popular item for participants as they were regarded as functional items of clothing, suitable for the practicalities of everyday life.

### 6.3.2 Practicality

Kathy, Xandra, Sasha, and Philomena, all worked from home with home-based businesses. Philomena, who has two children at school, favours jeans as they are comfortable and practical for baking, looking after the children and for the school run. Kathy wears jeans the vast majority of the time for the same reasons. Additionally, she had a small toddler at home so jeans are convenient for all the spheres of her life: baking, shop work and playing with her toddler. Kathy was the only participant who specified a specific cut of jeans. This particular cut suited her shape and fitted her. Sasha worked occasionally outside the home as a mystery shopper and no special garments are required for this. She was also a freelancer on social media and had a tendency to wear jeans as again this garment is practical for her work from home, housework, and the school run. Jill and Maria had no other role outside the home. Jill dresses casually most of the time as there is no occasion to warrant smart dress. Sam was also at home helping to care for an elderly relative, and her clothing tends to be centred on jeans too as they are practical for her. Jeans were popular for another reason too, that they were comfortable items to wear:

*“Yes, and they are the most comfortable jeans you will ever wear” (S2).*

Comfort was a priority for most of the participants with regard to their clothing, particularly Kathy who described comfort as the main defining characteristic of all garments that she owns:

*“Comfort, comfort is the main thing, if something doesn’t look comfortable then I don’t even look at it.” (K3)*

For Ali and Jill, part of the comfort of their jeans came from their age, as also identified by Woodward (2007) in her ethnography: that as jeans age, they become more comfortable as they mould to the shape of the wearer. Ali and Jill had both had possessed their jeans for a long time, indeed so long that Ali’s jeans which had originally been black were now grey. Consequently, the

jeans had moulded themselves to their shape, and as Entwistle (2000) suggests, comfort is a person's "normal" experience of dress and its relationship to the body is that it becomes an extension of the body, so that like a second skin it is not really noticeable to the wearer. In both cases the jeans were so comfortable that they became cherished items to be hung onto until they fell apart.

*They're just really comfortable, and everyone thinks I'm mad to keep them because I like, they're like, ... just look at them, look at the bottom of that, (laughter) but these are my Sunday jeans. Like so if I'm going for a walk or just kind of kicking around. (J2)*

Though obviously old and worn, items were downgraded to be worn for certain activities within the home. This is also the case for other items, such as Kathy's T-shirt which was downgraded to a T-shirt to be worn for sleeping in when it became worn. Sam deliberately bought worn clothing for when she was a self-employed gardener, the implication being that worn clothing was more suitable for such work. Essentially what all these garments had in common was the inability for these garments to be worn for social occasions. Some participants such as Philomena and Maria had more than one pair of jeans, some ordinary pairs for day to day living and more expensive pairs for social occasions such as going out with friends.

### 6.3.3 Conclusion

It is evident from the above that some garments were viewed on a basic level purely for their practicality. Miller and Woodward (2007) claim, that irrespective of women's social positioning or background, the pivotal dynamic which underpins how women choose what to wear is between clothing that is "easy" and "safe", and clothing that allows women to transform themselves. They discuss this in terms of habitual clothing, which are those items of clothing that women know how to wear through wearing them all of the time. These habitual clothes were exemplified by jeans, popular items of clothing that were "easy", "safe" and practical for participants' day to day living. These garments were a favourite with participants for these reasons and other considerations

were not viewed as important, such as how they looked in these garments. Yet, how they look and what others think is important and this factor/aspect is explored within the next section. As Philomena and Maria demonstrate, having several pairs of jeans, some for everyday wear and others for more occasional wear, indicate a different set of priorities which will be explored within the next section. The most dominating factor affecting participants' clothing choices at all levels of their clothing "needs", was their life circumstances.

### 6.4 Social Influences

Within this section outside influences are explored which impact upon the participants' clothing choices.

#### 6.4.1 Work

Work was an area whereby most participants had specific clothing for their role as there were external criteria and expectations from others governing what sort of garments to wear for this purpose. In her ethnography of women's wardrobes, Woodward (2007) discovered that women often saw work as not being a place where they could enact a core identity, and as being restrictive in terms of how you can behave and indeed in what you can wear. As part of "belonging" to the workplace, the participants had to conform to some degree to what others expected them to wear.

#### 6.4.2 Professional Wardrobes

Gisela and Ali both required specific clothing for their working roles. Ali, who worked as a cover supervisor at a secondary school, had to dress relatively smartly for work.

*It's not written down but it's kind of universally understood rule that of you know, no denim, not even cords, things like that, you have to be quite smart. (A3)*

The school had a strict dress code that Ali is fully aware of, to the extent that failure to comply would mean her line manager having a quiet word with her about this. So, her work clothes have

smart collars and are rather conservative, a distinctive style specifically for her working life. Gisela, as a University Administrator, liked to wear wide-legged trousers for work, and tends to favour more expensive brands although she often teams up expensive trousers with a cheap T-shirt from Sainsburys or an item from a charity shop. Her place of work did not seem to have a formal dress code and she said that over the years, she has become slightly more casual than she used to be in her day to day role. Though there are exceptions, she generally dresses up more smartly if she is running a course. In Gisela's case she conformed to a dress norm that is represented by an unspoken, implicitly understood, taken-for-granted knowledge about how people should look (Freeburg and Workman, 2010). For Ali, it is a type of mind-set: dressing smartly for work in turn affects her work; being smart means that she is viewed in a different way, as a professional, by others and also by herself.

### 6.4.3 The Former Professional Roles

All participants were in full-time work before they had children, and in Sam's case before she retired. In a similar way to Ali and Gisela now, for their former professional roles some of the participants had another persona for work and used to "power-dress" to a certain extent. Power-dressing, a concept developed in the 1980s, was based on Goffman's theory of Impression Management whereby women dressed in a certain "uniform" or "power suit" at work as a visual demonstration of themselves progressing to become serious career women (Entwhistle, 2010, cited in Steele, 2010). Cara, in her previous role of Diversity Officer, used to "power-dress" as she described it, by wearing smart pencil skirts and blouses in order to cultivate an impression for her colleagues of a strong woman, in her own words as "*someone not to be messed with.*" Sasha as a former teacher, wore high heels not as a form of power dressing, but which she used as a behavioural control device as they would clack on the floor giving warning to her pupils that she was on her way. Jill who was a former Exams Officer at a local college, and Philomena who was a PA at an accountancy firm, both had smart formal work clothes comprising mostly of suits in

conservative colours such as black, as both workplaces had a dress code. Jill, who has now disposed of her former work clothes, explained her thoughts and feelings about them:

*The sort of clothing that didn't necessary reflect what I would wear now. Thinking about it, I must have looked very serious, or even scary. I was obviously, you know, trying to convey you know that impression of myself, so, yeah mostly it's gone. So, I decided that even if I did go back to work they weren't really me any more so, perhaps kind of darker colours, when I was young I used to wear a lot of black and now I just find it's a bit sombre so perhaps my taste has changed as well. (J1)*

For Jill, clothing was part of her work persona, separating her own identity and the "performance" she put on at work as an individual to be taken seriously (Giddens, 1991). Her choice of clothing also affected her confidence at work, they gave her a more positive self-esteem. The persona that Jill had for her work role was expressed through her clothing and disposing of her work clothes reflects her wish not to be that person anymore. Philomena had disposed of most of her work clothes mainly for similar reasons to Jill. As she says of her former job:

*"At the time I loved it but now, I couldn't think of anything worse!!" (P3)*

Disposing of their clothing reflects not only their decision to close the chapter on their professional lives but demonstrates the fluidity of clothing styles, particularly with changing tastes for certain colours. Black was considered to be a suitable colour for work, partly because it was seen to be a conventional colour but also because of its practicality in that any other colour could be worn with it. Now released from external pressure to wear a certain style and colour of clothing, the current complete freedom of choice enabled the participants to choose brighter colours, another significant move away from their former clothing and work personas. Xandra used to work in an office environment as she was a manager for a bank, her style was similarly professional and formal. However, she loved this particular style as wearing skirt suits with tights and heels was very professional and glamorous. For her, her professional clothing was an



extension of her cultural South American “*feminine style*”. She gave an example of a typical work dress that she would wear: a simple black dress with a high-neck line. High neck-lines are important for her, as she does not wish to expose any cleavage, an implicit feeling as Entwistle notes, that with work being a public domain, women’s potentially sexual bodies should be covered (Entwistle, 2010, cited in Steele, 2010). Sasha and Maria, as former secondary school teachers, followed this implicit dress code and, similarly to Ali, owned conservative clothing for their roles. Sasha wore plain dresses for practicality as they “*kept everything covered*”. Maria’s previous teaching job required her to have clothes that were functional and professional for the workplace. As she says:

*Interesting I don’t know if I would say that they’re more conservative, I mean I’m not a trendy type of person anyway and I’m not going to be showing a lot of skin because it’s cold and that’s not my style. Um, but no jeans, I don’t, I wouldn’t wear jeans to the workplace and so along those lines a more professional. Blouses, trousers, proper trousers um shoes with the little heel on them, nothing too much. (M4)*

Maria kept much of her professional clothing, an indication that although she is not currently teaching, at some point she anticipates returning to this role. Additionally, professional style influences her own personal style as she is becoming drawn more towards demure and comfortable garments. This is also an indication of the fluid nature of how personal styles shift and change over a person’s lifetime, reflecting not only an individual’s preference but external forces that influence personal choice. Sasha, who had disposed of most of her work clothing as she no longer teaches, had kept a few items. She described one item, it was a jacket and she had worn this jacket recently to a meeting at school concerning one of her children:

*I have a few smart jackets, but I don’t wear it, sort of, like, I’ve got one that I wore for a meeting at the school about one of my kids and I wore it and I was stressed out and I thought if I put a jacket on I might look a bit more...official! (S2)*

This was a meeting that she foresaw would be problematic and she had worn the jacket deliberately to project an image of herself, a more professional image, to make a good impression.

Sam, now fully retired, wore suits for work as she had progressed into a more managerial role, but had disposed of them all, signalling her professional life is at an end. However, unlike her suits, she still possesses formal party frocks which she used to wear for functions linked to her husband's former work role. Overall, the former professional clothing tended to be formal for participants, as their clothing was projecting a version of themselves, a different persona. This was vital for their professional role, but they tended to keep clothing specifically for work which was not worn on other occasions as it was not required within any other area of their life. Given that many of the participants had disposed of their formal professional clothing, it was a sign of closure for participants that although a return to work was planned they had either found an alternative career path or were planning to find one. Belk (1988) posits that consumers shed or neglect possessions when possessions no longer fit consumers' ideal self-images. This can occur either because the ideal self-image has changed or because the images of the objects formerly incorporated in the extended self has changed. So, in the discarding of possessions that no longer fit the participants' view of themselves is their fit with their perceptions of their personal histories.

### 6.4.4 Social Occasions

Both Philomena and Sasha, whose days, at the time of the interview, were dominated by the daily ritual of the school run as the main activity outside the home, felt the implicit external pressure on what garments are deemed "suitable" for this activity. Philomena felt garments such as maxi dresses were inappropriate, and Sasha described how, on a hot day, she wore a short dress and felt "uncomfortable" wearing this, particularly as she lives in an area of Leicester dominated by an ethnic group who tend to wear more covering garments. Although there is no dress code as such for activities like the school-run, both demonstrate a semiotic "fit" to the outer environment,

where clothing is selected to be appropriate to the occasion (Woodward, 2007), although neither of them could articulate clearly why wearing particular dresses felt “*unsuitable*” for such an activity.

### 6.4.5 Conclusion

Throughout this section there were two clear themes emerging, the implicit and explicit expectations that others have that affected their clothing choices, particularly in the working world. Such clothing may even not be specified yet participants were picking up on unspoken cues to choose particular garments to wear. Yet for some participants, although others may be dictating to a certain degree what they might wear, it was clear that this mode of dress helped with their professional identities, that it affected them in a positive manner, giving them self-confidence and professionalism. Though this might not be part of their core identity, dressing in this manner was still part of their identity which for some was cheerfully discarded along with their clothing when they left that particular role.

## 6.5 Identity

As Entwistle (2016) posits, there is an integral link between individual identity and the body in terms of clothing consumption. Within this section “identity” and how this links with participants is explored, particularly looking at how individual “styles” form and what influences the participants were under when they formed, and equally what current potential influences there are which affect their choices of garment. Included in these influences are the individual and the social groups in which they belong as discussed in Chapter Two (2.11).

### 6.5.1 Former Selves

Skjold (2016) puts forward the concept of the biographical wardrobe, which traces the development of an individual’s dress practices throughout their lives, and describes the process thus: teenage years, where people start to form their own ideas of self; adulthood, when people adjust their wardrobes to a more adult version for work, for having children etc; and then multiple

phases of transformation as life goes on, including various life changes that can affect people such as bodily changes or retirement. Though within this research there was not an in-depth wardrobe study, there were nevertheless significant changes throughout the participants' lives that could be explained by this concept. For most of them their personal style did start when they were young, and life stages did have an impact upon their wardrobes. There were impacts of personal style upon their current identity that had started forming when they were young.

### 6.5.2 Former Selves: The Major Influences

In various discussions it was evident that, in addition to their work clothes, participants' behaviour changed over their lifetime in other areas too as circumstances altered.

Fashion played a bigger part in their lives when they were young. This is perhaps no surprise, given that younger people tend to demonstrate a higher degree of fashion involvement than do older people (O'Cass, 2004). Jill describes how when she was younger, she identified with the programme "Newcastle by Night". She and her friends would buy whatever was fashionable that week and go out, wearing very little. She comments that they:

*"Absolutely didn't wear a coat", and their style was "tiny weeny little dresses and mini-skirts." (J3)*

At this stage in her life, Jill used to be very concerned and self-conscious about her image; she and her friends would all be identically dressed and should any of them have a rip in their tights, the others would rip their tights to match. This identical style within the group correlates to Abbot and Sapsford's (2001) findings about young girls and their wardrobes, where style gives meaning, validation and coherence to their group identity, defining who is part of the group and who is external to the group. Similarly, Ayman and Kaya (2014) found that for children reaching their teens, social pressure and conformity influence increases in dress and appearance. Group identity and belonging to specific groups was also important to other participants when they were

teenagers, and evident later in life too. Cara, who went to reggae parties as a teenager, had a particular outfit that she remembers:

*It was a top, basically trousers and a top but the trousers had big holes in, so it was like those fishnets? But you also get the tights I call pot-hole tights so it was like that, the holes were like this, all around, I had shorts underneath and I had this top, the same with these big holes and just a bra. (C3)*

Though her outfit was influenced by her peer group, and the fashion that they followed, she said that there were parties where this outfit was not particularly appropriate but group conformity did not prevent her from wearing the outfit as her own choice. Other participants followed their own individual tastes and reacted against expected fashion styles, and both Ali and Maria flirted with fashion sub-cultures. Abbott and Sapsford (2001) discovered that for young people there were two distinct groups of women, the 'trendies' who followed fashion, and the 'alternatives' who tended to rebel against what they saw as a popular or predetermined youth culture, which included groups such as Goths. Equally Polhemus and Proctor (1978) noted that for some people not following fashion was a personal statement and identification and active participation in a social group involved clothing. Ali was a Goth for a short period as a teenager, as was Maria, who admitted that she used to be "stropky" and was influenced then by the TV, music, and bands such as The Cure and The Smiths. This correlates with Abbott and Sapsford (2001) whose findings also established a relationship between clothes and musical taste. For Maria this was a phase, as she then later adopted the vintage/retro look that still influences her current personal style. Sam also reacted against fashion when she was younger. She admitted that she never had the figure for mini-skirts, but was seemingly immune to fashion influences around her as she commented that the issue of whether her clothing was fashionable or not had never bothered her. Sam's biggest influence when young was her mother who bought her clothing when she lived at home, although looking back at what she used to wear, she is rather appalled at their old-fashioned style.

Similarly, when Kathy was a teenager her biggest influence was also her mother, however she tried to induce Kathy to be more fashionable, an action Kathy actively resisted.

### 6.5.3 Cultural Influences

There was also another crucial factor which impacted on Kathy, along with Maria and Xandra. All three were born and grew up elsewhere in the world (America-Israel, America and Colombia), and all three of them came to the UK as a consequence of their spouses' careers. Culturally, this impacted on their clothing in terms of style, particularly with the change in climate. Additionally, Cara, though born and raised in Leicester, has cultural influences from being of Afro-Caribbean descent. This influences her in terms of her hairstyle and hair covering: as she describes it,

*“what black women can relate to” (C4).*

The significance of personal hair-style reflects historical and cultural influences affecting the identity of black women, such as the adoption of adornment traditions from home by the children of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Britain (Boris, 2017). How Cara's hair looks plays a big role in determining what she wears and how it affects her mood. Maria, having lived in California, was used to lighter weight fabrics, shorter sleeves and sandals. She has also lived in France which has affected her style too, as she feels that women there are more *“dressed up”* and *“tend to be a lot more put together”*. Xandra, having come from tropical Colombia, is used to wearing the same type of clothing all year round. Despite having to adapt to the seasonal weather here, Xandra still has strong cultural influences on the way she dresses.

*Yes, really the ladies are more vain in Colombia, you have to check for Colombian people they are very vain. I think we are more Latin Americans in general and we are more about beauty and about the body because as the weather helped you to dress differently and expose a little bit more so, you tend to be wearing, you tend to be more healthier and more fit and of course dressing different that shows those kind of things. (X4)*

Whilst her style has changed to accommodate the change in climate, she has remained heavily influenced by her cultural heritage as it is part of her personality. Kathy, having lived in Israel,

California, New York and now the UK, has kept to her own personal style and adapted to the changes in the weather by layering her clothes. One of Birtwhistle's findings confirmed a consumer preference for layering garments in a chilly or variable climate such as that found in Scotland (Birtwhistle & Tsim, 2005). To a lesser extent, Gisela has always had a strong sense of wanting to be a bit different from everybody else, growing up with a German mother, having a rather unusual name and wearing 'Dirndel' as a child. For all of them, their clothing style reflected aspects of their former selves as parts of their biography (Woodward, 2007).

### 6.5.4 Attitude to Fashion

All participants were asked about fashion (discussed earlier in section 2.10) as clothing is part of the fashion system, which, in defining the latest aesthetic, helps to shape trends and tastes that structure our experience of dress in daily life (Entwhistle, 2000). In addition, according to Barnes and Lea-Greenwood (2010), clothes buying is heavily dominated by the High Street retail stores offering consumers fast fashion that is being driven by catwalk styles, celebrity looks and the desire for newness, particularly around those items identified in the media which create interest and drive high levels of consumer demand. Andreozzi and Bianchi (2007) argue that rapidly changing fashions reflect consumer desire for novelty and variety. Yet despite the heavy influence of fashion, there was a general theme that fashion was not very important to participants and it had a limited appeal. As evident within this discussion, there was a feeling of not being very bothered with the "fashion system", and that participants were not happy with the clothing on offer. As Jill described it:

*"When you were younger you tried different styles more whereas now styles now are pretty much the same." (J2)*

Ali thinks of fashion now as a hobby for other people, and that fashion design is a form of art. Gisela, Jill, Maria and Philomena all agreed to a degree that they were probably more influenced by fashion, but only in the sense of noticing the signs of the times, and the trends that are

prevalent within clothing design. This indicates an influence of the fashion system rather than specific fashions or trend setters.

*I think it always comes up in hindsight, in the moment I think oh I'm not too trendy, um, at the moment I'm just sort of wearing kind of, what's out there, and then I look back at photos and think, wow that really does look like the nineties! (laughter). Yeah, then you see things come back in style, and leggings, 1980s leggings, the lace on the bottom of the capri leg and it's all back, it's all come back and it seems like everyone has leggings on underneath their dresses and tunics. (M4)*

These responses would reflect Entwistle's (2000) concept of the "Fashion System" whereby the participants would buy clothing within the fashion system, yet do not particularly follow fashion. One example of this is that Jill acknowledged that she had noticed the current trend for jeggings. Gisela had bought jeggings once and the lady who sold them to her tried to persuade her to buy an unusual smock top on the basis it was fashionable, but Gisela refused because she thought it looked like an "altered sack". Finding their own personal style was the big theme that came through within this section. Sam had never been influenced by fashion, she thought she knew more or less what she likes, and what suits her. Sasha agreed with this sentiment as well. Both Sasha and Kathy have never been concerned with fashion even when they were teenagers. Xandra has noticed fashion within Colombia but not the fashion here and has not noticed any trends here. Cara was influenced by fashion when she was younger and started going to parties but it was her father's attitude, which she described as "not being a sheep", that has influenced her more in having her own style. She described being at university and having friends with very different styles, such as a skateboarder, preppy and Bohemian, but they all appreciated each other's styles and did not want to change. Overall, although the participants gave a low priority to "fashion" they did recognize an influence that can be viewed as that of the fashion system. However, although their clothing choices may have been within predominant fashion system aspects, personal style emerged as a key choice determinant.



### 6.5.5 Current Influences - Implicit and Explicit Forces

In terms of implicit and explicit forces that influenced participants, no-one mentioned advertising or marketing. Anderson and Meyer (2000) found that pre-adolescents indicated an interest in buying clothing items to look like music, television and movie stars, a source of information which becomes increasingly important as pre-adolescents age. They also found that females were more susceptible to clothing advertisements. Crane's (1999) research found that women relied on three different types of sources for information about fashion. The first type of source was their social milieu, broadly defined. This suggests that following fashion was motivated by a desire to be accepted by their peers. The second type of source for information about fashion was the media, including fashion magazines, television, and clothes worn by popular singers. The third type of source was also the most important: that most women relied on local stores for information about fashion. However, the participants in this study mentioned information coming from non-market dominated sources, including sources over which marketers have little control such as friends, family, opinion leaders, and media (Workman and Cho, 2013). Even within these information sources, overall the interviews indicate little conscious influence from the media; the participants' peer groups and partners play a far greater role. Ali likes Kate Moss and Lily Allen, and Cara likes Kylie Minogue, but neither of them wish to emulate their style of clothing. Xandra, when younger, was influenced by Mariah Carey and Gloria Stefan but did not have the money to dress like them. Philomena sometimes watches *This Morning* if they have fashion items, and sometimes gets inspiration from this, but she is a very visual shopper and is far more influenced by what she sees in the shop windows. Ali does think that she is subconsciously influenced by the social norms of fashion:

*I do you know like looking at pretty pictures and stuff and Instagram, things like that people put pictures of um what they wore today, take pictures of their daily outfit and post pictures up, I don't do that but you know it's nice looking at other people's and stuff but I can't remember a time that I've ever gone, oh I really love your outfit, where's it from*

*I must buy everything that you've got on! But of course external influences definitely, I think it would be very hard to get away from that, in daily life it would be impossible not to be influenced. (A4)*

No-one except Xandra mentioned feeling “feminine”. According to Craik (2009), femininity is intimately bound up with fashion as females contrive to create a certain look that is a spectacle and that becomes the object of the normatively male gaze. Whilst male partners and husbands of the participants were not openly acknowledged to have had much influence over what they wore there was clearly some influence. Philomena’s husband liked her wearing low cut tops but he did not buy clothes for her. Both the husbands of Xandra and Gisela had bought them clothes occasionally. This was an action welcomed by Xandra as she feels he has “*good taste*” and has introduced her to some of her favourite shops and brands. Gisela thinks that her husband had a good eye for what suits her. In contrast, Kathy, who is now divorced, notes that a key disagreement between herself and her ex-husband was about her personal style. He wanted her to be more feminine, to wear pretty shoes rather than practical ones, to wear more make-up and stylish clothing, all of which she refused to do. For Maria, her main influence is her husband and she does not buy any clothing without his approval; he tends to favour bright colours for her. She also thinks that her style now is probably influenced by her peer group: the mothers that she socializes with on a regular basis

## 6.6 Personal Style

### 6.6.1 Identity and Personal Style

As discussed in Chapter Two, one of the issues with eco-ethical clothing for ethically minded consumers was the compromise over self-identity and “style” (Butler and Francis 1997; Miller, 2015). Black et al., (2005, in Scott, 2005) argue that dress is crucial in an individual’s personal identity. Clothing can represent emotional aspects of behaviour through cultural and peer identification and use of colour and style. For the participants personal “style” was a way to

express their identity and they tended towards favouring distinct styles. As Skjold (2016) posits, people are affected by the design characteristics of what they wear in terms of how a certain cut affects the movements of the body for example, how certain colours, textures or patterns are preferred by the user, or how certain stylistic references are preferred regardless of fashion trends. While to an outside observer the each of the participants had a consistent personal style, Sam and Jill commented that they “had not found their style”. Jill when younger did follow fashion to fit in with her peer group and her group of friends, in line with similar behaviour in young teenagers, fashion and peer groups (Cox and Dittmar, 1995; Klepp and Storm-Mathisen, 2005, Abbot and Sapsford, 2001). However, in later life Jill struggled to find what garments suited her. Equally Sam commented on struggling with her own style, but this was the case when she was younger and not interested in fashion at all and strongly influenced by her mother. There was a large difference among the participants in the ability to express what their style is. For example, Cara has a clothing style that shows of her well-toned body, of which she is very proud and relies on as a dance teacher, but described it in terms of items she liked, such as tight jackets or leopard prints. Whereas others were more reflective and used labels, such as “mods” (Maria), “rock chick” (Amy) or 1940s vintage (Gisela).

### 6.6.2 What Influences Personal Style?

Firstly, there needs to be a definition of “style”. Stacey (2006) gives a definition of style in terms of subgroups of objects that are *perceptually similar*. He goes further to define several types of style concept, one of which is the *preferential style* – a person’s propensity to choose objects with particular stylistic characteristics and these stylistic choices being made as consumers rather than by designers. These style preferences can remain stable over decades. This preferential style was evident in the participants’ choices. Given the low priority that the participants gave to fashion, the explicit and implicit influences and from observing their shopping behaviour, it was evident that the participants had styles or colours that they favoured. For them their preferential style acted as a filter: they actively chose certain styles which were more appealing to them than

others which in turn influenced their entire wardrobe. In terms of style there were three main elements that influenced a participants' particular style.

Woodward's fieldwork (2007) revealed that an important relationship negotiated through clothing is that between mothers and daughters, from the household provisioning of children, the socialization into certain clothing preferences and a continual, yet redefined involvement in adulthood. There was little evidence of this mother-daughter clothing relationship with the participants, rather there is more of an indication of subconscious rebellion: Sam now criticizes the clothes her mother bought for her; Kathy resisted any attempt by her mother to make her fashionable and Sasha deliberately allows her children far more clothing freedoms than she was allowed as a child.

As discussed earlier in 6.5.4 fashion did not play a significant part in their lives however they did seem to notice if there was a fashion trend that they liked. For example, Cara was looking for 1950s-style dresses, which were currently on trend, and rather than buying such clothing in order to appear on-trend she was looking to buy a trend that she liked. So therefore, there is a level of overlap between style and fashion influence in practice in what people buy, and this demonstrates the maturity of their choice. How much style influences people varies, as some of the participants had more precise ideas of their own style than others and Ali and Maria, who in their teens rejected fashion, seemed to have the strongest ideas of styles that they liked. Ali and Maria favoured more "anti-fashion" styles (see Polhemus & Proctor, 1978) when they were younger – Ali was a Goth, which might have been one of the sources of her liking black—which may have influenced their later style. Ali favoured vintage-style dresses, as did Philomena. Gisela had a strong personal style which involved vintage-style clothing for personal and leisure activities. Her creative approach to her style of dress was similar to what DeLong et al., (2005) describe as creativity in different ensembles, satisfying personal desires, needs and motivation, and creating and recognizing a specific image of ourselves.

### 6.6.3 Elements of style

#### 6.6.3.1 Colour

There were strong personal preferences for certain colours. Ali had a strong preference for black. She has always liked black since a teenager as she feels it is a “safe” colour, it suits her, and black can be worn with every other colour.

*Just since I was a kid, I've always worn black and it used to drive my Mum up the wall, she used to hate it and it wasn't like a kind of, I wouldn't say it was like a sub-culture thing or a goth thing it was more just I really liked wearing black and...I don't know where it came from...once I started buying black and started wearing black I realized that it suited me and... if you buy everything in the same colour then everything goes with everything. (A3)*

Ali was the most noticeable amongst the participants to show a real preference for black. Within fashion black is always a popular choice. As Clark and Miller (2002) explain, black fashionwear is understood to be less individualizing or expressive than some alternative choices so that wearers are often both more secure in their sense of the approval of others, but disappointed by their failure to attempt a more ambitious projection in the world. Yet, when interviewing Ali and challenging her taste for black using the colour swatch from *The House of Colour*, there was no sense of personal disappointment. Occasionally she did wear a bright colour, and although she views black as a “safe colour”, she did not offer any further information about her choice, just that she always liked that colour and it had practical uses; black could be worn with any other colour. Equally Kathy could not explain why she had a preference for purple and grey, they were her favourites. Cara loved bright colours and beige. Sasha, whilst showing no strong preference for any particular colour, disliked navy blue and would avoid the colour if she could. The reason she gave was because the colour reminded her of her old school uniform.

### 6.6.3.2 Shape

There were particular cuts of garments that were favoured by some of the participants. The empire-line style was chosen by Kathy as she felt this style flattered her. Ali had three major styles: smart formal for work; casual for being at home, usually leggings and a jumper; and her rock chick look, generally short black dresses in a similar 1940s style. She also favoured similar short shift-type dresses, a style she found convenient because they were one item rather than two: wearing two items required them to “match”, an activity she found a nuisance. Sasha, despite being a mother of five, described her varied styles as being “*different versions of me*”. Although she wears casual clothing for her day to day, she had a very varied selection of clothing. She owned various dresses suitable for “jive dancing”, ball gowns, and her Burlesque costumes, which were mainly corsets with matching accessories. Dressing up in various ways was key for Sasha: she confessed to having “*more dressing up clothing than the kids*”.

### 6.6.3.3 Decoration

This manifested largely with regard to/in terms of patterns on fabric. Cara was most definite about pattern type and leopard-print was her big favourite.

### 6.6.3.4 Vintage

Gisela’s style is “vintage”, particularly the 1940s. This is in part due to her husband and herself frequently attending 1940s events, but she wears her vintage styles on other occasions too, as it is part of her individual “look”. Maria likes the mod style, and vintage, particularly posh dresses from the 1940s.

### 6.6.3.5 Feminine

Xandra likes to look very feminine, wear clothes which show off her “curves”, and strongly favours the colours white and blue. Cara also likes tight-fitting clothes, such as short, fitted denim jackets. As a fitness instructor, she is very health conscious and confident in her body shape, which due to the level of exercise she regularly undertakes, is very trim.

### 6.6.3.6 Unsure

Philomena does not have a specific style, generally wearing/opting for jeans and a nice brightly-coloured top. Both Sam and Jill did not have a specific style either, and both felt confusion as to what suited them and often needed external advice.

### 6.6.3.7 Body changes

Whilst some participants seemingly went back to the body shape they had before they became mothers, some participants changed shape therefore influencing their change of style. Kathy admitted to currently favouring empire-line style tops as they hid her “*wobbly stomach*” after having had three children. Xandra and Philomena favoured “*looser, more flowing*” tops after admitting their bodies had changed.

Klepp and Storm-Mathisen (2005) found in their research that it was absolutely essential for the women to find clothing that they defined as “becoming”. This is closely related to style, as finding “your own style” means finding the clothes that are becoming on you. When women talk about what is becoming, they often refer to colours, but also to cut and shape. What matters is the relationship between these elements and their own body. Bodily shortcomings that have been self-defined can be camouflaged by wearing becoming clothes. Similarly, to these participants, the styles were not only the ones that they liked but that they felt looked good on them.

### 6.6.4 Image

As well as the above elements of style, as discussed within Chapter Two, both Flugel (1966) and Stone (1962) acknowledge how other people judge others on how they dress. Barnard (2002) claims that people often make judgements concerning people’s social work and status on the basis of what those people are wearing, how others judge, and on/by their own internal standards. Consequently “image” was discussed with participants, in terms of how they thought they presented themselves to the world. Sasha did not want people to have an opinion about her image at all; she wished just to look inconspicuous and not to be noticed for the wrong reasons,

such as having messy hair. When Kathy sells her baked goods at events such as fairs, how she appears to others is irrelevant as she feels that her produce is the main focus for people there. However, Cara had a different viewpoint:

*I noticed that people gave me compliments in like dresses.... I also thought as well actually, this might be good because maybe I'm inspiring people you know because of the fitness, the whole fitness thing, ... oh yeah you look really good, oh yeah, that kind of thing, I though Oooh... Maybe I should wear more of these, so I thought maybe I could, maybe I ought to be more of an advert for my business as well so that might help me. (C4)*

Her description of this look was “*casual sophistication*”, the image she was trying to project within this environment, but otherwise her style was “*smart casual*”. Sam described her image as “*smart casual*” an image she was comfortable with, and other people’s opinions were not important to her. Philomena described her style as “*normal*” or “*smart casual*” – she did not believe in exposing any flesh, and in this she was conforming to one of the thirty-five social norms related to dress that Freeburg and Workman (2010) have identified, namely that women should avoid apparel that immodestly exposes the body. Maria and Xandra shared similar feelings about their own image. Maria was concerned about her image, but did not know what image she wanted to project. Part of her felt vain just within this sphere, but on the other hand she asked,

*“Whether is it so bad to want to present yourself in a certain way?”*

Xandra felt that in the UK people dress as they want and that nobody judges you for the way you dress. She thought in part that this is a good thing, however the disadvantage is that sometimes people are too relaxed. She found the style here a little too casual for her:

*I like to look a little bit elegant, formal and also, it's good on any occasion you know because it's better to over dress than for to be under on the occasion, you know what I mean? I feel that if someone invite me to their house, how lovely to show that the*



*occasion is important for me, even if it's only for a cup of coffee, you know? It shows care for the other person, you know? I'm not going to arrive in a gown like I've just arrived from my bed. No, no way. (X2)*

Xandra expressed strong internal standards as to how she must look: it is important for her to look “pretty” and “feminine”. Jill struggled to articulate how she felt about her image. She was full-time at home and always wore jeans but felt a bit smarter if she wore a top with some detail on, and she considered T-shirts too plain. She also described her look as “smart casual”. In effect she was trying to express that by dressing a bit “smarter” her self-esteem felt better. For Maria that reflection is inward, others are judging her so she judges herself. Mead helpfully comments on this idea: “the ‘I’ is a social self”, as it is constructed through the gaze of others and learnt, internalized social expectations. This notion of internalization helps to account for many acts of dressing which are non-reflective,” (Mead, 1982, cited in Woodward, 2007, p.21). It is possible that the other participants felt this internalization too, as it was interesting that the most common self-described style was “smart casual”. Although their clothing was casual, reflecting more the functionality of their garments, no-one wanted to be too casual, for as Jill struggled to describe it, a bit of smartness was required to enable participants to feel good about themselves.

### 6.6.5 Judgement on appearances

Miller and Woodward (2007) argue that Woodward’s ethnographic findings relate closely to a suggestion by Clarke and Miller (2002) to re-think the theory of fashion. They argue that their research demonstrates that for most people their primary point of reference is not to the fashion industry but to their personal state of anxiety about what to wear. They further argue that this anxiety stemming from potential social embarrassment over what clothing to wear should be studied. Whilst the participants demonstrated no specific signs of “anxiety” there was certainly a consideration of what other people might think of their clothing. One key area of consideration was how the participants showed awareness of the rules and norms of social spaces (Entwhistle, 2000) and which garments were appropriate for different social occasions, demonstrated by

buying specific clothes for work for example. Though this was not really explored in depth, the participants did comment on this. This is another area that could be picked up in further work, exploring/examining the judgement of appearance by others and anxiety over what to wear.

### 6.7 Clothing fulfilling needs

In summary it is evident that clothing choices are very dependent on an individual's own perceived "needs" which vary widely and can have many multi-faceted influences. One of the well-established general classifications of need is that by Maslow, as discussed in Chapter Two. As figure 6.1 illustrates, needs are layered from very basic needs that need to be met in order before the higher levels come into focus.

This analysis focuses on the rationale given for purchasing decisions and the issues that the participants were conscious of. In some cases, these directly contradicted the observable behaviour. For example, all the participants had commented that they were not attracted to particularly to fashionable clothing, while wearing clothes that did not look unfashionable. Therefore, this analysis of need focuses on what the participants actually said, and also comments on obvious differences between what they said and what they did.

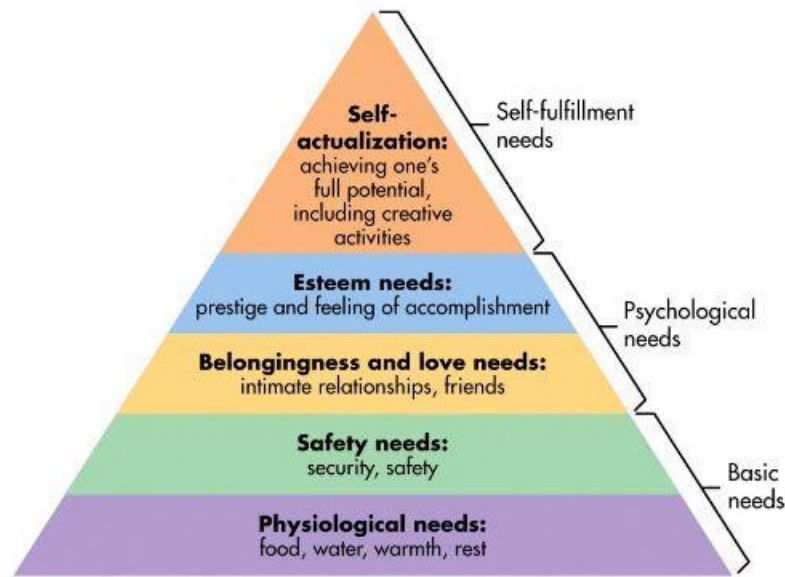


Figure 6.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has been linked to clothing by marketers such as Solomon and Rabolt (2004) who argue that clothing can satisfy needs at every level. The Hierarchy is nested to reflect the needs clothing may fulfil for an individual with three levels, each of which needs to be fulfilled in order for the higher one to come to the forefront: basic needs, followed by psychological needs and then self-fulfilment needs. Some of these needs were highlighted by the participants themselves, other needs they were not quite aware of, but come out in this analysis.

### 6.7.1 Physiological needs

This applies to most clothes: protection from the elements, warmth, and privacy. Some garments are seen in purely practical terms as discussed within section 6.2.2, such as Ali's coat which was bought purely to keep her warm rather than because of how it looked. While Ali commented that how the coat looked did not matter to her, the choice of this particular coat shows that it has properties she was attracted to. To a certain extent most of the participants' clothing fulfilled these basic needs, warmth, purpose and so forth, though it was clear some garments were purely regarded as at this level.

### 6.7.2 Safety need

Some garments have a safety need, for example safety hats or special shoes for work. Apart from Kathy who just mentioned her cycling helmet, the participants did not discuss clothes with a mainly safety purpose. However, a safety need is implicit in purely functional clothing, such as Sue's gardening trousers.

### 6.7.3 Belonging and love need

In Chapter Two, it was seen that a key element within fashion theory is how an individual's clothing choices reflect the tension between belonging to a social group and differentiating themselves (Simmel, 1957; Belk, 1988; Barnard, 2002). As Black et al., (2005, in Scott, 2005) argue appropriate clothing engenders and enhances social acceptance and self-esteem. In terms of belonging to a social group, there was evidence that group membership was a strong influence on clothing choices. One example was Maria who felt that her current peer group of mothers influenced her way of dressing, that there was a common style between them suitable for interacting with young children. Her current style of dressing, particularly tops that allowed her to breastfeed, were also part of her love needs, a way of expressing her motherly love.

For work, participants dressed to "fit in" with the implicit dress codes, which are picked up by observation, and explicit dress codes, which are openly stated. The participants commented on wearing dark colours such as black, which tended to be the prevailing choice for them as it does their colleagues. The effect of a dress code on clothing is similar to conformity with group membership, as it is either self-imposed or externally imposed to signal belonging.

Memories of clothes that were worn in the past were also evidence of past group memberships. For example, Jill as a teenager dressed in skimpy little dresses for nights out in town in an identical style to her friends in order to fit in and be part of the group. Another strong element of group membership was the cultural heritage of some of the participants, such as Xandra whose

style of dress was still very strongly influenced by the South American mode of dressing when she was growing up, which she described as

*“being vain and showing off her body”.*

Hanging onto former items of clothing as a keepsake might also be interpreted as an aspect of love needs. Examples of this include Marla and her special item, a dress not quite her style but by the same designer as her wedding dress, so it keeps that special memory alive for her. Also, Sasha and her Cure T-shirt, a memory of teenage rebellion, and Gisela, who owned a very nice suit from the 1960s which had been a treasured possession given to her by her mother-in-law. Though it did not fit Gisela anymore, she felt unable to part with the suit as the garment had sentimental value.

### 6.7.4 Esteem needs

These can be expressed by wearing expensive clothing, brands or accessories. Barnard (2002) claims that clothing and fashion are often used to indicate social worth or status. Veblen (1899) coined the phrase, “conspicuous consumption” to describe how the leisured class used clothing and fashion to display their wealth and their social status. Andreozzi and Bianchi (2001) argue that within Veblen’s theory, individual preferences have no role as consumers adopt any consumption good as long as it can be used to signal their social position. Consequently, individuals’ may not consume an item they actually like, rather the question tends to be what colour is “in” at the moment with the “right” people. Though this is equally applicable to people today, there was no evidence of participants actively displaying their social status through clothing and accessories. In particular none of them commented about the social esteem of their husbands’ having influence in/over their clothing purchases, as would have been the case when Veblen wrote about conspicuous consumption in the late nineteenth century. Wanting to be seen wearing expensive clothes or clothes of certain brands was largely absent in the group of participants, nor did they comment on possessing luxury items that are designed to be inconspicuous as defined by

Eckhardt et al., (2015). There were just two cases where the participants had worn expensive clothing in the past. Philomena previously spent large sums of money on branded work clothes and Sam owned a number of elaborate ball gowns. Philomena had disposed of most of her work clothing now that she was full-time at home, and equally Sam was discussing getting rid of her gowns as she no longer attended these events which had been linked to her husband's work. It was a sign that that phase of their life was over so therefore the clothes were no longer needed, and there was no attempt to hang onto them as social status symbols.

There was no evidence that showing their social status featured explicitly in the lives of any of the participants. While the participants looked like typical members of their social groups, for example Maria and Kathy wore tunic type tops and jeans like many other mothers in their peer group, social class or group membership was never given as a rationale for purchasing decisions.

Several participants, such as Jill and Xandra, commented however on self-esteem being an important factor in how they dressed. They both made a conscious effort to look, as Jill, put it *"a little bit smarter and not wear joggers and T-shirt"*. Xandra described this as *"self-respect and respect for others"*. The research however did not explore in detail to what extent this sense of self-esteem was derived from their expectation of the esteem in which others would hold them.

### 6.7.5 Self-Actualisation

This category of need is about the realization of participants' talents and potential. Examples of garments fulfilling this need include the gold gloves that were bought by Sasha for a specific burlesque costume. The gloves were not for protection from the cold, but being part of her *"act"* reflected an important aspect of Sasha. Burlesque dancing is an enriching experience and part of Sasha's *"multiple personalities"*. A very similar example was Cara buying tights for her carnival costume to enact her carnival *"persona"*; dancing is an important part of her life and carnival part of her cultural heritage. Gisela's vintage style of dressing for specific historic-themed events is

also an expression of her personality, that for her and her husband these events are important aspects of their personal interests and enjoyment.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs acts as a flexible structure. Everyone had a mix of garments in their wardrobe which applied to different points in the Maslow hierarchy, fulfilling multiple needs on different levels. As discussed in section 6.2.1, some garments were bought for specific purposes or for only basic needs without any explicit physiological needs associated with them, like Sam's gardening clothes. However other garments were bought new but over time got downgraded, such as Jill's favourite pair of jeans which was downgraded to gardening clothes or Kathy's T-shirt downgraded to one only used for sleeping in. Overall, once garments were no longer cherished or loved and no longer fit for purpose they were disposed of. In the second category of the psychological needs of esteem and belongingness, the examples ranged across a variety of social situations, such as current peer group, former work personas and long-gone teenage peer groups. These garments, which had represented a persona for a particular life stage, were disposed of once the stage was over, unless they had become keepsakes of the former selves.

### 6.7.6 Critique of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Overall, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a basic structure, and whilst some core elements correspond, the Hierarchy does not neatly map to clothing. As argued in section 6.4 personal style, which has a strong element of self-fulfilment, permeates all the purchasing decisions. Even mundane items such as Ali's coat, which primarily fulfilled the basic need of warmth, still possessed elements of her style; the coat was black, which was her favourite colour. Maslow's Hierarchy has been criticized for lack of evidence that it forms a nested hierarchy where the basic needs need to be satisfied before higher needs come into play. The data from participants suggests that the Maslow categories are fine to a degree, but how they combine clothing type and the preferences and social behaviour of participants can be problematic. The evidence suggests that there is a dynamic relationship between factors, whereas the Maslow Hierarchy is rather

static. For example, the higher needs of self-fulfilment and identity may override the lower basic needs of clothing to provide warmth and modesty as with Jill and her friends as teenagers wearing skimpy outfits on freezing nights. Higher up the hierarchy it is about generic factors and not specifics. From this study, it can be seen that clothing fulfils a mix of the needs, but that this varies by type of clothing and the lifestyle and attitudes of the individuals concerned. The choice to buy a particular garment has multiple reasons behind it that reflect different needs on the Maslow hierarchy. The participants are often conscious of single items meeting multiple needs, for example jeans are often seen as comfortable items that fit multiple situations, as indicated by Kathy's rationale for selecting her jeans: they are utilitarian, practical garments that can be worn at home, for work and for social occasions. This reflected Kathy's belief that jeans are socially acceptable for all spheres of her life, and the fact that she is not very interested in clothes and bought as little as necessary. She prioritises comfort, a basic need, and thereby projects an attitude and membership of a group of like-minded people who share or do not mind her outlook.

Clothes however are also used as a conscious partitioning of realms of personal life. This was most strongly exemplified by Ali, who has three distinct styles, casual clothing for home, work clothing and her "rock-chick" look as her core identity and by Gisela, who has work, home and hobby clothes. Both have a bigger variety of garments for different occasions as clothing is more important for them. Gisela and Ali were genuinely interested in clothing and enjoyed playing with clothes as a means of self-expression, whereas those who saw clothing as a chore also did not use it consciously for self-expression. As the next chapter discusses in section 7.5 this is also to some extent a matter of the personal resources the participants had. With the possible exception of Gisela, who was the only one with a professional job and therefore a substantial personal income, none had the money to purchase a differentiated wardrobe and update it regularly, so that multiple needs needed to be met with the clothes they had and by small interventions to the wardrobe.



It is difficult to generalize how clothes relate to Maslow needs, because it varies with the individual item of clothing and maybe more importantly with the individual who buys and wears the clothes. Beyond the ubiquitous physical needs, it depends on the situation of the individual and their relationship to specific garments. The needs can also change over time, as clothes lose their importance in fulfilling higher level needs and are reduced to the purely functional properties.

Fundamentally Maslow's Hierarchy does not cover the selection of items which would fill the same needs but have different properties. In particular it does not cover issues of appearance and perception by others in a straight forward way. While it might be possible to construct arguments why these personal and aesthetic decisions are influenced by issues such as group membership or self-esteem, the participants explained that they selected items simply by what they liked. For example, all had their favourite colours or garment shapes that they know suited them well, as with Karen who liked purple and high waist lines, probably because this balanced her slightly short legs but the preference was not presented in those terms. Other researchers have had issues with Maslow, for example Shaw and Tomolillo (in Bruce et al., 2004) considered it inadequate for exploring ethical issues in fashion from a consumer perspective. Whilst Maslow provided a framework for explaining the role fashion plays in driving and motivating consumers—particularly the motivation of ethical consumers to follow their own personal goals—it is unable to explore ethical consumers' perception of fashion.

This came out strongly in several of the participants. Kathy and Maria were members of a mothers' group that actively encouraged more eco-friendly products such as washable nappies. However, they had not connected their beliefs to the clothes that they wore. Both had non-material needs that could have been met by sustainable clothing, but they had not reflected on it. In terms of/with regard to this research, there were two important aspects of clothing that Maslow does not cover particularly well: identity, which is very strongly linked to an individual's personal style, and judgement of appearance, that is how participants felt others judged them by

the image they were projecting. However, these factors are more reflected in Manfred Max-Neef's (2002) classification of needs, which regardless of nation, religion or culture he defines as follows:

- Physical or material needs, which are subsistence and protection.
- Psychological (non-material) needs, which are affection, understanding, participation, creation, recreation, identity and freedom.

The Max-Neef framework looks at needs from the perspective of in the individual in a society and the needs that the individual has for the society to work in a more holistic way. Systems of needs are satisfied or not by different types of satisfiers (Cruz et al., 2009). Within this framework, aspects of the Maslow Hierarchy, such as self-esteem or belonging to groups, would appear under the category of identity.

### 6.8 Conclusions

In terms of needs, the Max-Neef framework has been selected by the sustainable fashion community as most helpful as discussed in Chapter Two. Fletcher (2008) groups the Max-Neef framework into material and non-material needs and fundamentally rejects fast fashion as a means to address non-materials needs. To a certain degree, the participants agreed with this view as keeping up with the latest trends was not a priority for them but rather it was their own "style" that influenced their needs. This was evident as most of the participants had a strong sense of their own "style" in terms of particular garment shapes, colours and types of garment that they preferred. As Klepp and Bjerck (2014) argue personal style often begins to form when individuals are young, in their teens. This was true for most of the participants with multiple influences which included fashion, anti-fashion, family, cultural background and their own personality. In essence, all these influences formed part of their identity. Looking back at the wider social context, the influence of media, in terms of magazines, social media, and the TV, was tenuous with no firm evidence that it had any effect on participants. Equally, as argued by Roach-Higgins and Eicher

(1992, p.16), identity formed by aspects such as social structures, kinship groups, gender and social class all influence the individual's choice of dress. Warde (1994) posits that he suspects that social contacts are more influential than mass media. Social networks, friends, peers, colleagues and family all contribute to decisions as to what to buy and what objects mean in patterns of consumption. Whilst social class was never specifically mentioned, several stated that their culture and ethnic group was a huge influence. Maria, Kathy, Cara and Xandra, all of whom did not grow up in the UK, adapted their clothing in various ways to incorporate both aspects of their background and their current situation in the UK. There was little mention of people within their own family, particularly husbands and partners, influencing their clothing choices apart from a couple of exceptions, Kathy and Maria. Children were not mentioned as an influence on style, besides functional requirements or breastfeeding them. The analysis in this chapter revealed a lack of reflection of why and how they acquired and wore garments. Many responded to questions by first saying that they had not thought about the issue and then putting together an answer. In particular they had not reflected on the aspects of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Therefore, it is not possible to conclude that the psychological and self-fulfillment needs did not affect them, rather that they did consciously acknowledge them. Clothing was extension and expression of their personality and in line with other aspects of their lives. For many of them, clothing was not a very important aspect of their life and they preferred to devote their time, money and energy to other issues. This bore similarities to Ritch, (2012) where the focus for her participants was on self-identity, aesthetics, their own style, appearance, how others will make judgements on them and a dissatisfaction with current fashion trends. Overall, their clothing choices reflected three important elements of their lives and themselves: the practicality of the garment, the smartness for their self-esteem and their personal style, not what was currently "in fashion". These three factors tended to be the dominant ones for all the participants.

## 7 Shopping

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### 7.1 Introduction

A key element of this research centres on the major factors behind the purchasing, use and disposal of clothing. Shopping is the point where the ownership of most garments begins and where the trajectory for their sustainability is set. What individuals do with their garments depends upon the garments that they own. Understanding how they purchased these garments and the reasoning behind their choices, gives an insight into the attitudes and behaviours associated with clothing ownership. Therefore, shopping is a key activity to understand. In Chapter 6 the attitudes of participants to clothing was considered and how their responses relate to research literature on clothing behaviours. In this chapter the shopping activities are used to explore further what key factors are involved in the choice of clothing and the role of sustainability-related issues within this. As discussed within Chapter 6 participant “needs” and their personal style were the dominating factors that influenced clothing choice. Here within the shopping activity there was evidence that again, perceived “needs” and personal style were strong influences within this activity. Accordingly, this chapter is divided into three parts:



**Figure 7.1** Three major shopping themes

Some information from the shopping activity has already been reported when it related to findings in earlier chapters. However, here the results directly stemming from the shopping activity are reported and discussed. As reported in Chapter Two, habits, routines and social norms all play a part within consumption patterns (Jackson, 2005). Consumption takes place within the dominant social paradigm (McDonagh and Prothero, 2014) whereby companies are focused on

growth and increasing profits and are constantly looking at various means such as marketing, advertising and displays of merchandise to persuade people to buy more goods and services. Much of what is written about consumption, particularly shopping, comes from marketing literature, which looks at the issues from the view point of how sellers can persuade people to buy more clothing thereby increasing their sales (Moisander et al., 2010; Blackwell et al., 2006). From the consumer point of view this is captured by the stereotype of modern consumerism "I shop therefore I am" (Dittmar and Drury, 2000, p.109).

This research takes a more holistic angle, seeing buying as the beginning of a journey of ownership. It investigates the activity of shopping to understand what influences an individual's consumption patterns. Consumer goods can and do function as material symbols of who a person is and who they would like to be. Warde (1994) also argues that consumption creates self-identity, and that consumption can be a risky business as consumers have a freedom to choose, so some consumers can therefore feel anxious that they could make the "wrong" choice. In this context, advertising can be seen as a means to assuage this anxiety. Shoppers are conflicted between shopping for necessity and shopping for status, the latter encouraged by the media (Zukin and Maguire 2004). As Solomon and Rabolt (2004) and Jain et al., (2014) remind us, retailers know that visual merchandising in stores, in terms of displays and layout, can spark consumers' curiosity and interest and these are designed to increase sales. Consumers are estimated to have spent £57.7 billion on clothing in 2017 in the UK alone, with on-line retailers taking approximately 24% of the market (Intel, 2017).

Fisher et al., (2008) claim that people acquire information from social media and from other sources including the shopping experience itself that influences their clothing choices during the activity of shopping. As explained in Chapter 3.11.3, the role of the shopping trips was to observe shopping behavior and thereby gain a better understanding of to what extent the participants captured information about clothing and what/which sorts of information they picked up on.

## 7.2 The Shopping Activities

The aim was to have as natural an activity as possible, where the participants maintained their usual habits so that phenomena could be observed during the shopping trip and later discussed. Compared to the other activities the shopping trip was fairly unstructured. At the beginning of each there was a short discussion about the intention behind the shopping trips. Some trips involved searching for specific items, some had a more general purpose and others were browsing activities with no intention to purchase. Even for the browsing activities it was possible to gain insights into the decision-making processes. Table 7.1 gives a reminder of all sixteen shopping trips, the locations and the participants involved.

Participant	Location	Retailers
Ali	Internet	Urban Outfitters, Brand Alley, Pinterest, Net-A-Porter, Coggles, Unidays and ASOS.
	Highcross	John Lewis, Topshop, Zara, H & M, River Island, Next, New Look, Miss Selfridge and Debenhams.
Kathy	Internet	eBay
	Leicester City Centre	Sue Ryder-Vintage, Age UK, Oxfam, White Stuff, Face, La Senza and H & M.
Maria	Internet	H & M, Next and eBay
	Market Harborough	Joules, FatFace and White Stuff.
Xandra	Leicester City Centre	Fenwicks, H & M, Zara, River Island, and New Look.
	Internet	Yoox, Gap, Ted Baker
Cara	Fosse Park	Asda
	Leicester City Centre	Discount store, Primark, H & M, Top Girl and Voodoo.
Sam	Boundary Mills	Boundary Mills
Philomena	Fosse Park	Next, Wallis, Dorothy Perkins, Monsoon and River Island
Sasha	Leicester City Centre	Marks & Spencer, H & M, Top Girl, TK Maxx, Primark
Gisela	Internet	Hobbs, Marks & Spencer, East, Phase Eight, 20 <sup>th</sup> Century Foxy, Lindebopp and Bettylicious.
Jill	Internet	Next, Marks & Spencer, Long Tall Sally and Joules.

Table 7.1 Table of Participants Shopping Destinations

In the interviews, the participants confirmed that the activity was a relatively normal experience, the difference being that I was there. Generally, most participants shopped alone. My presence

affected the experience in subtle ways, such as acting as a shopping companion which many of the participants stated that they were not used to, but overall all the participants thought that the activity had been a typical experience. Time was a key factor and overall the shopping trips lasted for approximately an hour or an hour and a half with the shortest shopping trip being Philomena's which lasted for about forty-two minutes. The longest shopping activity appeared to be Sam's as the whole expedition to Boundary Mills (her chosen shopping location) took about six hours. However, once the journeying and refreshment breaks were factored in, the actual time spent shopping was very similar to the others, at approximately an hour and a half. Generally speaking, the shopping activity ended with a purchase, with the exception of Sasha who seemed to enjoy browsing until she was called home by her family responsibilities.

### 7.3 Attitudes to Clothes Shopping

The pre-discussions before the activities and the shopping trips themselves revealed participants' attitudes towards shopping as a whole. Yurchisin and Johnson (2010) indicate that shopping is one of the top three leisure time activities for women, but despite the popular stereotype of women and shopping, there was little evidence that participants had any particular enthusiasm for clothes shopping and seemed to have a more pragmatic attitude towards the activity:

*I'm not a shopping fanatic, you know like you get some people that get really excited over shopping, I don't get excited over shopping, it's a very matter of fact thing, I might need this, I'm going to shop for it. (C3)*

Other research confirmed that many do not enjoy shopping and would prefer to avoid it (Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980; Westbrook and Black, 1985). Ali described her attitude thus:

*I don't see it as a leisure activity any more I see it as a—what would you say— a requirement, something I have to do. (A4)*

The trips were organized around the participants' caring responsibilities as none of the participants enjoyed shopping with their children. This included Xandra, who describes shopping with her children as being "*horrible*", but due to unavoidable circumstances, had to bring her eldest child with us on the shopping trip. None of the participants claimed to be frequent shoppers, nor did shopping seem to be a leisure activity for any of them.

### 7.3.1 Participant Needs

Falk and Campbell (1997) posit that the practice of shopping shows the difference between two orientations: that is the practical, the shopping for, often in terms of necessities; and recreational shopping, which is more pleasurable, though both orientations are not always distinct activities and may appear in the same shopping trip. Whilst there were aspects of both orientations in many of the shopping trips, most shopping trips were very focused on the practicalities of what clothing was deemed to be "needed." Before and after the shopping activity there was a discussion about the purpose of the shopping trip, what participants were looking for, hence the focus on needs. In some cases, the delay in taking part in a shopping activity was due to the participant's self-perception that they did not "need" any specific garment for their wardrobe. Whilst there was much discussion in the last chapter on "needs", the shopping trips produced further complexities as in the context of clothing "need" is a difficult term with different definitions. In terms of shopping, Blackwell et al.,(2006, p.71) define need recognition as the moment, "when an individual senses a difference between what he or she perceives to be the ideal versus the actual state of affairs". Sometimes this need recognition is defined as "problem recognition" or "desires" rather than ideals. At the beginning of the shopping trips, participants all described what they were searching for: either there was a specific "need" for a specific garment (s) that required replacing or was deemed lacking within the wardrobe, or there were more vague requirements, where no garments were specified but participants "desired" new garments for a holiday or for the summer. So, the participants could be divided into two groups between their "needs" and their "desires". In contrast to Blackwell, they were not seeking the ideal but what



would be adequate for their needs. It was noticeable that whilst some participants had very specific requirements, the ones with the vaguest notions were relying on what they could find during the activity of shopping. As Jackson (2005) argues, many consumer tastes and preferences are informed by desire, and desire has a very different character to needs. The participants were clearly relying on finding something that they liked and were expecting the activity of shopping to provide it for them. It is evident that whatever self-perceived “need” or “desire” the participants had, there was a wide variation as the degree of specificity of the shopping plans varied significantly:

- **A like for like replacement**, where they had a garment that they liked, which was wearing out, and so they looked for an identical item or a current season replacement. For example, Kathy searched on eBay for a specific type of jeans from a specific brand, whilst Sam was looking to replace a white skirt.
- **A specific item**, where they had a fairly clear idea of what garment they wanted, but not of a specific brand or shop. Gisela wanted a vintage-style swimming costume and was delighted when she discovered a swimsuit in that particular style on an internet website. Maria wanted a long, navy blue “grandfather” cardigan and was searching eBay for this garment.
- **An instance in a class of items**, where they are looking for an item that fulfils a functional need, without a clear specification of what it should look like. Maria was also looking for a top that was modest and would allow her to breastfeed.
- **An item for a season**, where they were looking to refresh their wardrobes, without a clear indication of the garment they were looking for. For example, Xandra was looking for summer clothes for an upcoming holiday and Philomena just generally for summer clothing.
- **Clothes for an occasion** for which they require a new item without a clear specification of what this might be. For example, Ali looked for a party top that could be worn with jeans.

- **No needs were articulated**, as people have many items that fulfil the same needs. This was the case for the browsing trips. However, even within the browsing trips there were differences. Ali, for instance, had a Pinterest webpage where she organized items that she found when browsing, such as a dress she admired, coveted and earmarked for a potential future purchase. Whereas for others, if they were browsing but for whatever reason did not purchase, the information was not retained as there was a clear lack of interest in doing so.

The above are not clearly distinguishable categories, but emerged from the primary rationale offered by the participants. The categories can overlap: Sam was also buying a pair of white trousers for her holiday but this garment could be “dressed up” or “dressed down” for any particular occasion. The rationale applied to specific items rather than to people, as each of the participants articulated their needs in a different way for different items and shopping trips. Ali, for example, went browsing on the first shopping trip, but looked for a party top on the second shopping trip.

### 7.3.2 Shopping Tactics

Whilst some had definite garments in mind that they were looking for, others had only vague ideas, a tactic they deliberately employed. This was due to past experience of shopping, for example Gisela was looking for a specific item, a vintage-style swimming costume but was preparing herself for disappointment:

*“Almost 99% sure that I won’t find it because I don’t know where to start”. (G1)*

As Gisela had such a strong sense of her own style, which is difficult to find, she described how she had in the past bought a couple of items on impulse, partly because she really liked the garments but also because she felt that if she needed a “*vintage-style dress*” then she would have a “*devil of a job*” in finding one. Jill in contrast, had uncertainty about her own personal style, so her shopping style was described by herself as being very “*random*” and “*fly-by-night*”. She

started her shopping trip with intentions to buy casual clothing for a camping holiday and was distracted by other garments. Despite the multitude of offerings, she expresses dissatisfaction with the clothing on offer:

*I must say that I do feel there is a slight gap perhaps in the market for um, I don't know my age group, I sometimes wonder where to go and I'm really that, I'm not really that committed to anywhere in particular, I just shop where I think that might be something that I like rather than being passionately connected to one store. (J1)*

Philomena also commented on having a rather random style, she showed herself as a very visual shopper who ended up acting on impulse:

*Um, I always find that if I'm out looking for anything in particular then I'll never find it. Yes. I'm quite indecisive as well. Probably why I'm a bit of a nightmare shopping with because I'll pick something up and wonder around, change my mind then end up going back to the first thing that I saw. (P1)*

For Philomena, Gisela and Jill there was the general theme of expecting not to find what they were looking for, hence the impulsive and random style of shopping, which are strategies that they adopt to deal with this issue. For all three they were relying on seeing a garment or garments that they would then choose. Maria was the only participant who was clearly suffering from confusion through too much choice. Maria was overwhelmed, and found herself suffering from consumer anxiety, a subject she mentioned three times during the activities:

*"Sometimes I find myself really overwhelmed with consumerism in a way I just get really anxious." (M2)*

It was not just in terms of clothing where she felt this, but with regard to other items as well. The plethora of choices confused her; she goes with an object in mind, to help her narrow her focus, but often she bought a few things and then returns most of them, as she could not decide, and

devolved the responsibility onto her husband whether she should keep the clothing she has bought.

### 7.3.3 Visual Filters

Several participants showed a strong visual response in their shopping, particularly within the physical shopping environment. There were two types of visual filters: firstly, some of the participants were using a filtering process of shopping according to their personal style. For instance, both Ali and Sam shopped mainly by colour. Ali usually preferred black or grey, and on this occasion, Sam actively sought white garments. Other participants, particularly Maria and Cara, were shopping mainly accordingly to style, looking for certain types of garments. This enabled them to significantly reduce the number garments they needed to look through. They would visit a shop, literally search the store visually, and if there was no visual stimulation and nothing catches their eye, the participant would walk out again. Some shop visits were very short, less than five minutes in many cases. Secondly, most participants were distracted at some stage by the visual displays in the store. Cant and Hefer (2014) advocate that retailers use inventive techniques within visual merchandising displays to make shopping easier and quicker. Both Philomena and Xandra responded quite strongly to this, to mannequins in store displaying garments that they noticed, with Philomena buying a top that she saw in the shop window.

### 7.3.4 Retailers/Brands

Every participant favoured certain retailers or brands for varying reasons. This reflects the findings of Arnould et al., (2004), who describe brand-image as the collection of knowledge, feelings and attitudes an individual has about a specific brand. As consumers have a wide choice, some consumers employ strategies to reduce the risk of making bad purchasing decisions, namely one that they will regret. Mitchell and McGoldrick (1996) see brand loyalty as a risk reduction strategy, as well as being something that results from word-of-mouth from friends and family who choose well-known brands. There is evidence that participants employed some of these risk reduction

strategies within their choice of brands. For the participants brand image had a number of different sources as set out below:

- **Personal Recommendation:** Xandra commented on her husband's "very good taste" as he had introduced her to her favourite British brands.
- **Learning of peer group suggestions:** Maria learnt which shops to frequent from her peer group. It was noteworthy that for both Xandra and Maria, along with Kathy, the "external" information about British brands and retailers had all come from their personal networks rather than from advertising.
- **Personal experience in the past:** Sam really liked German brands that she knows about and favours. She comments:

*I love the German brands; they also very much target their clothing to the middle age what I would call middle age, probably forty, maybe forty-five possibly even fifty, they're in brilliant condition and everything goes in the washing machine, so that's another bonus for me as well. Easy-care . (S1.)*

- **Quality:** Another quality of these brands was durability of clothing; this was an important quality for Sam as she keeps her clothes until they start to disintegrate. Durability was also important for Philomena who has similar reasons for liking Next as she feels their clothes wear well. Kathy favoured Fatface for what she perceived to be good quality clothing and in cotton, a material she prefers. For most of the other participants, favourite brands revolved mainly around style.
- **Fit to their own body shape:** Xandra's favourite brands, Benetton and Esprit, have designs she liked and she felt these suited and fitted her. Ted Baker was favoured by both Ali and Xandra for having the "style" of dresses they both really liked and which fitted them. This was particularly important for Ali as she is "petite" and she found it difficult to find

dresses in the right size, whilst the perceived durability of this brand was another attraction.

- **Personal Style:** Gisela had her specialist vintage-style on-line sites, for clothing she cannot find anywhere else, particularly not in the high street locations.
- **Good value for money:** Another risk reduction strategy identified by Mitchell and McGoldrick (1996) is price information which can be used to decide which brand is the best value for money. Several participants liked H & M for similar reasons. For example, Kathy knew about H & M approximately eighteen years ago from a friend who bought their clothes in Germany, and the way her friend dressed had made a strong impression on her:

*“ I kind of knew what to look for basically so when I moved here, and I knew H & M were here I kinda [sic] of knew that was where I wanted to go. I like the way she dressed, her clothes seemed nice and also comfortable.” (K3)*



Figure 7.2 Typical H&M Conscious Collection display [Source: [www.hm.com/clothes](http://www.hm.com/clothes)]

H & M had other qualities according to participants, such as a “young style”, and “long-lasting” and “affordable” clothing. H & M are a fashion chain that Solomon and Rabolt (2004) identify as offering quality and fashion at a reasonable price and this emphasis has turned many people into loyal shoppers. Once they find a store that provides the value they seek, they reward it with their business consistently and this seems to be the case here. Yet on each trip, despite H & M’s “Conscious Clothing” (H & M, 2017) being advertised within the store (Figure 7.1) not a single participant commented on this, so gauging their awareness of any sustainability initiative at the

time was difficult. This shows that while the participants used brands as a filter for selecting shops, their knowledge about the brands and their values are actually quite shallow. That their decisions on brands and retailers centred purely on their requirements for clothing and no other factors seemed important enough to register consciously for them, for example status symbols. This point will be discussed later in Chapter Eight.

### 7.4 The Experience of Shopping

#### 7.4.1 Preferred Location

Although participants shopping styles varied, all of them had their preferred location for shopping and the location was considered in terms of time and convenience as well as actual distance. Everyone had their favourite location for differing reasons

##### 7.4.1.1 The special shopping trip:

Sam was fond of her shopping location, Boundary Mills, explaining that:

*“I like it because it’s a really nice shopping experience and I don’t know, I feel relaxed when I come here whereas if I’m going around town or Highcross or somewhere where there’s lots of fashion places, I feel really quite pressurized and that’s not how I like to shop normally. So I do like coming here. But it’s for the whole experience, like having a cup of tea first. Then looking round generally I do tend to find clothes that are styles that I think will suit me, and obviously they are at a reduced price.” (S1)*

Clearly the physical surroundings are important for her, uncrowded, the ability to find what she was looking for and at the right sort of prices she was prepared to pay and amenities all contribute to a good shopping experience. No other participant travelled any significant distance. Generally, participants preferred to shop relatively locally, within the city where they lived.

### 7.4.1.2 Combining clothes shopping with other shopping

Cara combined her clothes shopping with her grocery shopping as her favourite store was Asda. This was time-saving and she liked the clothing. The combination of convenience and affordability was attractive (Allwood et al., 2006). Shopping at home on the internet was a preferred option for some of the participants such as Xandra:

*“It’s because it’s the only time that I can do it um for me sometimes I’m too tired to go shopping, sometimes things are busy so I don’t have to be going until to town looking for parking, a big concern about the time because when I’m shopping and looking around, the time flies. There are more varieties, you can buy more sizes um so I am like, I like more on-line.” (X2)*

### 7.4.1.3 Charity shops

Charity shops were popular with participants, particularly Kathy, Sasha and Gisela, all of who found them convenient to pop into now and again, fitting their visits around their regular routines. Charity shops have moved their market position and are growing rapidly; there are now more than nine thousand of them in the UK benefiting from people’s taste for bargains and appealing to a new level of shoppers. Charity shopping has become fashionable and acceptable across the spectrum and some 55% of people use them (Morrish, 2012). Some charity shops offer fashion or “vintage” clothing such as the Sue Ryder store visited with Kathy. Gisela and Ali deliberately targeted the charity shops in a relatively well-off suburb as they can find quality clothing there relatively cheaply. Sasha found charity shops a means to find cheap clothes for her and her five children, and she knew where to find the cheaper ones. Jill, who had recently discovered charity shops, enjoyed finding bargains. Others such as Karen use charity shops as a way to supplement other forms of shopping. She felt frustrated with charity shops as one would organise by colour, and another by size, which she felt made her task looking for a fleece more difficult. She would prefer if the shops organized by size and then by specific items such as the shirts all being together (as occurs in clothes stores). This has been highlighted by Hiller Connell



(2010) noting that some consumers avoid purchasing second-hand clothing because of a perception that the merchandise in second hand stores is poorly organized. Poor organization results in frustrating shopping experiences and sometimes avoidance of second-hand stores altogether.

### 7.4.2 Internet Shopping

Apart from the convenience of shopping from home, internet shopping was attractive to the participants for being able to shop anytime, as having the flexibility to combine the activity with other home responsibilities, and for having more clothing choices. Eroglu (2014) also points to the advantages of the internet for customers and enterprises in providing a wider choice, the ability to target niche markets and potentially lower cost.

Internet shopping of participants fell into three main categories, see table below:

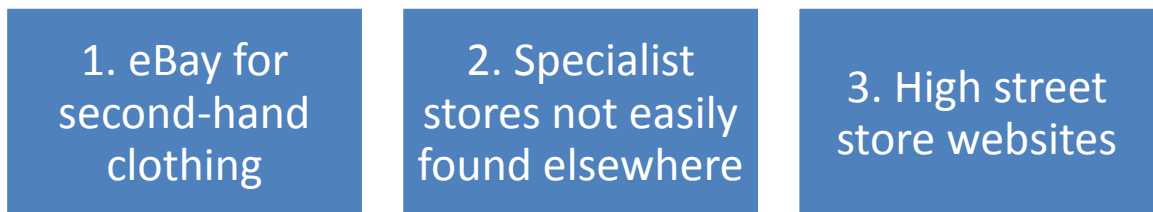


Figure 7.3 internet shopping options

Research by Park and Stoel (2005) suggests that shoppers may use a brand as a core internal source of information for judging and evaluating the quality of apparel sold on the internet. Some participants only shopped at the websites of high street stores, as an extension to their normal shopping as these were retailers and brands that they knew and trusted. This was a finding similar to Jones and Kim (2010) who asserted that customers of a retailer's traditional stores may be more willing to shop at the retailer's website because they are already familiar with the products, having tried out many of them in the retailer's traditional store and also knowing that they can easily return to the store any on-line purchase they decide not to keep.

The ability to return garments to high street stores, as opposed to posting garments back, was an advantage, although stores such as H & M only offered store credit or an exchange instore rather than a full refund, a disadvantage pointed out by Ali. The biggest advantage of the internet was the wider availability on-line, and the greater ease of finding what they wanted. Kathy and Jill used the internet for specific requirements. Kathy looked for particular brands and types of jeans. Jill, being tall, used the internet to specify exactly what she wanted. Kathy's internet shopping behaviour corresponds with what Nielson (2014) calls as a product-focused consumer. A product-focused consumer has identified exactly what they want, a replacement for something they already have, and the goal is speed. Similarly, Maria was very focused when searching for her navy blue "grandfather" cardigan.

Both were able to narrow down their searches easily on eBay but both were disappointed; Kathy found there were no jeans matching her specifications, and for Maria despite the plethora of options, she did not find anything she liked. Ali falls into two of Nielsen's (2014) categories of internet shoppers: firstly a 'bargain hunter' using the internet for this activity and particularly keeping an eye on websites offering discounts or bidding on eBay; and secondly she is also a 'researcher', someone who plans to purchase in the future but is collecting information first. When she finds items that she likes but the brand is unfamiliar she will research the brand to establish whether the garment will offer the qualities, such as durability, that she requires. A key factor of the internet were the specialist websites that were a favourite with Xandra and Gisela as they could purchase clothing not easily found on the high street that suited their personal style.

Fit was sometimes a problem: Gisela measured herself, "*again and then again,*" which usually worked for her. Maria usually bought just tops on the internet as they were easier to fit than trousers, though she was not sure whether she was a size 10 or 12 so has to order both. Paying delivery costs was barely mentioned, though Jill said that for her it was cheaper paying for delivery than collecting in store, especially allowing for obligatory refreshment there or the unexpected purchase of a toy for a nagging child. Gisela was the only participant who mentioned

her dislike of not being able to actually touch the fabric of the garments, though she was an enthusiastic internet shopper, and this was the only “*sacrifice*” that she found difficult. This finding is reflected by Park and Stoel (2005), where it was found that internet shopping is often associated with higher levels of perceived risk due to an inability to physically examine a product prior to purchase. The other major problem with internet shopping was the visual display of clothing on the internet sites. According to Eroglu et al., (2001) certain looks, feel and features of the on-line shopping context are likely to affect the use and results of on-line shopping. Ali found the catwalk display function on the ASOS site useful, a site that she particularly liked, but not all websites offer this facility. Gisela thought the pictures on East were “always rubbish” and Jill found it hard to see the exact colour of garments.

### 7.4.3 Dislikes

The selection of shops appeared to be guided as much by what people liked about shops or brands as by what they did not like about shops. For many participants, dislikes were an effective filtering mechanism to handle the potentially overwhelming selection of shopping options. The reasons for avoiding particular shopping options fell into the following three categories. Firstly, the general shopping experience with shops or shopping centres feeling “*cramped*” and being a “*poor experience*”. Crowds, particularly children and teenagers were seen as “*distracting*.” The most extreme was Gisela, who “*hated going into town*”. Secondly, an unpleasant experience in the past, where a single bad experience led them to black-list the shop for ever after, for example Cara boycotted TKMaxx after an experience she perceived as racist. Finally, there was the wrong perceived target audience of the shop. Some participants recognized or felt that some retailers were not offering clothing tailored towards their demographic. Sam and Jill both disliked Primark, not just because they felt the retailer failed to cater for their demographic. As quality was an important criterion for many participants, some voiced an objection to shops they associated with “disposable” fast fashion with clothing of questionable quality.

Some of these responses indicate that dislikes were being used by the participants to reduce complexity. By filtering out entire shops they again reduced their search spaces.

However, many dislikes were simply arising from a mismatch between what the participants sought in clothes and what a particular shop offered. Philomena and Sam mentioned that they no longer patronized Marks & Spencer, as they felt it did not cater for women of their age. This reflects research by Birtwhistle and Tsim (2005), who note that Marks and Spencer in particular had lost their appeal in the mature women's market.

This illustrates that the source of the dislikes ranged from single bad experiences with a single shop, to dislikes in general about shopping locations, regardless of the retailers. Maria liked a chain of US value stores in particular for their strategy of clothing ranges designed by haute couture designers, so that she was able to buy a designer top for about £15 which she thinks was "well priced" with a quality she could not find here. Blackwell et al., (2006, p.68) discuss this same retailer as a case study of a CEO who realized that a key market segment of middle-income, middle-aged women was not being targeted by competitors, but largely ignored. There was clearly a gap in the clothing market which this retailer then successfully filled.

### 7.4.4 Help with Shopping

On balance, it would seem that shopping in a physical location was more popular than internet shopping, as one advantage of physical shopping, as highlighted by Gisela and Sam, was the ability to obtain assistance to some degree. Both Gisela and Sam had problems imagining on themselves clothing seen on a rack. Gisela described her "personal shopper" experience at John Lewis, on this occasion shopping for work clothing:

*"Yeah, tell me to shorten the time. To start with they might open your eyes to possibility thinking because certain things on the hanger look rubbish. Well; that's their job isn't it? To say that would look nice on such and such, I like to have some idea what it would look*

*like. It would be so much quicker if someone says that's the one. Then you can go out and have a cup of tea!" (G1)*

Forsythe et al., (2001) argue that consumer decision-making models should include a surrogate option, that is agents employed by a consumer or retail firm to identify a need, access product information, evaluate alternatives, and/or make purchases on behalf of the consumer. Surrogates can include both personal shoppers and shop assistants. They discovered that the most important functional benefits for consumers using such surrogate services were saving time and improving fit. This was the case with Gisela, in that she found using a personal shopper a positive experience, saving herself time and inconvenience. Forsythe et al., (2001) also suggest that the consultative role of the surrogate may be more valuable to users than the purchasing role.

Jill sought advice from friends who accompanied her when buying clothing for special occasions, as she was unable to decide for herself. Sam, who of all the participants was the least confident about her own personal clothing style, described some of her favourite shops as two small boutiques that had very able assistants who, in her opinion, gave her excellent advice on what suited her. This correlates to one of the key findings of research into the mature women's market undertaken by Birtwhistle and Tsim, (2005). In this, staff were identified as particularly important to these customers who looked for shops with "staff who can give advice and help", and who can "recommend garments" and provide a good service.

### 7.4.5 Effect of Emotions on Shopping

Participants were asked whether emotion affected their clothing shopping, given that "retail therapy" is a common cliché in modern life, described by Warde (1994) as buying which acts as compensation for emotional stresses. Kang and Johnson (2011) define retail therapy as consumption behaviours that individuals engage in to alleviate their negative moods.

Overall participants did not feel that this was an activity they indulged in. Food such as coffee, cake and chocolate, was deemed more preferable than clothes shopping as a form of "therapy". Sam described retail therapy as "*the last thing she would do*", gardening was her preferred

activity. Ali admitted to doing occasional retail therapy clothes shopping, usually on-line so she had to wait for it, and so she “*doesn't get that instant gratification*”. Jill did not have what she describes as “*that emotional buzz shopping for clothes*” and she would rather buy random cushions. Kathy derived emotional satisfaction from buying garments she has her eye on in the sale, as occurred during the third shopping trip. This confirmed the theory of consumption economics that consumers desire to receive a warm glow from their shopping experience in exchange for their resources of time, money, and energy (Andreoni, 1990, cited in Atkins and Kim, 2016). Gisela could only think of two occasions when she had done this and, in both cases, they happened in circumstances of extreme emotional distress. Philomena did shop to cheer herself up sometimes, but she usually bought clothing for her children rather than herself.

### 7.4.6 Children

During the course of the activities, discussions of how the participants bought clothing for their children emerged. This was to be expected given the recognition that women tend to hold most of the household responsibilities (Carrigan and Szmigin, 2006). In Miller's (1998) *Theory of Shopping*, he identifies that his respondents, mostly women, explained their shopping activity as an act of love directed at another person, how they monitor their families' needs and wishes and buy items for them including clothing. One of the questions within the interview in this study was about how the participants provided clothing for their children. None of the participants spent a lot of money on clothing for children, apart from Jill who bought clothing occasionally from John Lewis though she justified the expense on the grounds that the garments were highly durable so they could be passed onto the younger child. Some mothers like Maria and Jill, bought specifically organic cotton for their children and questioned the role of chemicals in clothing, wondering why they accepted that organic fabrics were more important for their children rather than for themselves.

The passing on of children's clothing from friends and family networks featured strongly. Every participant except Sam (who had grown up children) mentioned that they either had clothing

passed to them or passed clothes onto others. This is in contrast to the participants themselves where there was very little mention of clothing being passed onto them (the odd item but nothing significant). The attitude towards clothing for the children was different to the attitude towards their own. Some of the participants with young boys mentioned how little or no interest these children had in their clothing, and how it was not worth spending money as they would “*destroy*” or “*trash*” their clothes. Sasha bought most of the clothing for her children second-hand and said that she had “*brainwashed*” them into accepting and buying second-hand clothing themselves. Xandra received clothing for her children from friends, but generally she would not accept them from anyone else, as she has prejudices against this. Apart from these networks, clothing was bought in sales, from the supermarket, or high street stores. Overall, it was noticeable that there were more sustainable habits in clothing for children than for the adults. Some environmental criteria (e.g. organic cotton) played a role, but in part the greater sustainability was a by-product of other aspects, such as young children themselves having no interest in their clothing, so that concepts such as self-image were completely alien to them. Second-hand clothing was also deemed acceptable in part due to the fact that young children can grow quite fast so in some cases garments were only needed for a short while before bigger garments were required.

### 7.5 Attitude to Spending

Schmidt et al., (1999) argue that consumers are under pressure to create appropriate forms of “self” through engaging in consumption processes. Money represents power to purchase and its absence excludes individuals from full participation in the sacred rituals of the/a consumer society. Consumer demand for goods and services depends on both the ability to buy and the willingness to buy (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004). Expenditures on clothing can be or is postponed or eliminated if people do not feel that this is a good time to spend money.

### 7.5.1 Shopping Sites

Table 7.2 gives an overview of how the participants shopped and the categories of shops visited. Some of the answers did not feature during the actual shopping activity but emerged in discussions about shopping or during the Wardrobe Sampling task.

Participant	Super market	Young Fashion H & M etc	High Street	Sales	Charity Shop	eBay / Internet	Reduced Price*	Specific Brands/ Internet Sites
Ali		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kathy		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Maria		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
Xandra		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes	Yes
Cara	Yes	Yes						
Sam					Occasionally		Yes	
Philomena			Yes	Yes			Yes	
Sasha		Yes			Yes		Yes	
Gisela	Occasionally		Yes		Yes			Yes
Jill			Yes					

Table 7.2 Categories of Shopping by Participant

\*Reduced price as in discount retailers, such as Boundary Mills and the Next staff shop

### 7.5.2 Main Attitudes

Lack of money was definitely an issue for some of the participants. As Warde (1994) acknowledges, lack of money must be one of the most potent sources of consumer anxiety.

In economic theory, Gabriel and Lang (2015, p.41) point out that resources are scarce and human wants can be infinite, so choices must be made between competing alternatives. On the basis of the best available information, people choose the optimal course of action to maximize their welfare, after a careful consideration of all options, under their existing “budget constraints”. Though this theory has been criticised by many economists there was evidence that some of the participants employed multiple tactics for shopping, choosing various places and methods, taking advantage of opportunities, or acknowledging that their multiple requirements for clothing required different brands and retailers as shown above. Miller (1998) also identifies the centrality



of thrift, strategies that shoppers adopt and opportunities they take advantage of in order to save money, which shoppers take advantage of adopt in attempt to save money.

The participants displayed three major following approaches to shopping which could be identified as self-restraint, selection by price and bargain hunting. Some exerted self-control as during the sixteen shopping trips there were several instances when participants restricted their own spending within the activities. Xandra said that there was no money for the second shopping trip. She was not going to spend anything on clothing as she had just been on holiday:

*“Not buying any. I don’t need any, we came back very poor from the holidays.”*

(X2)

Whilst some participants exercised self-control on occasion, Cara confessed that she had to do this all the time:

*“I’ve never got the money to go shopping. So it’s always like, um, I’ll kind of make do and mend with what I’ve got.”* (C3)

The second strategy is selection by price. Price information is one of the risk reduction strategies identified by Mitchell and McGoldrick (1996). This can be used in a simplifying way, for example when consumers always buy a high-priced brand or a low-priced brand. An example of this is Cara shopping at Asda. Finally, there was bargain-hunting. Sasha was under similar constraints to Cara yet she had a multitude of strategies for shopping, from taking advantage of cheaper clothing stores within the town centre, visiting local charity shops, bargain internet sites and TK Maxx, to re-selling designer clothing she had bought from there when she did not need the garment any longer. Moisander et al. (2010) comment that rational self-interested consumers look for “hot deals” and “bargain prices” in making their purchases, which describes Ali who has already been identified as a self-confessed “bargain hunter”. Her style of spending was what Bardhi and Arnould (2005) describe as a type of thrift shopping, as a realization of consumer desires for luxury. Consequently, she bought quality clothing through eBay, discount websites, charity shops,

and sales, and was well-organized and knew where to find what she wanted, which formed part of her enjoyment. To a lesser extent, Xandra shared similar traits, particularly for designer shoes and Ted Baker, but she bought both either through sales or through a contact who arranges a discount for her. Sam bought reduced-price clothing from outlets. Quality clothing was very important for these three participants but they either could not afford or were unwilling to pay the normal prices for these garments. *Kantar Worldview* reported recently (Kantar, 2017) that a trend over the past few years has been for fashion retailers to over-buy, resulting in deep discounting on leftover stock. Consequently, there are many sales throughout the year. Kathy organized her third shopping trip to take place specifically in the post-Christmas sales and shops on eBay and charity shops.

Gisela had the most variety of strategies and possibly the most disposable income. She bought expensive, individually-made items on impulse, occasional impulse buys from supermarkets, and a variety of work and fun items from her favourite high street stores and internet sites. A common factor amongst most of the participants was that they considered their purchases carefully, they thought about what type of garment was needed, and whether the particular garment they wanted to buy would fulfil their requirements.

Table 7.3 shows the participants' main approaches to spending. It is based on overall impressions that were given of their personal financial circumstances and comments that the participants made, as specific financial questions were not discussed. The table shows their main attitude towards spending and lists key financial indicators. The shaded areas demonstrate whether an individual is in that category.

Main Attitude	Kathy	Ali	Sam	Xandra	Cara	Sasha	Gisela	Philomena	Maria	Jill
Sales	Yes								Yes	
Reduced		Bargain hunter	Habit					Occasional trip to NEXT staff shop		
Limited Income					Single Parent	Five Children				
Occasional Splurges		Birthday money					Buys garments on impulse			
Won't Spend	Clothing not a priority	Currently doesn't have any money		Currently doesn't have any money					No personal income, no need, she has enough clothing	No personal income, no need
Control of Own Income	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	husband	husband
Disposable Income	Some	Some after expenses paid	More than she has had before	Not much, trying to establish a business	Very little	Very little	Has enough	Some	More than she has had before	Has enough
Home-owner	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Table 7.3 Main Approaches Towards Spending

### 7.5.3 Spending More on Clothing

As it was assumed that the lack of disposable income would be a factor affecting purchase, all participants were asked the question were they to have an unlimited budget, would their clothes shopping be any different? The first thought of most participants was that no, their behaviour would not change as they did not like shopping, that shopping was not “part of their personality” or that they would rather spend money on travelling. However, when they thought about the issue more, they thought there could be potential behaviour change, usually within their current spending behaviours and considered the major influences apart from money that might produce such a change. Ali, Sam, Cara and Kathy were reluctant to spend any more on clothing. Despite Sam having more disposable income now than ever before, this change has not affected her current clothes shopping. Kathy would feel stupid for buying jeans for sixty pounds just because she could, an attribute she puts down to her “*poor person upbringing!*” Cara was happy with her choices. Maria, had the biggest dilemma of all the participants. Her spending strategy focused on preventing herself spending money on clothing as she felt she “*doesn't deserve it*”. There are two reasons why that was the case: firstly, she was not earning money and so could not contribute to

the family income and did not need clothing for work. The second reason was more complex and was bound up with historical clothing habits. She reflected:

*“I don’t know, it’s all emotional and psychological, which is nothing to do with the reality and I think back to you know, hundreds of years ago when you had the one dress and the vest or something underneath it that then or sleeves that you chopped out and that and that’s what you had and that’s what you wore until it was absolutely threadbare so why do I have a whole wardrobe full of clothes that I never wear. Do I really need one more thing?” (M2)*

In the discussion about whether her strategy would change should she have an unlimited budget, she felt that it would not change much: her self-control, and the recognition that she owns clothing that is unworn, would not let her spend the money. Similarly, Jill controlled her spending as she was not in paid work and her “priorities” were not herself and her clothing, although she recognized that her situation was a fluid one and that in the future her strategy would probably change. If she possessed more disposable income, she would buy more garments particularly if she was working. Sasha admitted that she would be very tempted by a garment from Vivienne Westwood, a designer she admired as Westwood’s style of clothing reflected her own self-image, yet she pondered as to where she would wear such a garment. She also acknowledged that she would have even more pairs of expensive shoes sitting in a box, reflecting how seldom she wore her current favourite pair of shoes. Gisela would carry on her current spending trend of buying unique clothing made by individuals but would not extend this behaviour to her whole wardrobe as she could not see herself “*being silly*”. Xandra was the only participant who would freely buy more clothing from the retailers she patronizes now, though she would, for practicality’s sake, build a walk-in wardrobe first to store them. Most participants were happy with the clothing that they were currently buying. There was a generally held recognition that probably they had too many garments that they only seldom wore, and they were not interested in partaking in any more shopping activity than they already did.

### 7.6 Priorities for Shopping

By observing participants whilst shopping, their visual priorities became apparent which they later confirmed within the interview. Aesthetics, colour and style followed by whether the garment was value for money, seemed to be the most important aspects for participants, with style being particularly important for Gisela. Eckman et al., (1990) had similar findings and described aesthetics, that is style, colour and pattern, fabric and appearance, as important for women when choosing their clothing. The aesthetic qualities that were important to participants varied within the group. The priority for Kathy was comfort, then colour, however she viewed comfort as being strongly linked to style. For Sam, the priorities were the requirements of the garment she was looking for, then she focuses on the brands that she likes. The priority for Sasha is generally what she could afford and Cara agreed with this along with what “need” she perceived herself to have. This did not quite agree with the results of research by Abraham-Littrell et al., (1995), who concluded that consumers concentrated on styling, construction, fabric and colour, in that order. Whilst style was the most important for Gisela and Kathy, colour did seem to be the most important priority for the others. Fabric was not mentioned much by participants at all. Comfort was an important factor for participants as clothing not only had to have the attributes of feeling physically right in terms of fit and being unrestricted in terms of activity, but also the implicit attributes of looking “right” for them in terms of style, occasion and self-image. This is in line with one of Birtwhistle and Tsim’s (2005) findings on clothing and the mature woman of over 45, where quality was key, and factors such as styling and comfort were highly rated.

### 7.7 Conclusion

The shopping trips provided three major benefits to this research. Firstly, they provided key insights in terms of participants’ attitudes. They helped to develop a relationship with the participants which gave confidence in the information that they provided in the other activities. This was evident in the interviews, in that having been shopping with them meant that they could

not tell a different story. Also, when asking about the shopping activities in the interviews, the shopping trip provided examples. After the first five participants, the shopping trips were limited to just the one as the second shopping trip did not reveal any significantly different information. This chapter produced similarities to Chapter 6, in as much that similar themes emerged from these activities that can be grouped under four major headings: Needs, Style, Habits and Life Circumstances.

### 7.7.1 Needs

Overall, the purchasing behaviour of participants was largely either for a specific item of clothing or from a section from a group of clothes that would address the same need.

As Babin, Darden and Griffin (1994) argue, shopping experiences can have two important dimensions: utilitarian and hedonic values. It was noticeable that participants tended to exhibit more utilitarian consumer behaviour, defined as consumption designed to meet functional needs, in contrast to hedonic consumer behaviour, consumption that is directed at satisfying needs for fantasy, excitement and fun (Arnould et al., 2004). Though there were aspects of hedonic behaviour such as Ali's bargain hunting, how she organized her searches, and the time she spent on this activity, overall participants demonstrated more utilitarian behaviour. The participants' attitude to shopping was revealing as it was contrary to stereotypical expectations about women and shopping, shopping was viewed as a pragmatic activity rather than an enjoyable one. This attitude clearly affected behaviour: shopping trips tended to be short, infrequent and centred around self-perceived "needs". Their attitudes towards shopping were demonstrated by their behaviour and their attitudes to life in general. This will be further discussed in Chapter 8. 2. 4 in Consumption Habits.

### 7.7.2 Style

Research by Ritch and Schroeder (2012) established that the main criteria for garment selection for female shoppers are style followed by price. It has been established in Chapter Six that personal style was important for participants, and that fashion itself was not a consideration

which was confirmed in the shopping activities. Personal style led to impulsive shopping as participants bought what they liked rather than what was currently on trend. Certain brands and retailers were favoured over others as they offered preferred styles, garments that fulfilled specific “needs”, garment qualities such as durability, and attractive pricing amenable to their budgets. This correlates to research by Eckman et al., (1990) that overall four major types of criteria emerge as important to respondents: aesthetics, usefulness, performance and quality alongside extrinsic criteria such as price. Comfort, practicality and utility were more important, reflecting the participants’ lifestyles.

### 7.7.3 Attitudes to Spending

Price naturally was part of the decision-making process which was revealed within their attitude to spending. There were essentially two drives for their approaches to spending.

Firstly, that their budget was restricted by low income led to buying cheaply or spending restrictions. This does not necessarily confine spending to cheap clothing but led to actively seeking bargains and reduced-price garments. Secondly, that their budget was restricted by their own choice. This was as a consequence of various factors, including clothing not being a priority, dislike of shopping, lack of occasion or work situation to necessitate the buying of specific garments, and recognition by most of the participants that they owned too much clothing already giving rise to the self-realization that there was no “need”.

### 7.7.4 Habits

The focus on their “needs”, personal style, and favourite brands and retailers demonstrates habitual decision-making by participants. According to Jackson (2005) it is well-known that consumers often make choices on the basis of simple signals like brand or price. This is particularly the case in making routine or habitual purchases. The decision-making for participants was evident with each participant favouring certain retailers and locations with satisfactory experiences reinforcing their habits. Equally, bad experiences had a similar influence, with

perceptions of certain retailers or an unsatisfactory customer service resulting in boycotting certain retailers. Participants had regular habits, however there was evidence of changes over time such as with the participants who moved to the UK and so changed their normal retailers. The influence of technology was beginning to impact on participants, although for most participants, their internet shopping was influenced by the physical bricks and mortar retailers, whilst others such as Gisela and Ali were actively seeking new internet sites to cater for their tastes. As Kim et al., (2014) posit, the rapid evolution of information and technology is having a revolutionary impact upon the marketplace whereby consumers can access boundary-less information and globally available goods and services.

### 7.7.5 Life Stage

As well as information technology having an impact on their shopping habits, their own life stage also had an impact on habits. At the time of participating in this research, their life stage was centred on family responsibilities, which is acknowledged by the market segmentation of the family life cycle, as seen in Solomon and Rabolt (2004) and Arnould et al., (2004). Though this is a marketing classification devised to market segment consumers at each stage of a life-cycle, and this research focuses on the individual, the acknowledgement that life is not static but there are significant changes throughout nevertheless is an important one. Yurchisin & Johnson (2010) acknowledge this life cycle pattern: people's wardrobes turn full circle as they reach retirement age, when they typically stop wearing professional clothing on a daily basis. This also determined the participants' current clothing "needs" (as discussed in Section 7.3). Time was a major factor, dictating not only length of shopping trips but also their decision-making structure.

## 7.8 Implications for Sustainable Behaviour

Overall, there were several aspects of sustainable behaviour with the participants.

The shopping trips were relatively short and were focused on buying particular garments for a specific need. Clothing purchases were few and the trip tended to end once this was achieved.



Their needs were pragmatic ones and there was a preference for quality garments that were durable from some of the participants. This is in accordance with one of the consumer sustainable goals (Allwood et al., 2006; Fisher et al., 2008) to buy clothing that lasts longer.

All participants demonstrated financial self-restraint to a degree, the priority being what they could afford. Some of the shopping activities were browsing and participants did not spend money that they did not have, yet they did not seem unhappy about this. This is in contrast to Armstrong et al.,’s (2016) studies of young female college students who were asked to abstain from clothing purchasing for ten weeks. This research found that there were significant barriers to reduced consumption, with many participants feeling consumption envy of those who could shop with impunity.

In terms of the children’s clothing there was a big emphasis on second-hand clothing, particularly recycling clothes through the network of family and friends by “passing on” garments. Children’s clothing tended to fulfil two of the consumer sustainable goals, (Allwood et al., 2006; Fisher et al., 2008) that of acquiring more second-hand clothing and recycling clothing. Second-hand clothing was popular, either buying through charity shops or through on-line resources such as eBay.

The biggest influences on their clothing choices were their “needs”, family and friends and what they liked. Fashion, social status or consumption as identity was noticeably absent.

As described in the introduction of this chapter, part of the exercise in the shopping activity was to see how participants reacted to the information around them when shopping (Fisher et al., 2008). Whilst they seemed to disregard any advertising in store, focusing on looking at the clothes offered, they also disregarded the range of sustainable range of clothing being advertised in H & M. No-one commented on this at all. The only thing they took notice of in store were the mannequins displaying any garments that they liked. As discussed in Chapter Six, they all claimed no conscious influence on the way that they dressed in terms of fashion, advertising and marketing. This chapter would confirm this as there was no seeming influence from these factors

as evidenced in the way that they shopped. Two interesting aspects of shopping were the emotional aspect and the potential to spend more if they had more financial resources to do so. In terms of so-called retail therapy, hardly any of the participants did partake in this, as clothes shopping was not fulfilling an emotional need for them. Equally, when asked if they would they spend any more on clothing if they had the money similar responses were evoked, mainly the recognition that they had enough clothing already and there were other activities they would rather spend their money on. The participants tended to shop less for clothing for themselves since becoming mothers, correlating with similar findings from Ritch's (2015) research that mothers tended to shop less for fashion for themselves due to a mixture of reduced time, reduced finances and fewer social occasions that necessitated new garments.

This attitude, manifested through the shopping activities, formed part of the type of the sustainable behaviour exhibited by participants that showed that any sustainability effect was a byproduct of other factors. These instances of sustainable behaviours will be discussed further within the next chapter.

## 8 Factors affecting clothing consumption and implications for sustainability

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### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the research questions and pulls together the conclusions of this research to argue the key thesis: “In clothing, sustainable behaviour does not always arise from awareness of sustainability” and discusses the implications that arise from it. Chapter 5 showed that overall, the participants displayed fairly sustainable behaviour, but their level of sustainability awareness was relatively low. Chapter 6 examined attitudes and behaviour around the ownership of their clothes, while Chapter 7 addressed shopping behaviour. As described in Chapter Three, this research took a mixed methods approach, where the qualitative and quantitative strands run in parallel providing a synthesis of both strands in the interpretation (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). This synthesis comes together firstly to answer the two research questions but comes together within five overarching themes which as Cresswell (2013) recommended which were identified through the coding process and will be discussed further within the discussion. The five key themes which are:

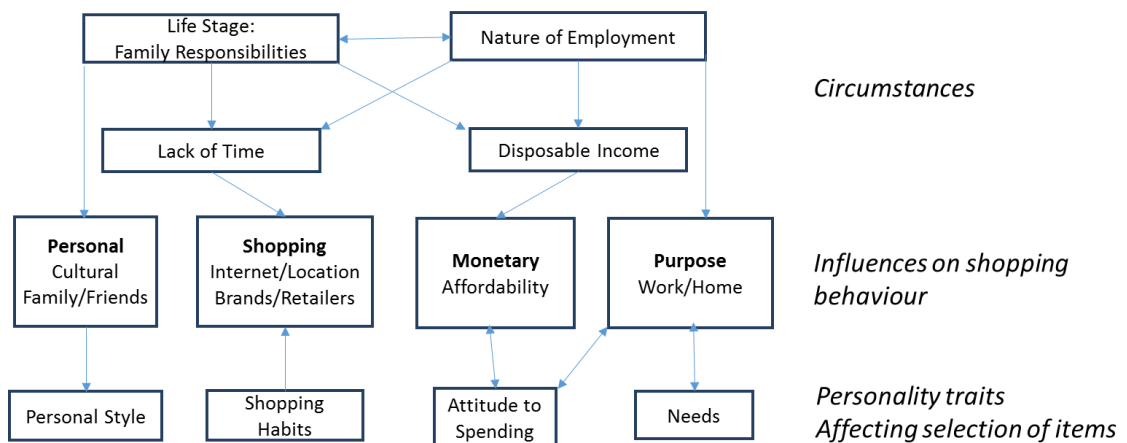


Figure 8.1 five key themes affecting clothing consumption

These come together to form the final conclusion, the implications for sustainability.

**Research Question One: What are the key factors that influence consumers in the purchasing, use and disposal of clothes?**

Purchasing, use and disposal of clothing are connected and cannot be looked at in isolation. What clothes people buy affects how they use them and how and when they dispose of them. However, all three aspects of clothing consumption are profoundly affected by an individual's life circumstances and their personality traits. Figure 8.1 summarises the different factors affecting clothing behaviour. It separates the life factors, such as family circumstances, from personality traits which are likely to persist over a life time. The factors interrelate, having an effecting each other. The participants were at a stage of life which was dominated by care duties, which also affected the nature of their employment since none were in full time employment. Their life circumstances left them with both limited time and limited income, which directly affected where and how they shopped. Their personality traits also affected their life circumstances and vice versa, however their accounts of their personal style, shopping habits and attitude to spending indicated that these would persist beyond the current circumstances.



**Figure 8.2 Major factors influencing the purchasing of clothing**

The participants themselves claimed that life circumstances were the biggest influence on their behaviour stating that family responsibilities had “changed their priorities.”

Thompson et al., (1990) found that motherhood was the most central to women's consumer experiences in terms of forgoing the income of professional work for the needs of their children,

shopping experiences with children being hectic and the responsibility to spend money wisely. Ritch's thesis (2012) found that motherhood impacted significantly upon participants and their clothing consumption, whereby one participant prioritized sustainability whereas another felt restricted to purchase ethically. Not only did it bring a change in working patterns, a shortage of disposable income and less time for themselves but also led them to question their world-view, and change their ethical attitudes (Carey et al., 2008). For these participants, their life stage also determined the participants' current clothing "needs" (as discussed in Chapter Six) and changed some of their attitudes towards clothing. They needed clothes that were suitable for their lives at home with their children and part-time work. Additionally, Gisela and Ali had distinct work clothes.

Identity is a key element in the selection, use and disposal of clothing (Entwhistle, 2016, Simmel 1957, Roach-Higgin, Eicher 1992, Evans 1989). Niinimaki (2010) points out the dual role of clothing as expressing one's self, but also participation in social groups and class through fashion. Fashion clothing means different things to different people O'Cass (2004). The participants largely associated fashion with fad or individual features, like colours, and showed little awareness of fashion as a wider social phenomenon or as a system that influences their decision by predetermining the options from which they can choose and affecting their perception of what looks nice and what does not. Therefore, they claimed that they were not much influenced by fashion. Contrary to claims in the literature, none of the participants were particularly influenced by consumption culture (Chapter 2.3). More remarkably, there was also little discussion of how the judgement of others would influence their choices with the exception of Jill.

### 8.1.1 Purchasing garments

Shopping for clothing was not a leisure activity for most of the participants, but rather a core that needed to be squeezed into the participant's busy lives when the opportunity arose. Their habits formed around their favourite brands and retailers to minimize the time spent on shopping to get what garments they perceived they "needed" and get home again. It was noticeable that

participants tended to exhibit more utilitarian consumer behaviour, defined as consumption designed to meet functional needs, in contrast to hedonic consumer behaviour as noted by (Arnould et al., 2004). This attitude clearly affected behaviour as shopping trips tended to be short, infrequent and centred on the purpose of what was required. The analysis in this thesis showed the following three major influencing factors which were style, needs and attitude to spending.

All participants claimed that personal style was more important than fashion itself. This was evident in the shopping trips and rationale provided for selection garments. Personal style began for most participants in their youth when they developed a personal taste and was strongly influenced by their social group around them, particularly in terms of culture, which is also recognized by Warde (1994) and Hiller (2016). Most, maybe with the exception of Jill and to a lesser extent Sam, had a strong sense of personal style, that guided their purchasing decisions and acted as filter when confronted with a large selection. Their style reinforced their identity, of who they were, with some participants enacting more than just the one identity. It also played a role in seemingly impulsive shopping behaviour as participants bought garments that they really liked when they saw them. In some cases, this overwrote their stringent budget control.

The participants justified most purchases as garments that “needed”, either as replacement for garments wearing out or for specific situations, as work or holidays. Comfort, practicality and utility, reflecting their lifestyles were listed as major selection criteria in addition to personal style. This also determined that selection to brands and retailers, which they believed would have garments of the required style, quality and price point. For each individual there were clear differences in their attitudes towards and buying habits for the different garments that they possessed. Some clothing was not deemed as important as others and was therefore bought cheaply, whereas other garments had more money spent on them and were treasured.

Price was a major factor in their decision-making process. There were essentially three spending strategies: (a) Bargain hunting or reduced price shopping in response to having a limited income, but valuing quality. (b) Limiting spending by choice regardless of income in consequence of factors such as clothing not being a priority, dislike of shopping and lack of occasion or work situation to necessitate the buying of specific garments. Most participants recognised that they owned too much clothing, so that they felt that they no “need” for more clothing. Therefore, they were already spending less on clothing as demanded by the sustainable clothing goals. Buying items they love no matter how limited their income if they really liked them. It was revealed by the discussion around the “special item” led that some of the participants bought occasion-wear such as special dresses, a special coat or pair of shoes, because they really liked them. These were items that were clearly cherished and loved by their owners for long periods of time. This love for certain items in their wardrobe could be pertinent towards the ideology of Slow Fashion which will be discussed later in this chapter.

### 8.1.2 Use of Clothing

Unlike the shopping behaviour where the assertion by the participants could be triangulated with observation during shopping trips, the following observation on use behaviour are largely based on statements made in interviews:

- **Washing Temperature:** Some of the participants already washed at 30 degrees. For those who did not there were three main reasons: (1) they were following instructions on the washing labels, (2) there were concerns over whether the low temperature would clean well enough and (3) two participants did not understand how to use their washing machine and has not read the instructions.
- **Washing powder:** Most of the participants had tried eco-friendly washing powder but expressed dissatisfaction with it. This underperformance of washing powder has been identified as an issue with green products by Peattie and Crane (2005). Some participants also chose their washing powder to manage skin problems, particularly eczema.

- **Drying Behaviour:** All participants did line-dry to some extent. The majority did have a tumble drier or access to one, but used it sporadically, largely due to cost. Fisher et al. (2008) also found that people were more aware of the financial cost of tumble drying than the energy usage, and used line-drying as much as possible.
- **Repairing or Adapting Clothing:** The majority of participants were skilled in making and repairing clothing or had access to others with the requisite skills. The clothes making skills were very under-utilized due to fabrics costing more than ready-made clothing and the disinclination to spend time making or repurposing garments. However, there was a high level of minor repair to extend the lives of clothing.
- **Ironing.** The overwhelming response to this, with one exception, Sam, was that the participants avoided ironing as much as possible as they disliked this activity.

### 8.1.3 Disposal of Clothing

All the participants recycled their clothing by giving to friends, charity shops, charity bags that came through the door or taken to the tip, with little curiosity over what happened next. No-one mentioned performing this behaviour for either ethical or environmental reasons, however there was potentially a link between recycling clothing and recycling other household products, an example being Sam who recycled everything she could. Equally, a link has been found by Saicheua et al., (2012) who found if common household products are recycled then the same is done for clothing. This would infer that recycling is not necessarily seen as a “green” behaviour, requiring the right pro-environmental attitudes, but participant’s actions reflected a more pragmatic view, that it was seen as the “norm”, which according to Thomas and Sharp (2013) is how they often become habits or habitual behaviours, that recycling clothing is done automatically and lacks conscious intent or awareness of action.

### 8.1.4 Consumption Habits

The acquisition, use and disposal of clothing seemed to be largely influenced by habit. An observation also made by Hiller (2016) on clothing behaviours of ethical consumers. The



participants did not research into the garments they were buying and rarely reflected about their behaviour in this area. Several participants, like Maria, commented on being challenged by the overwhelming choice they are confronted with. All participants applied filters to reduce the choice and save time in shopping. Time has also been identified as a critical factor by other researchers such as Carrigan and Szimgin (2006; Carrigan and Szimgin 2001). The focus on their “needs”, personal style, and favourite brands and retailers demonstrates their filters for decision-making. Each participant favoured certain retailers and locations with satisfactory experiences reinforcing their habits. Participants had regular habits but there was evidence of changes over time. The factors influential in changing habits were rooted in life changes, for example, moving to the UK and the influence of the internet in how they shopped.

Additionally there were three major factors there were identified as being important.

Firstly, it was evident there was limited time for shopping and research about clothing due to the demands of the family and working life. This also affected their willingness to iron and mend clothes. Secondly, in caring for their families, as Miller (1998) identified within his ethnographic research, as love for others - the participants were doing what they thought was best for their families particularly in terms of washing. Finally, many listed ‘convenience’ as a main reason for selection the location of shopping. Use was also largely habitual. Many washed everything at the same temperature and many disliked tumble driers, but used it, because they did not like having washing hanging around the house. The desire to impose order in the household was also identified by Carrigan and Szimgin (2006). Cleanliness and comfort of clothes for the family were more important as also identified by Shove (2003a).

***Research Question Two: In an individual’s clothing consumption pattern, what possible barriers towards more sustainable behaviour can be identified?***

Every participant to a certain extent did engage with the proposed modes of sustainable behaviour as outlined in the Sustainable Clothing Goals. Figure 8.2. gives an overview of the barriers to sustainable behaviour outlined in this chapter.

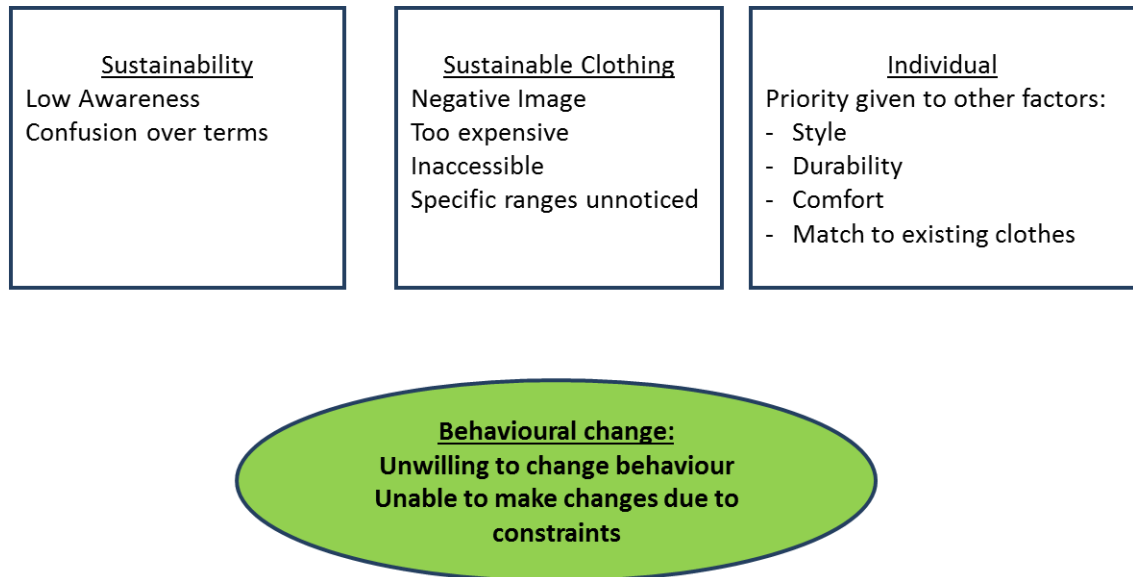


Figure 8.3 The Barriers to Sustainable Behaviour

Firstly, in line with the literature review in Chapter 2 there was a low level of awareness of sustainability in clothing. This resonates with the general point that unsustainable behaviour is largely driven by a lack of knowledge of the underlying societal costs of such behaviour (Heeren et al., 2016). Some specific barriers to sustainable behaviour however were identified.

The definition of “sustainability” and what the term actually meant. The participants were unclear and hesitant over the term. However, once the separate issues, such as ethical issues, or the use of water for cotton production were discussed, participants showed much more understanding. The participants had simply never connected the various ethical and environmental issues with the term “sustainability”, even though they were relatively aware of individual sustainable issues. Their uncertainty over what the term “sustainability” actually meant could be linked to lack of information and where to find it. The participants were unsure about sustainability issues regarding clothing, an example being Ali, who despite having the highest level of awareness, was unsure whether much clothing could be recycled given that many garments were made out of mixed fibres. Most of the participants claimed not to know where to find information on sustainability issues, though Sasha and Xandra felt that the information was there if they really looked for it. Hiller Connell (2012b) identified a barrier of insufficient and unreliable

information about the environmental impacts of the clothing industry. There was low knowledge about the clothing industry in general, even their favourite brands. Their knowledge of the clothing brands they patronized was also limited and curiously stereotyped. For example, Xandra liked the Spanish and Italian designers because she liked their style which she described as “fresh and formal” or Kathy liked FatFace because the majority of the garments that they offered were cotton. The focus was very much on what they liked and wanted from the brands and retailers, sustainability concerns were low on the list of participants. Most of the participants made assumptions about sustainability, such as being reflected in the reputation of retailer and the price of the garment (Ritch and Schroder, 2012). This was also evident in the research by Chan and Wong (2012) and Shaw et al., (2006) who found that consumers had unsubstantiated confidence that certain UK retailers were devoid of garment-worker exploitation.

There were clear barriers against buying eco or ethically-made clothing. Only three participants considered buying such clothing, Kathy, Xandra and Jill. The participants know little about eco clothing, but in line with their general shopping behaviour had formed opinions based on very cursory knowledge. Mainly that the style of ethically-made clothing had a negative image for the participants. They expect ethically-made clothing to have certain of eco- aesthetics, which many did not consider to be acceptable to them. This was discussed in Chapter 2.27, where there were similar findings amongst ethical consumers.

There was also the perception that ethical clothing was too expensive. Ali actively questioned whether consumers would be able to afford eco/ethical clothing. She spoke of a friend who designed swimsuits for a website that retailed at around £20. She would not be able to design eco/ethical swimsuits for that price as the market segment she was designing for would not pay that amount. Accessibility of eco clothing was also an issue. They did not know where to buy them. Only one shop in Leicester was identified as having these available. In Hiller’s (2016) thesis on ethical consumers, within their clothing consumption stories, it was evident that their shopping habits were dominated by the High Street stores. As mentioned in 2.8 that fact that the

ethical clothing market is just 0.4% of the total clothing market, highlights the significant barrier. Despite retailers' advertising on sustainability, several participants did not notice the "sustainable clothing" ranges and posters in shops. For example, nobody commented on the "Conscious" collection in H & M, the most popular shop. When asked, doubts about the underlying value system of ethical clothing were expressed. Sasha and Ali both felt that workers in the developing world could not have western standards imposed upon them. Based on her own experience of living in south-east Asia Ali suggested that many jobs that seem to western eyes to be exploitation were seen as good jobs by the local workers. This issue was also identified by Joergens (2006) and Iwanow et al., (2005). Sasha expressed scepticism about the increased price for fair-trade. She wondered whether it is used to obtain profit for the retailer, rather than for the workers. This was also identified by Bray et al., (2011) and by Fisher et al., (2008), Hiller (2016). Peattie and Crane (2005) also identified that there is a mistrust of green claims by companies by consumers.

Whilst second hand clothing was generally viewed positively by participants, Xandra, the South American participant was concerned about the negative image of second-hand clothing. Others were concerned about the poor organization of clothes in second hand stores, particularly charity shops. This was also identified by Hiller Connell (2010).

Awareness of sustainability does not translate into action. Whilst Ali, Sasha and Xandra had the highest sustainability awareness of the group, it was not readily apparent in the activities and only emerged in the discussion right at the end of the interview. Ali also felt that for her, sustainability was "personal style" which meant buying clothing that suited her that she would cherish and keep for a long time. Ali was most aware of sustainability, had absorbed the information, yet she had made up her own mind to deal with the various issues in her own way that was also convenient for herself. Others felt that they were doing enough and questioned whether they really could be more "sustainable." Though their awareness of sustainability in clothing was low, all the participants showed aspects of unintentional sustainable behaviour through the four major themes identified below.

## 8.2 Hidden Sustainability

While there are many barriers to more sustainable behaviour and little awareness of sustainability for clothing, the participants' behaviour was already quite sustainable. It is important to understand how a general predisposition to sustainable behaviour affects clothing consumptions, as approaches to improving sustainability must build on these behaviours.

### 8.2.1 Attitudes to Consumption Behaviours

A crucial element of the sustainability debate has been the question of how to change consumption patterns (Jackson, 2005). As discussed in Chapter 1 clothing is part of the general consumption patterns of the individual, and with constantly changing styles fashion creates needs, which contribute to significant ethical and environmental issues. In particular, clothing waste has become a significant sustainability issue. Clothing retailers tend to follow the Dominant Social Paradigm putting emphasis on economic return, with consumption as the root towards profitability (McDonagh and Prothero, 2014). Additionally, consumption of clothing is also encouraged by people wishing to display their status and social class through their goods and possessions. (Warde, 1994). In history social classes differentiated each other through clothing (Simmel, 1957) and more recently luxury items are now designed to be inconspicuous to demonstrate social status to those in the know (Eckhardt et al.,2015). Conspicuous consumption is also a means to differentiate to set the leisure classes apart from the rest (Szmigin, 2010). Yet the participants' pragmatic nature of their clothing indicated that, although most were not in paid employment or had small part-time jobs, they certainly regarded themselves as working in terms of their caring responsibilities. They did not explicitly subscribe to the dominant consumer culture view, which presents the philosophy of consumption as being the route to the "good life", whilst those of non-consumption are those who are missing out on "real-life" (Connelly & Prothero, 2003). In conversations with participants there was little explicit reference to social class, status or any materialistic values, attitudes that may lead to the over-consumption of clothing. Though, from visiting their homes, there was plenty of contextual evidence that some of the participants

led comfortable lives in terms of well-maintained large houses and descriptions of some of their activities, such as holidays abroad. Their attitudes towards clothing tended to be pragmatic and focused what they felt they needed and liked rather than what items of clothing would impress others. Fletcher (2008, p130) in her discussion on over-consumption of clothing identified consumption escalators which are the below, which to some extent were present in the participants' behaviour:

- **Pressure to compare ourselves to others, through the accumulation and display of possessions.** Participants in Armstrong's et al., (2016) study did compare themselves with others and on a social level and experienced feelings of jealousy and inadequacy. However, the participants within this research expressed such sentiments with the exception of Jill. She who felt judged and was teased by her friends, who she felt had more clothes, which were nicer and more fashionable.
- **The rolling replacement of things, as each new purchase requires the buying of another to match.** While matching was an issue for the participants, the directly was the opposite. They bought new clothes to fit in with existing ones and selected them so that they would match future purchases. For example, Ali and Sam who bought garments in black/white so they would "match" other garments. This type of behaviour in terms of matching items was also identified by Woodward (2015). Sasha, liked dresses because they avoided the problem of matching altogether. Other participants did not speak about this as a specific issue. However, the efforts to match clothing already owned demonstrated sustainable behaviour. This was another reason why jeans were so popular, as they were regarded as garments that would match any top.
- **The cultural obligation to experience everything and buy things accordingly.** This was not commented on by the participants with regards to clothing. Whilst Ali admitted that it was hard not to be influenced by advertising and by others, there was little evidence that any of the participants actually were. This is in contrast to Armstrong et al.,'s (2016)

findings that participants (89%) in their study were distressed by the multitude of seemingly inescapable prompts in terms of marketing and social media promotion characteristic of the fashion system.

- **Constant consumption as part of a continuous process of identity formation.** The participants came across as knowing who they were and were confident expressing their identity through their personal style. Fashion played little or no role in their self-identity. No participant spoke about wanting the latest trend in fashion clothing and it was striking how little the participants were affected by constant renewal of fashion as seen within the “fashion system” (Entwhistle, 2000). Some had disregarded fashion their entire lives and placed no importance on this. Status symbols such as T-shirts designer logos by Tommy Hilfiger, used as a kind of social positioning (Szmigin, 2010) seemed to play no part in their lives. Wearing the right “brands” were important for some individuals (Valor 2007; Carrigan and Atalla 2001 ) but not for these participants.

There was no evidence in their attitudes or behaviour that they felt the need for constant consumption. There were instances within the shopping trips that participants did like novelty and this was particularly seen in the case when they were browsing and admired many garments although in most cases the participants had the strength to control their spending so were able to resist the temptation. However the desire for novelty was there, and was openly acknowledged by Ali who was convinced that individuals would always want new clothing. In terms of specialisation within daily life, the tendency that individuals have to present themselves differently according to the situation, the two participants with the biggest wardrobes and seemingly possessing the most garments were Gisela and Sasha who seemed to have the most “identities.” The smallest number of garments possessed was by Kathy who had just the one identity through all spheres of her life. Overall, though there was evidence that suggested that their clothing behaviour was more in line with alternative approaches to consumption advocated

by Soper (In: Shaw et al., 2016) and Barnett et al., (2005), which involves consuming less and focusing on other areas of life such as hobbies, interests and a slower pace of life.

Motherhood has changed their “priorities” and lead to a big shift in their consumption patterns due to lack of money and time. For examples both Xandra and Philomena seriously cut down from buying expensive professional clothing. The participants expressed no regrets about their previous consumption habits. Szmigin (2010) argues that the debate on de-consumption does not recognize the joy of consumption only the negatives. These participants did not give any impression that this had been a negative impact, but talked about getting enjoyments from other activities such as gardening, cooking, holidays, keeping fit, which seemed more important to them than shopping for clothing. Ali and Jill also commented that children affected their values, which in turn had an impact on their shopping. Jill admits that her younger self would probably have shopped in Primark had the stores then existed, but having had children has affected her worldview. Ali used to buy lots of cheap garments from stores such as Primark but since her child’s birth and being more aware of ethical issues, she now considers her former habits to be wasteful and is more circumspect about her purchases.

### 8.2.2 Shopping

The participants were not, on the whole, inclined to purchase a lot of clothes. Similarly, Ritch and Schroder (2012) found that their participants preferred trips to the city centre to visit established fashion retailers and this occurred so infrequently that it was viewed as an indulgent treat.

This is acknowledged by Sam that she did not “*stress over clothes*” or participate in any last-minute shopping, she would rather “*wear what I’ve got rather than stress to go out and try and find something*” (S3). This was echoed by other participants who would make do with what garments they already owned. Most of the participants also felt that they owned far too much clothing already. Woodward (2007) discovered within her ethnographic research on women’s wardrobes that her participants owned an average of ninety-eight garments. In general, the



participants preferred to own fewer, but higher quality and nicer clothes, findings reflected by Fisher et al., (2008) and Ritch (2012).

The participants did not use shopping as a means to cheer themselves up, unlike the young university students in Armstrong et al., (2016)'s study who experienced emotional deflation resulting from the removal of recreational shopping and purchasing. The behaviour of most participants can be classified as being practical in terms of necessities, rather than recreational, the two orientations as defined by Falk and Campbell (1997). Though, there were aspects of hedonic shopping as was demonstrated by the bargain-hunting of Ali and Sam and the impulsive shopping by some of the participants, particularly with Gisela. Aspects of hedonic behaviour in shopping by ethical consumers were found by Gregory-Smith et al., (2013) in the rejoicing in the purchase of a cheap product or bargain. This was evident in the behaviour of Ali and Sam who purposely targeted reduced clothing albeit in different ways. For both of them, the extra effort of exertion is worth it, they are rewarded with quality garments that they have not paid full price for. Another aspect of hedonic shopping was impulsive shopping, with Wood (2004) viewing this behaviour as a "failure." Recognizing their dependence on shopping for clothing items, Armstrong et al. 2016 also found a self-diagnosed negative attitude towards impulse shopping in her university students. The ethnographic nature of this study however revealed another side to impulse buying such as demonstrated by Gisela. She saw two garments that she really wanted and bought without any financial considerations. However, as she had a distinct style and knew what she wanted and was therefore delighted to find something she liked without looking. Cara also bought an expensive garment on impulse. Both were very attached to the garments, which is a form of sustainable behaviour. This type of behaviour has been noted by Thompson et al., (1990) in a study of everyday consumer experiences of married women, the participants also displayed this type of impulsive behaviour, described as being captivated/being deliberate, though generally they usually planned their clothes shopping in terms of garment needed and a set sum of money to be spent.

Despite instances of spontaneous buying, the participants generally saw shopping as a chore and filtered the shopping options by style, location and price. They did not systematically search as suggested by Solomon and Rabolt (2004) and their shopping behaviour was highly habitual. Davies and Gutsche (2016) also discovered that the activity of shopping was dominated by *habit* and *availability*. The filtering mechanism of clothes shopping excluded options, (shops, brands, styles, places etc.) on little information or as a result of one-off experiences. One bad experience can lead to a store being boycotted and not visited again. Chan and Wong (2012) argue that improving store-related attributes can improve eco-clothing consumption. Considering the prejudiced that the participants had to eco clothing (see section 8.3) this could be an important factor.

### 8.2.3 Monetary Concerns

Disposable income was the main determinant of the participants' attitude to spending, as it was for the mothers in Ritch (2012)'s study. Xandra summarized this as:

*"I really need it before I buy it." (X4).*

The lack of time, lack of money and family responsibilities mean that people adopt more frugal habits and do not buy clothing, which as Pepper et al. (2009) points out may not arise from any ethical or environmental reason, but from income limitations and self-control. Cara was a frugal purchaser, however although lack of disposable income was driving her buying decisions, she seemed content with this, and there was no overt display of wanting more disposable income. Kathy had similar feelings, claiming she would feel stupid for buying jeans for sixty pounds. All participants other than Gisela, set limits for their clothing purchases and question whether there was a genuine need for a particular garment. Self-control is an aspect of sustainable clothing behaviour identified by Hiller-Connell (2010). Maria seemed to question her particular clothing need the most of all the participants. This was an attitude also noted by Thompson et al., (1990) by the married women participants who by not being in paid professional work felt a

responsibility to control spending. In her case this attitude is not restricted to clothing. Overall, the behaviours among these participants indicated that there were a number of key personality and circumstances factors that affected their willingness to spend on clothing.

### 8.2.4 Needs

Generally, the participants focused on clothing that fulfilled their needs, often for specific items. Needs were discussed both within Chapter Six in terms of general needs for clothing and in Chapter Seven when their particular need was articulated for the shopping trip. This specific need for an item of clothing was recognized by Armstong et al., (2016)'s participants too. In the context of shopping, Blackwell et al., (2006, p71) defines need recognition as the moment, "when an individual senses a difference between what he or she perceives to be the ideal versus the actual state of affairs." Generally speaking within the shopping activities, the participants did not define need by an ideal, as stated by Blackwell, but adequate or comfortable would do as most did not expect to find exactly they wanted, a dissatisfaction openly expressed with the current clothing market.

Needs, expressed as a general term is slightly problematic, as this covers a wide spectrum and is very much dependent upon the individual concerned. Nevertheless, the importance of needs cannot be understated, as the design community have called for more attention on consumers "needs" (Fletcher, 2008, Niinimaki, 2010). As Jackson (2005) argues the needs-based critique of consumer society appears to hold out considerable hope for sustainable consumption. If social and psychological needs really are ill-served by modern commodities, then it should be possible to live better by consuming less, and in the process, reduce our impacts on the environment.

In this research, defining these social and psychological needs came primarily from Chapter 6. During the activities, various needs were mentioned: functionality, comfort, social acceptance, personal style and smartness. Style seems to be a clear priority need for consumers (Ritch and Schroder, 2012; Klepp and Storm-Mathisen, 2005; Birtwhistle and Tsim, 2005 and Appleford,

2012). Style was far important factor than fashion, as fashion was not really a primary “need” and had been declining as they grew older. Several commented that fashion had been more important when they were younger, as a signal of group identify (see also Klepp and Storm-Mathisen, (2005) Abbot and Sapford, (2001); Cox and Dittmar, (1995). As Crane (1999) claims, fashion is oriented primarily toward the tastes of the young, who, both male and female, are more fashion conscious and more active consumers of clothing than the middle-aged. Fisher et al., (2008) had found, fashion played a decreasing role in the participants’ lives. Fletcher (2008) argues that clothing and fashion are different entities and meet different needs. Non-fashion clothing is material to protect a person’s modesty and to keep warm, while she sees the function of fashion as urging people to consume fashion to satisfy their emotional needs. She contests that the ever-changing styles of fashion leads to the sustainable issues under discussion within this thesis. This research demonstrates that this not as straightforward as Fletcher (2008) believes, given their low involvement with fashion and not demonstrating any dependence on shopping for emotional needs. In terms of fast fashion, Woodward (2015) sees this as a problematic notion, when seen through the lens of what people actually wear. New items are combined with items already owned, some items such as skinny jeans which as regarded as fashion “slow-burners” persist over time. The participants regarded items as socially acceptable rather than fashionable. For example, for Kathy jeans were functional, modest, kept her warm, suitable for all aspects of her life yet were also deemed socially acceptable. Jeans are ubiquitous garments, (Miller and Woodward, 2010); however, prestige and status are associated with particular clothing brands and labels (Armstrong et al., 2016). Some participants had different jeans for different occasions. Philomena has designer jeans for social occasions as well as a more ordinary pair. The former addressed the need for self-image and the latter fulfilling an essentially functional need. Other participants also owned more expensive pairs of jeans (and other items which they claimed were “designer”), but did not mentioned social prestige explicitly, although there was more of an implicit meaning of social acceptance. The differentiation was however not in terms of fashion, but condition of the

garment, as worn-out jeans could only be worn at home, where they provide a relaxed and soft, tactile feeling representing comfort, another important quality. In many ways, these participants need for clothing were similar to the studies of ethical consumers. For example, personal style was important too for ethical consumers, and sustainable clothing was not fulfilling consumers need for “self-identify” and style (Butler and Francis, 1997) and is often seen to be unappealing (Gam, 2011) or unfashionable designs (Hassan et al., 2014, Shaw et al., 2006, Hiller Connell, 2010).

Ninnimaki (2012) talks about attributes garments need to have. For example, office wear must meet certain expectations regarding social acceptance and professional codes. Eco-clothing often is regarded as lacking these properties. For ethical consumers, their needs are also very similar in terms of multiple identities, (particularly in relation to life roles), and social selves. (Hiller, 2016). As this research demonstrated, clothing must be viewed as acceptable for a variety of social roles and the different identities of the individual.

### 8.2.5 Ethical Behaviour

The participants of this study were not pre-screened for any positive ethical or environmental attitudes, they displayed unprompted ethical behaviour as discussed within Chapter Five. Kathy was a committed vegan and active member of a local vegan group. This led to a dilemma over her shoes and a potential trade-off between her values and her affordability. As discussed in 2.6 many ethical consumers have to make “trade-offs” between different factors. She justified buying vegan shoes for £80, which is expensive for her, because the shoes were compatible with her vegan values and would be her only pair. As Hiller (2016) recognized when an individual perceived an item to be expensive, sometimes the individual can have an act of justification to themselves, to enable purchase. She also gave her worn-out jeans to be made into handbags. This is an example of spillover behaviour, i.e. ethical behaviour in one sphere of her life influences her behaviour in another sphere of life identified (Thogersen and Olander, 2003). An example of where behaviour has not spilled over is from Sam. She is fully aware of the Fairtrade shop, and sells cards at specific

events, one of the attractions of doing this is that the card company is small, family-run and is ethical. Yet as she muses, it has never occurred to her buy ethical clothing before, possibly because of the image of ethical clothing and that she is so entrenched in her habits of buying specific brands.

Gam et al., (2010) found a link between mothers' environmental concerns, environmental purchasing behaviours and recycling behaviour significantly affected their involvement in organic cotton clothing for their children. Motherhood prompted the participants to pursue a more ethical life and they bought organic clothing for their new-born children but were not entirely sure why, nor did they question why they did not buy it for themselves. There was no discernible link between their buying of this clothing and their environmental concerns, as they were relatively ignorant of organic clothing as proved in Chapter 5. Whilst they were good at recycling, there was again no discernible link between their recycling habits and the buying of organic clothing for their children. Cervellon and Wernerfelt (2012) showed purchase motivations for organic clothing are based on health such as allergy prevention. This was the case for Xandra, whose children have eczema. This area was another example of participants being disinclined to seek information. Maria expressed concern over chemicals in clothing and tried to buy organic clothing for her child. However, she was not actively seeking information herself.

Mainstream consumers knowingly buy ethical products, but display a lack of knowledge about their purchases (Davies and Gutsche, 2016), which also manifest itself in a confusion over the labels such as organic products. One reason for not seeking information might be, that many felt good about what they were doing and did not want to incur potential guilt through increased knowledge (Davies and Gutsche, 2016). This certainly applied to Maria and potentially to the others as well. Jill and Cara had gained some ethical knowledge came from attendance at church. Faith groups have been established as an ethical consumers' cultural habitat (Newholm, 2005). In particular Fairtrade has been promoted as part of a religious moral framework (Wenell, in Shaw et al 2016, Pepper et al., 2011). For example, Jill learned about Fairtrade products in church and now

buys Fairtrade bananas and other Fairtrade food products. As a result of the raised awareness of Fairtrade through her church and this research, she now indicated that she was prepared to pay extra for fair-trade clothing. Increased knowledgeable and had strong attitudes seems to correlate with a willingness to pay more (Kozar and Hiller Connell, 2013).

Knowing more about the issues affected other participants differently. Cara, openly acknowledged she suspected that workers were being paid too little in the manufacturing of garments yet squashed her conscience when buying clothes, which can be seen as a form of denied responsibility (Chatzidakis et al., 2007). Cara regretted her actions but justified them on the grounds of price and the inability to afford more expensive clothing. As McEachern (2015) observed that whilst consumers may feel guilt buying at cheap items, their budget cannot allow them to do otherwise. Ethical consumerism tends to be for the more affluent consumer (Solomon and Rabolt, 2004; Humphrey in Shaw et al, 2016). Cara could buy second hand clothing instead but she does not like charity shops, she prefers the convenience of supermarket shopping.

Davies and Gutsche (2016) claim that ethically influenced consumers are open to ethical alternative products just so long as they can perceive benefits to *self* through *peer* esteem, *accomplishment* and perceptions of *higher quality*. As Sam points out, she would consider fair-trade clothing as long as her requirements for quality and durable long-lasting clothing are met.

### 8.3 Implications for discussions on sustainable clothing consumption

Throughout this research sustainable behaviour emerged as a by-product of other motivations and factors. The participants were not acting from any sustainable principle, as such, as generally their awareness of the various ethical and environmental issues was low. Even when such awareness existed it did not necessarily translate to sustainable behaviour. This has large implication for research on sustainable clothing, which advocated engaging in conscious sustainable behaviour.

### 8.3.1 Sustainable Clothing Goals

The sustainable goals which were proposed by Fisher et al., (2008) and Allwood et al., (2006) had very similar goals for consumers in terms of clothing consumption. Below are the sustainable clothing goals that were most pertinent for the participants in terms of goals they were likely to achieve or felt that they were already achieving.

- **Buying fewer clothes:** Kilbourne and Mittelstaedt (2012) argue that society needs to engage with the 'less is more' philosophy. The participants had already adopted this philosophy in terms of their clothing. Motherhood and the consequent reduction in disposable incomes has already led to a reduction in clothing purchases. No-one asked the participants to be less materialistic; rather they were making the choice themselves. Their consumption behaviours demonstrate the participants having attitudes towards consumption that are more in agreement with various acts of voluntary simplicity and/or anti-consumption. (McDonagh and Prothero, 2014). Purchasing is rationalized as meeting a need. To reduce buying even further the notion of need would need to be challenged.
- **More durable clothing,** classified by WRAP (2012) into physical durability concerning the resistance to damage and wear and emotional durability, i.e. the ability to stay relevant and desirable to the consumer. Durability of clothing was seen a key indicator of quality and value for money. Both physical and emotional durability of clothing was recognized and desired, which led to clothing being cherished and kept. Emotional durability is aligned with the participants' strong sense of personal style. Sam and Kathy had their specific items that they kept on replacing when they were physically worn out. The majority had competent repairing/sewing skills and gave examples of garments mended and altered. They bought reduced clothes in preference to cheap ones. Durability and quality are widely recognized as important characteristics (e.g. Jagel et al., 2012) and reflected in the time and money invested in obtaining it (Ritch, 2012). The desire for durability increases with age (Fisher et al., 2008).



- **Buying Second Hand Clothes.** Second-hand clothing from both charity shops and other sources was mentioned as a first option for many of the participants, a choice dictated by their income and preference. The purchase of second-hand clothing was seen as a means of obtaining good quality durable clothes at low cost.
- **Not Ironing.** Most of the participants hated ironing, and hardly ever ironed. However, this was not in any way linked to sustainability issues such as energy saving.
- **Recycling clothing** Most of their clothing was recycled, either by taking clothing to charity shops, offering it to friends and family, or taking it to the local clothes bank. This behaviour was an ingrained habit, coming from a reluctance to throw items away. No specific reasons were given for this behaviour, just that this is what they would normally do. It can be assumed that this was to some extent a spill over behaviour from recycling in general, particularly as for most participants there was kerbside collection of clothing and textiles. Most of them, particularly children's clothes were passed onto networks of family and friends, one of the most common methods for clothing disposal as acknowledged by Domina and Koch (1999).

There were similar results from Hiller's (2016) study of ethical consumers, and it was found that few of the participants in his study readily fit into the narrow view of the eco consumer, that patterns of clothing consumption were considered in relations to other personal conventions, values and habits. They prioritized buying less, better quality and avoiding brands that were perceived to be the worst culprits in relation to supply chain issues and fast fashion.

### 8.3.2 Slow Fashion

Fletcher's (2010) vision of Slow Fashion is based on a vision of sustainability in the fashion sector based on different values and goals to the current ones. In slow fashion sustainable products that have a longer usable life and are more highly valued (Clark, 2008). To goals is to lever a deep and lasting change in fashion (Fletcher, 2010) through increasing the bond between consumers and their items of clothing. Even though there is a lack of a conceptual definition of slow fashion (Jung

and Jin, 2014) part of the philosophy is encouraging consumers to buy high-quality items (Fletcher, 2008) made by local artisans (Fletcher, 2010). Participants like Gisela engaged in the slow fashion behaviour, but did not espouse the relevant values.

Participants had some items of clothing for many years, jeans worn because they were “comfortable” and had moulded to their owner’s shape or a special dress, not often worn but an item that will be kept forever. These are instances of what Woodward (2015) terms “Accidental Sustainability” something that emerges from everyday clothing practices rather than a separate “add on”. Part of Slow Fashion is the encouragement of attachment to clothing is encouraged by the Sustainable Clothing Plan. WRAP established a website to encouraging people to make the most of their wardrobe and to change the way they buy, use and dispose of their clothing (loveyourclothes, 2017)

### 8.3.3 Eco/Ethical Clothing

In this study consumers were asked to express wishes regarding future eco-fashion, and the strongest support went to the statement that clothes should be long-lasting, durable and made with high quality. This is recognized by Niinimäki (2010) that style, colour, fit and quality are more dominant factors than ethicality when purchasing clothes in general. Consumers who focus on their own individual style, rather than fashion are significantly more likely to purchase environmental clothing and dispose of their clothing. Additionally there was a link to frugality too in terms of style consumption. (Cho et al., 2015). Sustainable purchase and disposal behaviour could therefore be increased by giving consumers tools and assistance to help them understand their preferred style and cuts that would suit their body shapes, so that they feel confident in their clothes and value them as a result. This might persuade consumers to invest in better quality clothes and to wear, care and keep them longer and balance out the perceived financial, social and psychological risks of clothing purchase (Harris et al., 2016).

## 8.4 Critique of the Sustainability Agenda

As discussed within Chapter 2.7 in the context of the Attitude-Behaviour Gap, no matter how ethically-inclined consumers are, their own wider clothes-buying considerations tend to be more important and that knowledge may not significantly increase sustainable-apparel purchasing behaviour, which is subject to many personal and contextual barriers. This was proved in Chapter Five by the participants who despite scoring highly on the Defra test for Pro-Environmental Attitudes did not extend their concern for the environment to their clothes-buying. This was largely due to ignorance but also having no idea where to find such clothing. Despite their awareness having been raised by this research, there was a general unwillingness to pursue these types of clothing due to the perception of eco clothing as costly and unstylish, by most of the participants. Though there were signs of small changes, such as Philomena deciding to buy organic clothing for her new grandchild. Hiller Connell and Kozar (2012a) highlight, that much of the sustainable clothing literature concentrates on young students (Kozar and Hiller Connell, 2013; Gam (2011); Valor (2007). One of the reasons is that in the USA consumers under the age of 25 spend a greater percentage of the annual income on apparel than any other age group, which is clearly different to the participants within this research. Most literature on clothing consumption concentrates on the acquisition phase. Chan and Wong (2012) have highlighted that fashion consumers have a price range that is acceptable to pay for a product. However, there is a reluctance to pay significantly more for eco-fashion. Niinimaki (2010) showed that nearly 30% willing ethical consumers to pay 10-14% more but not many were willing to pay more than that. Ritch (2012) argues that fashion sustainability should not be forced on consumers through paying a premium, because people already see sustainability as an excuse to increase prices and higher prices could exclude some consumers. This attitude was evident in Sasha and Cara, who both declared that cost would prohibit them from buying more expensive eco-clothing whatever their attitudes or beliefs were. However, the participants would pay more for items they cherished.

This could be seen as an example of achieving sustainability indirectly by focusing on the properties of clothing rather than sustainability.

Hiller Connell and Kozar (2014) also acknowledged that concern about the environment in general did not lead to sustainable clothing consumption. Gisela is an example of how challenging it is to achieve this behaviour change. She was possibly the most affected by the discussion on sustainable awareness and shocked by her own ignorance of issues affecting the clothing supply chain. She had studied geography and covered the effects of pesticides on the environment. As a result of taking part in this research she changed her brand of washing powder to one that had more environmentally-friendly claims. However, she soon reverted to the original brand, because she did not think it washed well and she disputed the claims that the brand was more environmentally-friendly, since she could not see the evidence for this. As Carrigan (2017) recognizes being ethically informed will not change most people's consumption behaviour, the challenges continue.

Szmigin (2010) argues that consumers need to understand their relationship with things at a deeper level rather than just as extensions of themselves. Production and consumption need to be considered in the consumer understanding and designers and manufacturers need to understand consumers to inform them, so that consumers can make better choices. There is a clear requirement for better information for consumers on sustainability as this research has proved. Woodward (2015) also argues that to make a difference for sustainability, information must come from consumers. She advocates more research on social practices and clothing usage to understand how accidental sustainability emerges from everyday clothing practices, such as individual's long-term relationships with garments such as jeans. This research would argue that greater consideration of consumer needs for clothing would make a difference towards sustainability.

The design community have examined various ways in which a consumer can participate within the design process (e.g. Black and Eckert (2012) Niinmaki and Hassi, (2011); Fletcher, 2008). In

previous research (Crommentuijn-Marsh, 2008) Considerate Design, that the garment is customized to what a customer wishes was explored with participants as a potential sustainability solution. However, the research revealed that participants had reservations about this, primarily that the garment would be too expensive, or that the garment would therefore only be for a special occasion, not a daily use garment. Whilst this would seemingly be a way forward personalizing more to an individual's style, there would be difficulties given that many of the participants had multiple identities and requirements for different types of garment. Hirscher (2013) explored participatory design processes, through half-way items, enabling consumers to finish the garment by customizing for their own needs. Though within her study participants reacted to this process with positivity, Hirscher acknowledged that whether they would succeed in the market is less certain. Niinimäki and Hassi (2011) along with Fletcher (2010) call for radical changes to the system of clothing consumption, however what a consumer needs and requires from a product remains relatively unexplored. A needs-focused strategy could yield the more sustainable products because it incorporates consumer behaviour into the product strategy (Armstrong and LeHew, 2011). Niinimäki (2010) argues, thus consumers should engage in the design process to accomplish eco-fashion that better reflects consumers' different needs and desires. Jagel et al., (2012) in their study of ethical consumers, suggests an approach of slow fashion, that combines high quality durable materials with modern, yet timeless design that makes individuals look good and able to express their identity. Within this study participants also emphasized eco materials and environmental concerns. For these participants the eco/ethical credentials of a garment are not so important yet they would be willing to consider such garments if they felt that the garment was right for them. This is suggested as a way forward for ethical consumers but it is evident that this approach would appeal to others too as this research demonstrates. For both sets of consumers, the garment requirements are very similar, except with the addition of the garments being manufactured more sustainably. At the end of such a design process it is thus possible to deepen consumers' product attachment and at the same time

add value to the product through sustainability, but with sustainability as an add-on feature after the priorities of style, durability and design.

However, this is likely to remain a niche solution, because it ignores the ways in which people buy clothes such as the pleasure of the hunt or the pleasure of finding something they like. As Szmigin (2010) identified conspicuous consumption is about pleasure, the development of personal taste and style and showing off the style can give an individual pleasure, and lead to a garment being cherished. In terms of the sustainable behaviour, there is a need to find out what matters to people and appealing to the forms of ethical concern that are already embedded in their daily consumption practices (Carrigan and Bosganit, 2016). Recycling as seen as perfectly normal behaviour so therefore they could be targeted to enact more environmentally-friendly behaviour. Hiller (2016) found that the avoidance of waste of a key determinant of pro-environmental behaviour. An example of this from the participants was the “passing on” of clothing from their children to others and the receiving of cast-off clothing from others. Though they were not partaking in this behaviour for necessarily pro-environmental reasons, their perception of this practice did focus on waste-avoidance.

However, the research has also demonstrated, that individuals can act as ambassadors for sustainability and pass their understanding onto their peer group. Therefore, there might be a possibility of diffusion of sustainable awareness, rather than just of eco-clothing, which would allow for a more holistic approach to introducing sustainability. Evidence from Section 7.3.4 showed that information about brands and retailers came from their personal networks rather than from advertising. Increasing the durability of clothing or making the durability more salient to consumers might be a fruitful way to increase overall sustainability. This would also increase the chance of clothes being passed on second hand. Some of this diffusion behaviour can already be found in green forums on the internet, where consumers knowledgeable about sustainable fashion have been educating newcomers (Cervellon & Wernerfelt, 2012). In existing networks

relationships are formed and participants have learned to trust others, therefore making the adoption of eco-behaviour more likely Castaneda (2015).

## 9 Conclusion

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### 9.1 Introduction

This thesis presents a unique in-depth study of the clothing purchasing and ownership behaviour of ten women between 25 and 60 in and around Leicester. The goal of the thesis was to understand the participants' behaviour in relation to buying, using and disposing of clothes and through that understanding establish how the sustainability of their behaviour could be increased.

### 9.2 Key Conclusions

The research established that their behaviour was relatively sustainable. The participants were scored using the Sustainability Clothing Goals, see section 5.6 and displayed overall high sustainability scores, however the factors which contributed to an individual's sustainable score varied.

The participants showed little awareness of sustainability in clothing and their sustainable behaviour was as a result of other factors. Some participants were aware of ethical issues associated with clothes production or to a lesser extent environmental issues, when they were asked about them, but these issues don't appear to influence their purchasing behaviour.

In practice, they engaged regularly in a number of forms of sustainable behaviour proposed by Allwood et al., (2006) and Fisher et al., (2008).

They bought little clothing feeling they had enough clothes and disliked clothes shopping generally. They were also keen on buying second hand clothing. They disliked ironing, avoiding this activity as much as possible. They recycled most of their clothes, which is likely to be a spill over behaviour from other recycling behaviours, aided by regular kerbside collections. (Chapter 8).



***Q1: What are the key factors that influence consumers in the purchasing, use and disposal of clothes?***

Clothes buying and use behaviours were shaped by their life circumstances and their personality. For most the participants, the key influencing experience was becoming a mother, their disposable incomes, their time and to a certain extent, their values. (Section 6.1). Over the years, participants had developed since their teenage years a strong sense of their own style, which guided their purchasing decisions (Section 6.5.2). Main purchasing decisions arose from a sense of needing a particular garment either for a specific purpose or to replace a worn-out garment. Most garments tended to be utilitarian for their everyday lives (Section 7.3.1).

***Q2: In an individual's clothing consumption pattern what possible barriers towards more sustainable behaviour can be identified?***

The participants had low awareness of sustainable issues and textiles and simply did not think about it, sustainability did not play a part in their clothing decisions. The participants did not like eco-clothing that they thought pushed an eco-aesthetic and additionally did not know where to obtain such garments.

Any environmentally-beneficial behaviours were mainly a by-product of these core determining factors. As discussed in the previous chapter, this would indicate that actions to promote sustainability in clothing should link to where there is a good match with these core-determining factors.

### 9.3 Additional conclusions

As this is an in-depth study of clothing purchasing and ownership by a group of women, this PhD study has yielded many interesting insights into the clothing behaviour of this group of women.

Clothing was not very important in the lives of many of the participants. Consequently, they used various filters to cut down on their shopping activity and reducing the search space of garments

to look at such as having a personal style, targeting specific retailers and brands, specific shopping locations and the internet (Chapter 7). Shopping is as much influenced by what they disliked than by what they liked, in particular in terms of shopping experience and quality of garments. Overall, the participants controlled their spending quite rigidly.

The behaviour varies for different clothing types within one individual and garments are viewed differently according to their purpose. Fast fashion or changing trends are not important for the participants and for some, never were regarded as important. Clothing is used to express different identities, so that the number of owned garments increases markedly for those who actively express multiple identities. The participants knew little about retailer sustainability initiatives. Convenience and family requirements tend to be a priority for these participants whatever their attitudes towards sustainability.

### 9.4 Limitations of the thesis

This research was exploratory and was limited geographically to only ten case study women in and around Leicester. While a sample size of ten does give insights into potential patterns, the results are not statistically significant. There were no male participants and the study had a mixed group in terms of age and cultural background. The group was selected from the extended social network of the researchers and then through snowballing, so that the sample set was biased towards the researchers' own social circles. Consequently, cannot be representative of the entire population in terms of social class, gender, ethnicity and age.

By focussing on a small number of individuals, it has been possible to build up close personal relationships with the participants which provided a deeper understanding of their behaviours. However, the methodology carries an inherent risk that the participants were biased by the researchers' presence, that their perception of the researchers' interests.

The analysis started with a broad quantitative view in Chapter 5 and then focussed on a particular number of topics in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. Other themes could have been developed in detail, such as the differences in treatment of garment types.

The quantitative data could have been analysed in more detail and correlated against the qualitative findings. The study was designed to address the participants' knowledge, beliefs and attitudes on sustainability last to avoid biasing the data collection. However, this precluded questioning the participants in more depth on their attitude behaviour gap with regards to sustainable consumption. It would have been very interesting to explore underlying values and the beliefs of the participants in more depth, but this would have required an additional interview with each participant in what was already an intensive data gathering process.

The thesis focusses on analysing existing behaviour, which points towards potential interventions. However, these were not explored in detail due to time constraints. In particular the study revealed that the participants lack knowledge and did not make the connections between their general awareness of sustainability and its implications for clothing. It would have been very interesting to explore in more detail, how they could have obtained the required understanding.

### 9.5 Further Work

As the thesis was an exploratory study, it raised many more questions than it has been able to answer. The following areas would merit further research:

- **Further validation of the research findings.** The study is built on only ten women whose overall behaviour was fairly similar. It would have been very interesting to further validate the findings with other women from the same group, for example through targeted interviews or focus groups.

- **Follow up interview after six months:** These would reveal the long-term effects of having taken part in the study and changes of behaviour that might have arisen from the increased awareness.
- **Broader range of participants.** This research concentrated on women only, future research could focus on men or include a mixed gender group. During the course of this research it was suggested by two of the participants that partners could be included too. Though most of the participants did shop alone and did not consult their partners on their own shopping decisions, some commented on shopping with their partners for clothes. By studying partners together, explicit and implicit influences on each other could be explored, along with their attitudes towards spending.
- **Impulse Shopping:** The theses revealed an interesting link between impulse shopping and slow fashion, as the participants kept the items they liked for a long time. This contradicts the established literature on this topic, which sees impulse buying as frivolous and wasteful. The participants saw it as an effective way of obtaining garments they were looking for now or expected to look for in the future and would keep for many years. Some of the garments they had reported to buy on impulse were craft garments. This would point to a link to the slow fashion ideology, advocated by Fletcher, (2010) and Clark, (2008).
- **Judgement of appearances by others:** Miller and Woodward (2007) and Clarke and Miller (2002) challenging fashion theories and posit that anxiety dominates women's choices of what to wear. This was an underexplored area within this research but needs further exploration.
- **Understanding the values and attitudes of the participants:** Some participants had very strong ethical and attitudes on a variety of subjects. The participants also demonstrated strong attitudes against any societal pressure to consume clothing as a display of social

class, wealth or status. This relation between values and behaviour would be a fruitful topic for a study in its own right.

- **Variation in behaviour for different garment types:** This thesis concentrated on three items in the wardrobe audit, but the participants commented on significant differences between classes of garments, e.g. leisure or professional clothing. Additionally, the perceived “needs” of participants, on what garment was lacking from their wardrobe. Building on Woodward’s (2007) and Skjold’s (2016) ethnographic wardrobe studies, a more in-depth analysis could be carried out.
- **Understanding what “fashion” actually means to people and the importance it has in their lives.** As section 1.2 highlights “fashion” is used interchangeably with clothing, so it may not be “fast fashion” driving clothing consumption but as Sasha and Gisela’s wardrobes demonstrate it was their multiple “identities.”
- **Deriving strategies of intervention to increase sustainability.** For clothing manufacturers to produce more durable garments and provide consumers with this knowledge, and potentially some guarantee that these garments would last for longer. For second-hand clothing stores to be more appealing to consumers and to be better organized. To investigate how to provide better information to educate consumers about the production of clothing to enable them to make more sustainable choices.

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## Appendices

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### A1: Information for participants

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

DEPT OF ENGINEERING AND INNOVATION

SUPERVISORS: PROF STEPHEN POTTER

PROF CLAUDIA ECKERT

PhD RESEARCHER: PHILIPPA CROMMENTUIJN-MARSH

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS.

The purpose of this research is for a PhD study at the Open University. The research will be an in-depth study of clothing purchase and behaviour, based on case studies of individuals. The research will be seeking to understand the long term issues that influence behaviour of consumers.

I have asked you to be a participant in my research and this is information for you to keep. There are three activities with which you will be involved. These are:

- 1) One clothes shopping trips, which can either be in a shopping centre or on-line. There will also be a short discussion about your shopping trips in general.

Proposed duration: 1 to 2 hours.

- 2) A wardrobe audit. I will give you three categories of clothing which we will then discuss and I will ask you to choose an item from each category and we will discuss the items, their history and your feelings about them. This will take place within your home.



Proposed duration: Approximately 1 hour.

- 3) An interview to tie in all three activities together, and to have a discussion on clothing in general.

Proposed duration: Approximately 2 hours.

- 4) I will be observing and recording, all these activities.
- 5) All these activities are purely for research purposes only, no data will be passed onto anybody else outside the Open University research team.

## A2: Participant Consent Form

OPEN UNIVERSITY

DEPT OF ENGINEERING AND INNOVATION

SUPERVISORS: PROF STEPHEN POTTER

PROF CLAUDIA ECKERT

PhD RESEARCHER: PHILIPPA CROMMENTUIJN-MARSH

CONSENT FORM FOR PERSONS PARTICIPATING IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

- 1) I consent to participate in this project, the details of which have been explained to me and I have been provided with a statement to keep.
- 2) I understand that my participation will involve ethnographic observation and I agree that the researcher may use the results.
- 3) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and withdraw any unprocessed data I have provided.
- 4) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded subject to legal requirements.
- 5) I have been informed that with my consent the data will be stored at the researcher's house.
- 6) The data will only be available to the researcher and her supervisory team.
- 7) I note that short quotes may be used but the identity of the individual will be kept confidential.

- 8) I have been informed that a summary copy of the research findings will be given to me.
  
- 9) I consent to being audio-recorded and garments being photographed to support the research.

Signature:

Date:

### A3: Defra Pro-Environmental Attitudes

Q12 We're trying to get a people with a range of opinions on all sorts of issues so could you tell me if you would tend to strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of these statements.

Environmental issues are a low priority for me compared to other things in my life

Strongly agree	→ GO TO g
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	→ CONTINUE
Strongly disagree	

For the sake of the environment, car users should pay higher taxes

Strongly agree	→ Positive Green
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	→ CONTINUE
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

I sometimes feel guilty about doing things that harm the environment

Strongly agree	→ Concerned Consumer
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	→ Waste Watchers
Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

I don't pay much attention to the amount of water and energy I use in my home

Strongly agree	→ CONTINUE
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	→ Cautious Participants
Strongly disagree	

It's not worth me doing things to help the environment if others don't do the same

Strongly agree	→ CONTINUE
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	→ Sideline Supporters

Disagree	
Strongly disagree	

If things continue on their current course, we will soon experience a major environmental disaster

Strongly agree	→ Stalled Starters
Agree	
Neither agree nor disagree	
Disagree	→ Honestly Disengaged
Strongly disagree	

### Code respondent segment

Positive Greens	1	→ Ask Positive Greens section Page 6
Waste Watchers	2	→ Ask Waste Watchers section Page 7
Concerned Consumers	3	→ Ask Concerned Consumers section Page 8
Sideline Supporters	4	→ Ask Sideline Supporters section Page 9
Cautious Participants	5	→ Ask Cautious Participants section Page 10
Stalled Starters	6	→ Ask Stalled Starters section Page 11
Honestly Disengaged	7	→ Ask Honestly Disengaged section Page 12

**Positive Greens** – Must code highlighted answers for 6 questions

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
I don't pay much attention to the amount of water and energy I use in my home	1	2	3	4	5
If things continue on their current course, we will soon experience a major environmental disaster	1	2	3	4	5
It is only worth doing environmentally friendly things if they save you money	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to do a lot more to help the environment	1	2	3	4	5
We are close to the limit of the number of people the earth can support	1	2	3	4	5
The so-called 'environmental crisis' facing humanity has been greatly exaggerated	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes feel guilty about doing things that harm the environment	1	2	3	4	5
It's not worth me doing things to help the environment if others don't do the same	1	2	3	4	5
I don't know much about carbon footprints or carbon offsetting	1	2	3	4	5

Q13 Which of the following sets of statements most reflects your own beliefs? You may not agree with all the statements in a box exactly, but pick the one which fits closest overall.

*PLEASE USE PARTICIPANT CARD AT THIS POINT*

I think we need to do more things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest.	Positive Greens
'Waste not, want not' – that's important. You should live life thinking about what you're doing and using.	
I think I do more than many people to be environmentally friendly, but I think it would be hard to give up some things, like flying.	
I think climate change is a big problem for us but I can forget to keep an eye on how much water or electricity I use. I would like to do more to help the environment but I'm not sure what.	
I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment but only if everyone else is acting to tackle climate change too.	
I don't know much about climate change and to be honest, the environment is not a priority for me compared with other things in my life.	
Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. It makes no difference to me – I'm just living my life the way I want to.	

**Waste Watchers** – Must code highlighted answers for 5 questions

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
I don't pay much attention to the amount of water and energy I use in my home	1	2	3	4	5
If things continue on their current course, we will soon experience a major environmental disaster	1	2	3	4	5
It is only worth doing environmentally friendly things if they save you money	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to do a lot more to help the environment	1	2	3	4	5
We are close to the limit of the number of people the earth can support	1	2	3	4	5
The so-called 'environmental crisis' facing humanity has been greatly exaggerated	1	2	3	4	5
It's not worth me doing things to help the environment if others don't do the same	1	2	3	4	5
I don't know much about carbon footprints or carbon offsetting	1	2	3	4	5

Q13 Which of the following sets of statements most reflects your own beliefs? You may not agree with all the statements in a box exactly, but pick the one which fits closest overall.

*PLEASE USE PARTICIPANT CARD AT THIS POINT*

I think we need to do more things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest.	
'Waste not, want not' – that's important. You should live life thinking about what you're doing and using.	Waste Watchers
I think I do more than many people to be environmentally friendly, but I think it would be hard to give up some things, like flying.	
I think climate change is a big problem for us but I can forget to keep an eye on how much water or electricity I use. I would like to do more to help the environment but I'm not sure what.	
I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment but only if everyone else is acting to tackle climate change too.	
I don't know much about climate change and to be honest, the environment is not a priority for me compared with other things in my life.	
Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. It makes no difference to me – I'm just living my life the way I want to.	

**Concerned Consumers** – Must code highlighted answers for 5 questions

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
I don't pay much attention to the amount of water and energy I use in my home	1	2	3	4	5
If things continue on their current course, we will soon experience a major environmental disaster	1	2	3	4	5
It is only worth doing environmentally friendly things if they save you money	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to do a lot more to help the environment	1	2	3	4	5
We are close to the limit of the number of people the earth can support	1	2	3	4	5
The so-called 'environmental crisis' facing humanity has been greatly exaggerated	1	2	3	4	5
It's not worth me doing things to help the environment if others don't do the same	1	2	3	4	5
I don't know much about carbon footprints or carbon offsetting	1	2	3	4	5

Q13 Which of the following sets of statements most reflects your own beliefs? You may not agree with all the statements in a box exactly, but pick the one which fits closest overall.

*PLEASE USE PARTICIPANT CARD AT THIS POINT*

I think we need to do more things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest.	
"Waste not, want not" – that's important. You should live life thinking about what you're doing and using.	
I think I do more than many people to be environmentally friendly, but I think it would be hard to give up some things, like flying.	Concerned Consumers
I think climate change is a big problem for us but I can forget to keep an eye on how much water or electricity I use. I would like to do more to help the environment but I'm not sure what.	
I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment but only if everyone else is acting to tackle climate change too.	
I don't know much about climate change and to be honest, the environment is not a priority for me compared with other things in my life.	
Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. It makes no difference to me – I'm just living my life the way I want to.	



**Sideline Supporters** – Must code highlighted answers for 5 questions

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
If things continue on their current course, we will soon experience a major environmental disaster	1	2	3	4	5
It is only worth doing environmentally friendly things if they save you money	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to do a lot more to help the environment	1	2	3	4	5
We are close to the limit of the number of people the earth can support	1	2	3	4	5
The so-called 'environmental crisis' facing humanity has been greatly exaggerated	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes feel guilty about doing things that harm the environment	1	2	3	4	5
I don't know much about carbon footprints or carbon offsetting	1	2	3	4	5
For the sake of the environment, car users should pay higher taxes	1	2	3	4	5

Q13 Which of the following sets of statements most reflects your own beliefs? You may not agree with all the statements in a box exactly, but pick the one which fits closest overall.

*PLEASE USE PARTICIPANT CARD AT THIS POINT*

I think we need to do more things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest.	
'Waste not, want not' – that's important. You should live life thinking about what you're doing and using.	
I think I do more than many people to be environmentally friendly, but I think it would be hard to give up some things, like flying.	
I think climate change is a big problem for us but I can forget to keep an eye on how much water or electricity I use. I would like to do more to help the environment but I'm not sure what.	Sideline Supporters
I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment but only if everyone else is acting to tackle climate change too.	
I don't know much about climate change and to be honest, the environment is not a priority for me compared with other things in my life.	
Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. It makes no difference to me – I'm just living my life the way I want to.	

**Cautious Participants** – Must code highlighted answers for 6 questions

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
If things continue on their current course, we will soon experience a major environmental disaster	1	2	3	4	5
It is only worth doing environmentally friendly things if they save you money	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to do a lot more to help the environment	1	2	3	4	5
We are close to the limit of the number of people the earth can support	1	2	3	4	5
The so-called 'environmental crisis' facing humanity has been greatly exaggerated	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes feel guilty about doing things that harm the environment	1	2	3	4	5
It's not worth me doing things to help the environment if others don't do the same	1	2	3	4	5
I don't know much about carbon footprints or carbon offsetting	1	2	3	4	5
For the sake of the environment, car users should pay higher taxes	1	2	3	4	5

Q13 Which of the following sets of statements most reflects your own beliefs? You may not agree with all the statements in a box exactly, but pick the one which fits closest overall.

*PLEASE USE PARTICIPANT CARD AT THIS POINT*

I think we need to do more things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest.	
'Waste not, want not' – that's important. You should live life thinking about what you're doing and using.	
I think I do more than many people to be environmentally friendly, but I think it would be hard to give up some things, like flying.	
I think climate change is a big problem for us but I can forget to keep an eye on how much water or electricity I use. I would like to do more to help the environment but I'm not sure what.	
I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment but only if everyone else is acting to tackle climate change too.	Cautious Participants
I don't know much about climate change and to be honest, the environment is not a priority for me compared with other things in my life.	
Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. It makes no difference to me – I'm just living my life the way I want to.	

**Stalled Starters** – Must code highlighted answers for 4 questions

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
It is only worth doing environmentally friendly things if they save you money	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to do a lot more to help the environment	1	2	3	4	5
We are close to the limit of the number of people the earth can support	1	2	3	4	5
The so-called 'environmental crisis' facing humanity has been greatly exaggerated	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes feel guilty about doing things that harm the environment	1	2	3	4	5
I don't know much about carbon footprints or carbon offsetting	1	2	3	4	5
For the sake of the environment, car users should pay higher taxes	1	2	3	4	5

Q13 Which of the following sets of statements most reflects your own beliefs? You may not agree with all the statements in a box exactly, but pick the one which fits closest overall.

*PLEASE USE PARTICIPANT CARD AT THIS POINT*

I think we need to do more things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest.	
'Waste not, want not' – that's important. You should live life thinking about what you're doing and using.	
I think I do more than many people to be environmentally friendly, but I think it would be hard to give up some things, like flying.	
I think climate change is a big problem for us but I can forget to keep an eye on how much water or electricity I use. I would like to do more to help the environment but I'm not sure what.	
I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment but only if everyone else is acting to tackle climate change too.	
I don't know much about climate change and to be honest, the environment is not a priority for me compared with other things in my life.	Stalled Starters
Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. It makes no difference to me – I'm just living my life the way I want to.	

**Honestly Disengaged** – Must code highlighted answers for 4 questions

	AGREE STRONGLY	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	DISAGREE STRONGLY
It is only worth doing environmentally friendly things if they save you money	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to do a lot more to help the environment	1	2	3	4	5
We are close to the limit of the number of people the earth can support	1	2	3	4	5
The so-called 'environmental crisis' facing humanity has been greatly exaggerated	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes feel guilty about doing things that harm the environment	1	2	3	4	5
I don't know much about carbon footprints or carbon offsetting	1	2	3	4	5
For the sake of the environment, car users should pay higher taxes	1	2	3	4	5

Q13 Which of the following sets of statements most reflects your own beliefs? You may not agree with all the statements in a box exactly, but pick the one which fits closest overall.

*PLEASE USE PARTICIPANT CARD AT THIS POINT*

I think we need to do more things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest.	
'Waste not, want not' – that's important. You should live life thinking about what you're doing and using.	
I think I do more than many people to be environmentally friendly, but I think it would be hard to give up some things, like flying.	
I think climate change is a big problem for us but I can forget to keep an eye on how much water or electricity I use. I would like to do more to help the environment but I'm not sure what.	
I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment but only if everyone else is acting to tackle climate change too.	
I don't know much about climate change and to be honest, the environment is not a priority for me compared with other things in my life.	
Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. It makes no difference to me – I'm just living my life the way I want to.	Honestly Disengaged

Q14 Which of these shops do you ever use to buy clothes for yourself?

Q15 And which of these shops would you never use to buy clothes for yourself?

#### A4: Participant Card for the Defra Test

1. I think we need to do more things differently to tackle climate change. I do what I can and I feel bad about the rest.
2. 'Waste not, want not' – that's important. You should live life thinking about what you're doing and using.
3. I think I do more than many people to be environmentally friendly, but I think it would be hard to give up some things, like flying.
4. I think climate change is a big problem for us but I can forget to keep an eye on how much water or electricity I use. I would like to do more to help the environment but I'm not sure what.
5. I'd like to do a bit more to help the environment but only if everyone else is acting to tackle climate change too.
6. I don't know much about climate change and to be honest, the environment is not a priority for me compared with other things in my life.
7. Maybe there'll be an environmental disaster, maybe not. It makes no difference to me – I'm just living my life the way I want to.

## A5: CSI – Consumer Styles Inventory

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
1. Getting very good quality is very important to me.					
2. The well-known national brands are best for me.					
3. I usually have one or more outfits of the very newest style.					
4. Shopping is a pleasant activity to me.					
5. I buy as much as possible at “sale” prices.					
6. I should plan my shopping more carefully than I do.					
7. There are so many brands to choose from that often I feel confused.					
8. I have favourite brands that I buy over and over.					
9. When it comes to purchasing products, I try to get the very best or perfect choice.					
10. The more expensive brands are usually my choices.					
11. I keep my wardrobe up-to-date with the changing fashions.					
12. Going shopping is one of the enjoyable activities of my life.					
13. The lower price products are usually my choice.					
14. I am impulsive when shopping.					
15. Sometimes it’s hard to choose which stores to shop.					
16. Once I find a product or brand I like, I stick with it.					

## A6: Coding Table

SUSTAINABLE FASHION	INFORMATION	Shopping	Clothing Needs	Sustainable behaviour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sourcing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custom Made</li> <li>• Fair-Trade</li> <li>• Hiring</li> <li>• Locally Made</li> <li>• Second-Hand Clothing</li> <li>• Vintage</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Usage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drying</li> <li>• Ironing</li> <li>• Repairing/Making</li> <li>• Washing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Disposal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing On</li> <li>• Recycling</li> <li>• Reuse</li> <li>• Waste</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Property of clothing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Durability</li> <li>• Ethical/Eco</li> <li>• Fibres</li> <li>• Organic</li> <li>• Quality</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Vegan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sources of information</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Campaign Groups</li> <li>• Family &amp; Friends</li> <li>• Experience</li> <li>• News: TV, Newspaper</li> <li>• Radio</li> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Local</li> <li>• Promotion</li> <li>• Labels</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Levels of understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aware</li> <li>• Don't Know</li> <li>• Overwhelmed</li> <li>• Lack of Information</li> <li>• Never Thought</li> <li>• Sceptical</li> <li>• Trustworthy</li> <li>• Unaware</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Unsure</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Preferred Location</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Physical location</li> <li>• Brands</li> <li>• Retailers</li> <li>• Others</li> <li>• EBay</li> <li>• Charity Shops</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Attitude to shopping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoidance</li> <li>• Organized</li> <li>• Tactics</li> <li>• Emotion</li> <li>• Children</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Rationale for Shopping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• - Need</li> <li>• Want</li> <li>• Holiday</li> <li>• Requirements</li> <li>• Browsing</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Shopping Experience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surroundings</li> <li>• Visual</li> <li>• Dislike</li> <li>• Trying it on</li> <li>• Return</li> <li>• Disappointment</li> <li>• Help</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Price</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced</li> <li>• Value</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Priorities for Selection</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection by Price</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Aesthetics</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Attachment to clothing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• special</li> <li>• -not important</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Body Issues</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing shape</li> <li>• Size Fit Too Tight</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Clothing Attributes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colour</li> <li>• Comfortable</li> <li>• Style</li> <li>• Practical</li> <li>• Quality</li> <li>• Decoration</li> <li>• Feminine</li> <li>• Accessories/shoes</li> <li>• Warmth</li> <li>• Self-Actualization</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Purpose of Garment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• special</li> <li>• work</li> <li>• in home context</li> <li>• Former selves</li> <li>• Social occasion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Clothes Life cycle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• usage</li> <li>• unworn</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Identity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teenagers</li> <li>• typical</li> <li>• like</li> <li>• dislike</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Emotion</li> <li>• Mothers/Family</li> <li>• Family/Mothers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individual</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influences</li> <li>• Peers</li> <li>• Skills</li> <li>• Knowledge</li> <li>• Time – Too Busy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Life Stage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner</li> <li>• Children</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Attitude to Spending</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-Restraint</li> <li>• Income</li> <li>• Impulse</li> <li>• Bargain Hunting</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Self - Image</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal Style</li> <li>• Unsure</li> <li>• Projected image</li> <li>• Fashion</li> <li>• Anti-Fashion</li> <li>• Appearance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Sustainable Behaviour</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitude to Consumption</li> <li>• Not Buying</li> <li>• Ethical Concern</li> <li>• Environmental concern</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## A7: Cara – Interview – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014

### First Section

*Ok, great that's going. So going back to the two shopping activities that we did, do you think that was a fairly accurate description of your shopping behaviour? (pause) Um, Do you want a reminder of what we did? Where did we go? We went to Sainsburys, Asda, Asda, we went to Asda first, didn't we in Fosse Park? Yes, yes, yes, went to Asda. Did I buy anything there, I can't remember. But I saw something that I liked. You found that jacket, but when I went back to find it, it wasn't there. So next time I thought I'm just going to buy it, so I'd say with the Asda shop, I do often go and look round and peruse and think, oh I like the look of that, and I like the look of that, sometimes I do more window shopping than shopping but I kind of regretted that, not buying that item, it wasn't there when I went back. Oh then there were the leopard skin onesie, do you regret not buying that as well? Was there? Oh the onesie!! Yes, yes, that was nice and soft. I didn't really think about that. It was more the jacket? It was more the jacket yeah. And the second time, I bought a few items from Primark, yeah um cos obviously I've said to you, I've worn those skirts, maybe a couple of times? Because they're so bright, (laughter), it has to be a bright, sunny day, I'll have to feel like it's a bright, sunny day to wear them.*

*Do you feel a bit self-conscious if you wear something bright? No, No? No, no I just have to feel like it's the right day, like it's the right weather yeah. So you wouldn't feel comfortable wearing them today? No, because its dull. Oh Ok, so you've got to have a sunny day to wear them? I've got these, these were for class, I've got to look bright for class but if it's like a normal day, like its dull, no because I kind of get dictated to by the weather. Oh right, so you like wearing dull clothes for dull days? I like bright clothes anyway but mine were extra, extra bright so for me I like bright clothes that stand out so I don't mind wearing those on a dull day but if I've got something that was extra bright like the pink, that was quite pink, that was very pink and very yellow so if for me that would be too bright, too summery Oh I see, but I like different colours and reds and oranges*



and things like that which I would happily wear on a dull day but so for me it's not, it's my bright if that makes sense. That pink was bright for me whereas I might wear a jumper that was bright for somebody else but for me it's just right, just nice, just happy. *That's right, it's a happy colour isn't it? In terms of the shopping trip, do you, was there anything that was a bit different about those two shopping trips? Anything a bit different to what you would do normally?* Um, maybe with the Primark one I probably won't have bought so many things, even though I didn't buy many things but I'm not really too much of a shopper. Like what I do is, like with the Asda, that's what I do usually, go for my food shopping and have a little look round the George section and I might buy one thing. So I buy usually one piece at a time and I never usually buy a range of things, so that was probably different because I don't usually buy a few things at a time. (laughter) I've usually got an idea, maybe I want such and such a thing maybe I want a dress or maybe I want leggings or you know and you know it'll just be I'm going if I see something that's fine and if I don't that's fine again, so that's what probably was a bit different. *Oh Ok, so you probably would have done it with your food shopping?* Yeah. Or if I had something, the jacket I really liked the jacket from Primark because I did have an idea of that didn't I? So if it was a day when I kind of thought Oh I'm looking for a jacket, it just gets too much for me if I'm looking for more than one thing. *Oh OK, so just looking for one thing?* Yeah, because it's too much, too much choice out there and if I'm looking for more than one thing and there's more than one thing for a jacket and I've got to look more for a skirt as well it's too much, gives me a bit of a headache sometimes. (laughter). *A bit too much? Easier to concentrate on one thing, easier to concentrate on one thing, yeah. In terms of your favourite shops, would you say Asda and Primark are your favourites?* Yeah, I like BooHoo on the internet as well, *BooHoo?* Yeah, BooHoo.com, I do like BooHoo as well that's it, I don't really shop that much. *Do you do much on-line shopping?* About the same, um, probably, it goes in spurts so sometimes I'm like woowoo I'll have a look on -line and buy, then I actually then I might buy a few things! *Oh yes?* Yes. I don't know whether it's the physical thing, rummaging around things that I find too much but if it's an on-line thing I have in the past, yeah I usually do buy more than

one thing and I think because its totalling everything up and I can see what I'm buying and visually I can think, yeah I'm getting this and I'm getting that. Um that's why. It comes in spurts, I might do it about three times a year or something. Again it's not going to be many things but it's about four items, four items that I might get. *Do you have any problems with on-line shopping at all?* No. *In terms of fit or anything?* No, not really, I mean I had something that I ordered, it was a dress for my cousin's wedding and I ordered it thinking yeah, I think I like this, but it wasn't what I expected so, so I ordered something else, they have all the returns bits, so you can return it, they make it really easy. *So do you like on-line shopping because you feel that there isn't as much choice and you're not so overwhelmed by that, that shop environment?* Um, it's just the physical metre of being in the shop and there's people and then there's the rummaging around and just all we've got to get back to my car before the ticket runs out, then standing in the queue, it's all just ah, and I've never really liked shopping but I prefer on-line shopping. I do prefer that, I feel like I can go at my own pace if I need to go somewhere, or do something, do something with the kids I've got the computer, it might time out but I can go back so yeah. *Oh right OK, are there any shops you don't particularly like or won't go in for any reasons?* (laughter), Sorry? There is, there's TK Max, I've kind of boycotted that! (laughter), *there is? Why have you boycotted that?* Because a few years ago, it was Christmas Eve and I was buying my sister some jeans, she was with me and it got to the point that it was closing and they wouldn't allow her to go into the changing rooms to allow her to try some jeans on. *Oh OK.* So I said oh Ok, so I said to the cashier, if they don't fit, can I bring them back and they said yeah so they didn't fit so Boxing Day I tried to come back and I couldn't find the receipt and um the cashier woman was really rude to me and she said to me, you need your receipt, you need this but yeah I'm really sorry but I can't find it. Other place would just let you exchange it and she was that rude that somebody else in the queue said, I work in customer services and how you're speaking to this woman, (ie me) is really rude! *Oh wow.* So she actually said that, and then, (laughter), then, she, I was like please can you change it and then, She was like, can I have security please? (laughter), *that was a bit OTT*, she was going to throw me out

so I'm like, I'm not going there again. So I haven't been there since, since my sister was thirteen. *So a few years?* Yeah, about three or four years. (laughter) So that's the only shop I kind of consciously say, I'm not going in there. *Not going in there, I don't blame you, that is appalling customer service.* That was really bad, Jane Norman is another one that I don't go to now because I don't feel that post-having children my body is the same. I used to go there a lot because I had kids and everything was tight-fitting and the material was very, and you know, actually you had to be stick-thin because it was so tight, and also the material clung and had to be stick-thin, *Oh yes,* but now I don't. *Oh yes.* Because I just think, it would just be ridiculous. That's the place I would like to go to but I don't. *Do you feel that your body has changed much since having children?* Yeah, yeah, yeah, it has. It's changed a lot but such is life isn't it? (laughter). *It's just the way it is! That's right.* *How would you describe your shopping style?* I'm not a fanatic, I'm not a shopping fanatic, you know like you get some people that get really excited over shopping, I don't get excited over shopping, it's a very matter of fact thing, I might need this, I'm going to shop for it. But I wouldn't, I'm trying to think, no it's not, some people get really excited about shopping don't they? They're like, I'm going shopping! I've never been excited about going shopping. No. *Claudia: Do you shop in the sales?* Before Christmas, I'll shop before Christmas to buy things for other people but not really for myself. Even the sales, that kind of thing doesn't really excite me it's just a lot of people around. *It is a lot of visual stimulation around.* Maybe it's that's yeah, *it's people it's a big shop, there's this clothes, there's that clothes, there's loud music.* Yeah, it's just everything really, it's the crowds, I never used to be, I've always been quite um, not bad about the crowds but um like when I was at university, myself and a friend used to go to Oxford Street and we'll split up and say look split up, do whatever shopping we've got to do, come back if we've not got everything we want then we'll split up again because I just haven't got time to oh what does this look like on me? I haven't got time to do that so, so in terms of my style I would say it's quite a kind of matter of fact approach yeah, like I need this I'm going to go here and look, I'm not one of these types of people who'll go round Marks and says like oh yeah, I really like this, I'll go and look somewhere

else, if I like it I just get it. I haven't got the time and energy to go round for me only to go back to the same shop, yeah. So. *OK, so when you are shopping, what are your priorities? Is it something that you need? Yeah, like a skirt, or is it colour, style, price? What sort of considerations?* I would say, something I need, first and foremost then price as well, oh I forgot, going back to one of the questions, I like Top Girl as well, *You like Top Girl?* I do like Top Girl, yes, yeah, those pieces I showed you the leopard print and the trousers, the treggings, that's what they're called, *Oh treggings, they're from Top Girl?* They're from Top Girl as well, then price and need, that's what I go by. *Those are the main considerations, yeah. Ok, Do you look at the label when shopping and I remember when we were in Primark we did have a look at the label for the skirt, didn't we, to see where it was made?* Yes. Yeah. *Do you look at the labels much when you're shopping?* No, I know I should be more ethical but yeah, no. You know, I think you consciously know that you can know but it's like, well, how are these clothes getting made kind of thing at the same time, that's why I kind of, I think maybe I justify in terms of myself I go for need rather than shopping for greed if that makes sense, so *that does make sense, yeah.* So I'm not kind of spending too much in these places at the same time I'm a single parent and I can't afford to pay for kind of expensive things but I kind of want to look good so yeah, so no I'm not, and I'm not a kind of designer label kind of person, like that. I don't really go for designer labels. *Claudia: How do you shop for your children?* Do you know what? It's probably the same way. Um, and also they get clothes like say when it's their birthday and their family, the kids have always got lots of clothes, loads of clothes which they grow out of so quickly, but they seem to be bought clothes from their Dad's side, his Mum and him actually, him, he usually gives money for clothes and they go and buy clothes and my sister, there's a big gap, she likes shopping so she will take them rather than me or if I'm in Asda, going through then they're like can we look at this, can we look at that? So I'd say, they get money, they want to spend on clothes and it's usually my sister who takes them to town. I don't really take them to town. *Oh OK, No. When I go shopping in town for me, they don't go with me because they'll probably get bored. (laughter). Yes, had that. In terms of your clothing style, do*

*you think that your style has changed much over the years? Have you always have the same/similar style of clothing/dressing? Oh yes, no, no its changed because, you explained about the blouse, Yes, Can you just explain that again about the blouse? You bought the blouse because you were going to change your style but then, which one? The floaty blouse, oh that one, yes, you couldn't find it. No, I found it again, now, yes. Did your sister have it? I haven't asked her actually, I need to ask her. (laughter). Yes, that kind of t-shirty, blousy thing, yes, no. Because you were going to change your style but then you changed your mind. Yeah, but I was saying as well like my work dictating, the Probation Service and it was office-based and lots of meetings and stuff, I was quite power-dressy so I had my smart pencil skirts and blouses and just you know, I just used to power-dress and people used to say, are you power-dressing? (laughter). But now because I'm in a different job which is totally you know working with families and children, you can't really, if you go to somebody's house with heels you might tread on the child's hand or something so I've had to adjust cos I never used to wear flat shoes before because when you're wearing heels it's that certain look isn't it? Yeah, yeah that's right. Yeah, so it changes the look so it's a lot more casual now the look although I have it, I kinda of have it more smart casual than anything. Claudia: So do you have a different style then for work and your private life? No, not really no. I don't know. I did before when I was at Probation, when I was wearing more smarter clothes it was totally different, um, but now it's literally the same, I wear what I wear in private to work as well. So with the families, not this work! (laughter, referring to her exercise class). Not the Ju-Vup work! But you're got the bright colours, yes, you've got the bright colours, yes and I noticed you love leopard print, yes, I love leopard print you like tight-fitting jackets, yes, yes, I do. I like beiges, and I like leopard print, I do love my leopard print (laughter), though sometimes I feel like it's a bit of overkill. I've worn leopard print every day this week! (laughter), Do you like leopard print or zebras or other animals as well? I think it's just leopard print, there's just something about it, yeah, I love leopard print. Even my hair is kind of matching! (laughter). I've lost track of where I was, oh yes it was about your style changing and the blouse again, that one we were talking about, you know the*

*one you couldn't find, yeah, you were going to change it but then you thought actually I'm not going to change because it was a certain style that you like, yes, yeah. I couldn't, I wouldn't know, because when you've got a piece, an item of clothing, you've got to think of everything else that you're wearing, of every item haven't you and I couldn't really see, I think that would go with, it would suit my sister, it really would. It would go with a nice pair of jeans or you know these, um, (pause), kind of pencil skirts but with a lot of elastic in, those ones and a high you know those kind of, I think that would go nicely with that. Sort of with a high waist, yes, like a pencil skirt? Yeah, because I've seen my sister wear something like that before, so that's why I think, she's younger than me maybe it's just not, not for me! (laughter). Do you think that, styles change a little bit when you get older and yeah, and after having children, yeah. Definitely. Claudia: So what kind of things did you wear as a teenager then? Um, I wore jeans, a lot of jeans but I was saying to you, like now I don't really wear the jeans, like that time when I wore the jeans before because I could never get them to fit right, they were always too big in the waist so they were always like falling down or just you know if you put the belt on, it was gape or rucked in too much so that's why I've given up on jeans. I used to wear a lot of jeans before um, yeah. I think I used to wear a lot of jeans whereas now if it's more casual I just wear leggings and maybe some kind of longer top or something like that. Though I did wear, I got a, I've got this pair of jeans actually that I forgot I had and um they're quite smart-looking these jeans and I did put them on and the kids said oh Mummy, you look like a proper Mummy now (laughter). I was what does that mean? A proper Mummy? I was like, I don't know how to take it. Claudia: It's a compliment, you look like a proper Mummy. I was like Oh. Maybe its one of those things it's better not to know!! Um, What would you say was your main influence about how you dressed. Are you concerned with the image you are projecting or do you think about that at all? The main influence about how you dress? Hmm, I liked, I like to be, I like to project, well I was thinking about this the other actually, oh yes, I was thinking about this the other day because I noticed that people gave me compliments in like dresses. Oh yes? Yes, so I quite like dresses but I also thought as well actually, this might be good*

because maybe I'm inspiring people you know because of the fitness, the whole fitness thing, oh yeah you look really good, oh yeah, that kind of thing, I though Oooh. Maybe I should wear more of these, *because you're a good advert for Ju-Vup?* Well, yes. That's what I was thinking the other day, I was at church actually and I had this, it was a dress that I wear to work so it was something that I wear normally anyway and um I had fake leather boots on as well and they were like oohoooooh, you look really oohooh, and for me it wasn't particularly like I'm dressing up for anything, so I thought maybe I could, maybe I ought to be more of an advert for my business as well so that might help me. I do like, you know you get those jersey-type material dresses? They're quite tight-fitting and um, like just past the knee, that kind of thing, some have white sleeves just past the arms, that kind of thing, I think at the moment I'm trying to project um, confidence, um a bit of casual sophistication, yeah I think that's what I'm trying to project! (laughter). *Casual sophistication? I like that, that's good.* I think that's what I'm trying to um, *project?* Project, yeah. *In terms of image, when people, when we were talking last week you said when you were wearing yellow and black, you got comments about being a bumble-bee. A bumble-bee, oh yeah ! (laughter) That was my manager! (laughter), She's always coming out with things like that though. (laughter) There's nothing wrong with. What being a bumble-bee? So it doesn't concern you when people make comments like that? Oh No, no, doesn't bother me. Doesn't bother you? Oh no, no. I'm not bothered by what people think, as long as I'm not hurting anyone, I'm hurting their eyes, they can just look away, but no it doesn't . Does fashion influence you at all? No. Has fashion ever influenced you at all? Um, I think the only time it did was when I was young and I started going out to these reggae parties and stuff and they wore, the types of clothes they wore that's the only time really but then that would be every so often on a night out so not really during my daytime wear, So these would be for the parties? For the parties, yeah. So what would you wear to a reggae party then? Ooooh. (laughter) I look back and I'm like, why did my Mum let me go out like that? I remember I had this outfit, oh gosh! It was a top, basically trousers and a top but the trousers had big holes in *oh right*, so it was like, you know like those*

fishnets? But you also get those other, the tights I call pot-hole tights so it was like that, the holes were like this, all around, I had shorts underneath and I had this top, the same with these big holes and just a bra. And I look back and I think, why didn't my Mum tell me to? And then, I remember my Dad coming down the stairs and saying I'm going to have to watch what you're wearing! (laughter). But it would be winter and I would be going out, *wearing that?* With no coats and, *weren't you cold?* I was freezing! (laughter). You can't even see your outfit! *But I guess that was to sort of fit in with what other people were wearing at the party? Was it? Or?* Well, um, I wouldn't say it was to fit in with what they were wearing cos sometimes we would go to a party that wasn't that particular style. *Ah OK.* But I would still wear that because I liked it. So but other than that, I've been quite, I don't really follow what other people do or you know. *You've always had your own style?* Yeah. Yeah. It's always been my Dad who's said, don't be a sheep. *Oh was it?* Yeah, yeah, don't follow people, don't be a sheep, do your own thing. *Be your own person?* Yeah. *So when you were younger while we're on the subject, were you influenced by any pop idols or anything like that?* No. Not really. No, I wouldn't say I was. Who did I like? No, I'm trying to think, who I like, people like E17 and people like boy bands, boy bands so people like that, I'm not likely to emulate them. *No.* I like Kyle Minogue but I'm not going to wear her clothes. *No I wasn't.* *No.* It was more literally what I liked to wear, I mean the only time I remember having a battle with my Mum was when I was little and she used to get me plimsolls for doing PE in, not trainers like my friends and I wanted some named trainers and I think she was picking me up from my playscheme one day and I must have did something, not incredibly naughty and she was like right, you're not having those trainers! And even to this day, I'm like, you remember when you didn't buy me those trainers! (laughter). I wanted some trainers with a name on! (laughter). And I had those black plimsolls. (laughter). And she was like urrrrrgh. And I would say that was the only time, I've been really, oh I really want some trainers, I didn't care what name they were, any trainers! Not plimsolls. *So there weren't any outside influences on you at all? Friends for example?* No. No. *Magazines or anything like that?* No, when I was at uni the friends that I had, all our styles were



completely different. *Were they?* Yeah. They were completely different. I had one friend who was like, like a skateboarder and another friend who was very preppy and if she had been in America she would have been a cheerleader. Another friend who was very Bohemian, all completely different and they used to call us the Black Spice Girls! It was like, everyone was different, and we appreciated everyone's styles and didn't want to change because that was them. Yeah, yeah, so I'm not, no. *Like your father said?* Yeah, *your own person?* Yeah, I can see Sariaya, my youngest, some of the things she wears, like really but that's her style, she's just out there, she's like what, it look good! (laughter). Alright then. *We've talked a little about this already, how are you at making/repairing clothes?* Oh yes, I can basic things um I'm probably a bit more lazy than I should be actually, I could probably do, like a lot of times, I save things for my Mum and take them to my Mum but there might be times when I could have actually fixed it myself but she's got a sewing machine and I often think, oh it could be better done on a sewing machine anyway, so but I've grown more now like in terms of thinking, actually there could a lot of in so why not just sew it and or if it's a favourite item or something, then why not, cos there's a lot of disposing nowadays isn't there? *That's right.* and a lot of get rid of it and we'll just get something else whereas it never used to be like that did it? *No.* People used to do make do and mend. *Yeah, that was a wartime phrase wasn't it?* Yeah. Make do and mend but I think it should come back because so many people are just constantly buying clothes! And there's not really that need so that's what I go back to, is there that need to, Do I need to? *Do you need it?* Do I need it to? *Do you need it rather than want it?* Yes, yeah. *There is a difference.* Don't get me wrong there are sometimes when I might want something but I'd say my whole life there's only been yeah, I need something, then I see something I want it , I want it, but in terms of going out and probably looking , oh sorry, (laughter as she accidentally spills some water). Going out and seeing something randomly and saying I want that, there's only been about maybe five times in my life when I've thought that, like I've seen the Florence, I've seen the Florence and Fred advert, *oh yes.* Is that your cat? It's got something in its mouth. (distraction as my cat catches a mouse on the lawn). Yeah, there's a Florence and Fred

advert with a leopard print fur coat and I was like, I want that! (laughter). I want that! I do actually need a coat so I could just, yes, buy it! (laughter). *We are getting more towards winter aren't we?* Yeah, yeah. Again, my winter coat which I've got has been at my Mum's for ages now, cos it's got a rip in and I've asked her to sew it but she's not sewn it yet. You see that's another thing that I've just thought, you see I think in the past I probably would have thrown it away but now I'm like, no, I like the coat, it's a good coat so can mend. *So can still wear it?* Yeah. *Does emotion effect your clothes shopping at all? Do you shop to cheer yourself up or anything like that?* No. No? I'd rather have a bit of cake. (laughter). I'd rather have a cake. *Nice big chocolate cake?* Yeah. *Claudia: Do you buy different things if you are in a different mood?* Um, (pause), no, not necessarily, I tell you what would affect my mood, and this is something different, but then it affects what I'm wearing if that makes sense for a lot of black women, it's in terms of their hair, *oh yes?* That's what, in terms of shapes and I remember one time I was in a, bit of an angry place and I got like this, (pointing to her hair bandana) like a bit darker than this, *Dark Red?* Hair extensions on and I was like arrghh, I just want to be, I don't want people to talk to me! Grrrrrr. (laughter), that kind of thing, that shapes a lot of how cos I suppose the type of hair, the texture of your hair, I know cos since mine, just had my hair natural, I think again that's why, I've been more casual, because it suits being more sort of casual look. So because I was talking about it before, wasn't I? *About your hair yes,* and I was about to, there's certain clothing, there's certain items of clothing that I tried on, like I've got this really, well um, I'm going to E-Bay it now. I've got this jacket which like to the knee, very smart, quite tight-fitting. Like a breasted jacket, coat-jacket thing and I used to love wearing that but now it doesn't suit me because of my hair! (laughter). So there's a lot of things which, I've kind of, oh that doesn't suit me anymore but I didn't really think that would happen but I was like yeah. And I've kind of onto more that, smart casual rather than smart because that jacket was really, really smart you see so yeah there's a lot of things like that. *So your hair influences what you wear?* Yeah, yeah and also whether it suits me but because I've got natural hair now if it, it rubs on anything like wool or anything like that, it makes it more

friction and it makes it frizzy so things like that I have to take into account, in terms of what clothing am I going to wear, will it rub on my hair? Do I need to have my hair up? If I need to have my hair up does it suit my style of clothes? *Oh I see it takes you into another direction, doesn't it?* Yeah. So that's a big thing for me personally. *So that's the first bit of it, so we're going to go to the next section.*

*This section was 35 minutes and 50 seconds.*

### Final Section

*[Note: Section 2 of the interview covers the CSI and the DEFRA test, which have not been included in this appendix.]*

*So as you can see we've changed the topic a little bit. Do you know what sustainability means? I heard it but I don't know what it means. OK. I know obviously it's, I was thinking it was to do with the environment in terms of, in terms of resources, earth's resources. And no, I know it's to do with the environment and the earth's resources. OK, that's fine. Do you know what it means for clothing? No, no. OK. So are you aware of any environmental issues that affect clothing? That might affect clothing? Environmental issues? Yes, that might affect clothing. (a long pause). No. Well, you know you have those kinds of factories that you know where people make clothes and things like that in different countries. All I kind of focus is on is in terms of the people in there and the environment in there, *Sweatshops?* Yeah, and how it impacts on them. But I hadn't really thought about how everything else impacts upon the environment itself. Yes. *That's right. So you haven't heard of the water issues, such as the Aral Sea.* No, I haven't heard. *OK that's handy we do have a map on the dining room table, this is a pre-1914 map as you can see. Claudia: The Aral Sea has shrunk. That's the Caspian so that is the Aral Sea. Me: Yes, that is the Aral Sea it's shrunk dramatically. OK. It's in the former Soviet Union, Right OK. By Uzbekistan and it's shrunk dramatically because basically they've diverted the water because of cotton. Oh really? You see, cotton is a big, it's a major producer of cotton. Oh really. So they've diverted the water but**

*because it's an inland sea it's shrunk dramatically. Oh really. If you google Aral Sea, you will see it. Oh yeah. Claudia: You see rusting ships essentially sitting in mud essentially. Oh wow. Me: That's right. So you haven't heard of that one, right, are you aware of issues such as chemicals used in your clothing? No, no. OK, there are other issues such as pesticides which are used in cotton growing within the developing world, have you heard of any of those issues? No. I have heard obviously of pesticides but I associate those mainly with food, I don't associate, I would never have associated it with clothes. With cotton? Right. Um, are you aware of waste issues to do with clothing? ( a long pause). I wouldn't know really where they went, I just assumed that clothes that um weren't kind of, were disposed of and probably didn't really count, you know how they do these big landfill things that's what I thought happened. That they'd end up in landfill? Yeah. That's what that happened. Obviously they do all these things where they sell them to um developing countries and stuff like that, I know they've got those kinds of schemes but I know that, even that's a kind of money-making thing for the companies though. Oh right. So, So anyway, you know a little bit about the ethical issues, when we spoke earlier we were talking about factories and people within factories, is there anything that you're particularly aware of? I suppose so in terms of it, I don't know too much into it, I suppose I keep myself blind on purpose because I know it's that whole morality of it, there's a shop and its' got all these clothes for such a bargain when I know I can't afford other clothes but at the same time it's like you know there might be children, I don't think of that when I go in. There might be children, my daughters age in there, you know working for pennies in horrible conditions oh I feel so bad now. This isn't about making you feel bad, don't worry, this is to see how people, part of this is seeing how aware people are. Then they'll , there's that thing where that factory caved in as well, that's right in Bangladesh. In terms of conditions people are working in, whether buildings are safe buildings are and health regulations and you know. So you have heard of a few sweatshop issues, yeah, oh right, so how did you hear of these issues? In the media. Ok in the media. Do you think there's a lack of information on these issues. Um, maybe in terms of the media not showing it so much but*

at the same time if I wanted to find out I could find out. *So you think you can find out?* Yeah. *So where would you try and find the information?* I think I would just google it first. *Yeah.* There must be some, because there are lots of different groups that campaign against different things like this so I'm sure they'll be some campaign groups against things like this. *So, do you read newspapers at all?* No, not really. *In terms of these issues, the ones you have heard of, do you think the source was trustworthy?* Yes, it was actually in the media, it was on the news. It was News at Ten so, *You felt it was a trustworthy source?* Yeah. *Claudia: Do you mainly get your news mainly from television?* Television or I'll go on the internet and look at the BBC or something like that so. But yeah, I don't watch because everything's like very negative I don't really watch. (laughter), *I know what you mean.* Yeah, so I know obviously you need to find out what is going on but then there's the whole bombardment this bad thing is happening, this bad thing happened and then it gets quite traumatic. *I know what you mean. I think particularly in the news recently it's been quite depressing hasn't it. On these types of issues do you think that some brands or retailers are more trustworthy than others?* They probably are and I can't remember who it was but I remember them talking about a particular, they were investigating a particular shop, you know where that caving of that building happened, I can't remember what company it was though and they said they were investigating whether they knew conditions were like this, probably are companies more trustworthy, I suppose because companies are built up by people and then in those companies you get people who you can trust and people that you can't and then you get people who are money motivated and they don't care and then, if they are at the top end of a particular company then they might just a blind eye let it happen and then I suppose you've got other companies that are more, I don't know what companies have got more of a better ethos around, *so you don't think, in terms of companies and a better ethos, are there any particular companies that come to mind?* In terms of clothing? *In terms of clothing is there anything that makes you think, oh I can trust this retailer more than this one on this issue?* I can't think, I can't think of a company like that for clothing. *Really?* Yeah, I don't know. Do you know of any? *Do I know of any?*

*Oh, You know the ones that marketed as being ethical, you know like Co-Operatives, the Bank you know you kind of know. Or like social enterprises, you know they've got more of a social, um, kind of whatever they're doing is the benefit of society but I can't think in terms of. In terms of retailers, quite a lot of them do make quite a few clothes. Oh do they? Yes, they do and some of them have initiatives. I suppose it's whether or not I'm going to look for it, I could go onto their website and look at their corporate social responsibility and see they say this and they say that. Maybe its just not been in my radar, do you know what I mean? So, at the end of the day, if I was interesting in finding out, I probably could find out but I'm not. So you're not? No, I'm not really, maybe it's the fact that the certain place I go to for clothes, so if its somewhere where it is totally not my style, would that make me change? And I don't think it would. You don't think it would? No, Also, in all these sort of things, do you want to know? Is there an aspect of yourself where you think, I could find out but I'd rather not? Do you see what I mean? Yes, I think it's just, when I think of environmental issues, I think clothing is at the other end, you don't necessarily look at environmental issues and clothing together. No you don't. But other things like pollution, look what's happened to the ozone layer, loads of different things, but you never really equate clothing and environmental issues do you? It's made me think, yes. But do you think retailers and brands have a responsibility to deal with these issues? Yeah, Yes they do. I do think they do, yes. They should have an awareness of, I suppose it's like over here you know you couldn't have people working in awful conditions, or you know they wouldn't allow things like you know ,well I don't know what they do over here. Like you say in terms of the water, in terms of the diverting the water to grow cotton? I don't know, if it was like a bit of sea over here for example, I don't know whether there would be uproar over that, I don't know do you think there would be an uproar? Or are people not bothered? I don't know. So if say you were growing cotton in Rutland Water and as a result Rutland water all disappeared? Yeah, I think there would be uproar. You think there would be uproar? Yeah, Yeah yes. So you know it's that whole aspect of globalisation of big companies well using their power to kind of set aside and do what they want to do, it's all*

down to money isn't it? *Do you think there's an out of sight, out of mind aspect? It's all happening in Uzbekistan, well who's heard of that??* Yeah, well, yeah, and they've got no voice over there to um right against it, it is. *Do you think that there's one more issue that's more important than others? For example do you think that the treatment of workers in factories is more important than say the water aspect or do you think they're all equally important or would you say that there was one more important than the other?* Umm, it's a hard question, ummm (pause, then laughter). Because I suppose I've always had that in my head about the treatment of people because I suppose you can relate to it more, um because we know what it's like to work over here, we know the conditions we, work and what we wouldn't accept so we can relate to it more. Whereas at the same time, looking at the environment, looking at the whole diverse, the water, looking at the resources we've got that's going to affect future generations anyway isn't it? Oh gosh I don't know how to answer that! I don't know. *Do you think that the problem is a bit overwhelming? Do you think you're a bit overwhelmed by this, by these issues?* Umm because there a lot of issues, there's loads of issues, there is a lot of issues. Hmmm. (pause). Oh my brain feels fried!! *Would these issues influence you at all in your clothes buying?? (again, pause).* Umm, again like I said, if it was, if I found that a manufacturer or a big organisation was extremely ethical in terms of what they were doing but it was not my style of clothing then I think, I'm not going to shop there because it was ethical. But at the same time, if it was in my favour I kinda of think, which shop it was, which place it was now, in terms of that, that building thing. *I think the Rana Plaza one, are you trying to think of which companies? Are you trying to think of which company was affected?* Yes, it was, *Claudia: there were a lot of different companies there, Me: Yes there were And, Claudia: I think there was several clothes companies and each of them had a number of different customers as well. I've got a feeling, it was New Look or Primark. Oh was it? Claudia: I think Gap also. Gap as well? Yes. I've got the information all somewhere yes, because a lot of these clothing companies are in the same building. Oh really. It was a big one wasn't it. I can't remember what was said because I know people were kind of trying to defend, but I don't know*

whether, because it's so hard isn't it, in terms of the human aspect they need to have a decent environment to work in you know, but the same time if those people didn't have those jobs in those countries there's a lot of sex-trafficking on and so on. So the fundamental issue is about the poverty in these countries and how to bring people, so they've not forced to work in a situation like that. But it's so hard, it's like a massive, massive area going back to your question, I'll probably just because I don't really shop anyway, I'll probably just *carry on*? Not shop that much then, but yeah go somewhere else for my leggings or something or would I? I don't know because I go to Asda and if Asda was involved I'll go to Asda would I not shop there? I don't know if I wouldn't actually. Because again it's down to finances, this is what I can afford. *Yes, so you're limited by income?* Yeah. *And to a certain extent, going back to that Rana Plaza accident there was a lot of bribery and corruption going on.* Oh was there? *The owner had paid, had put illegal floors on the building and had paid the authorities not to notice.* Oh my gosh. Sounds like something from Coronation Street!! (laughter). *Sorry I don't watch Coronation Street.* That's really bad! *There is a lot going on the Rana Plaza.* The companies over here must have that clout to say, look we're giving you that business then, or everything boils down to money, that's what it boils down to at the end. That's it isn't it. *Yes, but I have heard, I have spoken to Sainsburys, Marks & Spencers John Lewis and they all admitted its' quite hard to know exactly what is going on in the supply chain. Asda admitted that as well, didn't she? She was at the workshop last year, She admitted that as well. It's because the supply chains are so long it's actually hard to know what is going on.* *Claudia: It's the sub-contracting, they change the contractors and get a variety of companies and then they sub-contract to subject to requirements and it becomes very hard to track and it's expensive.* *Me: I'm afraid we need to cram it in a bit now, anyway all these issues have been thought about and discussed by quite a few people and the British Government as well and they've come up with this report about sustainable fashion and they've come out with some goals about what they'll like consumers to do so actually this has become the focus of my research, they have produced these goals but I'll like to see how what the consumers think about them. But because*



*they're written by a male, a male engineer a lot of people actually don't think quite like that. But I would like to know what consumers think about the goals, so here they are. So fashion goal number one is buy second-hand clothing where possible? Is that something that you do buy? Second-hand clothing? No. no. Claudia: Do you buy second-hand clothing for your kids? No, but a friend has recently told me that I need to go with them to car boot sales as apparently she says they have decent things and I know how fast my kids grow, they wear things twice so you can imagine. I'm not adverse to buying second hand clothes I've just haven't bought them. Claudia: is your younger one wearing the older one's clothes? She's getting taller than the other one now, they're a big as each other aren't they? That's right, last time I saw them she had really shot up hadn't she? Yeah, so I can't do even do that anymore. What about your clothes? Is any proportion of your wardrobe second-hand? Have you got any second-hand clothing? No, no apart from those trousers I told you, but I don't know, I think Marie France had bought them and then, she gave them to me? (Interruption as the phone rings). Marie France (mutual friend) had given you a pair of trousers hadn't she? Yeah, that's right. In terms of second hand clothing is it because you don't know where you would buy them, or they don't appeal to you or? I just haven't looked to be honest, I've got no aversion to it, to second-hand clothes, I just haven't looked, again because it's like, need, like if I need such and such, I'll go into such and such, this is where the dress section is for example but I've always have this idea that if I went into a charity shop, I'll end up going to this charity shop, and this charity shop because I wouldn't know whether they would be one with that particular dress or they might I don't know, it seems a lot of hassle but that my personal in terms of how I personally shop. And probably if it was something second hand I would probably am more likely to go on E-Bay or something, where I can kind of see OK and don't have to trawl around everywhere, Yes, it 's a bit more focused isn't it? You can go straight to the dresses section Yeah, and look at the dresses. Yes, and narrow it down from there, That kind of thing. Yeah, yes. Um, the next one is buy fewer garments, but more durable garments, ie garments that would last for longer, would you spend more on a garment that would last you longer? Probably, yeah, I tend*

to wear my clothes a lot , like for a long time um so, not pay too much more, I don't want to pay too much more. But yeah, I think as you get older and you have kids it changes anyway because you focus on getting the kids things and, they're definitely grown so they always have to get the new clothes, I'm fine with I've got, and as you said, if something needs sewing then I'd sew it, need to get something else I'll get something else. *So you're prepared to spend a bit more but not much more?* Not too much more, yeah. *Another goal is buy clothing that is more sustainable, i.e. more eco-clothing or ethical clothing for example fair-trade you know oh, the fair-trade mark, there's fair-trade clothing.* Oh do they have fair-trade clothing Oh? *They have them at the fair-trade shop in Leicester actually.* Oh again, it depends if it's not my style then I am not gonna buy that clothing. I can imagine fair trade clothing being quite bright, well not bright but a bit bohemian, I imagine them like that. *Well, yeah that's actually, I see them that's a fairly accurate description of them.* They're not really my style, *so they're not really your style?* No? *Would you know what eco-clothing was or where to buy them for example?* No, I wouldn't, No I wouldn't know where you buy them at all. Apart from now you tell me where to buy fair-trade have certain clothes and stuff. *That's right and there is a fair-trade shop in Leicester but if they weren't your style?* Yeah. I'm not going to, you've got to feel comfortable somehow, it's a subjective view, *that's right.* So. *Yes, Yes, clothing is slightly different isn't it?* It's different to buying a jar of coffee. Yes. Do you know what I mean, like buying a jar of fair-trade coffee, you don't actually wear that, clothing is quite a personal thing isn't it? It sends out a message, *That's right. So what of the following are you more likely to buy, for example, second-hand clothing, vintage, are you interesting in vintage at all? Vintage clothing?* What does that mean? *Vintage, so for example 1960s,* oh I like, do you now what year those dresses? *Oh those 1950 dresses!* I like those, I haven't got one yet. *You'd be interested aren't you?* Yeah, *I know the yellow with the big skirt.* Yeah, I like those, *the 1950s style, that style.* We're talked a little about second hand clothing, now *artisan or custom-made now when we were talking last week, you said you'd had clothes made for you before, which shops were they?* There was a shop in the Silver Arcade and it used to make

going out clothes like, if you wanted, actually other clothes as well but going out clothes and you just go there with your pattern, they'd cut it and make it for you, so you'd go with your pattern, I think they had some material or I think you could take your own material as well. *And they would make it for you?* And they would make it for you yeah, and I liked it, yeah. If I could sew then I would make more of my clothes, like probably not day clothes, probably just like or may day clothes in the summer, because its different isn't it summer and winter wear? *Yes, exactly.* Like my Mum used to make a lot of clothes for us, well for me when I was little, *so never say never?* Yes. *We've talked about fair-trade clothes just now haven't we? They've got to be your style haven't they?* Yeah. *What about clothes that are locally-made, ie clothes that were made in England?* Yeah, as long as they were in my style! Yes as long as it was something that I was comfortable wearing, yes. *And organic clothing, you know organic cotton and fibres like that?* Yeah. That would probably be better on my hair! (laughter). When you were saying about the pesticides, I didn't know and was thinking what pesticides are going to get in my hair aren't they?? *Or vegan? Or vegan clothes and shoes??* Vegan shoes?? *Yeah, you know they don't wear leather?* So what do they, what would it be? *It's some kind of plastic isn't it?* *Claudia: Or man-made stuff?* I don't know about that, I don't know. It's like what, like jelly babies? Those kind of things? *Jelly baby shoes??* *Well, um, they look quite authentic, oh do they?* *Yes, they look quite authentic but they're not leather,* Oh right. *Because they won't use animal products.* As long as it looked alright Yeah. . *So as long as it looks alright?* Yeah, that's fine. *Would you be willing to pay more to eco/ethical fashion for example, paying £5 more for a T-shirt?* A t-shirt? *Yes, A t-shirt.* Umm (pause) I don't know, I'm so thrifty, *Would it have to be something that you wanted?* I suppose it would have to be something that I needed first and if it was ethically, if it was an ethical t-shirt then it would have to stand out as something I really wanted so yeah. *Another goal is hiring clothes?* Oh, *Hiring clothes? Have you ever considered this at all? About hiring clothes?* No. When you hire clothes? For a special occasion or something? *Claudia: A ball gown or something like that.* Oh yeah. *Wedding gowns or something like that.* Oh yeah, I can imagine

that's quite expensive for those. *Depends on the item what you're hiring. Claudia: Or how much it costs to buy it.* A lot of celebrities do that don't they? Hiring items on red carpets stuff, yeah, that could be a possibility because you don't wear that special outfit for ages or at all. So yeah possibly as long as it wasn't too expensive. *OK, so it's something that you would consider?* Because if it was loads of money you might as well buy a dress for that if it was loads. *Yes, yes that's true it depends on the occasion doesn't it and on the dress.* Yeah. *Another goal is to repair or adapt clothing to prolong its life?* Yes. *You do that already don't you?* Yeah, yes. *And another goal is recycling it at the end of its life, recycling clothes when you have finished with them.* Recycling how? *Well, there are different ways of recycling, it depends on the item, well for example, there's a lady in Leicester who takes pairs of jeans and recycles them into handbags.* Ahhh. That's good, *or recycling could be that you alter it slightly and give it to one of your daughters.* Yes, yeah, yeah, *or you give it to the clothing banks and they recycle.* Yeah, yeah, yes. I like that kind of thing. Yes. *Turning the jeans into shorts or something like that, I like that kind of thing.* *When you get rid of clothes, where do you take them again?* Well yeah, I always save them for the intention of selling them on E-Bay and that but when they get too much, I've got too many clothes around I end up taking them to the tip thing, the recycle clothes bank thing, I end up going there but I should actually just sort them. The last time I did that, you know the jeans I was talking about, my sister got the jeans and they've still got the tags on them I and I ended up taking them as well. A brand new pair of jeans, never been worn. *You took them to recycling?* Yeah, I forgot I didn't realize, it had got to the point oh I've got all these clothes, I can't have them in my house anymore and I took them and they've gone. *You took them to recycling?* Yeah. *Washing clothes at 30 degrees, this is another goal, would you consider this to wash clothes at 30 degrees?* Yes. *Rather than the usual forty or more.* The only thing, if it was whites, I don't know I couldn't consider doing the whites, my kids get their tops quite messy and *Claudia: So what temperature do you wash at?* The whites? 50, the white ones, if they are blouses and stuff. *The school blouses?* Yeah. *Claudia: Do you have a machine full of them and stuff? Because I never have enough to wash everything at*

*high temperatures! (laughter).* Um, I've blouses, it's like probably half full or something yeah. But I was thinking about, well the other day I put it on, well the normal one which is forty and it didn't get them sparkly clean then I was thinking about what you said about the washing powder, and I thought maybe it's the washing powder, maybe it's that, maybe that's why I'm sure it cleaned it at forty before. (laughter). *So on the subject would you be prepared to use eco-friendly washing powder?* Yeah, yeah I would do yeah. *But would it have to do its job?* Yeah, yeah, it would. *Ok Um would you consider line-drying, drying clothes on the line?* Yeah, if I had a line. I need to get a line but yeah, yeah. *Claudia: Do you run a tumble-drier or* No, no, the tumble drier, yeah, they just go on , they basically go on the radiators, the tumble drier's too loud, I don't use it now. They just go on the radiators really. *And avoid ironing as much as possible?* Oh I'd like that yeah. (laughter). *Most people agree with this one! Claudia: I don't think it should be on this list. Do you iron much?* No, no, just when it needs doing. I know people who love ironing and go Oh I've got a big basket of ironing but no. No. *No, not you. And finally separating synthetic and natural fibres? When you're buying clothes are you aware of fibres whether it's a mixture of fibres or 100% cotton and that sort of thing?* Um not particularly aware, I know that, you know certain things like cotton, I'm don't know if it's totally cotton or because I can't wear wool, it's too itchy. *Doesn't go with the hair?* Yeah and it's itchy on my skin as well. Things like, it it acrylic, it that a bit like wool? *It's a bit like, they use it a lot in woolly jumpers.* So in terms of acrylic I can wear because it's not itchy. I know what that is, the legging material, what is that? Cotton? *Claudia: Cotton with lycra?* Cotton with lycra that's it. Some things are quite sheer and soft but I don't know what they're made of, like the leopardprint top, I don't know what that is, is it viscose? *Viscose?* I know I've heard of it but I don't know exactly what it is. *OK, right. Um, we've got five minutes, we've got about five or six minutes left but I'll try and put them all together. Now you're a bit more aware would you change your behaviour at all?* Um, do you know what I'll probably look at the retailers I do buy from, what in terms of socially and for the environment, ethically, I'll probably look first. I'll look there and then take it from there really. *Take it from there?* Take it from there, cos it's only, I

don't really buy too many things from too many shops anyway so there's only a few. So it's not really that hard. So *you would just have a look and see?* Yeah. *So would there be anything that influences you to change your behaviour at all? Do you think anything would influence you?* Um, I suppose if I found something glaringly unethical I would think twice and look, look at the companies that weren't so unethical but did sell the same type of clothes that I'm into. I wouldn't change the type of clothes I like wearing, I wouldn't do that. *OK Maybe I could make them I could ask my Mum to make them or something?* Yeah, *have a big making session?* Yeah, get a few patterns but then again it comes down to cost because by the time you've got the pattern and the material you might as well have bought one. It's the ethicalness so, it's really difficult. *It is isn't it? It's a minefield.* Yeah. *Do you think that retailers and brands ought to do more? About it?* Yeah, Yeah I know what you said in terms of the supply chains are really long but they should have an indication in terms of, I don't know because they still have contracts don't they these companies so if they've got that in their contracts in terms of the way in which the companies are carrying on with the environment or people or for example, than that would automatically go to the sub-contractors, its supposed to be, everything's supposed to be, everything bound by the first, *the first contractor?* Yeah, yes and to able to investigate it more and *e more transparent about it?* *Do you think more labelling on clothes would help? Like the fair-trade for example, you've got the fair-trade label, they label themselves fair-trade, do you think a label like that would help? When you're buying them?* Um, *Would that help?* Possibly, but it wouldn't be fair-trade style, if it was like just fair-trade. *Yes, if it was something like fair trade or if it some of these environmental standards.* Yeah, that would be good actually. So you kind of know and you feel more appeased or (laughter). Yeah, that might help actually, as long as the companies were being honest about it as well. And just saying it and then if something happened, saying oh I don't know about that, it's just having the whole ethical mind-set from the start. But in this world, because everyone is so driven by money, having everything driven by money that mind-set is already there so, *Do you think that's ultimately the bottom line for companies? Money? And that's it?* Yeah, money, profits,

cost yeah. *Yeah, so do you think, this is the final question! Are there any actions you would like to see for this all to happen, any action you would like to see from companies or?* To be more transparent, taking more initiative to find out what goes on down the supply chain and the, the terms of the whole chain. Um, they make absolutely millions these companies, *they do make a lot* yes, So to even if was like having an agreement where they could um, they could say Ok we need to know where the factory is so every so often we're going to send somebody to have a look round and see what's happening with the environment and see what's happening with the buildings and see what's, I don't know how these clothes are made but the chemicals, the buildings those kinds of things so the people are a bit more on their toes, oh oh someone might come in and *revoke their contract? That kind of thing?* Yeah.

*That's it, thanks very much. Thank you for taking part.* It was really interesting.

*[End of final section of the interview with Cara]*

