

**THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**THE SOCIOLOGY OF CONSUMER  
BEHAVIOUR AND MEN**

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Sociology  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**by**

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**April 1995**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Tables	v
<b>Introduction</b>	
Studying the Act of Shopping	6
Notes	14
<b>Chapter One</b>	
Sociological and Historical Theories of the Consumer	15
Notes	55
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
Marketing and Retailing Approaches to the Consumer	56
Notes	83
<b>Chapter Three</b>	
Methodological Questions in the Study	84
Notes	96
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
The Practice and Experience of Shopping	98
Notes	120
<b>Chapter Five</b>	
Gender Differences within the Experience of Shopping	121
Notes	141

<b>Chapter Six</b>	
Situating the Shopping Act	143
Notes	167
<b>Chapter Seven</b>	
Ideologies of Shopping	168
Notes	196
<b>Chapter Eight</b>	
Ideologies, Power and Shopping	198
Notes	227
<b>Conclusions</b>	229
<b>Appendix One</b>	
Sample interview transcripts	
Group One	236
Group Two	273
Group Three	302
Tape A	330
Tape C	365
Tape E	402
<b>Appendix Two</b>	
Media Images of the ‘Female’ Consumer	443
<b>Bibliography</b>	446

## **PREFACE**

Shopping is an activity which is receiving increasing attention from sociologists. Yet this enthusiasm to theorise about the importance and meaning of this activity has not been generally matched by corresponding empirical research on such questions. This study provides the results of a small-scale analysis of people's attitudes to shopping, it uses their attitudes to understand the importance which this activity has for them.



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The present study is based on research conducted at the University of York in the Department of Sociology. I gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by the Economic and Social Research Council. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Dr Colin Campbell for his invaluable support and guidance, and to Dr Barry Sandywell for his helpful comments. In addition, this research would not have been possible without the daily coffee meetings with Betty, Fran and Kathy in the department. Last, but not least, I would like to acknowledge the emotional support provided by my parents and two very special people in my life, Lizzy and Nuala.

**LIST OF TABLES**

One	Analysis of Shopper typologies
Two	Interview variables for the study
Three	Interviewers
Four	Interview variables for the Finnish Study
Five	Types of Shopping which people enjoy and dislike
Six	Male and Female Shopping Type Preferences
Seven	Time use by sex and employment status

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **STUDYING THE ACT OF SHOPPING**

The subject of this thesis is the act of 'shopping'. The central aim of this study is to provide the reader with an analysis of the importance and meaning this activity has for people. Shopping is a daily task in which the majority of the population partake; but it is, in many respects, a taken-for-granted aspect of our lives. In recent years much has been written about this activity, and many claims have been made about its sociological importance, but, as I will demonstrate most of these remain largely unsubstantiated. This study provides some answers to the question of the importance of this activity both to the people concerned and to sociological theory.

The starting place for my own interest in the area of consumption emerged from two sources. The first, was being taught Sociology by Professor Zygmunt Bauman at Leeds University. The major influence of this experience was the interest it provoked in the postmodernity debate. The second influence was completing the Masters course in The Sociology of Contemporary Culture at York University where this initial interest was further stimulated and questioned. During this year I became conscious of the fact that many commentators were beginning to perceive the sphere of culture as where sociological interest should reside in the 1980s (Bauman, 1988b). However, within contemporary sociological thinking on culture it appeared that undue priority was given to the production of 'texts', whether these were books or films, rather than the processes of consumption.

This conviction became even stronger when I was introduced, by Dr Colin Campbell of the Department of Sociology, to some of the research which he had been conducting on women and their attitudes to shopping. In reading these transcripts I was struck by the significant role that their male partners

appeared to be playing in the women's own experiences of shopping. Upon further examination of the research literature on shopping (see Chapter Two) it became evident that an analysis of men as shoppers was surprisingly absent from such discussions. Studies of the act preferred to employ all-female samples, with the only justification for this being that it was women who tend to act as the purchasing agent for the household. This led me to the conclusion that one potential avenue for research on the topic of shopping would be to conduct interviews with men and to compare their attitudes to this activity with the women's views previously acquired.

In the summer of 1991, I completed a dissertation for the Masters course at York University which provided a review of contemporary theories of consumption. This piece of work confirmed many of my earlier suspicions. One of the main issues to emerge from this project was the belief that too much academic work had examined the uses people make of consumer objects, rather than on understanding the meaning of the act of consumption itself. This limitation was curious considering the amount of theoretical work which was beginning to emerge on the presumed shift to what was termed a so-called 'consumer society'. Suddenly it appeared that the act of consumption, an activity which had long been neglected in sociological analysis, was receiving greater academic interest. However, this concern was not matched by a concomitant desire to test some of the theoretical claims, instead they appeared content to merely assert that consumer activities were an important means for the construction of self-identity (Bocock, 1993; Featherstone, 1991; Bauman, 1988a; 1988b). The limits to this perspective were made clear in terms of the fact that the only means which were identified as crucial to this process of identity-construction tended to focus on what people purchase and the uses they make of such objects. The outcome of this approach is that research on the act of shopping in its own right had not been conducted<sup>1</sup>.



Shopping is just one aspect of the broader processes of consumption which, as I learned from my initial literature review, is usually defined as the processes which surround the acquisition and enjoyment gained from consumer goods or services which may or may be eventually purchased. Recent writers have analysed other forms of the consumer, such as the viewers of television programmes, such as *Nationwide* (Morley, 1992), and soap operas (Tulloch and Moran, 1986; Hobson, 1982), the readers of romantic fiction (Radway, 1987), to the 'consumers' of Prisons, Schools and the National Health Service (see Keat *et al.*, 1994) and museums (Radley, 1991).

My own analysis of the consumer concentrates, as I have stated, on the shopper. In this manner, my aim at the outset of this thesis was rather simple, to produce an empirical analysis of the activity of shopping which began with the voice of shoppers and not the theoretician's. To ask, what might we as sociologists gain from listening to what people themselves might have to say about their own experiences of this activity, and the meaning which it may have for them.

How we define the process of 'shopping' is of crucial importance for our analysis and the conclusions we are able to draw. If we turn to a dictionary definition, we discover that 'shop' refers to the actual building or room intended for the retail sale of merchandise or for the sale of services. To 'shop' is also a verb, and it is this meaning of the term which forms the basis for the current analysis, that is the process by which people are said to visit this outlet "with intent to purchase goods" or simply "to make a search or hunt" (*Collins Pocket English Dictionary*, 1985). Shopping in this manner is defined as the activity of visiting shop either to simply examine goods or with the intention to purchase something. My own view is that there is much more to this process than is revealed by these simple definitions. In the analysis I was centrally interested in how people talk about their shopping activities, how they

say they will conduct themselves when shopping, and how they go about 'shopping'. The purpose of the study is thus an examination of questions of 'what' and 'how' (Morley, 1992: 140) with respect to this act: What do the people themselves consider to be important about the act of shopping? And what does their talk about shopping say about how they construe this activity and how they will accomplish this task.

The aim of the thesis is modest. It is to use empirical research to throw some light upon current theories of this activity, and to cast some doubts upon some of the claims which have been made about this activity. Perhaps the most debatable conclusion made about this activity, which serves to highlight this lack of research, is the undifferentiated nature of the statements: 'I Shop Therefore I Am' or the equally controversial 'Born to shop' label (Starkey, 1989).

In Chapter One of the thesis a review is provided of the many ways in which this consumer has been theorized. Three main sociological approaches to this activity are outlined: First, an approach which understands the consumer as chiefly motivated by the desire to distinguish themselves from others; second, a perspective which emphasizes the aspect of manipulation within consumer behaviour; and finally, a third approach which stresses the pleasure and potential for liberation within this activity. In my critique of such approaches I suggest that they have remained remarkably unaware of the gendered nature of this activity. This I suggest may be due to their inability to deal with the historical studies of shopping which testify to the importance of this factor for any understanding of consumer behaviour. Another problem with much of this sociological literature on the topic of shopping is the lack of empirical evidence. Many of the theories appear as deductively-derived and owe much more to the unsubstantiated claims of social scientists about this activity than the reality which can be empirically discovered.

To overcome this lack of empirical research on the act of shopping, in Chapter Two, I provide a review of the work which has been conducted on consumer behaviour. This research is located within the fields of marketing, advertising and retailing. The value of this research is that it enables us to examine the question of what we actually know about people's shopping behaviour and to provide a number of answers. The general conclusion which can be drawn from analysing such research is that we still have a lot to learn, and one of the major reasons for this is that the research which has been conducted tends to equate shopping with the act of buying. Shopping in this evaluation is reduced to a decision-making exercise.

A second problem which stems from this original orientation to shopping is that where research is conducted it tends to be on all-female samples. The justification which marketers and retailers give for this bias is simple, is that women are said to make over eighty per cent of the purchasing decisions within the household (Scott, 1976). Hence, they focus solely on women's attitudes to shopping.

The conclusion which can be drawn from Chapter Two is that we still know very little about the practice of shopping, especially the question of how people set about accomplishing this act. Moreover, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Two we at present know very little about men's attitudes to shopping. In a similar fashion, no comparative analysis of the views of men and women on the topic of shopping exists. Instead researchers have been content to rely upon the traditional stereotypes which view men as aversive toward this activity. The outcome of this view is that the gendered nature of shopping is largely assumed, despite the fact that little research exists on the ways in which gender may influence how people construe the activity of shopping. Moreover, research on the consequences of the 'feminine' status of shopping for male participation in this activity is also deemed not worthy of research, since it has traditionally been assumed, as I will demonstrate, that shopping is



women's work (see Chapter One and Chapters Seven and Eight) and that men do not shop.

In Chapter Three the method of data collection is analysed, its merits for investigating the proposed research topic and the potential limits of such data. Answers are provided to the questions of how the research data was obtained and how such findings should be treated.

The question of the priority which is placed upon gender differences within the current thesis is an issue which needs to be addressed. Why this excessive preoccupation with the variable of gender? Is the researcher trying to claim that such a factor is more important, in causal terms, than other variables such as class, age or gender? As I will demonstrate in Chapter Three, this study is not attempting to correlate such gender differences with some kind of 'causal' relevance, rather the effort is simply to question and analyse the influence which this factor may have, an aspect which, as I demonstrate in Chapters One and Two, has largely been ignored in current research on the topic of shopping. To justify this approach, it is necessary to reconsider the lack of attention given to this aspect of the activity in recent accounts (see Chapter Two) and the discrepancy between this academic view and the people's own accounts of their shopping experiences (see Chapter Five).

In Chapter Four I provide a preliminary analysis of the findings. In this chapter I argue that to understand the act of shopping and what meaning and importance this act has for people it is necessary to move away from the general assumption which equates shopping with the acquisition of goods. Instead it is necessary to explore what activities are central to an understanding of shopping in its own right. This is achieved through an examination of questions such as how frequently people will shop, where they go, who they shop with, etc.. In addition, the pleasures of browsing, bargain-hunting and the retail environment itself are also analysed. In the chapter I



look at the importance the retail environment appears to have and the role of others in the shopping context.

In the next chapter I argue that although shopping is best understood as a practice and experience there are crucial differences in terms of how men and women construe this activity. From the research material it was evident that gender appears to play a significant role in the shopping experience. Marked gender differences were evident in terms of the time men and women say they spend shopping and how they say they will accomplish this activity. In this chapter I illustrate these differences by outlining a characteristic 'male' and 'female' ideal type style of shopping. This concept is outlined to examine and illustrate the importance of how the act of shopping is conducted to the people themselves.

In Chapter Six I attempt to question and analyse such gender differences by examining the wider social framework within which the act of shopping is situated. The chapter provides an exploration of the different ways of accounting for these 'shopping styles' based upon a critical study of four explanations. First, that the different resources of time may affect people's attitudes to shopping; second, that having the available financial resources will affect how they construe this act; third, the association between shopping and using it as a means to meet others; and finally, four, that the extent to which shopping is regarded as a leisure activity will depend upon whether it is part of an individual's 'work role'.

In Chapter Seven it is argued that the act of shopping also exists within a broader ideological framework. The men and women's ideas about shopping are treated as 'ideologies' which serve a number of functions, such as the attempts which were made by the respondents to criticize the other gender and the way they conduct their shopping. But also, to enable men to participate in an activity which is implicitly 'feminine' in a 'masculine' manner.

In Chapter Eight of the thesis I use the main findings so far obtained from this study to begin to answer the question of the meaning shopping has for men and women. I attempt a critique of current theories of consumer culture. The main argument is that the 'I shop therefore I am' thesis tends to not only overstate the importance of shopping to the construction of self-identity, but also to universalize this experience. As suggested, for many of the men the counter theses would be that of: 'I do not shop therefore I am a man'; or 'I go, buy what I have to therefore I am a man'. The aim of this chapter is to question and analyse the priority which social scientists have placed upon the act of shopping. This is achieved through an exploration of a new way of thinking about consumer activities one which centres on the usefulness of applying notions of power and ideology to this sphere. I outline the ways in which masculine power is made clear in the shopping context, in terms of the sexual division of labour and the guilt which women associate with their pleasures. However, the chapter goes on to suggest that a degree of feminine power is expressed in the form of their greater expertise in this sphere and the lack of competence of men. Through this perspective it is argued that people defines themselves not only through what they purchase, but equally, in terms of how they shop.

## Notes

- 1 This conclusion has since become qualified as a number of studies are now focusing on the act of shopping. These include the research currently being conducted in Finland by Pasi Falk (1993) and Turo-Kimmo Lehtonen (1993), and work conducted on shoppers in Trinidad and London by Daniel Miller (1994; 1993). For a review of their current findings see Chapter One. Reference to the Finnish findings and data can also be found in Chapter Six, Seven and Eight of this study.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **SOCIOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL THEORIES OF THE CONSUMER**

### **Introduction**

As stated in the introduction the aim of this thesis is to understand the place and meaning shopping has in people's lives. To address this question it is helpful to examine previous theories of the consumer within both classical and contemporary sociology, but also within the emerging historical discussion that has centred on this activity.

This chapter begins with the view of consumption which can be traced in the writings of the 'founding fathers' Karl Marx, Max Weber and Émile Durkheim. Traditionally it has been accepted that such classical theorists neglected to analyse the sphere of consumption due to the attention they granted to the consequences of the emerging division of labour. However, in studying their theories what emerges is the peculiar way that they did view the activity of consumption.

The chapter then outlines the three dominant approaches to understanding consumer behaviour within sociological studies. The first approach considers consumption as a means of social differentiation. A second approach analyses consumption as a tool of manipulation. A third approach studies consumption as a kind of liberation. Three problems are identified as common to all these approaches. First, that they all tend to bracket academic attention away from the act of shopping by their focus on goods which are "purchased" and the uses individuals are said to make of these. Second, that they all tend to be theoretically-derived rather than paying attention to what consumers themselves might think about their own



behaviour. Finally, that all these approaches neglect the factor of gender as an important influence upon people's experience and everyday conduct.

The next section of the chapter moves on to a discussion of the emerging sociological debate on the topic of shopping itself. Such research is traced to the late 1980s and much of this work seeks to argue that the act of shopping has become a preeminent concern for modern society. Curiously much of this work is oblivious to the earlier historical contributions to the topic of shopping. Perhaps it is not surprising then that the factor of gender receives little attention in their discussions. Some theorists even argue that the 1980s marked a period in which gender differences in the realm of shopping disappeared; while others suggest that they still remain marked. I counter this conclusion with a consideration of research on consumption that has demonstrated the value of a consideration of the factor of gender.

The final section of the chapter broadens the discussion by looking at the findings that emerge from the historical discussion of the topic of shopping. Many of these studies reveal that the act of shopping from the nineteenth century onwards came to be perceived as a female domain. Shopping in other words came to be viewed as 'women's work'. Meanwhile two interpretations of this change were developed; one that viewed the act as a form of female empowerment, while an alternative reading is that it threatened to entrap women through observation and disciplining.

As stated, the chapter begins with a discussion of the contribution of classical sociology to this debate.

### **Classical Sociology and the consumer**

For Karl Marx the sphere of production is perceived as all-important for a sociological understanding of the constitution of modern society. In the

Preface to *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* Marx outlines his viewpoint:

"The mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness." (Marx, 1978: 3).

For Marx the experience of work appears as the most seminal aspect of our life. Within Marx's writings there are scattered remarks on the role of consumption, most of these can be found in *Grundrisse* (1973) and his *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* (1971). Marx in these writings suggests that the processes of consumption and exchange are subordinate to production. Production in the view of Marx and Engels "creates the consumer" (1985: 132) because an object is said to be consumed in a particular way, a manner "determined" by the economic base.

However in his earlier critique of the political economists, contained in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1981), Marx appears to be hinting at the limitations of not only their perspective, but also his own: since they can "assert that the proletarian, just like a horse, need only receive so much as enables him to work. It does not consider him in his leisure time, as a human being." (in Bottomore and Rubel, 1984: 176; 1981: 24).

One such leisure time activity is shopping. Max Weber writing almost seventy years later in the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976) was aware of the powerful appeal of consumerism. In the final sections of the book Weber shifts from his central discussion of the Protestant Ethic to a general critique of modern society, where he suggests:

"In Baxter's view the care for external goods should lie on the shoulders of the 'saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment'. But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage." (1976: 181).

For Weber the appeal of buying things had taken on a new social importance, gripping and enslaving the individual consciousness in an all encompassing "iron cage" of consumerism.

Émile Durkheim's views on consumption appear to share many of the concerns of his contemporary Max Weber. Within his discussion of *anomie* Durkheim insists that individual happiness is concomitant with an individual's relationship between their needs and means. Durkheim considered that human needs are 'boundless', as he concludes: "Unlimited desires are insatiable by definition insatiability is rightly considered a sign of morbidity. Being unlimited, they constantly and infinitely surpass the means at their command; they cannot be quenched. Inextinguishable thirst is constantly renewed torture." (1987: 175). The regulatory force for Durkheim is social solidarity, the integration of the individual into the prevailing norms and values of that society. If this breaks down, for example, if an individual loses their job or wins the lottery, Durkheim believed that *anomie* would be the inevitable result.

Many parallels exist between Durkheim's conception and that of early Greek thought. For Plato, in his account of *The Republic* (1987) a society centred on consumption is termed "luxurious" or worse still a "feverish" one, driven by endless and limitless desire. For Durkheim, as we saw the answer lay in regulating such desires through moral force. It is this implicitly negative conception of consumer practices that we see constantly reappearing in subsequent accounts of the act of consumption.

## **Consumption as social differentiation**

One of the first social theorists to probe the importance of the act of consumption was Thorstein Veblen. For Veblen, writing at the same time as



Max Weber and Émile Durkheim, the act of consumption had become all important since for him it appeared to act as the chief means of social differentiation within contemporary society. He believed that the organisation of modern society at the turn of the twentieth century had become qualitatively different:

"The means of communication and mobility of the population now expose the individual to the observation of many persons who have no other means of judging his respectability than the display of goods." (1953: 71).

In his *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1953), originally published in 1899, Thorstein Veblen examined a group of individuals for whom the act of consumption had taken on a greater significance. This so-called leisure class was said to use the material objects that they consumed to construct a sense of individual identity.

For Veblen material goods conveyed to others information about social status. To express this usage Veblen coined the notion of a 'conspicuous consumption'. He believed that for the newly emerging Leisure class paid employment had become base and degraded, as a result the only means of conveying one's honour and respectability was through the display of leisure. Veblen outlines this point when he argues: "The only practicable means of impressing one's pecuniary ability on those unsympathetic observers of one's everyday life is an unremitting demonstration of ability to pay." (1953: 71). Veblen does tend to overstate this argument when he suggests that the sole motivation for acquiring goods is for the purposes of 'emulation' (1953: 35). Meanwhile his theory of status wars appears excessively rigid, particularly when he asserts: "each class envies and emulates the class next above it in the social scale, while it rarely compares itself with those below or with those considerably in advance." (1953: 81). Later theorists have critiqued Veblen for the overimportance he grants to perceiving the leisure class as the 'norm of



reputability'. Steiner and Weiss (1951) argue against this apparently unidirectional theory of the dissemination of fashion with the example of counter-snobbery.

A further problem is that Veblen talks very little about how the leisure class acquire their goods. This may be due to the fact that he believed that the actual process of shopping for such consumer objects may be too degrading for the leisure class to actually perform themselves. Consequently his analysis offers us few insights into the practice of consumer behaviour.

The analysis of consumption as a means of differentiation has been further pursued by Pierre Bourdieu. In his book *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1992a) Bourdieu sets out to examine the relationship between the cultural practices of people, their cultural dispositions and competence. He illustrates the relationship between an the 'habitus' of an individual and the uses people make of the things they purchase. People's choices of cultural artefacts, from paintings to music, from clothes to the internal decor of their homes and even what food they put on the kitchen table is said to classify them as distinguished by that persons social origin and educational attainment (1992a: 13). For Bourdieu, in this manner, an individual's tastes in music, art and clothes are not innocent, rather they function to distinguish that person. For example, Bourdieu distinguishes the taste of the working classes as one of 'necessity', from that of the bourgeois which is said to exude a 'sense of distinction' and 'ease'. Hence, "Economic power" for Bourdieu as it was with Veblen, "is first and foremost a power to keep economic necessity at arm's length." (1992a: 55). Hence consumer objects become constitutive elements in a person's lifestyle, or what Weber terms the 'stylization of life' (1992a: 55). For both Pierre Bourdieu and Thorstein Veblen the principle differentiating factor is that of social class.

This understanding of the use of consumption can be equally found in the work of Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood. In their book *The World of*

*Goods* (1980) both writers perceive the primary use of this act to be one of classification, that is, consumer objects are said to enable us to make sense of and understand what they term the "inchoate flux of events" (1980: 65). Grant McCracken in his book entitled *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (1991) views such objects as the "scaffolding on which the world is hung" (1991: 74). However, McCracken in two earlier articles warns against over-emphasising the importance of status (1989: 177; 1987: 151). He argues that such objects may carry many more meanings to being simply a reflection of an individual's social position. In this way, the focus on using consumer objects to convey simply social competition may restrict our understanding by diverting attention from other cultural meanings and uses to which they may be put. A similar complaint may be that the attention to status overshadows examination of the processes of consumption that occur prior to acquisition, one such being shopping itself. The shopper in other words is theorised as primarily motivated by the desire to distinguish themselves from others. An alternative understanding of this act can be gained by theories of consumption that emphasize the manipulative aspects of this activity and which therefore posit the consumer as acting within a much more constrained position when shopping.

### **Consumption as manipulation**

A second view of the process of consumption considers it as an arena of manipulation, in which the shopper is targeted and seduced by advertisers and retailers to buy what they never appeared to want in the first place. The main exponent of this view is Jean Baudrillard (1988). However, the thread of Baudrillard's argument can be traced back to earlier writings such as those emerging from the Frankfurt School (Kellner, 1989).

The main aim of the Frankfurt School was to provide a contemporary critique of existing forms of capitalism, in much the same way as Karl Marx had done a century earlier. Taking their lead from the publications of Marx's early texts during the 1930s, specially his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (1981), theorists such as Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer and Herbert Marcuse sought to understand and condemn the emerging mass consumer society. In the book *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1973) Horkheimer and Adorno set out to establish that the culture industry was a contemporary means of mass deception. For Marcuse, in this often-stated passage from his *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (1964), this view of the negative consequences of living in a consumer society is made clear: "The people recognise themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment." (1964: 9). It is this negative evaluation of the sphere of consumption that the contemporary French theorist Jean Baudrillard largely adopts.

Jean Baudrillard, like the members of the Frankfurt School, begins with the idea that Marx's neglect of the realm of consumption demands to be remedied (1988). For Baudrillard, capitalism demands not only a docile labour force, but also acquiescent consumers. "Having socialized the masses into a labour force" Baudrillard explains, "the industrial system had to go further in order to fulfil itself and to socialize the masses... into a force of consumption (1988: 50). The processes of production and consumption, for Baudrillard, must be understood as part and parcel of the same "grand logical process" that of the survival of capitalism. Hence it is the socialisation to consume that supersedes the learning to labour debate.

To achieve this critique Baudrillard tackles the question of "needs". For Baudrillard most "needs" are false ones, as Herbert Marcuse a decade earlier argued: "Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others



love and hate, belong to this category of false needs." (1964: 5). For Baudrillard, the discourse on "needs" used by both Marx and Galbraith is illusory, the argument that "man" is endowed with basic needs that demand "satisfaction" is a myth. The most fundamental illusion is the overemphasis upon the materiality of the object itself. This is expressed through the way that Baudrillard chooses to define the activity of consumption as "not defined by the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the car we drive" but "in the organisation of all this as signifying practice." (1988: 21-22). For Baudrillard, consumption is primarily a form of symbolic behaviour. This is best expressed through his argument that the 'purchasing impulse' of consumers is directed toward the arrangement of objects. Considering that Baudrillard wrote this piece in 1970 his account has a somewhat prophetic ring in terms of explaining the behaviour of Yuppies in the 1980s. A group for whom the penchant for a matrix of brand goods was specially pronounced: the Rolex watch, the BMW car, Levi's jeans etc.. The acquisition of objects, in Baudrillard's view, is not explained by referring to their utility, since what is being consumed is their sign-value.

Baudrillard's view of consumption as a "signifying practice" amounts to a view of goods as a means of social differentiation, although his conclusions are far gloomier than those propounded by Bourdieu (1992a), Douglas and Isherwood (1980) or even Veblen (1953). This fatal prognosis is illustrated when he asserts that: "In the U.S. 90% of the population experience no other desire than to possess what other's possess." (1988: 11).

The main problem with Baudrillard's account of the practices of consumption is that people appear as wholly constrained by this process. Moreover, very little empirical evidence is cited which might support his theoretical conclusions. Consumers in his account appears as the dupes, rather than as the practitioners or architects of their own behaviour. Using the terms of Marcuse, we might suggest that such theorists only view the

behaviour of people when shopping in a one-dimensional manner. The main problem in Baudrillard's work, which has also been traced in the writings of his forefather Marx (Birnbaum, 1953), is the inability to tackle the thorny question of human motivation. For Marx it was why should people work; for Baudrillard the all-important question is why should we shop in the way he outlines. Is the fact that people may buy goods in particular constellations the only important thing that we as Sociologists can say about shopping?

Jean Baudrillard's vision of consumption is also an essentially fatalistic one. This is expressed when he speaks specifically of spending, as a potent element of social control, one that "we will never escape" (1988: 53). In addition, Alan Tomlinson argues that Baudrillard's model of society is premised upon an affluent, prosperous shopper who has the economic means to behave in this way (1989: 20). A theory that distracts academic attention from understanding the consumer behaviour of those who do not have the means to participate in this (expensive) play of signifiers.

Another problem is the totalising nature of many of his arguments. One explanation for the all-encompassing nature of his account can be understood with reference to the influence of writers such as Ernst Dichter, Pierre Martineau and Vance Packard upon his thought. In his article on the nature of 'Consumer Society' (1988) he cites the work of these motivational researchers. For this group of men writing in the 1950s the power of the system of advertising was understood as all-powerful and all-persuasive. For example, Vance Packard in his infamous *Hidden Persuaders* (1986) speaks of consumers as "docile" and compliant "image lovers" who remain susceptible to the powers of persuasion. The main problem with such approaches is that they tend to overstate the influence and power of such institutions. The process of communication is effectively reduced to a "hypodermic" model in which the message of advertising can never be resisted by consumers since it operates as a kind of "silver bullet".

Michael Schudson critiques the assumed power of advertising in a book suitably entitled the *Uneasy Persuasion* (1986). He recounts examples of failed advertising campaigns, commodities that have succeeded without such devices, and the statistic that ninety per cent of items put onto the market fail despite such expensive campaigns. Mica Nava (1992) in her critique takes a different stance, she argues that the act of buying is not always an act of capitulation, it also has the potential to resist. To support this claim Nava presents data on the emergence of new "Green" or "ethical" shoppers for whom product boycotting is standard practice (1992: 196).

The tendency to equate the act of consumption with a negative moral assessment of manipulation is the major problem with such accounts. Moreover, such a view is in no way new or novel; rather such negative accounts can be discovered from early Greek thought onwards. The term "consume" itself implies such a view, since the activity is defined as: "To make away with, destroy, as by fire, evaporation, decomposition, disease" (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 1959: 378). It is these negative connotations that are implicit to the view of consumption as a form of manipulation. The writings of the Political Economists of the eighteenth century, from Adam Smith to Ricardo also adopted such an approach. For these writers, as with Emerson: "[wo]man is always a consumer and ought to be a producer." (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*: 379).

Recent theorists have sought to remedy the excessively gloomy prognosis of present times with an account of consumption as a form of liberation, it is toward an examination of their views and their implications for our understanding of the act of shopping that the analysis now turns.





## Consumption as liberation

The opposing view to the perspective that considers consumption as a form of "disease" (Porter, 1993) is that which interprets the activity as one of potential liberation, the panacea or antidote to many of the ills of modern society. In the late 1970s a backlash to this orthodox neo-Marxist approach was initiated (Nava, 1992). In this reinterpretation consumers are not merely duped, manipulated or gullible to the power of advertising, rather the activity enables them to seek pleasure through the active appropriation and use of goods in ways that they themselves choose.

Central to this shift of emphasis in the social sciences was the work produced in the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). Much of this work tended to overthrow the orthodoxy of the productionist bias within sociology, that is to say it considered the analysis of culture and everyday life as of vital importance for any sociological consideration of modern society. The early work of the centre expressed such ambitions through their studies of youth subcultures. Stuart Hall, for example, in his analysis of such groups, argued that the category of 'youth' had become problematic in the 1950s with the emergence of the 'Teddy Boy' (Jefferson, 1976). Other subcultures investigated by the centre included Mods (Hebdige, 1987; 1976), Skinheads (Clarke, 1976) and Punks (Hebdige, 1987). The characteristic that all such groups are said to share is their use of the materials of consumption to 'win a space'. Young people's use of consumer goods was thus analysed as a means of establishing and reinforcing the consciousness of the group. Tony Jefferson (1976) demonstrated this idea through the example, of the Teddy Boy's Edwardian suit and black crepe sole shoes; while Dick Hebdige (1987; 1976) studied the distinctive parka and scooter of the Mod; and John Clarke (1976) examined the use of the Union Jack and Doctor Martin boot by Skinheads to create a 'magical' sense of community.

Dick Hebdige's analysis of the mod subculture illustrates this use of material goods in more depth. For Hebdige, the mod is the quintessential conspicuous consumer, however, unlike Veblen's negative evaluation of such an activity, he demonstrates the element of resistance within their actions, for example, Mods are portrayed as endowing consumer goods with an "oppositional meaning" than that intended by marketers and advertisers. Resignification, is the term which Hebdige employs to define this activity and it is best understood through his analysis of the Italian Scooter (1988). In the history of the Italian Vespa and Lambretta, which begins in the 1940s, Hebdige is able to demonstrate that the motorbike was originally advertised to the Italian female consumer. Hebdige is able to show how the British male mod subculture of the 1960s appropriated such a feminine object to express their own emerging lifestyle and social position. The object could thus be used as a mythical Chariot in the 'magical assault' on Buckingham Palace and the seaside towns of Brighton and Folkestone. Through this analysis Hebdige highlights how goods originally conceived to convey particular meanings are only ever realised through use. That is to say, in his own words: "The object splits. And is re-assembled in use." (1988: 107).

Daniel Miller in his book *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (1987) argues a similar point, but chooses to employ the term 'recontextualisation' to illustrate such themes of usage, resistance and autonomy for the individual. In this attempt Miller is heavily influenced by the writings of Friedrich Hegel. This is expressed through his attempt to use Hegel's concept of 'objectification' to suggest that the production of objects is always secondary to how such goods are actually consumed. This must be related to Miller's belief that society is constructed through the appropriation of culture (1987: 193). A view that he has argued in a range of articles from the use of homes in a council estate (1988) to the young of Trinidad (1993). In the earlier article 'Appropriating the State on the Council Estate' (1988) Miller is able to demonstrate the strategies



that people employ to transfer their council flat kitchens from a state of 'inalienable culture' to one approaching Grant McCracken's use of the concept of 'homeyness' (1989). The residents, who are far from Baudrillard's affluent public, are portrayed as "creative appropriators" (1988: 360) of the space within which they live, due to their efforts to recreate the kitchens, given to them by the council, to suit their own tastes.

This view of consumption as a form of appropriation implies that questions of identity need to be centred not only on the sphere of production, as it was in classical sociology, but also that of consumption. Herbert Moorhouse's account of 'American Automobiles and Worker's Dreams' (1983) provides further evidence of the importance of people's use of their leisure time. Moorhouse analysed the American hot rod culture of the 1940s, he argues that the priority given to the sphere of production is misguided. For Moorhouse, the world of work far from offering such men intrinsic satisfaction is better understood as an instrumental activity, that is to say, simply "a sacrifice of time, necessary to building a life outside it." (1983: 408). The realm of consumption cannot be reduced to a sphere of manipulation, rather it was in this arena that the workers exercised their skills, competed with each other and took risks that were centred on the twin goals of personal success and individuality (1983: 411).

It is in the hands of a Frenchman, Michel de Certeau, that this debate on the importance of the activities of consumption is finally heralded and investigated. In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1988) Certeau casts the sociological searchlight on previously trivialised everyday routines from reading, to cooking and even walking to unravel the potential for autonomy and activity. Certeau argues that as sociologists we "mustn't take people for fools" (1988: 176); instead we must attend to the transformations that they make upon culture. Walking is thus viewed by Certeau as an utterance, an appropriation of the topographic system, a spatial realization and actualization

of this order (1986: 130). Unfortunately Certeau gives us little information on how we can understand the shoppers behaviour, although the consumer also 'walks' and once again there is no way of predicting what rules will guide their actions, what shops will be frequented, how long will be spent, and whether their looking might be guided by desire or necessity. The work of Certeau has however been particularly important for many writers who focus specifically upon the shopping act.

## **The Sociology of Shopping**

The concentration on understanding the act of shopping by a number of sociologists appears to have turned on its head the earlier production bias within the discipline. Most of these writings accept the conclusion that (post) modern society is one in which culture has gained an increasing significance, particularly for the construction of personal identity. Zygmunt Bauman for example states that "Consumer culture is a culture of men and women integrated into society as consumers." (1987: 166). Along similar lines Jon Goss states that shopping has become what he terms the "dominant mode of contemporary public life" (1993: 18). Mike Starkey goes even farther by retranslating Descartes modern ethic of *Cogito Ergo Sum*, to become a postmodern one of "I Shop therefore I Am" (1989: 41).

The works of Zygmunt Bauman (1990; 1988a; 1988b; 1987) offer a particular account of the role of consumption within modern societies. He reworks many of the insights offered by Baudrillard (1988) and Bourdieu (1992a), as is evident when he suggests that: "Reality as the consumer experiences it, is a pursuit of pleasure...For the consumer system, a spending-happy consumer is a necessity; for the individual consumer, spending is a duty - perhaps the most important of duties. There is a pressure to spend: on the social level, the pressure of symbolic rivalry, of the needs of self-

construction through acquisition (most in commodity form) of distinction and difference." (1988b: 808). Once again the primary motivation to shop is said to be that of defining and constructing one's personal identity.

A recently edited by Rob Shields entitled *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption* (1992) shares many of Bauman's theoretical concerns. Lauren Langmen's article 'Neon Cages: Shopping for Subjectivity' (1992) is illustrative of this research emphasis, as he explains: "People use cultural objects and meanings to fashion their subjectivity." (1992: 57). Other articles in the volume employ a Goffmanesque perspective to understand consumer practices, the retail world thus becomes a stage for the presentation of the self. John Clammer's piece sums up such a reading: "Shopping...by it's every nature possesses theatricality: one dresses up to go out and one shops to acquire new persona, to modify the old one or to perfect the setting in which one is seen and known." (1992: 204).

The attention to the construction of personal identity through the act of shopping is not without problems. One such criticism is that it understands consumer behaviour in a one-dimensional manner that tends to lend authority to the theoretician's voice, while silencing the views of the actual shopper.

This limitation is equally apparent in the earlier discussion of consumption. For example, even in the discussion of consumption as a form of liberation the views of the people involved, whether they be Mods, Rockers, or even Certeau's street-walkers, cooks and shoppers remain remarkably absent from the discussion. Jim Griesemer in an article entitled 'Style as Metaphor for Symbolic Action: Teddy Boys, Authenticity and Identity' (1982) makes a similar point in his critique of the work of the Birmingham School. Griesemer argues that the importance that researchers accredit to such consumer goods may not reflect what the people themselves think of such objects. Pierre Bourdieu explains why this discrepancy may exist when he suggests that the focus on everyday life or 'lived experience' may be simply a



"thinly disguised projection of [the] researcher's 'lived experience'." (1992a: 100).

In a similar manner, rarely in the Shield's volume (1992) is evidence from actual shoppers presented, instead the writings of theorists of consumption from Jean Baudrillard, to Pierre Bourdieu and Maffesoli are referenced to lend credence to their claims. Perhaps in this respect we can employ a critique that was offered by Alvin Gouldner of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor. Gouldner argued that through the attention it granted to 'appearances' it tends to deflect sociological attention from the 'underlying essences' (1971: 378) of an individual's conduct. In a similar fashion, Mary Douglas critiques this perspective with the idea that: "The shopper is not expecting to develop a personal identity by choice of commodities: that would be too difficult. Shopping is an agonistic struggle to define not what one is, but what one is not." (1992: 86).

Alongside this burgeoning of literature on the self and shopping are a growing number of studies that examine the quintessential locale of the postmodern era, the shopping mall. Rob Shields in this manner examines Canada's *West Edmonton Mall* (1989); Jean Baudrillard (1988) cites *Parly 2* in Paris which he claims offers "the previously unexperienced luxury of strolling between stores which freely offer their temptations." (1988: 34). David Chaney (1990) studies the British equivalent, Gateshead's own *Metrocentre* as a 'cultural form'. Articles by Meaghan Morris (1988) and John Fiske (1989) analyse the Australian mall-shopping experience. Jon Goss (1993) argues that shopping in such spaces is a leisure activity; he reports that trips to American malls now last nearly three hours, whereas thirty years ago people would spend only twenty minutes over this act (1993: 34). Most tend to view the mall as the latter day equivalent of Walter Benjamin's examination of the Paris arcades, which he defined as "dream worlds" (Buck-Morss, 1990). John

Carroll (1979) considers the *Shopping World* of Melbourne, Australia as the modern equivalent of the Greek agora.

The work of John Fiske (1989; 1987) also examines the emergence of a consumer culture. Fiske's work can be understood as an extension of Michel de Certeau's previously discussed examination of walking and reading (1988) to the act of shopping. Unlike Jean Baudrillard's writings on the experience of the affluent when shopping, Fiske highlights the practices of the 'have-nots' and the degree to which their actions contain an element of resistance against the capitalist order. Shopping malls are thus portrayed as significant "arenas of struggle" for the "weak" (or poor) to practice their "guerilla warfare" (1989: 14). To illustrate his argument Fiske uses a study conducted by Pressdee (Fiske, 1989: 14) to highlight the prevalence of unemployed youths who frequent such malls practising their "proletarian shopping", which rather disappointingly is simply the act of window shopping. Despite the hyperbole of Fiske's discussion and terms it does draw attention to the wider constraints that surround the experience of shopping. An article by George H. Lewis (1990) reflects these concerns in his examination of how American youths and the elderly used malls to create a community atmosphere. Lewis documents how the elderly would use the malls as a warm environment in which to meet their friends and pursue leisure activities, such as jogging down the aisles.

The research on the experience of retail malls does however tend to delimit and circumscribe the multifarious nature of the shopping experience open to people. Further studies have sought to broaden this horizon by examining other sites in which people can meet and shop, these range from analyses of home shopping parties for tupperware (Rapping, 1980) and lingerie (Gainer and Fischer, 1991), to analyses of garage sales (Soiffer and Herrmann, 1987), and flea markets (Fredriksson, 1993). Academic attention has also not examined the wealth of consumer sites in Britain, such as those

who frequent car boot sales on Sundays, jumble sales, to craft and antique fairs.

Central to all these consumer sites, and the different forms that the shopping act can take, is the clear social function that the activity performs, people can shop with their friends, their families, they can talk to other shoppers and to shop assistants. Recent work has returned to this theme and sought to elaborate upon the kind of sociability that is offered and facilitated by the shopping experience. We have already seen George H. Lewis' reference to community within the mall (1990); Rob Shields employs one of Maffesoli's insights to speak of "tribalism" in the mall (1992: 14). Kevin Hetherington (1992) uses Schmalenbach's overlooked concept of the *Bund* to illustrate the peculiar form of solidarity on offer, which is intense but also unstable (1992: 93). Turo-Kimmo Lehtonen (1993) uses the theoretical tools of Georg Simmel to argue that shopping is best understood as a social form, a practice that "creates secure frames for relaxing together" (1993: 50). Daniel Miller provides ethnographic evidence on the Trinidadian experience of shopping to assert that: "What shopping provides above all is an excuse to encounter other people." (1993: 62). This longing for sociability is not reserved to the elderly or lonely; Miller speaks of groups of men who use shopping centres as spaces to meet, talk and comment on the appearance of others. A usage very similar to how Australian (Fiske, 1989) and American youths (Lewis, 1990) were said to 'hang out' in their own shopping spaces.

The highlighting of the social experience that shopping offers has led other researchers to examine further the question of how people actually accomplish this act. In contrast to the earlier discussed theoretical appraisals of this activity such research has employed empirical data obtained from small focus groups with shoppers to validate their claims. Perhaps the most important study to date, which has examined the act of shopping itself, was conducted by two Canadians Robert Prus and Lorne Dawson (1991). In their



article 'Shop 'til you drop: Shopping as Recreational and Laborious activity' they interviewed ninety-five consumers, asking them specifically how they accomplished their shopping activity. It is through such an examination that we realise the limitations of those theories that attempt to link questions of self-identity with the shopping act. Prus and Dawson cite people for whom the shopping experience is not always 'fun', but the degree to which it can be a chore, a tedious duty that one must perform within a hectic daily schedule. This point will be attended to later in the discussion, but for the moment it is perhaps necessary to cite one of Ann Oakley's housewives (1980) who simply stated: "I detest shopping - I never know what to get" (1980: 146).

Prus and Dawson's work alerts us to the reality of shopping rather than the theoretical model of this act. Other research has further extended our understanding of the shopping experience. A good example is Beng Huat Chua's (1992) analysis of women shopping in Singapore for clothes. In this study Beng makes the most of empirical material derived from his own ethnographic study to highlight the importance of a person's co-shoppers, and the retail staff.

Colin Campbell (1993a) further elaborates on this topic, but in terms of the individual experience offered by shopping. He addresses the question of why shopping is pleasurable, and argues that the degree of satisfaction is influenced by the extent to which the act itself is "self-determined" (1993a: 6). Campbell thus counters those theories that highlight the manipulative aspects of shopping by his attention to the possibility and limits of autonomy within the act. He proposes that desire is not founded on a "lack" as Baudrillard would have us believe, or pre-programmed by advertisers rather it is the outcome of browsing and the degree to which this is self-directed (1993a: 10). Pasi Falk (1993) further examines the experience of shopping through his discussion of the kinds of scopic pleasures provided by this act. For Falk, these can be

independent of the act of purchasing, and related to the much more physiological dimension of 'just looking'.

The act of shopping through such studies is understood as a practice that displays disparities and variations in terms of the experience itself, but also in terms of the people who enjoy it. One such conclusion is the extent to which shopping is a 'gendered activity' (Lunt and Livingstone, 1992; Oakley, 1974). Ann Oakley for example writes of men who will not carry the shopping bags for the fear of being labelled effeminate (1974: 93). Jan Pahl (1990; 1989) provides empirical evidence that suggests that men and women have different patterns of spending in terms of the commodities they will purchase (see also Peters, 1989). On the question of how men and women shop Lunt and Livingstone (1992) found that a higher proportion of the routine shoppers were men, whereas the women were more likely to be leisure shoppers.

Myriam Jansen-Verbeke (1987) in her analysis of shopping (see Chapter Two) counters this view with the suggestion that the gendered nature of women's leisure is imposed by the researcher and not borne out by the evidence (1987: 72). The conclusions of other studies have tended to support Jansen-Verbeke's view, these suggest the blurring of gender distinctions. For example, Carl Gardner and Julie Shepherd assert that: "Once Britain's major spectator and participation sport, the Saturday afternoon soccer match used to be an automatic choice for a large proportion of working class men...[Today] you are as likely to find the working-class husband spending his Saturday afternoon in a shopping centre, or retail park, with wife and family." (1989: 47). Further evidence can be found in Jonathan Rutherford's account of *Men's Silences: Predicaments in Masculinity* (1992) which quotes the spokeswoman for *Mothercare* who in explaining why a father holding a child was placed on the frontcover of their 1987 catalogue suggested: "Men aren't ashamed to come into our shops anymore." (1992: 64). In a similar fashion,



Robert Boccock asserts that in contemporary society men are as much a part of modern consumerism as women (1993: 102).

A number of articles have expanded upon this theme by suggesting that masculinity is increasingly expressed through an individual's use of the tools of consumption (Nixon, 1992; Mort, 1988). Frank Mort in an article entitled 'Boy's Own? Masculinity, Style and Popular Culture' (1988) cites the launch of men's magazines such as *Arena* in 1986, and the subsequent publication of *Esquire* and *GQ* as significant agents in this redefinition of masculinity. For Mort, these magazines signalled a greater likelihood that male sexuality would be perceived through what men wear and do with the commodities they purchase, as he indicates the nature of this change: "Young men are being sold images which rupture traditional icons of masculinity. They are stimulated to look at themselves - and other men - as objects of consumer desire. They are getting pleasures previously branded as taboo or feminine." (1988: 194).

The implication from this is that men are shopping more, and that their attitudes to this act have witnessed something of a sea-change. Unfortunately little empirical evidence is cited that might lend support to these claims. In addition, the test case that is often employed is the behaviour of young men. In the current study I hope to put to the test the assertion that men's attitudes to shopping have changed in the ways outlined by such theories.

This conclusion is particularly appropriate if we refer to previous studies of the topic of consumption that have theorized this sphere as revealing gender differences.

### **Consumption as gendered**

I noted earlier that theories of consumption have tended to neglect the factor of gender in their accounts. Angela McRobbie in her critique of the work of the Birmingham School has suggested that whenever the themes of

resistance, autonomy and liberation are mentioned they are always associated with male workers and subcultures (1986). Other theorists of consumption have hinted at some degree of a gender division. This can be illustrated by referring to the work of Pierre Bourdieu, who in his account of *Distinction* (1992a), a book whose primary focus is class difference, does acknowledge the influence gender might have. Most of his references to the contrast between men and women tend to be relegated to footnotes, however he does offer this insight: "Men are forbidden any sort of 'pretension' in matters of culture, language or clothing." (1992a: 382).

Further support for the importance of the factor gender to an understanding of consumer behaviour can be found amongst recent research on other consumer activities. Recent research, for example, has centred on gender differences in terms of such consumer practices as reading (Flynn and Schweikart, 1988), the use and meaning of domestic technology, such as the telephone and video recorder (Gray, 1992; Livingstone, 1992), to the activity of watching television itself (Morley, 1992).

In a similar manner Mihalyi Csikzentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton (1981) argued that gender differences were apparent in the terms of people's favourite possessions and the 'meaning' that they ascribed to such objects. Csikzentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton interviewed 82 Chicago families, making a total sample of 315 respondents about the importance of such objects. Each respondent was asked the following question: "What are the things in your home which are special to you?" (1981: 56). On the basis of the responses gathered Csikzentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton were able to classify the kinds of objects people most favoured and why they preferred them. For example, such items as photographs, furniture, visual art occurred often as favourite things. Whilst, the reasons people gave for their importance tended to centre on where the goods were obtained from, that is if they were gifts, rather than on the use or value of the object.

However, Csikzentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton did note significant gender and age-related differences in terms of the objects that the people spoke of and why they considered them important. They discovered that the women in their sample tended to speak of plants and furniture, whereas the men were more likely to cite technical equipment such as a television set. In terms of age, they found that whereas children preferred stereos, the grandparents were more attached to photographs of their family.

If we concentrate on the gender variable, we find that Csikzentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton employed the 'instrumental' versus 'expressive' distinction to illustrate the contrasting relationship between men, women and their favourite things. The men were said to prefer what they termed 'objects of action' such as their gun collection, an old lathe or climbing equipment that they used. In contrast, the women preferred objects that they could 'contemplate' such as visual pictures, sculptures, but also plants. On this basis Csikzentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton argue "the selves of men and women represent different sets of intention or habits of consciousness. They pay attention to different things in the same environment and even value the same things for quite different reasons." (1981: 106).

Helga Dittmar's work (1992; 1991; 1989) can be understood as an attempt to extrapolate upon and extend the findings with respect of the variable of gender that Csikzentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton discovered. Once again we are given the idea that men value objects that are primarily use-oriented, such as for use in sports or outdoor pursuits like climbing. In contrast, the women in Dittmar's study preferred objects that were relational and symbolic, a good example being photographs (1992: 134). This conclusion implies that if consumption is understood as a form of symbolic behaviour or a means of social differentiation, as in the work of Veblen (1953), Bourdieu (1992a) and McCracken (1991), the practices may vary between men and women.



Other studies have sought to argue that men and women's perception of domestic objects, such as telephones, computers and videos, may also reveal areas of gender difference. Sonia Livingstone's (1992) article on the meaning of domestic technologies is a case in point. She demonstrates the extent to which men's and women's talk about such commodities differs. The men in her study tended to stress the functional qualities of such items as a telephone, whereas, the women spoke of such objects as bridges to social interaction with their friends and family. Livingstone, quotes Lynn and Frank Irving to emphasis this contrast:

"It's [telephone] a connection to other people, other worlds, prevents me from being isolated. And if you can't get to see people you chat to them. So I enjoy the fact that it's there, to be in contact with people." (Livingstone, 1992: 121).

This view of Lynn's contrasts sharply with that of her husband's account:

"...well the telephone is just a random gadget - it's either used or it's not used...it's absolutely totally utilitarian for me." (1992: 122).

Daniel Miller's previously discussed work on the uses of council estate kitchens by their tenants supports this view of contrasting male and female orientations toward household objects. He remarks that the kitchen is usually perceived to be the woman's domain and he found that the men in his study were less likely to initiate changes to this social space, as compared to the women, although it was they who would physically undertake the changes (1988: 367). Ann Whitehead's earlier work reproduces this view of gendered locales within the home, from the male workshop or shed, to the female kitchen (1984). Bourdieu's anthropological work on the Kaybyl tribe (1973) presents similar evidence of a male-female division in terms of the spaces that they prefer to occupy. Daniel Miller, concludes, "gender is perhaps best seen not from the perspective of an essentialist division from two a priori categories

of male and female come to the world with specific interests, but rather as being constructed through the cultural development of relational forms." (1988: 367). The crucial point is that gender differences are socially constructed, and develop through everyday actions, or what Miller terms "an emergent construction" (1988: 367).

Other work on the notion of gender differences within consumer behaviour comes from the field of media studies. David Morley (1992) argues that men and women typically display contrary modes or 'styles' of watching the television. The men in his study preferred to watch their programmes in silence; whereas Morley found that the women preferred to use them as mechanisms to prompt talk and relationships with others. In addition, the men in Morley's study, and also a later study by Ann Gray (1992), tended to exert the greatest degree of control over what the family watched. The men being generally more concerned to plan the evening's viewing, and to take charge of the remote control console.

In terms of the women's viewing preferences a great deal of work has been done on the pleasures they associate with soap operas (Morley, 1992; Fiske, 1991; Seiter *et al.*, 1986; Hobson, 1982). Much of this work explores the extent to which women's viewing patterns are used to structure their daily routines. In addition, Morley, reports that the women are much more likely to consider such viewing as an indulgence and a guilty pleasure.

John Tulloch and Albert Moran (1986) in their examination of the Australian day-time soap opera *A Country Practice* discussed such viewing with men. They found that the men's conversations tended to centre on their aversion toward such programmes, denigrating them as 'gossip' ridden. Ann Gray (1992) argues that such differences rather than being understood as natural or 'essential' to men and women, should be related to the contrasting positions that they occupy within the family, that is to say, they express the relationships of power and authority that exist between men and women



(1992: 126). Gray further suggests that David Morley's 'masculine' mode of viewing was true of some of the women in her study and that such gendered modes of behaviour need to be understood as "contingent upon the specific social dynamics" (Gray, 1992: 126) operating within the home.

Gray's conclusion is a significant one, and it is mirrored in the recent work on the act of shopping, in which the act is analysed in itself rather than calling attention to the wider social framework within which it is situated. This point can be illustrated in terms of the conclusions drawn about the contrasting opportunities for leisure between men and women. Rosemary Deem's early study of women's access to leisure in Milton Keynes (1986; 1983) argued that gender continues to be an important structuring principle. Deem found that the domestic position of such women served only to confound the potential for leisure in their lives. The main problems were those of childcare, transport, and also the constraining effect of their own partner's opinions, all of which served to diminish the possibility for leisure within their lives. The outcome of this situation was that the majority of the women practised home-based leisure pursuits such as knitting, sewing and reading. Rosemary Deem's findings are largely supported by a later study conducted by Eileen Green, Sandra Hebron and Diana Woodward (1989) which used *General Household Survey* data.

The reason for examining such studies, that highlight the gendered nature of consumer activities, is to highlight the links between such work and that revealed by analysis of shopping. To examine this topic further it is necessary to foreground historical studies of this act that have been strangely ignored by recent sociological studies of the activity of shopping. This is curious since many of the conclusions historians have reached about the importance of the department store during the nineteenth century appear to directly parallel the claims made about shopping malls by the sociologists we have so far discussed. However, the one factor that is given prominence in

the historical studies and not by sociologists is that of gender. In addition, such historical studies appear particularly adept at foregrounding the wider social situation within which the act is located.

### **The making of modern shopping**

Neil McKendrick in his co-edited analysis of the *Birth of the Consumer Society* (1982) claims "There was a consumer revolution in eighteenth century England. More men and women than ever before in human history enjoyed the experience of acquiring material possessions." (1982: 1). For McKendrick this trend, toward the increasing ownership of goods, was a product of a number of related factors. He considers the main one to be the rising incomes of the eighteenth century that enabled families to spend money which they had not previously had. Other factors such as the development of advertising, from the middle of the eighteenth century, served to enhance this propensity.

McKendrick's observation of the changing 'experience' of how possessions were acquired is significant since it recognises the changing relations surrounding the shopping act. Other historians have furthered our understanding of how and in what ways this experience changed. J.H. Plumb argues that the style of shops changed dramatically in the early eighteenth century (1982: 273). The two features that he uses to illustrate this were the use of bow-windows and display cabinets by shopkeepers to attract customers. Alison Adburgham in her analysis of *Shops and Shopping* (1964) from 1800 to 1914 outlines the manner of shopping available to people prior to 1815. She suggests that customers would frequent small local shops. Retail outlets that were more often run by individuals who lived above the premises, and would sell their own goods. Shopkeepers who tended to be craftsmen, making the goods that they sold. The shops at this time tended to specialise from shoemaker to tailor, hatter to stay-maker etc.. Other retail arenas at this

time were the local market might also sell drapery and haberdashery. In addition, salesman would travel from town to village offering their wares.

Adburgham (1964) and others contend that this world of shopping was radically transformed with the advent of the department store. Such writers disagree on the matter of which department store has the claim for being the first, whether it be in France, America or Britain. For Adburgham, the one that can claim to be the first department store is *Kendal Milne* in Manchester which was first established in 1831. For Michael B. Miller (1981), it is the *Bon Marché* owned by Aristide Boucicaut in Paris. However, despite their disagreements all these writers contend that the development of the department store revolutionised the retailing world by altering the perception of shopping and experience of this act available to people. The historian J.H. Plumb writes of the commercialisation of leisure, expressed through the shift to what he terms "casual shopping" (1982: 273). The department stores of the nineteenth century were instrumental in altering this experience. One such change implemented by the managers of department stores included the fact that rather than offering customers simply hats or drapery they offered them a range of merchandise under one roof. For example, Adburgham recounts how in 1837 the department store *Kendal Milne* began to sell silk, linen, shawls, and bonnets, this was soon expanded to also include upholstery, carpets and even cabinet-making.

However, perhaps the most fundamental change implemented by the managers of the departments store was that customers were now welcome to enter such shops without the obligation to purchase anything. Richard Sennett (1976) argues that the fixed-pricing system altered the shopping experience since it discouraged haggling and "made passivity into the norm" (1976: 142). Rachel Bowlby in her, aptly titled, book *Just Looking* (1985) proposes a contrary reading for this change, she suggests that it opened up the experience of shopping to the possibility for merely browsing:



"People could now come and go, to look and dream, perchance to buy, and shopping became a new bourgeois leisure activity - a way of pleasantly passing the time." (1985: 4).

One could argue that this change increased the need to look around the range of shops and thus promoted the activity of the shopper.

One conclusion is unequivocal and that is that the shopping experience was radically transformed. The managers of such department stores altered this experience even more by offering customers a range of services, from restaurants, to crèches and resting rooms to encourage them to spend more time in such places. Susan Porter Benson (1986) in her account of the American experience argues that the managers attempted to transform shopping from a simple purchasing act to a 'leisurely diversion' (1986: 21). Rosalind Williams (1982) outlines another change introduced by managers during this period that revealed the implicit intentions that lay behind such changes. This was the development of a system of instalment buying, by which means the acquisition of goods became divorced of the necessity for ready cash. Rosalind Williams interprets this transformation in retailing as a "fantasy come true", since it could enable the ordinary wage-earner to display an "illusion of wealth" (1982: 93). Rudi Laermans, for example, argues that the department stores offered a "false democratization" (1993: 96) of this shopping experience as they offered to the members of the new middle classes merchandise which, although relatively cheap, gave an alternative impression.

Michael B. Miller (1981) outlines the significance of the department store during this period. For Miller, the French equivalent of the *Bon Marché*, was a key agent in social change and the construction of a peculiarly bourgeois way of life (1981: 182) since they "showed people how they should dress, how they should furnish their home, and how they should spend their leisure time." (1981: 182). William R. Leach's (1984) documents how in



America during the nineteenth century the experience of shopping was to compete with churchgoing (1984: 33).

Having established the changes introduced by department stores it is necessary to attend to their social impact. One of the most significant changes for the current analysis is the effect they had for the role of women. Rudi Laermans (1993) comments at length on this impact when he suggests:

"...the early department stores also directly reinforced the traditional images of women as 'good housekeepers'. Their constant offering of bargains, their temporary price cuts and their sales campaigns alluded to a presupposed sense of economy and domestic responsibility among their female public... The department store redefined this traditional stereotype of femininity in terms of optimum consumption of certain products. In sum, the traditional woman's role as mother, wife and lady underwent a two-fold change...[w]omen were redefined as professional shoppers or consumers and their performance of their traditional roles was thoroughly 'commodified'" (1993: 95).

The act of shopping came to be perceived as women's work. A change that was linked to the emerging sexual division of labour that followed the Industrial Revolution of the Nineteenth century and which insured that women were excluded from the work place and relegated to the home.

Alice Clark in her classic text originally written in 1919 entitled *The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (see Bradley, 1992) is able to demonstrate that the separation of the work place from the home brought about by Industrialization heralded a drastic decline in women's status and economic power. Sylvia Walby (1986) outlines how the opportunities for female employment during the nineteenth century were dramatically curtailed by the combined forces of male trade unions and legislation which in 'protecting' workers' rights effectively excluded women from a variety of occupations. Harriet Bradley in *Men's Work, Women's Work* (1989) further details the new patterns of segregation within the work place. She argues that the 1880s and 1890s were perhaps the key decades in which the expansion of

capitalism was associated with the entry of women into service industries such as clerical work, but perhaps more importantly saleswork. Bradley further suggests that these changes in the division of labour were linked to ideologies of masculinity and femininity that created the notion of 'separate spheres' for men and women.

Married middle-class women were effectively excluded from the role of earners. Their new role was linked to what emerged as an 'ideology of domesticity' propounded by the Victorians that redefined the proper place for women to be that of the home, where they could fulfil their 'natural' role of nurturing and caring for their children, alongside the affairs of the household. As Bradley reveals the dominant conception of women that prevailed during the Nineteenth century: "Women were seen as essentially pure, but easily led astray; if they went out to work they were considered to risk moral corruption and sexual seduction" (1992: 209). These changes as Daniel Horowitz explains insured that a woman's most important contribution within society was as a consumer, rather than as a producer (1985: 70); a point that William R. Leach (1984) traces back to the early 1840s which redefined shopping as women's work.

One of the few activities open to middle-class women which offered them an escape from the confines of the home was shopping. Alison Adburgham illustrates how 'ladies' prior to 1815 would not shop after dark, and that even during the day ladies would be accompanied by their maid or footman. Adburgham recounts how it was considered indiscreet for a women to be seen shopping in Bond Street in the afternoon since it was at this time considered to be a "man's street" (1964: 7), due to the preponderance of shops catering for the needs of gentlemen of fashion such as hatters and tailors.

The emergence of department stores during the mid-nineteenth century further illustrates the view of shopping as a female world, since by the end of

the century women represented the majority of department store shoppers. Susan Porter Benson reports that between 1890 and 1940 nine out of ten of customers of American department stores were women (1986: 76). The degree of female dominance in terms of sheer numbers of shoppers led one manager of a Boston store to term it "an Adamless Eden" (1986: 76). A view echoed by how a reporter described the department store of 1910:

"On every floor, in every aisle, at every counter women... Filling the aisles, passing and repassing, a constantly arriving and departing throng of shoppers, women. Simply a moving, seeking, hurrying, mass of femininity, in the midst of which the occasional man shopper...looks lost and out of place." (in Benson, 1986: 76).

This view was echoed by the managers of such stores who perceived them as predominantly female spaces. William R. Leach in his article on the early history of American department stores suggests that the segregation of the sexes was institutionalised in the form of typically gendered spaces within such stores, but also through the use of even 'male' and 'female' elevators and entrances (1984: 331). Gail Reekie (1992) looks at the spatial arrangement of an Australian department store, *McWhirters*, in the 1930s. She demonstrates that each floor was designed in sexed terms, an arrangement that served to highlight the predominance of female spaces. The basement and first-floor showroom with their displays of women's clothing, millinery and underwear were foregrounded, while the spaces for men's clothing occupied a more peripheral position. Reekie cites journals for the Drapery trade that demonstrate that the logic behind these arrangements allowed men, who, as she explains, were considered to be "reluctant and self-conscious shoppers, to make a quick entrance and exit from the store on their way to or from work" (1992: 177). Reekie also highlights how the advertising of men's and women's goods was similarly segregated, since they occupied different days in the Brisbane newspaper the *Courier Mail* (1992: 177). William R. Leach argues



that such arrangements were not imposed to prevent the interaction of the sexes, but to give men "psychological peace of mind" (1984: 331).

Gender by this evaluation, was from the outset of the emerging consumer culture always a problem to be overcome. Rachel Bowlby in this manner argues that the factor of gender took on greater significance during this period (1985: 11). Moreover, even from the outset of this era men and women were perceived and treated differently when shopping by retailers, marketers and advertisers.

At this point it is necessary to speculate on what effect such changes had for the role of women within modern society. One optimistic assessment is that shopping offered to such women a resource for potential empowerment. An alternative reading is that these changes brought about a disciplining of female behaviour.

### **Shopping: empowerment or discipline for women**

Alison Adburgham argues that the growth of department stores ran parallel with the social emancipation of women (1964: 281). Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan in their somewhat aptly titled book *Give the Lady What She Wants* (1952) link shopping with the rise of early feminism. They detail how such women when out shopping opposed the social role open to them which promoted the values of modesty, submission and frailty. Purchasing what one wanted over and against the wishes of one's spouse, they argue, offered such women an opportunity to be waited upon and treated with deference. The department stores were thus said to have offered women a public space to indulge themselves in, to escape the restrictions of home life and to meet friends.

For Rachel Bowlby female empowerment is similarly equated with the world of consumption. She quotes Elizabeth Cady Stanton who in one of her



lectures given in the 1850s advised women to: "Go out and Buy" (Wendt and Kogan, 1952: 29), in her example it is a kitchen stove, which is said to be the panacea for a women's domestic lot as "When he sees you so much fresher, happier in your new kitchen, he will be delighted and the bills will be paid." (1952: 29).

At the same time as the act of shopping offered women a sphere of emancipation other historians and sociologists have argued that this arena could equally be theorized as one that threatened to entrap them. William R. Leach (1984), for example, documents how an increasing number of court cases at this time were brought by husbands who refused to pay the debts that their wives had incurred by overspending upon jewellery and fur coats.

In a similar fashion, the increasing shopping opportunities offered by department stores was concomitant with what could be termed a 'moral panic' centring on the presumed female inability to overcome the (male) managers persuasive appeals to their emotions and desires. A piece written by Lady Jeune in 1896 entitled the 'Ethics of Shopping', cited by Adburgham, illustrates the kinds of dangers that the experience of shopping was believed to offer to women:

"We [women] are not able to stand against the overwhelming temptations which besiege us at every turn... We go to purchase something we want; but when we get to our shop there are so many more things that we never thought of till they presented their obtrusive fascinations on every side... There are many shops in London into which one cannot safely trust oneself... There are two very important changes which have contributed to the temptation of spending money nowadays. One is the gathering together under one roof of all kinds of goods - clothing, millinery, groceries, furniture, in fact all the necessities of life..." (1964: 235).

Michael B. Miller outlines the kind of experience they offered to nineteenth century shoppers:

"Everywhere merchandise formed a decorative motif conveying an exceptional quality to the goods themselves. Silks cascaded from the walls of the silk gallery, ribbons were strung above the hall of ribbons, umbrellas were draped full blown in a parade of hues and designs. Oriental rugs, rich and textural, hung from the balconies for the spectators below." (1981: 168).

William R. Leach expands upon the ethical nature of the experience of shopping in his discussion of the number of cases of kleptomania amongst women, that sprang up with the emergence of department stores during the nineteenth century. The dark side of the experience of shopping is herein illustrated, a view that Miller (1981) is able to express when he writes of "masses of women whose identity was captive to the goods they could buy" (Miller, 1981: 190) - *la foule*. The French writer Émile Zola summed up this position in his novel *Au Bonheur des Dames* (this title is translated somewhat significantly as *The Paradise of Ladies*) through the voice of Mouret, his female heroine, on the effect such *grand magasins* had upon her: "They had aroused bodily desires in her, they were a huge temptation to which she was doomed to succumb" (in Bowlby, 1985: 70). For Zola, women are practically "seduced, driven crazy" (in Bowlby, 1985: 75) by the retail experience that the new department stores provided. Pierre Giffard summed up the position of such institutions and the immorality of the world that they offered:

"The husband who has driven his wife to the great bazar [sic], who leaves her for long hours as prey to the seductions of lace, who leaves her to go on and on in the wonderful storehouse of attractions where she empties her purse, her eyes on fire, her face reddened, her hand shivering, placed on that of a gloves salesman, while he goes off during this time with shady women to the furnished hotels of the eighteenth rank." (in Miller, 1981: 192).

The seduction of department stores was manifested to become of public concern, as illustrated through the 'moral panic' which surrounded the issue of shop-lifting and kleptomania during this period (Miller, 1981: 197-206). Miller cites a French Doctor Lecassagne who interpreted these incidents: "Women

of all sorts, drawn to these elegant surroundings by instincts native to their sex...find themselves overtaken by a sudden, unpremeditated, almost savage impulse." (1981: 202). Michael B. Miller cites a female kleptomaniac's own account of her experience of such public spaces:

"Once plunged into the sensuous atmosphere of the *grand magasin*... I felt myself overcome little by little by a disorder that can only be compared to that of drunkenness, with the dizziness and excitement that are peculiar to it. I saw things as if through a cloud, everything stimulated my desire... I felt myself swept along towards them and I grabbed hold of things without any outside superior consideration intervening to hold me back." (1981: 203).

During this period it would appear that women were perceived as at most risk from the temptations offered by the new experience of shopping. Later day historians have appeared to have accepted this evaluation without question. The work of Neil McKendrick illustrates this claim. In his examination of the behaviour of shoppers he employs such words as 'feverish' and 'rampant' to define what they are doing, the appeal of this act becomes an 'irresistible drug' that people are said to perform 'frenziedly'. To make matters worse, McKendrick singles out woman as the ones most prone to this inability to resist, as he himself outlines: "*Her* increased earning released *her* desire to compete with her social superiors - a desire pent up for centuries" (1974: 200, italics added).

Implicit to much of the work on consumption is this view of the activity as inherently negative, akin to a form of disease (Porter, 1993: 58). Daniel Horowitz in his examination of the *Morality of Spending* (1985) examines Americans attitudes toward the Consumer Society between 1875 and 1940. For Horowitz, in his examination of household budget studies of this time, a moral vision has always surrounded the issue of spending money. Horowitz illustrates the help and guidance women received in such concerns from the



number of journals that sprang up from *Good Housekeeping* to *Woman's Home Companion* and *Ladies' Home Journal* during this period.

In terms of understanding such changes and the implicit characterisation of woman as the prototypical shopper, one interpretation might be that this change heralded a dramatic new way of disciplining and controlling, but also devaluing the activities of women. That is to say, despite the superficial means of empowerment offered by the experience of shopping to women, this appeal contained within it the seeds of a more insidious form of constraint, to male authority. Amanda Vickery recounts how the act of shopping was typically perceived as a "degraded female hobby" an "arena of female vanity" (1992: 277), that, as we have witnessed, men typically sought to distance themselves from. This male moral condemnation was equally apparent to women at the time; as T.H. Breen's example of a letter published in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* of 1732 reveals:

"I have several time in your Paper seen severe reflections upon us as women, for idleness and extravagance, but I do not remember to have once seen any such Animadversions upon the Men." (1993: 256).

The later work of Andreas Huyssen can be employed to extend this argument. She argues that mass culture from the nineteenth century onwards was increasingly associated with woman, while 'high' or 'authentic' culture became the domain of men (1986: 47). For Huyssen the significance of this association lies in the fact that what is devalued is the feminine. A case in point being pulp fiction, but equally the act of shopping can be viewed within the same theoretical framework. Huyssen explains why this may be so: "The lure of mass culture, after all, has traditionally been described as the threat of losing oneself in dreams and delusions and of merely consuming rather than producing." (1986: 55). The act of shopping appears to nineteenth century thinkers to offer people similar delights<sup>1</sup>.



## Conclusion

The foregoing discussion has sought to examine and understand the many ways in which the topic of consumption has been analysed by previous theorists. Implicit to many of these views is a characteristic model of human nature. The main distinction between such contrasting views is the extent to which they are willing to consider the activity of consumption and the consumers themselves as active or passive. On the one side of this dualism, the consumer is viewed in a restrictive fashion as overly-restrained; on the other, the consumer is portrayed as overly-enabled, or liberated through this activity.

To tackle this problem and to seek to overcome it, it is proposed that we begin our analysis with the comments that actual consumers make about their own behaviour. A research procedure widely practised by those practitioners who have examined the gendered nature of consumption. Moreover, as I have attempted to demonstrate, their work highlights the clear positive benefits of employing such a methodology. Most of the other research on consumption that I have discussed tends to be theoretically-driven, that is to say we are given articles in which the views of other theorists are resorted to for substantiation, and rarely is any attempt made to correlate such claims with actual empirical data.

This research procedure, it is believed, will enable us to examine in closer detail the process of shopping itself but also to get to grips with the social framework within which the act is located. Rarely has this topic been deemed worthy of sociological investigation. Instead, it has largely been trivialised. To understand shopping as an activity we need to bracket talk of the objects of consumption. As I have attempted to show, the majority of research tends to focus upon what people do with objects that they purchase and the uses to which they are subsequently put after purchase; and

conversely far too little research addresses how people perceive the activity of shopping itself. The questions of how the act itself is experienced, and whether there are any definable differences in terms of the 'ideal' trip tend to be precluded from this focus on post-shopping behaviour.

In addition, to this aim, to highlight the meaning shopping has to the people involved, the thesis also seeks to pay particular attention to the way men perceive this activity since previously research has either attested to the gendered nature of consumer activities, or sought to argue that such distinctions are increasingly becoming blurred in (post) modern times. At present, no resolution to this contrast appears forthcoming.

The lack of research on men as shoppers can equally be found in consumer research on this topic. In Chapter Two a review is provided of such work since it does at least provide empirical investigation into the topic of shopping. Such research, produced not within sociology but from the disciplines of marketing, advertising, and retailing, offers a very different set of research aims and conclusions on this activity. Its most significant contribution to the debate surrounding shopping is the crucial role that empirical data plays within such research.

## Notes

- 1 Perhaps in this respect it is no coincidence that the reevaluation of the act of shopping, represented in the previously discussed work of Bauman (1988a; 1988b) Bocoock (1993) and Goss (1993), coincides with the suggested entry of men to this previously derided and trivialised female sphere.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

# **MARKETING AND RETAILING APPROACHES TO THE CONSUMER**

### **Introduction**

Chapter One provided the reader with a review of the existing sociological and historical literature which has examined the act of consumption. The main conclusion which can be drawn is that the act of shopping itself is not addressed in this literature. Academic consideration is focused instead on the pleasures people derive from post-shopping experiences, such as what people do with objects once they have bought them. A second finding was that much of this work is of a theoretical nature with little recourse to empirical data provided.

In the light of these conclusions it is necessary to examine research which does fulfil these two criteria. That is to say, it appears to focus on the activity of shopping and forefronts empirical data to support its conclusion. This body of work rather than produced within the social sciences can be traced to the disciplines of retailing and marketing. Research which has rarely been consulted or taken seriously by social scientists. One of the reasons for this neglect is that the work derives from a number of disciplines which have an 'interest' in understanding the shopping act. These include those of marketing, retailing and advertising. As we will discover in this review this research may be problematic to use, however it does provide some preliminary answers to facilitate our understanding of the act of shopping.

In this chapter I propose to deal with the relevant consumer research literature which provides an example of another route into the topic of consumption. The analysis begins with an appraisal of time-budget material



on shopping. Market research material on what people purchase is then discussed. After this theories of consumer choice are outlined and their impact upon subsequent consumer research. This can be traced in research on husband and wife decision-making and theories of consumer socialization. An outline is then provided of research on shopper typologies and the question of why people shop. The topic of gender differences within consumer research is then analysed since the dominant trend within consumer research appears to be to focus solely on the behaviour and attitudes of women to shopping. The main justification for this research imbalance is the suggestion that women are said to make 80% of the buying decisions (see Scott, 1976). The final section of the chapter redresses this imbalance by examining what we actually know about men's shopping.

### **Time-budget data**

One way of understanding the practice of shopping is to situate the act with respect to how much time the average person spends shopping per week. Unfortunately, such time-budget data is rather scarce and out-of-date. The Henley Centre in their report entitled *Leisure Futures* (1991) illustrate that the average person spends 4.6 hours per week shopping for essentials and other items. Such a figure masks a number of key socio-economic differences. For example, while employed men spend 3.3 hours; employed women spend 4.2 hours. For the unemployed, men spend 3.1 hours and women spend 5.1. The available figures for part-time workers applies only to women, it demonstrates that they spend 5.2 hours per week shopping. The earlier work of Jonathan Gershuny and Sally Jones (1987) in Britain and Douglass K. Hawes (1988; 1987) in North America tends to reiterate these differences. The findings of Alexander Szalai *et al.* (1972) provide further time-budget data on shopping which compares the time spent amongst urban and

suburban populations in twelve different countries. From this material we learn that whereas Americans living in forty-four cities spend eighteen minutes per day, Bulgarians, Hungarians and members of the old Federal Republic of Germany, living in the town of Osnabruck spent only four minutes per day shopping. Unfortunately, this study provided no comparable data for the British shopper.

Such time spent shopping may appear insignificant when we compare it to how much time people spend at work or even sleeping. However, it still constitutes an important aspect of people's 'free time'. This is corroborated by material in *Social Trends* (1993) which illustrates that one in ten day trips lasting over three hours are now to shops which are located over twenty to forty miles away. In this manner, research has demonstrated that shopping has become the third most likely reason for a day trip of over forty miles. The first two are to visit friends and go sightseeing, which can both occur alongside a shopping trip.

### **Market research material**

Other quantitative material on shopping is provided by market researchers. One such report was produced by the Nielson marketing agency and it was entitled *The British Shopper* (1992). Their introduction appears promising when they state that they can furnish us with the answers to a whole range of questions: "what is being bought, and when, but precisely where, by whom, and above all why." (1992: v). Most of the report is taken up with quantitative data in the form of league tables of the leading products (detergents to soups). Other material concentrates on the fastest growing market areas. The question of how the shopper buys is answered rather disappointingly by data on varying involvement in the selection of grocery

items and the usage of credit cards etc. The question of why the shopper buys is largely unanswered.

Another similar report is produced by the Key Note agency (1992a). Key Note also provide data on who buys what products. In addition, they commissioned Gallup to conduct a national survey on people's attitudes to shops and shopping. On the question of how people defined a 'good shop' the main attributes were friendly staff, low prices coupled with special offers and a wide product range. People also stressed the importance of shops which were spacious.

Key Note's material on the kinds of attributes which people identify as important to the act of shopping reveals a major limitation of such research. This is that the buying aspect of shopping is foregrounded. Shopping by this definition becomes simply a means-end activity centring on the exchange of goods. For marketers, buying is an obsession. The outcome of this perspective is that the understanding of shopping as an experience is rarely attended to.

## **Theories of consumer choice behaviour**

Another way of exploring the act of shopping and how it has previously been understood is through economic psychology. Economic psychology is the study of how people manage scarce resources to satisfy their needs (Warneryd, 1988). In relation to the act of shopping this is achieved through the construction of models which seek to explain how consumers behave as they do, and the processes which lead to a purchase being made. A number of such models have been constructed since the 1960s by A.R. Andreasen, F.M. Nicosia, J.A. Howard and J.N. Sheth, J.F. Engel, J.R. Bettman and D.T. Kollat, and R.D. Blackwell (see Friedman, 1988). Unfortunately lack of space permits us from analysing each in turn, but it is possible to identify a number of



shared assumptions. Firstly, all the models focus on the process of decision-making within the shopping act, and they all seek to explain why people acquire certain objects. This is usually achieved through the use of flow diagrams which include the key variables and determinants. Secondly, all the models are untestable, instead they provide only an *a priori* system of how people should act under certain conditions. Thirdly, they all assume that people have both complete information about what is available and foresight. In this manner, the shopper is theorised as both a problem-solver and a maximiser of utility (Lunt and Livingstone, 1992).

Such models and assumptions have been critiqued on a number of grounds since the 1950s. George Katona argued that the prevalence of problem-solving behaviour amidst the consumer act is a rare occurrence and that habitual behaviour is far more common (1953: 312). Martin Hollis and Edward J. Nell (1975) trace the neo-classical influence in the assumption that people are primarily concerned to satisfy their desires (1975: 49). Moreover, most of the work employs an information-processing model to human behaviour. Shopping by this definition is largely understood as a decision-making situation. Or as Van Raaij defines the outlook: "The economic behaviour of consumers...consists of comparing alternative options and making a decision about which option[s] to select under several kinds of constraints. It is then expected that a 'best' alternative leads to reaching a desired goal or avoiding an undesirable situation." (1988: 75). Understanding of the act of shopping in its own right is limited through this perspective to the search for information. This perspective has however had a considerable impact upon the nature and taken by subsequent consumer research. Three main ways of studying consumer behaviour will be outlined: first, husband-wife interaction; second, consumer socialization; and third, shopper typologies.



## **Husband-wife decision-making and shopping**

The limited approach to understanding the act of shopping can be illustrated through the research which has sought to understand the processes by which husband's and wife's make consumer decisions. Such material can be traced back to the 1950's when Elizabeth Wolgast's article 'Do Husbands or Wives make the Purchasing Decisions' (1953) appeared. Wolgast's data revealed that while women tended to dominate in the purchasing of a household appliance, men had more control in the choice of the family car. Subsequent research has outlined this concept of the influence of the vying partners for a range of products. These include research on cars (Cunningham and Green, 1974; Newman and Staelin, 1972; Jaffe and Senft, 1966; Sharp and Mott, 1956; Wolgast, 1953), household appliances, from 'white' to 'brown' goods (Woodside and Motes, 1979; Jaffe and Senft, 1966), to homes (Kelly and Egan, 1969), and even basic foodstuffs (NOP Survey, 1967; Nowland Studies, 1965, 1964<sup>1</sup>).

Such research has been criticised on a number of grounds. On a methodological level it has been argued that asking men and women who decided what three piece suite or television was bought is of limited value as both parties will claim different levels of control (Scott, 1976). Arch Woodside and William Motes (1979) criticise such analyses for the emphasis and priority they place upon the purchasing decision. They argue that this act needs to be broken down into a series of smaller stages. These range from initially suggesting the idea, to deciding upon the style, type, size or brand of item. In addition, there are the important questions of who decides what store is frequented, who actually visits the store, and who ultimately makes the actual purchase. Taking this criticism further we could suggest that this research

reveals very little about the act of shopping for such goods, especially when nothing is purchased and people are engaged in the activity of browsing.

### **Studies of consumer socialization**

Another significant strand of consumer research addresses the question of how people learn to shop. This research appears promising for the current study until one realises that the focus is not on how people learn to shop rather how they learn to buy things. The key proposition of such studies is that the ability to buy is not innate rather it represents a form of learned behaviour. Research on consumer socialization tends to use the information-processing model (Ward, Wackman and Wartella, 1977: 18-23). The main aim being to trace the varying influence of the four main socialization agents, the family, one's peers, school and the mass media, upon a child's consumer behaviour (Moschis and Churchill, 1978). In this context, the role of verbal communication between family members (Moschis, 1985), and actually shopping with one's children (Grossbart, Carlson and Walsh, 1991) is emphasized. Unfortunately, the majority of this research examines, as Scott Ward *et al.* (1977) title their book, *How Children Learn to Buy* and not the important question of the ways in which they may learn to shop. A second criticism is that most of this research focuses upon the role of the female parent's attitudes in the process of consumer socialization; this research bias can be seen in the work of Sanford Grossbart, Les Carlson and Ann Walsh (1991). The justification for this is simply the assertion that "mothers do the most shopping" (Grossbart, Carlson and Walsh, 1991: 155). John F. Peters' (1989) study of the clothes-shopping behaviour of teenagers and Sigmund Gronmo and Randi Lavik's (1988) analysis of the Norwegian experience both restate this claim with fathers seldom shopping with their children. A significant and as yet unresearched topic is the question of the effect such

male non-participation and 'apathy' may have upon a male child's attitudes to shopping, for example, in terms of learning appropriate male attitudes and behaviour.

### **Understanding Shoppers through the use of typologies**

A final strand of consumer research attempts to classify shoppers on the basis of their retail behaviour. This effort to classify people on the basis of their behaviour and attitudes is not unique to the disciplines of marketing, advertising and retailing. Indeed, such typologies have been used in the social sciences, a trend which can be traced to the writings of Max Weber, and his methodology of ideal types. Later sociologists, writing in the 1950s, also set out to distinguish people, but this time on the basis of their consumer behaviour. A notable example is David Riesman *et al.*'s (1961) distinction between the 'acquisitive' and 'escaping'<sup>2</sup> consumer. One of the most often quoted and celebrated pieces of work within this field of consumer research was produced by a sociologist, also in the 1950s. Gregory P. Stone's 'City Shoppers and Urban Identification: Observations on the Social Psychology of City Life' (1954) has acted as a blueprint for subsequent research. His main influence has been the academic interest given to creating typologies of shoppers on the basis of their retail behaviour. Stone interviewed 124 Chicago Housewives about their patronage behaviour. His 'filter' question was "Why would you rather do business with local independent merchants/chain stores?" (1954: 37). In explaining Stone's interest, we need to be aware of the influence of the Chicago School, especially the assumptions<sup>3</sup> behind Louis Wirth's seminal essay 'Urbanism as a Way of Life' (1964), originally written in 1938, and Robert S. Lynd's work on *Middletown* (1929) and 'The People as Consumers'<sup>4</sup>. Stone sought to argue that contrary to such critiques metropolitan life provided individuals with enclaves for personalization.



Through this shift of emphasis Stone was able to conceptualise such consumer activities as shopping, as providing extraneous potentials to merely purchasing. Stone identified four sub-categories of shoppers - economic, personalizing, ethical and apathetic - each classified by their varying attitudes to shopping. For the economic shopper, which constituted 33% of his sample, the main factors are those of price, quality and the available range of merchandise. For the personalizing consumer, 28% of his sample, such factors are secondary to the interpersonal and social benefits which shopping provides. Stone argued that such people attempt to personalize the customer role and in so doing often manage to "form identifications which bind them to the larger community" (1954: 37). Of the two remaining subgroups, Stone suggested that some housewives shop where they 'ought to'; others were what he termed 'ethical' in their shopping orientation, as expressed through the likelihood that they will frequent small corner shops where they know the staff and have already formed strong attachments. The final subgroup of shoppers, which Stone identified, were those people for whom the activity represented little more than a chore or duty. Seventeen per cent of his sample fitted into this generally 'apathetic' orientation to shopping.

The distinction between personalizing and ethical shoppers illustrates Stone's argument. He was interested in explaining such preferences by reference to the different social positions and community identifications which individuals exhibited. He argued that personalizing consumers had recently moved into the Chicago area and were keen to form "quasi-primary relationships" (1954: 42). Ethical consumers, in contrast, were found to be of a higher social status and had lived in the area for a comparatively longer period of time. Such people it was argued had already formed strong attachments, and would patronize those shopkeepers they knew. Hence, Stone's work addresses the nature of urban relationships in modern society. For Stone, city-life is not just a mass of "segmental depersonalized



relationships" (1954: 40) as Louis Wirth had argued, rather he believed that it contained implicit mechanisms for social integration. He considered shopping to be one such activity.

Subsequent consumer research on the topic of shopping has dropped many of Gregory P. Stone's original sociological concerns. The research emphasis is rather placed upon distinguishing and classifying people on the basis of their 'search behaviour,' such as where they choose to shop, what they buy and their loyalty to brands. In addition, much of this later work has attempted to apply more sophisticated statistical techniques to construct taxonomies of shoppers. Four favourite statistical measures are chi square, the likert test, cluster and factor analysis. A case in point is William R. Darden and Fred D. Reynolds' article 'Shopping Orientations and Product Usage Rates' (1971). Their basic conclusion is to offer support for Stone's original classification; although, they renamed the 'ethical' category the 'moralistic' consumer.

Louise E. Boone *et al.*'s 'City Shoppers and Urban Identification Revisited' (1974) sought to analyse whether any significant changes had occurred, in relation to the distribution of such types, over the twenty years since the original Stone study. To further Stone's analysis, they incorporated the variable of ethnicity to see whether this had exerted any influence upon an individual's shopping orientation. They compared middle-class Anglo-Americans living in Oklahoma, to middle-class Mexican-Americans in Texas. Amongst their findings they found that the Mexican-American group were far more 'economic' in their shopping outlook. In the Anglo-American group, the percentages of 'apathetic' and 'personalizing' consumers had increased; whilst the numbers of 'ethical' consumers had decreased.

A 1974 study by William Darden and Dub Ashton entitled 'Psychographic Profiles of Patronage Preference Groups' investigated specifically grocery shoppers and the reasons why they frequent certain

supermarkets. In their interpretation the concept of 'lifestyle' figures as a key explanatory variable for the differences amongst the groups. Darden and Ashton also found that the 'apathetic' or aversive subgroup had become the largest shopping segment, whereas in Stone's analysis they were the smallest. It is interesting to hypothesize whether this finding can be attributed to the varying types of shopping which are being analysed, that is, the difference between frequenting a grocery shop and a department store.

George P. Moschis' (1976) study of consumer orientations studies another specific type of shopping, women's search for cosmetics. He attempted to correlate shopping orientation with the actual sources of information, for example, whether they found out about the product from advertisements, free samples, salespeople, neighbours or friends. Moschis distinguishes between shoppers who are store or brand loyal, bargain or 'specials' shoppers, and psychosocializing women<sup>5</sup>.

Other studies, rather than analysing distinct types of shopping, have concentrated on distinct subsections of the consumer population to demonstrate if their shopping orientations differ in any significant manner. One such study is William G. Zikmund's analysis of 'Black Shopping Behaviour' (1977), which examines grocery shopping. On the basis of such variables as distance travelled, shopping frequency and their use of shopping lists, he distinguishes three subcategories of shopper: 'comparative', 'neighbourhood' and 'outshopper'. Robert H. Williams, John J. Painter and Herbert Nicholas (1978) also studied grocery shoppers. They distinguish shoppers on the basis of whether they are apathetic shoppers, convenient, interested in the price they pay, or the actual process of shopping itself.

A recent British study by Alan G. Hallsworth (1988) of grocery shoppers, is said to largely confirm Stone's original classification. This is a curious claim considering the fact that Stone's taxonomy was based on department store shoppers. In addition to this discrepancy, whereas Stone

identified four shopper types, Hallsworth suggests six factors which are said to be important to shoppers, these range from considerations of enjoyment, price, parking, sociability, quality, to the choice of small and local.

A 1992 study, by two psychologists Peter Lunt and Sonia Livingstone (1992), is impressive for the sheer size of the sample. They received 279 questionnaires, conducted nine focus group discussions, and twenty in-depth individual interviews. On the basis of this data, they offer a five-fold classification which distinguishes shoppers on the basis of whether they enjoy different types of shopping (food, clothes, presents or furniture), going with others, or for bargains or in sales, but also in terms of whether they state that they will buy items on impulse, to reward themselves, or whether they will use the second-hand market for their purchases. On the basis of these differences Lunt and Livingstone identify a number of subcategories of shoppers, these include careful, routine, leisure, thrifty and alternative shoppers. In effect, the routine shopper appears apathetic, the thrifty and careful shoppers conscious of price; while the leisure shopper appears to take pleasure in the process of shopping itself. Lunt and Livingstone's book thus comes closest to the original ambitions of Gregory P. Stone's original article.

Table One attempts to summarise the findings of this wide range of shopper typology studies, demonstrating the variety of subgroups used, and the changing distributions of such groups.

Table One: Analysis of Shopper Typologies

Study	Sample	Subgroups	Distribution - %s
Stone (1954)	Women	Economic	33.1
		Personalizing	28.2
		Ethical	17.8
		Apathetic	16.9
Darden and Reynolds (1971)	Women	Economic	Not Given
		Personalizing	
		Moralistic	
		Apathetic	



Table One - Continued:

Study	Sample	Subgroups	Distribution - %s
Boone <i>et al.</i> (1974)	Not specified	Economic Personalizing Apathetic Ethical	*35.4/54.2 36.7/23.7 21.8/14.5 6.1/7.6
Darden and Ashton (1974)	Women	Apathetic Quality Oriented Fastidious Convenience Stamp Collectors Demanding Stamp Avoiders	22 19 15 14.7 12 8.6 8.6
Moschis (1976)	Women	Store Loyal Brand Loyal Specials Shopper Psychosocializing Name Conscious Problem Solving	Not Given
Zikmund (1977)	Women	Comparative Neighbourhood Outshopper	32 30 38
Williams, Painter and Nicholas (1977)	Principal Grocery Buyer	Convenience Price Apathetic Involved	42.2 27.4 19.9 10.5
Bellenger and Korgaonkar (1980)	Adults	Recreational Economic	69 31
Tatzel (1982)	Adults	Independent Fashion-conscious Anxious Apathetic	Not Given
Westbrook and Black (1985)	Women	Economic Unnamed Choice Optimizing Shppg-process involved Shppg-process apathetic Average	31 20 18 12 10 9
Hallsworth (1988)	Not specified	Enjoyment Price Small and Local Parking Soclability Quality	Not Given
Lunt and Llivingstone (1992)	Adults	Routine Leisure Thrifty Careful Alternative	31 24 18 15 12

\* Figures before dash refer to Anglo-Americans and after dash to Mexican-Americans.



Robert A. Westbrook and William C. Black (1985) provide an excellent summary of previous work on shopper typologies. They critique these studies for their general neglect of the vital question of motivation. Their work can be understood as an attempt to refine Tauber's rather loose definition of shopper motives. They offer two additional motivations: 1. the anticipated utility of prospective purchases, and, 2. choice optimization. To understand shopping it is necessary to pay attention to not only the process of shopping, but also what happens before and after people shop. Westbrook and Black include types of shoppers who are 'involved' and 'apathetic' about the process itself. The only problems which arise are produced by their methodology in which such motivations are imputed rather than being deducted from consumer responses. This is illustrated by the fact that twenty-nine per cent of their sample are labelled "average" or "unnamed". Westbrook and Black suggest that these groups 'middled' with respect to the seven motivations which they employed. However, the fact that they remain unclassifiable, or as they admit, "they may be distinguished by other motivations not identified in this study." (1985: 102), pin-points the illusive nature of people's own motives for action.

Such typologies suffer from a whole range of biases which tend to limit the usefulness of their findings. The first is that the great majority of the work is produced within the auspices of the marketing fraternity. The main journals, i.e. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *Advances in Consumer Research* and *The Journal of Retailing*, employ a specific set of research criteria. This bias dictates who is to be analysed (women since they are the largest shopping population), and how they are to be analysed (the most cost-effective method). The outcome of this circumscribed perspective, is that the act of shopping tends to be abstracted and studied in isolation, rather than located within people's daily lives.

There is also a bias toward the most cost-effective method. This means that in most cases quantitative analysis of consumers is preferred to qualitative methods. Amongst the previous range of studies on shopper typologies all use questionnaires as their main methodological technique. The main reason why questionnaires are employed is that they allow for large sample analyses to be undertaken which permit statistical analysis. The main limitation of this method is that in some cases they may reveal more about the researcher's own aims, rather than challenging how people view the activity of shopping.

Alongside this tendency to over-use questionnaires is a general lack of consistency over what type of shopping is being analysed. Some studies as we have seen have analysed food shoppers (Hallsworth, 1988; Williams, Painter and Nichols, 1978; Bellenger *et al.*, 1977; Zikmund, 1977), while others investigated department store shoppers (Westbrook and Black, 1985; Stone, 1954), and others focused on cosmetic shoppers (Moschis, 1976), or those looking for clothes (Tatzel, 1982).

On the basis of this data, we see how a whole range of types of shopping have been analysed. The problem is the extent to which their findings are in any way comparable. Even a cursory glance at Table One reveals the contrasts in the typologies proposed. Recent studies (Campbell, 1992b; Lunt and Livingstone, 1992) have attempted to remedy this by examining people's general shopping behaviour, and by utilising qualitative methods to complement the quantitative material previously gathered.

In addition to this bias, there has been limited attention granted to other variables which may affect people's shopping experience. The model appears to be based on the ideal of a white middle-class Anglo-saxon female shopper. Variables such as age, gender, social class or ethnicity<sup>6</sup> are largely ignored. The result is that we are given little insight into how old people, men, or even low-income groups, may differ in terms of how they construe shopping.

## Why do People Shop?

Many of the studies which centre on shopping motives, tend to reproduce this same set of biases. However, they do address the question of why people shop. The previous research has forewarned us of the temptation to argue that shopping is either monotonous or a activity pleasurable for everybody. Shopper typologies at least shatter such illusions of a restricted view of what the act of shopping constitutes. The retail experience appears subdivided by the type of shopping an individual is performing. Another obstacle to the understanding of what shopping constitutes is produced by the tendency to equate shopping with buying. These two activities are not equivalent, one can shop without purchasing anything, and one can even purchase something without frequenting a shop through mail-order. The obvious limitation of this narrow definition of shopping is that the enjoyment or displeasure in shopping is reduced to object-relations, instead of a consideration of the activity itself which does not necessarily have to end in purchase.

The immediate problem we face when trying to establish why people shop is that of motive. Do people shop only and if they want a specific item. The answer must be an emphatic no, as shopping implicates a whole host of other factors, such as the time people are willing to spend, when they go, and with whom.

Research on shoppers' motives is 'implicit to many of the shopper typologies previously addressed. Other consumer research has specifically addressed this issue of understanding why people shop.

In the 1950s this topic of consumer motivation was much heralded with books by not only Vance Packard (1986), but also Ernest Dichter (1964) and Pierre Martineau (1957). Many of these books celebrated the apparently irresistible power of advertising to change the behaviour and attitudes of



consumers. Psychological methods were central to this use of 'depth advertising,' for example, the belief that through appealing to consumers' underlying fears and motives products could be sold.

Ernest Dichters' *Handbook of Consumer Motivations* (1964) sums up this approach in its explication of the reasons why people buy food items, such as apples and yoghurt, clothing, and cosmetics. Dichter outlines what he understands by the concept of 'motivation' in the following terms: "all those factors which make people act and move toward certain goals. Human beings are guided by many motivations, some intrinsic, some extrinsic, coming from within and from without... *Motives are drives aroused by outside influences.*" (1964: 436, italics added). From this definition we see how researchers have tended to understand motives as impulses or drives which because they are unconscious can be 'aroused' and manipulated by advertisers.

As the title *Motivation in Advertising: Motives that make people buy* (1957) suggests, Pierre Martineau's work is written using a similar framework for understanding people when shopping:

"He is mostly unaware of the basic motivational systems steering his actions and forming his preferences, and his own reasoning on the subject generally beclouds or conceals the real motives." (1957: 28-29).

The outcome of such appraisals of people and their motives is one in which the emphasis is on persuasion. The task for advertising becomes how to achieve this. Moreover, there is an affinity between such a perspective and the view of consumption as manipulation outlined in Chapter One, with in many circumstances a direct interchange between the theorists.

Later studies have attempted to present an alternative evaluation of the motives which underlie people's actions, by placing greater emphasis on people's "justifications" for their actions (see Campbell, 1990). Such studies



have addressed what people actually say about their own behaviour to unravel the motives they themselves employ.

Central to this view of shopping is a seminal, if short, article by Edward Tauber entitled 'Why do People Shop' (1972). In this piece he asked thirty men and women about why they shopped, rather than the more typical focus on why they bought specific items. To do this, Tauber asked his interviewees to recount their most recent shopping trips and to discuss their activities whilst shopping. On the basis of this data, Tauber presents eleven hypothesized motives, both social and personal, for going shopping. The personal motives for shopping included: (1) Role Playing, (2) Diversion, (3) Self-gratification, (4) Learning new trends, (5) Physical activity, and lastly, (6) Sensory stimulation. The social motives for shopping resemble, but extend, Stone's delineation of the personalizing shopper. This is where shopping is used as an activity which, provides (7) social experiences outside the home, that is, (8) communication with others, (9) peer group affiliation, (10) status and authority, and finally (11) the pleasures derived from paying the 'right' price, that is, bargaining (Tauber's 'haggling'). Tauber by this means managed to free the motive to shop, from the more prescriptive and circumscribed motive to purchase. In addition, what Tauber's work leads to is a consideration of the act of shopping in its own right, bracketed from concerns over what people buy and do with these items.

In an article entitled 'Shopping Center Patronage Motives' (1977) Danny N. Bellenger, Dan H. Robertson and Barnett A. Greenberg investigate further the basic motives which housewives employ in their choice of retail shopping centres. Using Martineau's hypothesis of the recreational nature of shopping, they outline two basic shopper types: 1. recreational; 2. Convenience (economic). The main distinguishing variable is the 'low' or 'high' interest in shopping as a leisure-time activity. In a later article, with Pradeep K. Korgaonkar, Bellenger (1980) further profiles this type of shopper. The

recreational shopper is said to spend more time shopping, is more impulsive and more interested in the actual atmosphere of such shops and the quality of goods (1980: 91).

Colin Campbell in a 1992 (1992b) piece, criticises this distinction since it is unable to explain those women who enjoy searching for bargains, and are thereby attempting to be 'economic' and 'recreational' at the same time. Campbell suggests that this anomaly undermines the bipolar framework employed, arguing that the single continuum of pleasure is the best means to understand the importance of shopping to people's lives. The problem becomes how do we unravel the pleasures people themselves derive from this act: Can we merely ask them?

The cumulative result of such analyses has been a re-appraisal of what shopping actually constitutes. The parameters of shopping are broadened, so that the application of rational choice becomes secondary to an awareness of the many activities which are hidden under this umbrella term, such as browsing, people-watching, eating and drinking etc.

Myriam Jansen-Verbeke's article 'Women, shopping and leisure' (1987) demonstrates this redefinition well. She makes the claim, through an analysis of shopping in the Netherlands, that this act should be understood as a form of leisure in its own right. Jansen-Verbeke acknowledges the lack of academic interest in shopping as a form of leisure. In contrast, shopping has traditionally been understood as a mundane and routine aspect of people's daily lives. She illustrates this point by listing the range of activities which are implicated in the shopping act. These range from eating and drinking in cafes and bars, sight-seeing, visiting museums or markets, being with one's friends to simply walking around.

An earlier study by Stuart U. Rich (1963) of the behaviour of women in department stores further expands our knowledge of the kinds of activities which are intrinsic to the shopping act. Rich outlines four such acts:

browsing, bargain hunting, impulse buying and comparison shopping (1963: 73). Subsequent research can be found which explicates in greater detail such acts. For example, Robert Schindler's work on bargain-hunting (1989); Dennis Rook and Stephen Hoch's work on impulse buying (1985) and Peter Bloch, Nancy Ridgway and Daniel Sherrell's work on browsing (1989). Bloch *et al.*'s article elaborates further on this shopping motive when they define browsing as "search activity that is independent of specific purchase needs or decisions." (1989: 13). An activity which is not constrained by the need to make an imminent decision about what to buy, rather the shopper gains pleasure from obtaining information about products and through the process of 'just looking'. The research of Stuart U. Rich (1963) is relevant in this respect since he examined the question of what consumers enjoy about the activity of shopping. His findings tend to echo Tauber's earlier motives. For example, high on the list are the acts of seeing new things, gaining new ideas, the recreational and social aspects of the act, but also the experience of being in a pleasant store atmosphere. In terms of what consumers dislike about shopping, Rich found that the major aspect was crowds, but also discourteous sales staff, and untidy displays of merchandise. All this data points to the notion that shopping is best understood as constituting a form of experience, with its own peculiar activities, pleasures and dissatisfactions.

Concomitant with this understanding of the leisure potential of shopping and the identification of recreational subgroups, has been a tendency to emphasize the hedonic aspects of consumption. Elizabeth C. Hirschman and Morris B. Holbrook (1982), stress "those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multisensory, fantasy, and emotive aspects of one's experience with products" (1982: 92). The necessary corollary is an "experiential" understanding of consumption (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) which champions the role of people's feelings and the 'fun' aspects of consumerism. Such an approach demands that shopper motives are not just linked to price



and quality, instead the actual retail environment becomes a significant variable in the experience.

Robert M. Schindler in the article 'The Excitement of Getting a Bargain: Some Hypotheses Concerning the Origins and Effects of Smart-Shopper Feelings' (1989) argues that the price people pay is significant. He demonstrates how shoppers (even criminals) chase bargains, bargains which he suggests produce "smart shopper feelings" (1989: 447) which are both utilitarian and expressive. One example, would be if a person bought a shirt for £5, which had previously been priced at £19.99. Schindler is arguing that if this item is bought the individual not only has the utilitarian benefit of having a shirt for much less money, but more importantly he or she will feel good in themselves, especially if they tell others about their saving.

However, this over-attention to the category of price can efface the varying perceptions of shopping which people will use according to their present economic circumstances. In times of recession, it is suggested, people will alter their buying habits. A point which Nick Ravo emphasizes through his talk of the 'Born-Again Penny-Pincher' (1992). Ben A. Oumlil (1983) also presents evidence of how such shopping orientations are influenced by economic change. The price an individual is willing to pay for consumer goods is not constant, instead we witness how shoppers remain active participants in the process, in terms of their willingness to hunt for bargains or withdrawal from spending. However, another study which calls into question Schindler's attention to price was conducted by Peter R. Dickson and Alan G. Sawyer (1990). They were able to demonstrate that food shoppers buying 'specials' or bargains were largely unaware of such price reductions, even when they had just placed it in their shopping trolleys.

The one valuable feature of Schindler's argument is that it does demonstrate the importance of the social dimension to the act of shopping. The problem is that, in its focus on that which is bought, it tends to divert



academic consideration from the less conspicuous aspects of shopping. Peter Bloch, Nancy Ridgway and Daniel Sherrell (1989) highlight the experience of browsing. The act of shopping hereby becomes more than just buying, rather the process or activity of shopping becomes important in its own right. Bloch *et al.* suggest that such browsing trips fulfil two functions, that is, they can be used to obtain information and to make comparisons, but also as a form of recreation.

If shopping is understood as a recreational activity this leads us to a consideration of under what circumstances it becomes pleasurable. Sigmund Gronmo and Randi Lavik (1988) sought to investigate social interaction within the shopping experience. They used Norwegian time-budget data to suggest that, contrary to Stone's conclusion, the most significant form of shopping interaction is with one's own nuclear family, not store personnel. This raises the issue of the kind of interaction which does occur between, say, men and women, and their attitudes to such joint shopping. If we accept that individuals exhibit shopping orientations, that is that they can be classified as either recreational or apathetic, the question arises as to whether such orientations ever conflict with each other, for example on a joint shopping trip; a point which will be addressed in Chapter Eight of this study.

Another question raised is that of where such individuals choose to shop. Implicit to all consumer research has been this focus on why consumers patronize certain stores over other ones. Recent studies have paid greater attention to the store atmosphere which is offered to consumers (see Shields, 1992). Perhaps the most extreme example of this perspective is Langrehr's assessment: "People buy so they can shop, not shop so they can buy." (1991: 428). The retail environment in this interpretation becomes essential to any understanding of what the act of shopping comprises. This is especially relevant considering the manufactured nature of this material space. The key question becomes: How do people themselves talk about this

environment? Do they consider it important or merely a hindrance? Answers to these questions will be provided in chapter four where I begin to outline the findings of the current study and attempt to argue that if we look at shopping in its own right it is best understood as both an experience and a practice.

## **Consumer research and men**

In terms of our evaluation of the dominant trends in consumer research it is necessary to suggest that a discrepancy exists in terms of the extent to which men are analysed as shoppers. Theories of consumer choice tend to adopt a non-gendered model which does not even acknowledge the significance of this variable. As we can gather from Table One, research which constructs shopper typologies tends to unproblematically use all-female samples. In addition, theories of consumer socialization concentrate upon the kind of role mother's play in teaching their children about consumer knowledge. The only form of research in which men appear is that of family-decision making. However, as I have argued such research suffers from a number of methodological weaknesses. In the final section of the chapter I propose to deal with research which, although fragmented, does reveal something about how men may behave when shopping.

The most appropriate starting-point for this consideration of gender differences is time-budget material. Jonathan Gershuny and Sally Jones (1987) provide the British case, they suggest that in 1984/5 women spent thirty-seven minutes of their day shopping, whereas during the same period men spent only twenty-eight minutes<sup>9</sup>. Douglass K. Hawes (1988; 1987) reports on the American experience, where in 1983/4 women spent 4.1 hours per week shopping and men spent only 2.3 hours.

Interpretation of these figures is however affected by a noticeable longitudinal trend which suggests that men appear to be shopping more than

they did in the 1960s (Gershuny and Jones, 1987) and 1970's (Hawes, 1988). Gershuny and Jones (1987), for example, provide figures on the participation rates of men who are employed full-time. These reveal that the participation rates of such men has increased from 36% in 1961 to 77% in 1983/4 (1987: 24). In addition, Gershuny and Jones highlight that between 1961 and 1985 the difference between men and women, in terms of how many minutes they spent shopping per day, has decreased from fourteen minutes to nine minutes. Hawes (1988) presents a similar picture, as between 1973 and 1984 men's shopping time had increased by 0.4 hours and women's shopping time had decreased by 0.1 hour.

In terms of where men shop, Sebastian De Grazia's early work (1964) on leisure, suggests that they are more likely to frequent supermarkets than department stores, with both sexes making the same proportion of visits to drugstores per week. De Grazia (1964) also found that the men were most likely to shop for their groceries on Friday and Saturday, particularly in the evenings, a finding corroborated by Rosemary Scott's (1976) subsequent analysis. John F. Sherry and Mary Ann McGrath's (1989) ethnographic study of christmas gift shopping also indicated that men shop most often in the evenings after work, when they are more typically alone, while at weekends they tend to shop with their wives or partners. As previously mentioned, Sigmund Gronmo and Randi Lavik's (1988) analysis also suggests that husband and wife shopping is important. They also demonstrate that the main joint shopping day of the week is Saturday.

When we come to the question of how men are said to shop, some studies have attempted to unravel gender differences. Danny N. Bellenger and Pradeep K. Korgaonkar (1980) argued that men are more likely to be 'economic' shoppers, whereas women were termed 'recreational' shoppers. Here 'economic' presumably equates with convenience shoppers, which suggests that, whereas women view shopping as a 'leisure' activity, men are



said to be generally 'apathetic'. A finding which Miriam Tatzel (1982) also found in her analysis of attitudes toward clothes shopping.

Unfortunately, such a conclusion contradicts Myriam Jansen-Verbeke's (1987) analysis of the primary motives which men and women offered for their visit to the city centre. Jansen-Verbeke found that the women she studied were more likely to suggest that their primary motive was to shop, whereas the men spoke more often of walking around, and other distractions such as eating and drinking. It would be difficult from these studies to provide a conclusive theory of how men and women shop, and if their styles may differ at all, as the notion of a gender difference remains largely unquestioned.

Work on what men and women buy does indicate some kind of gender split. Jansen-Verbeke, herself, found that, whereas men spend money on leisure goods, such as televisions and audio equipment, women spend more on food, clothes and items for the house. Peter H. Bloch, Nancy M. Ridgway and Daniel Sherrell L. (1989) also found that men were likely to be browsers for computer goods, whereas women tended to be the browsers for clothes. A finding also suggested by Douglas J. Tigert, Lawrence J. Ring and Charles W. King's (1976) analysis of fashion involvement.

John F. Peters' (1989) analysis of the clothes shopping habits of Canadian youths, aged between seventeen and twenty-four, suggests that the girls spent on average 23% of their money on clothing, the boys spent only 19%. Peters highlighted other gender differences with respect to who the youths shop with. He found that the boys would shop more often with their mothers than the girls, who would be more likely to go their female friends. For the girls, Peters suggests that shopping appears, even at this age, as more of a social activity, than it does for the boys, for whom the central question is that of acquisition.

Robert Prus and Lorne Dawson's article 'Shop 'til you drop: Shopping as recreational and laborious activity' (1991), previously discussed in Chapter



One, is able to remedy this previous bias toward quantitative research through their use of data generated in unstructured interviews<sup>10</sup>. The value of such a research methodology is made clear through even a cursory glance at the occasions when the shoppers are allowed to be heard. On the basis of such material they argue that shopping can be conceptualised as either 'recreational' or 'laborious', that is, as a form of leisure or a kind of work. Unfortunately, Prus and Dawson, in their interpretation of such data, adhere rigidly to the axioms of symbolic interactionism. The problem of this approach is that the theory tends to intrude upon the interpretation of the act itself. Hence, shopping, for Prus and Dawson is analysed as a means of 'displaying' oneself, while the activity of hunting for bargains is equated with 'gaming'. Prus and Dawson also do not discuss the apparent gender differences within their own empirical data. They quote a 27 year old man who finds selecting and buying a car exciting (1991: 154), juxtapositioned with a 67 year old woman who speaks about the difficulties of such purchasing. We are told about the 30 year old male who prefers food shopping, because it is 'organised' (1991: 152), contrasted with the 36 year old woman who speaks of the 'repetitious' (1991: 159) nature of such shopping trips. The variable of gender thus appears largely ignored, left implicit within their work.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have provided a review of relevant consumer research on the topic of shopping. I have argued that such research is based on a very restricted approach to the act of shopping. This has had a significant impact upon current knowledge about this activity. Implicit to much of this research are a number of biases which serve to aggravate this limited perspective. One of the main conclusions which can be drawn from the review is that retailers, marketers and advertisers have paid an inordinate amount of attention to the

act of buying. The majority of this research is by this measure deemed to be purchase-centric driven by the use of the information-processing model of consumer choice. This may explain why the majority of this research uses women as the test case for their theories and research, since as the data details women are said to carry out 80% of the purchasing decisions.

The chapter went on to detail the subsequent academic interest in the specific question of why people shop. This research has led to a consideration of the leisure potential hidden within the shopping experience.

The final claim of the chapter was that the attention granted to the consumer behaviour of women has bracketed the potential gender differences which may exist. An approach is required which also analyses the attitudes of men to the activity of shopping. To remedy this deficiency the thesis will pay specific attention to the possible gender differences within the data. Before this can proceed attention is granted to an evaluation of the methodology adopted in this study. By doing so, it is possible to outline the specific theoretical framework used to understand men's and women's attitudes about shopping.

## Notes

- 1 See Rosemary Scott (1976).
- 2 David Riesman *et al.* argue that "The acquisitive consumer brings to the sphere of consumption motivations and ideals similar to those he manifests in the sphere of production. The escaping consumer seeks, on the contrary, to dramatize an emotional polarity between work and play." (1961: 119).
- 3 In the essay Louis Wirth wrote: "The contacts of the city may indeed be face to face, but they are nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory and segmental." (1964: 71).
- 4 In a footnote Gregory Stone cites this article (1954: 40).
- 5 Such shoppers are said to emulate the consumption behaviour of others (Moschis, 1976: 63).
- 6 The exceptions here are Boone *et al.* (1974) and Zikmund's analysis of black shoppers (1977).
- 7 See Rosemary Scott (1976: 130-131)
- 8 See *op. cit.*
- 9 These times include the actual time spent travelling to the shop. Unfortunately, Gershuny and Jones (1987) only provide data on full-time working men and women, and part-time working women only.
- 10 Robert Prus and Lorne Dawson interviewed 95 consumers in the twin towns of Kitchener and Waterloo, Canada. The interviews lasted between two and three hours.

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS**

### **IN THE STUDY**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter One of the thesis provided the reader with a review of contemporary theories of consumption and the ways in which they have sought to understand consumer behaviour. In the critique of such theories it was suggested that one limitation which they possess is the tendency to be theoretically-derived rather than employing actual empirical research to justify their conclusions.

In Chapter Two the thesis addressed studies which have used empirical research to analyse the subject of shopping. A number of deficiencies were highlighted which tend to bedevil this body of work: first, the use of quantitative techniques over qualitative ones; second, the use of all-female samples to understand consumer behaviour; and third, the extent to which the findings are influenced by a suggested marketing bias.

The main justification for the current study of shopping was the lack of previous empirical sociological research on the act of shopping. Hence, the main aim is to provide a small-scale study of people's attitudes to the act of shopping. In this chapter the methodology employed will be outlined, examining specific questions such as, how and in what ways the data was obtained, what kind of data the study provides; and how we are to make sense of this empirical data. In the final section the theoretical model employed to interpret and understand this data will be outlined.



## **The Data**

The data for the current study was obtained from nine small focus group discussions. In addition, individual interviews were conducted with two women and two men.

In the small group sessions fifty-six people were interviewed about their general attitudes to the activity of shopping. Three age ranges were included: 25-34 years old; 35-44 years old, and 25-44 years old. The average age of respondents in the sample is 31 years. Thirty-seven of the people were women and nineteen were men. They came from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Seven of the groups contained people from socio-economic groupings B and C1 (four with women and three with men) and two groups of people from A, B and C<sup>1</sup>. Each participant was paid a small fee for their time and effort, and all were given refreshments during the course of the interviews. The respondents were all recruited with the help of a Market Research Agency based in Leeds. This agency provided a room for the interviews, which allowed us to record these sessions on both video and audio tapes.

As stated fifty-six of the respondents were interviewed in small focus groups. This is a standard method employed in both sociological analysis and marketing practice to elicit results (Morgan, 1988). The size of these groups was initially intended to be eight people. However, the number of people who were interviewed depended much more on whether people were able to come. For this reason, the size of the groups varied from four to eight. The average group-size for the nine interviews was six.

The interviews were conducted by a range of people. The women shoppers were interviewed by a research student, Kate Spencer, and by my supervisor, Dr. Colin Campbell. The men were interviewed by myself and Dr. Colin Campbell<sup>2</sup>. The four groups in which men and women were interviewed on an individual basis were also conducted by myself.

The questions for the interviews were devised in order to obtain a broad picture of the respondents' attitudes toward the activity of shopping. The main issues addressed were:

- \* How often did the respondents shop?
- \* Who did they shop with?
- \* What aspects of the activity did the respondents most enjoy and most dislike?
- \* Was shopping an important activity to them?
- \* Their ideas about the importance of fashion<sup>3</sup>
- \* The importance of bargain hunting

Two further issues were addressed by my own study which were not specifically raised in the interviews with women, but which were suggested by this material; they were:

- \* Whether the men thought women shopped in a different way to themselves? And in what way this difference was expressed?
- \* Whether the men thought that their attitudes to shopping had changed as they had grown older?

The interviews themselves were however only semi-structured, so that not all the same questions were asked in each case, instead every effort was made to follow the "flow" of the discussion. In addition, I attempted to wait until the interviewees own responses suggested the importance of gender differences before introducing this topic into the discussion.

The length of the interviews varied from between forty-five minutes to one and a half hours. The duration of each interview was very much dependent upon whether the discussion 'dried up', or if the respondents

showed any signs of tiredness or restlessness. Prior to the interviews all the respondents were asked for their permission to record their responses. In addition, the objectives of the study were made clear to the interviewees. They were informed that the research was conducted for academic use rather than for marketing purposes. The following is the introduction to the first interview with a male group:

"My name is Paul Hower and I'm a Research student at York University. I don't think they told you, but this is being done purely for academic research and it's not to sell detergents or something like that, it's purely for my own research actually. Because the problem with research on shopping is that it focuses on women and we are just trying to remedy that. I'll warn you that we're being videoed, if you hadn't guessed by now, and also being taped. This is purely so that I can, when I'm transcribing at the end, I can put a face to comments. OK, so you're all happy about that?" (1: 1)<sup>4</sup>.

All the interviews were taped by both audio and visual means and all the tapes were transcribed verbatim. The interviews with women were kindly transcribed by the Departmental Secretary, Mrs Betty Vickers. All the interviews with men were transcribed by myself this procedure took almost three months.

The results from a Finnish Project on the topic of shopping conducted by Dr. Pasi Falk and Mr. Turo-Kimmo Lehtonen are also used to substantiate the findings from my own analysis. This study asked a similar range of questions as the present analysis and was designed to offer a comparative perspective on shopping. Twenty-seven people were interviewed in this study. They consisted of nineteen women and eight men who were interviewed in six focus groups, containing an average of four people per group. These people were selected on the basis of whether they had an academic degree or were employed as clerical employees<sup>5</sup>.

## **Analysing the method**

As stated earlier this study attempts to provide a qualitative analysis of the role and importance of shopping in people's daily lives. The chosen method of analysis was through semi-structured group interviews - a method which raises a number of issues.

The reason for the choice of group interviews over individual ones was determined by a consideration of the advantages of this method. To explain this view, it is useful to analyse recent assessments of this technique. Nigel Fielding in his recent evaluation of the interview method defines them as "strategies for discovery" (1993: 136) in which the aim is to elicit information on 'what kinds of things are happening'. Robert Burgess (1984) justifies the focus group method on the grounds that the responses which are gathered are much more likely to be spontaneous, but also that they stimulate inter-respondent discussion and allow the interviewees to redefine topics and the direction of "flow" of the conversation (1984: 107). Burgess continues by stating that this method "take[s] conversation in directions that are meaningful to them [the people themselves]." (1984: 107). This was considered to be especially relevant to the current study, whose aim was to provide an exploratory analysis of what we know of this act and what we can find out about shopping from talking to shoppers. It was felt that the small focus group was the most appropriate method to carry out these objectives since it would enable us to gain information about what the people themselves considered meaningful about the activity of shopping.

The interview method has been criticised on a number of grounds all of which were taken seriously in the processes of obtaining and evaluating the research data. Edward F. McQuarrie and Selby H. McIntyre (1988) argue that more esoteric and divergent opinions will not be voiced in this group context. Another problem which is also true of individual interviewing is the effects the



interviewer may have upon the kind of responses which are given. Research on the range of biases was conducted by S. Sudman and N.M. Bradburn in 1974 (Fielding, 1993: 144). They found that the most important characteristics were those of age, sex, social class, religion and ethnicity, but also other factors such as the accent of the interviewer. Another important bias, which can occur in a group-setting, was identified by W.F. Whyte, as the "desire to please" (1982: 115). This desire to please includes not only the interviewer, but also the other people who are being interviewed in the group sessions. To see if the group situation made any recognisable differences in the kinds of responses interviewees gave single interviews were conducted in the summer of 1992 with two women and two men. On the whole the responses gained from these interviews were very similar to those given in the group context, and hence suggested no significant signs of difference.

Another significant set of issues are raised by how interviewers actually ask their questions. Nigel Fielding (1993) warns against putting words into the respondent's mouth (1993: 140). To protect against this he suggests the technique of probing be employed to encourage interviewees to give as full an answer as possible. To overcome some of these likely problems pilot interviews with friends and students at York University were conducted prior to the group interviews organised by the Market Research agency to acquaint myself with the interview guide, but also to familiarize me to the kind of situation and problems likely to emerge from this group setting.

A final disadvantage of the interview method is of a technical nature. This is the problem of gaining a clear recording of a discussion involving. In the interviews this was remedied by trying to ensure that only one respondent spoke at a time. Having detailed a number of problems with the group method it is necessary to state the considered value of this technique. Nigel Fielding (1993) is explicit about the merits of this approach. He suggests that they enable the researcher to concentrate on the issues of group dynamics and

consensus formation, as he himself states: "They allow you to see how people interact in considering a topic, and how they react to disagreement. They can help in identifying attitudes and behaviours which are considered socially unacceptable." (1993: 141-142). In this respect, it appears less important that 'divergent' or 'esoteric' responses will not be voiced, as ideas held by the whole group will be discussed. A final advantage of the method is that it is the cheapest and quickest method of gathering research data from a number of respondents, in terms of the time and money spent interviewing and transcribing what would have been fifty-six individual interviews as compared to nine group sessions.

Having detailed a number of potential advantages and disadvantages of the interview method it is necessary to move on to a discussion of the kind of material which this approach yields and how this should be analysed.

### **Analysing the material**

Interviewing provides the researcher with data on how people represent their own behaviour. It does not enable us to say anything about what people do. Instead, it provides us with the attitudes people possess and their own accounts of their behaviour. Nigel Fielding expresses this limitation when he suggests that such attitudes are a problematic indicator of what people have done or will do (1993: 148). Such attitudes do, however, enable us to explore the ideological framework which surrounds the activity of shopping.

Another issue raised by the interview method is that of the generalizability of the results obtained. The present study incorporates two indices to distinguish people, these are social status and gender. Factors such as region or ethnicity are not incorporated: all of the men and women were white, and all lived in the city of Leeds. However, for such an exploratory study as the present one the unrepresentativeness of the respondents is not a

difficulty as the researcher is not seeking so much to test the validity of arguments but rather to throw up hypotheses for discussion and further examination. Since shopping has rarely been seen as a worthy topic of empirical sociological research the benefits of the present study are apparent. Grant McCracken further expands upon the primary use of the qualitative method:

"The qualitative interview is not to discover how many, and what kinds of, people share a certain characteristic. It is to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions according to which one culture construes the world." (1988: 17).

The thesis itself also analyses the significance that gender appears to play in people's accounts of their shopping behaviour. This focus on gender is justified for two reasons. First, the data itself reveals the distinct gender differences between the men's and women's views and attitudes toward shopping. Second, in the literature review conducted on previous research on shopping it became apparent that attention to this variable had been neglected. Previous research has tended to examine women's attitudes to shopping, and the views of men are rarely addressed as we saw in Chapter Two.

Recent feminist writings have suggested what is termed a "new scepticism" concerning the use of gender as an analytical category (Bordo, 1991: 135). One of the significant arguments is that such theorizing produces essentialist accounts of reality and serves only to perpetuate such gendered accounts. For the current study the concentration on gender is justified by the importance which men's and women's own accounts place upon this factor. Gender differences in this way appear important for how they themselves construe the shopping act. In this way, the thesis sets out to illustrate the many ways in which this factor does play a significant role in people's accounts of their shopping activities.



The material itself also tends to focus on a limited range of types of shopping. For the respondents 'shopping' is usually defined as browsing or purchasing items of food or clothing. Upon further prompting the interviewees spoke about other activities such as shopping for books, records, jewellery, perfume and household items. However, the people themselves don't appear to consider browsing for certain things as 'shopping'. Perhaps the three most significant forms which were not present in the discussions were for holidays, houses or automobiles. 'Shopping' tended to be perceived and defined by the interviewees as a regular activity, but also as we shall discover as something women are more likely to do (see Chapter Six and Eight).

It is toward an illustration of how this data was interpreted that we now turn.

### **Interpreting the data**

One of the immediate problems with the interviewing method is the sheer mass of data which it throws up. The researcher is inundated with a diversity of opinions, attitudes and judgements. For the current study nine interview transcripts all of over thirty pages in length (see Appendix One) requires the researcher to be organized and ordered in his examination of the data.

It also demands a method for the interpretation of such data. In the current study the method employed made use of Max Weber's *ideal type*.

This method was popularised by Max Weber in his essay *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1976). He explains this methodology in more precise detail in his *Methodology of the Social Sciences* (1949: 90-112). In this text Weber suggests that this method is not simply the construction of median points, rather they represent the self-conscious and "one-sided accentuation" of the most significant and salient features of social phenomena



(1949: 90). Furthermore, Weber goes on to suggest that this method should not be understood as an end, but only as a means to foster further analysis through the construction of hypotheses about reality (1949: 92).

My own usage of this method was guided by the necessity to break down the material from the interviews into a manageable form. In discussions with over fifty shoppers the most immediate problem one faces is to overcome the 'data overload'. A further problem is how to incorporate the great array of cases and inevitable conflicting viewpoints into a sensible interpretative account.

For the current study, ideal type characterisations of "male" and "female" styles of shopping were constructed. Such a method involves a number of rules of use. The first is that the ideal types should be logically consistent which means that nothing unexplained should exist between the two poles. Moreover, an ideal type demands an opposite, and for the current study, this was the distinction between "male" and "female" shopping styles. The third rule of use warns us of the limits of this method in that the model constructed reveals nothing about causality, but can only demonstrate correlations between factors.

However, it is argued that this idealised view of human behaviour does correspond strongly with how the interviewees themselves define appropriate "male" and "female" behaviour. As we shall see in Chapter Five gender did appear as an important distinguishing principle. Moreover this method allows us to delve into questions surrounding the ideological framework within which the act of shopping exists.

## **Conclusion**

Having detailing the method of obtaining and interpreting the data it is necessary to restate the aims and objectives of the current study:

## **Aims:**

1. To gain a fuller understanding of the nature, significance and importance of the activity of shopping in the lives of the respondents. The central aim of this thesis is thus to explore the question of the "meaning" shopping has for people.
2. To use these findings to offer a detailed empirical critique of present sociological thinking on the topic of shopping, which as we discovered in Chapter One, tends to be theoretically based and identity-centric.

The next chapter provides a detailed discussion of the preliminary findings of the research project. The aim of this chapter is to provide a contrary interpretation of the act of shopping, one which, rather than analysing the buying aspect of this activity, seeks to understand it as both a practice and experience. Attention is thus given to understanding the act of shopping in its own right, regardless of whether or not people actually purchase anything, and to clarifying what are the basic activities of 'shopping'. Chapter Five seeks to outline the main gender differences which were evident in the men's and women's discussions of this activity. Chapter Six attempts to provide an understanding of such differences which relies on the respondents' references to their wider social lives. In this manner, it is necessary to situate the act of shopping within the wider social and cultural context in which it is embedded. Chapter Seven seeks to extend this discussion by relating the differences to the ideological framework which surrounds the act of shopping. Chapter Eight examines current theories of consumer culture in the light of the findings gathered from the study to assess future directions, it also attempts to apply notions of power, dominance and authority to the cultural practice of shopping.

**Notes**

1. The English interviews refer to the following subgroups, distinguished on the basis of sex, age, and socio-economic status:

Table Two: Interview Variables for the study

Group	Sex	Age	Size of Group	Socio-economic grouping
A	Women	25-34	8	BC1
B	Women	35-44	5	BC1
C	Women	25-34	6	BC1
D	Women	35-44	5	BC1
E	Women	35-44	8	ABC
F	Women	25-34	5	ABC
G	Female	25	1	With Academic degree
H	Female	35	1	With Academic degree
1	Men	25-44	8	BC1
2	Men	25-34	4	BC1
3	Men	35-44	7	BC1
4	Male	25	1	With Academic degree
5	Male	35	1	With Academic degree

- 2 The nine interviews were conducted by the following people (see Table Three):

Table Three: Interviewers

	Group	Interviewer
<b>The Women</b>	A	Dr. Colin Campbell
	B	Dr. Colin Campbell
	C	Kate Spencer
	D	Kate Spencer
	E	Kate Spencer
	F	Kate Spencer
	G	Paul Hower
	H	Paul Hower
<b>The Men</b>	1	Paul Hower
	2	Paul Hower
	3	Dr. Colin Campbell
	4	Paul Hower
	5	Paul Hower

- 3     The men’s and women’s responses to the question of the importance of fashion is not addressed in the thesis. Although, the women, as we shall discover in Chapter Five, preferred to shop for clothes than did the men. The importance of bargain-hunting to some people’s shopping is also addressed in Chapter Five.
- 4     Due to the limit of space I have been unable to include all of the interviews transcripts in the thesis. However, a selection of complete transcripts can be found in Appendix One for your information. If you require any further transcripts these can be provided upon request. The interviews throughout the thesis are referred to by either a letter (A



to H) for the English women; a number (1 to 5), for the English men; or a Roman Numeral (I to VI) for the Finnish men and women. The number after the colon, in all three cases, refers to the page from which the quote was taken. This can be found in Appendix One in the top right hand corner. Table Two (above) and Table Four (below) illustrate the distinguishing socio-economic characteristics of each of these interviews.

- 5
- The Finnish interviews refer to the following subgroups, distinguished on the basis of sex, age, education and employment.

Table Four: Interview variables for the Finnish study

Group	Sex	Age	Size of Group	Socio-economic grouping
I	Women	25-34	5	Clerical Employees
II	Women	25-34	5	With Academic Degree
III	Women	35-44	5	Clerical Employees
IV	Men	25-34	3	Clerical Employees
V	Women	35-44	4	With Academic degree
VI	Men	25-34	5	With Academic Degree

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE OF SHOPPING**

#### **Introduction**

Research and analysis of the practice of shopping is largely absent from previous sociological discussions of this act. In chapter one the main argument was that contemporary theories of consumption have tended to obscure analysis from the act of shopping, their main focus of attention being the use people make of objects once they have been purchased. In chapter two the analysis shifted to a review of the literature from the consumer research organisations. The main limitation of much of this work is that their treatment and understanding of the act of shopping is reduced to the analysis of people's buying behaviour. Valuable as this information is, it is impossible to deduce the importance of the act of shopping from data on whether or not people use price-off coupons, credits cards or what the best selling detergents might be.

To transcend these rather restricted research objectives it is necessary to ask ourselves whether there is more to shopping than the act of buying. What would a sociological investigation of this topic look like? To achieve this kind of interpretation it is necessary to bracket the act of buying. This will then allow us to unpack and begin to analyse people's everyday experience of shopping itself.

In this chapter this objective, of uncovering the as yet hidden aspects of this experience, will be achieved through a discussion of a range of topics. These include questions such as how often and where people shop, what they shop for, what are their shopping preferences, and finally, what kind of

pleasures and dissatisfactions do they mention in their talk. By addressing such questions the aim is to begin the analysis of the act of shopping in its own right.

## **People's Product Preferences**

The process of shopping is a differentiated task. One dimension along which such an activity can be divided is in terms of the products that people are buying or looking at. Amongst the people who were interviewed there was strong evidence to suggest that people differ in terms of the kinds of shopping that they enjoy and those that they find less satisfying. The following quotes illustrate the kinds of distinctions people make about this activity:

"I like shopping for things I want to buy but I loathe food shopping." (Carrie, B: 1)

"I don't like shopping for food but I like shopping for clothes." (Mary, A: 3)

"I enjoy food shopping...[but] I'm not really into clothes" (Patrick, 2: 2-6)

"I can't stand looking in clothes shops...[but] I like gadgets." (Ben, 3: 6).

The diversity of opinions over the many types of shopping which people preferred were interesting in the sense that they reveal that the pleasures of shopping far from being product-specific are much more likely to be context-specific. This point is reiterated if we quantify the preferences expressed by the shoppers (see Table Five).

Table Five: Types of Shopping which people enjoy or dislike doing

<u>For:</u>	<u>Enjoy</u>	<u>Dislike</u>
Clothes	31	13
Household items	30	1
Food	13	24
‘Gadgets’	12	-
Plants/Flowers	9	-
Sports/Activity Goods	3	-

Total Sample: 60

From the interviews it soon became apparent that such preferences could not be wholly accounted for by reference to the differing qualities of the objects. For example, while some people ‘detest’ food shopping others ‘love it’. An alternative explanation for these differences would be to take account of the differing forms such trips are likely to take. Factors such as who they shopped with, the context in which the trip occurred and how much time they had to shop appeared significant in this evaluation, as did the question of whether or not they were likely to ‘have to’ purchase something.

**How often do people shop?**

One of the first questions we asked the interviewees centred on the frequency with which they would go shopping: ‘How often do you shop?’ Their answers revealed two interesting features: first, that there is a wide divergence in terms of the participation rates of different people; second, the notion that shopping should be understood as a regular feature of people’s lives.



For some shopping, people will go on a regular basis. Food shopping tends to fit into this category. That is to say, people suggest that they will shop on the same day and at the same time, as the following quotes seek to illustrate:

IR	How often do you shop?
Phillip	Usually every Saturday (2: 1)
Claire	Once a week, vegetable shopping every other day. (D: 1)
Elenor	For me Thursday mornings, I only go once a week. (E: 1)
Daniel	I normally go once a month and buy a lot of stuff, I never buy anything fresh. (1: 1)
David	Go every Friday...it's the most convenient day (1: 1).

The range of responses for food shopping varied from every day to once a month. For other forms of shopping an even greater amount of divergence was represented. Shopping for clothes was indicative of this likelihood. For example, some people spoke of shopping for such items every week, while others revealed that they would go as little as 'once a year'.

The differing amounts of time that people spend shopping is a point that will be discussed in Chapter Six. This is because the interpretation of such differences is not straightforward. One cannot simply assume that just because people spend more time shopping that this activity has more importance to their lives. The fundamental question is whether such time is spent through choice or influenced by the other constraints upon people's lives.

### **Where do people shop?**

The structured and rather ritualistic nature of the shopping experience is further emphasized through the question of where people suggest they will shop in terms of the spaces themselves. The four main locales appear to be those of the city centre or 'town' (Leeds), 'corner' or 'local' shops, the supermarket and the shopping mall (the main ones within close proximity of

Leeds are *Meadowhall* at Sheffield, and the *Metrocentre* at Gateshead). These shopping spaces can be divided in terms of a number of features: one, in terms of the distance that people are prepared to travel; two, who they are likely to meet; three, the kinds of objects they will be looking at; four, how often they are likely to frequent them; and five, whether they will be buying or just browsing.

Food shopping appeared to occur in two of these spaces, the 'corner' shops and the supermarket. As one of the women outlined her typical behaviour:

"I go to Leeds probably once a month but I don't buy food in Leeds in the city centre. I buy most of my groceries from *Sainsbury's* which I do every week. I go to the shop nearly every day, the local *G.T. Smith's* supermarket for fresh things for tea. That's it, apart from just newspaper shops and things like that." (Carrie, B: 1).

The 'local' shopping trip was defined as within walking distance of their homes. For some people this event was a daily occurrence, that usually involved a quick jaunt to a small supermarket or corner shop to purchase anything from fresh bread to milk. The larger supermarket outing in most cases appeared to involve either the use of a car or public transport. In this manner, it is more likely to be a once weekly event in which people travel greater distances and are likely to purchase more goods. This point is illustrated through the definition of such shopping as for 'bulk' buying or for the 'big stuff' such as 'tins'. The routine nature of this trip was made clear through the frequency with which people would go, but also through the likelihood that they would shop at the same supermarket. Frequently mentioned supermarkets included the 'big five' of *Sainsbury*, *Asda*, *Tesco*, *Safeway* and *Morrisons*. The choice between these stores appeared to be based upon the distance that had to be travelled, but also other considerations, such as how 'clean' the supermarket was, and the range and quality of goods on offer. The 'favourite' shop for food

was *Marks and Spencer* which appeared to be used by some of the respondents as a way to 'treat' themselves. One of the main attractions was the diversity and novel nature of the goods on offer:

"I don't mind popping into *Marks and Spencer* because they have different items and everything." (Claire, D: 2).

and the presentation of the food which was described as 'clean and nice'. People did note that it was more expensive to shop in *Marks and Spencer*, which may explain why some people would only shop there on a somewhat irregular basis.

Shopping in Leeds city centre usually involves a bus ride. Some people did speak of visiting the same range of shops on their visits:

"I always go to the same shops *Marks and Spencer's*, *British Home Stores*." (Maureen, C: 3).

Others were less discriminating in the kinds of shops they would use:

"I don't even remember the names of the shops. I just look in the windows, if it looks alright I go in." (Pamela, C: 4).

Some people suggested that their time spent in the city centre was one in which a whole range of experiences would occur from having coffee or lunch out, to the greater likelihood that they would 'browse'.

A trip to the shopping mall involves the greatest distance to be travelled. It is in this way, more of an outing since the distance from Leeds to *Meadowhall* at Sheffield is thirty-three miles, and the *Metrocentre* at Gateshead is over ninety miles. This may explain, why many of those people who were interviewed associated such trips with spending money. That is to say, they suggested that to go to such places they would 'need more money'.



## Experiencing the retail environment

If we are talking of shopping as being an experience we need to attend to the role the retail environment plays in this activity. For many people the actual environment of shops was an important factor in their appraisal of the act of shopping. Here we will examine this view further by considering the kinds of pleasures people spoke about in relation to this environment and the ideal shopping space which people appear to prefer.

People stressed that the environment offered by shops was important to their enjoyment of the experience of shopping:

"I like to be in nice shops." (Ruth, A: 32)

"It's nice to go into nice shops." (Mary, A: 33).

Or as another women spoke of her preference for frequenting garden centres:

"I can totally loose myself in a garden centre...Looking at the different plants and just being amongst them just if it's for half an hour I feel totally different when I've been and had a look around." (Emma, E: 16).

If we examine further the range of pleasures that shopping offers to people we realise that they cover the whole gamut of the five senses<sup>1</sup>. For example, some people spoke of auditory pleasures in shops: "I always like it if there's a bit of background music... I think that's nice and relaxing." (Maggie, A: 32). Others mentioned pleasures of an olfactory nature: "I like the smell [in *The Body Shop*]. I walk around going [sniffs the air]...I just like it, I just love going in." (Helen, F: 12); "Second hand bookshops...Just the smell of them." (Charlotte, F: 16). Tactile pleasures included those of 'rummaging' for goods. And finally aesthetic or 'scopic' considerations: "[The] atmosphere of the



shop it was set out so nicely and I think it matters." (Carrie, B: 18); "It's enticing." (Jenny, B: 18). These embrace the pleasures of seeing the range of goods that are available, and other characteristics of the environment: "I just enjoy looking at everything." (Virginia, E: 19).

The range of items people enjoyed looking at was extensive, from clothes, to books, records, jewellery etc. One respondent, for example, spoke of the pleasures she gained from looking around craft stalls in Leeds: "I like looking round craft stalls for material, ribbon and lace and things." (Kathy, D: 9). Another person even spoke of looking around the Leeds fish market, in very similar terms:

"I like just looking... I even like going in the fish market which must be strange, but I do like going in and looking at different fishes on the stall." (Kay, B: 2).

It is in this manner that we could surmise that people gain sensory stimulation from the ambience of the retail environment.

For some shopping locales, these retail conditions appeared very important. One such place was the supermarket. People wanted food shops to have a good 'selection' to be 'presented nice' and above all to be 'clean'. This point was affirmed through one of the women's talk of why she shops at *Tesco's* and not *Grandways*:

"I went to *Grandways* once and after going round I went and put everything I'd got back on the shelf...it was an absolutely disgusting place... I thought everything was thrown together and I thought it was dirty...it's too squashed...I couldn't find anything whereas *Tesco's* is all so easily laid out." (Elenor, E: 4).

The question of the size of particular shops was important not only to supermarkets. People generally appeared to want shops with 'lots of space'. For some this was a functional requirement in that it allowed them to shop more quickly: "As long as there's space that you can get around." (Stephen,

3: 11). For others, the amount of available room enabled them to be more free to roam, look around and enjoy the experience on offer:

"I think I like the ones [shops] that are bigger and you can browse around I like that, you can walk around the shelves."  
(Ben, 3: 22)

"[In] Next there's plenty of space you can have a wander or sit down." (Peter, 2: 19)

"I think it's nice to walk around a shop that's not cluttered."  
(Phillip, 2: 19).

For others the opposite was true, these people preferred a shop that was full, or 'choc-a-bloc', with consumer goods:

"I like to see bags and bags and bags of racks of pullovers where I can have a good choice...five hundred suits on a rack and I can go through them and it's terrific." (Frank, 1: 40).

Or as one of the women expressed the kind of shop she gained most pleasure from visitng:

"I like these little chemists that are absolutely choc-a-bloc with everything. I like going in there...where they've got boxes of all sorts...little corner shops I like where it's full. Full of all sorts."  
(Claire, D: 2-3).

Hence, the criteria by which people evaluate shops demonstrates clear signs of difference. Moreover, the kinds of shops that people prefer and the experience of shopping they seek is very contrasting.

The respondents talk about shopping malls, such as the *Metrocentre* at Gateshead, Sheffield's *Meadowhall* and the lesser known *Ridings* in Wakefield, repeats this theme of the varying opinions toward the atmosphere of shops that they prefer. Some people evaluated such spaces on practical criteria, such as the fact that they provided a safe environment for their children, because there was no traffic. Others spoke of the convenience of the



parking arrangements in such places, whereas others enjoyed the fact that such retail spaces had a good range and selection of shops on offer. For other people the enjoyment they gained from the 'atmosphere' of such shopping centres was an important consideration, as one of the respondents stated: "*Meadowhall*. That is heaven to me." (Sharon, E:10).

Others were more critical of such places and the criteria by which they evaluated them stresses the idea that the shopping environment itself is a crucial factor in people's experience of shopping. One woman, for example, spoke of how: "once you've walked along one section they all look the same." (Jenny, B: 19). For this woman we could suggest that the environment fails to provide the necessary potential to browse which she demands. Another woman contrasted the experience of such shopping malls to that offered by her local market: "There's no character in them is there. Like the market there's a bit of character in there." (Kay, B: 19). One of the women in another group explained further why she thought such places were preferable:

"Individually small tiny shops and then they've got a market on the bottom of it haven't they. Nice atmosphere again, you know it's really old and good...it's more secure I think." (Anne, D: 25).

Other people spoke of how they preferred these shops because of the "friendly atmosphere" (Kay, B: 7).

The argument that the environment shops provide can serve to enhance or detract the experience of shopping that people obtain can be furthered if we analyse the people's comments about the retail staff. From the interviews with shoppers it soon became apparent that such an aspect formed a seminal part of the event, as the following quotes highlight:

"You don't get a chance to look before the assistants are coming on you." (Elenor, E: 21)

"You want to browse around and you want to see something that comes down and hits you because the worse thing is somebody

tapping you on the shoulder and saying 'Can I help you Sir?'" (Nigel, 1: 11).

What the people appeared to be most dissatisfied with was the fact that such retail staff would impinge upon their enjoyment of the shopping act. That is to say, they would influence the extent to which they were able to browse, and wander around stores freely. For example, one of the men suggested:

"I don't like assistants that jump on to you...I just like to look first and pick what I want." (Jim, 3: 12).

Others suggested that they would not trust the comments that such staff would offer to them:

"If the assistant comes up to me and instantly says 'Oh that looks lovely' that would put me off instantly because I don't think it works like that. I think you can tell when someone's genuine about it you know. In the big stores they tend to pounce on you." (Carrie, B: 10).

Another woman responded to Carrie's comment by suggesting:

"They tend to be over the top don't they, if they say 'Oh you look beautiful' and all this. You can tell yourself that if you don't really look that nice." (Kay, B: 10).

People appear to want a situation where they can shop in peace, without the intrusion of the retail staff. Perhaps the biggest fear stated by the respondents was that such staff might bias their own choice over the kinds of objects they really like.

Another feature of the retail environment that people were often not pleased about was the crowd of anonymous other shoppers. Once again the main reason for this dissatisfaction was the extent to which such others would impinge upon their experience of shopping. One strategy people employed to overcome this situation was to avoid going shopping at 'busy' times, such as



Friday night or on a Saturday: "I tend to go at about 9.30 before the onslaught of the rush comes." (Frank, 1: 6); "Friday night is always really really busy...and you're thinking get out of the way." (David, 1: 5); "it's when you've got people...with trolleys and things ramming your legs that it becomes very very unpleasurable." (Andrew, 1: 6). Busy shopping spaces were thus defined as just 'like hell'.

### **The Difference between 'having to shop' and 'going shopping'**

Shopping cannot be simply equated with the act of buying. To understand this point further it is necessary to distinguish between two forms this trip can take. The fundamental dividing line between these two kinds of shopping is the extent to which purchasing is formulated as the main motive for going.

For the first type of shopping the likelihood that one will purchase something appears as a priority. This is commonly referred to as the act of 'doing the shopping'. The most obvious type of shopping which fulfils this criteria is food shopping. For such shopping, many of the interviewees associated such a practice with the constraint of 'having to buy' goods and thus termed it a 'necessity'. This is how one of the men referred to this form of shopping: "I just go because you've got to do it...you know you've got to eat so you just do it." (Tim, 2: 3). Shopping in this instance is constrained by the necessity to fulfil ones 'needs' through the act of purchasing. Not surprisingly, people expressed a degree of dissatisfaction with such shopping and a number of negative terms were employed by the interviewees to characterise the mundane and laborious nature of such trips. These ranged from defining it as a form of 'work' to an 'ordeal' or 'chore'. For many people this type of shopping was defined as a 'necessity' a task that has 'got to be done', or as one of the men elaborated:

"Food shopping...becomes a chore but you know it's got to be done, that's the thing with food shopping whereas sort of [for a] hi-fi or whatever you know it's not a necessity." (Richard, 3: 27).

Shopping in which one knows one is likely to 'have to' purchase something appeared to offer the people less opportunity for pleasure than other forms that the trip could take. This could also be the case for other kinds of shopping. For example, many people spoke of their dissatisfaction with clothes shopping if they knew that they had to find something:

"I hate going in if you're looking for a particular thing." (Pamela, C: 18)

"I hate having to go in and look for something...I just don't like it." (Claire, D: 5).

Or as one of the Finnish women replied when asked if she liked shopping:

"I think it depends on whether you're looking for something, then it's horrible, especially if you've got little time and you're in a hurry and you have to find a certain kind of dress or something then it's a bit depressing." (Laila, II: 3).

For some people buying cars was construed in negative terms, as the following women suggested:

Sharon	I don't like spending money on cars
Elenor	No I don't
Sharon	It's a necessity
Virginia	Yes I think that
Sharon	Just something that has to happen (E: 24-25).

For others, even choosing a holiday could be interpreted in this light:

Roger	I don't think I'm shopping around for holidays...to me that is a necessity, see it's not shopping.
Nigel	...You look round though...you can spend a helluva lot of money on holidays
Roger	...but I wouldn't class it as shopping.



Daniel           ...It's just something you've got to spend money on. (1: 28).

We must ask ourselves why such people regard purchasing cars, holidays, food or even clothes as 'not shopping.' One explanation would be to suggest that in all these examples the act of purchasing is construed as a 'necessity' - in other words 'something you've got to spend money on'. Other explanations might examine the varying frequency of these different kinds of 'shopping'. Or how the money is spent. For example, can a car showroom or travel agency be classified as a shop or not. Alternatively, we might examine the extent to which such activities are assumed to part of one's 'work-role'. An explanation which will be illustrated in greater detail in Chapter Six of the thesis.

For the moment, we need to distinguish between those types of shopping that are perceived of as a 'necessity' and the instances in which the respondents spoke of simply 'going shopping'. On these occasions shoppers appear to have a much less clearer idea of what they want or may need. In other words, they have no pressing needs, the compulsion to purchase something is not as paramount and in consequence we could surmise they are simply out to enjoy the experience of shopping for its own sake.

"I don't even have to buy anything. I just like being in shops."  
(Ruth, A: 11).

"I don't even have to buy anything...I could just wander [in town] all day." (Kathy, D: 11).

Or as another of the respondents makes this distinction:

"If there's something needed or I need something then I go...[but] sometimes I'll go up to town if I just get a bit fed up just to get out...just for a walk round." (Angela, E: 15).

Shopping in this context is as one might expect not constrained by having the necessary money or needing a particular item. A point that may explain why some people are able to speak of the regularity with which they will conduct this task: "I can go shopping any time...quite easy." (Maggie, A: 11). Or as another person commented: "I love that [clothes shopping]. I could do it all the time." (Sharon, E: 10). In other words, she can go when she wants and this choice is not delimited by financial constraints.

The next question that must be addressed is to explore further the experiences and pleasures people obtain from the act of 'going shopping'.

### **Browsing and the pleasure of shopping**

The fact that people enjoy 'going shopping' is illustrated further if we focus specifically upon an act which is specifically associated with this practice that of browsing. "Browsing" argue Bloch *et al.* "may be viewed as one category of ongoing search which has been defined as search activity that is independent of specific purchase needs or decisions." (1989: 13).

From the interviews it became clear that many people associated shopping with the act of 'just looking' as the following Finnish women suggested:

"It's just about looking." (Ulla, III: 8)

"I don't buy anything that often I just look around." (Hilkka, III: 7)

"I wander around shops...I don't necessarily buy anything, I just want go to and see what there is." (Sinikka, III: 2).

A theme that was repeated in the interviews with the English shoppers:

"I just like looking at everything." (Kay, E: 19)

"I just enjoy looking at things." (Virginia, E: 8)



One of the English shoppers clarified the pleasures she received from such an act:

"I love going in the market...and not have anything in mind that I've gone to buy you know just have a look round, make it an afternoon." (Kay, B: 2).

Evidence such as this tends to refute the economic model of retail behaviour which posits that people only shop when they want a specific item. In contrast, the pleasures people gain from browsing illustrates the extent to which people will shop when they don't necessarily want anything. In addition, there is more to browsing than Tauber's notions of gaining ideas (1972: 47). Bloch *et al.* suggest browsing serves a recreational function (1989: 13). If we dissect this activity and its recreational potential we see that it embraces the processes of looking, but also wandering and roaming around.

This more elaborated definition is illustrated through how one of the women construed the act of shopping and the pleasures she gained from this process:

"I love town. I think the thing is just to have a day...and just be able to wander and just look at things. I don't even have to buy them often, I could just wander all day just looking at everything." (Kathy, D: 11).

Shopping in this evaluation appears more akin to a form of sightseeing in which the sights of interests are perceived as the items on display. Kathy's talk also reveals the extent to which shoppers are involved in an activity of constructing their own pleasures from the resources which the retail world presents them with. In a similar vein Kay (quoted earlier) spoke of how she would 'make it an afternoon'.

## **The pleasures of bargain-hunting**

People also appear to gain pleasure from the act of searching for and finding bargains. Such commodities were defined in terms of discovering an item at a price below the level that they had not expected to pay. Unfortunately, previous analysis of this activity has concentrated primarily upon the processes and effects that occur after purchasing. The work of Robert Schindler (1989), previously referred to in Chapter Two, is indicative of this research tradition with his notion of 'smart-shopper feelings'.

For our own shoppers it soon became apparent that many of them found considerable pleasures from the commodities themselves: "I love a bargain." (Nigel, 1: 2); "I love getting the bargains." (Kay, B: 5); "I like getting a bargain." (Megan, C: 36). The desire for a bargain appeared to exert considerable pressure upon the pattern of people's shopping. They spoke of how they would target shops: "I'll look in the shops where I know they have reduced things." (Aidan, 1: 23).

In addition to the pleasures people gain from obtaining bargains are the satisfactions they derive from the processes leading to such sprees. Here it is the activity of bargain-hunting which is important. One woman, for example, spoke of how she enjoyed looking for such items, gaining pleasure from 'rummaging' around shops which sold antiques. Moreover, this woman and other people spoke of the appeal of the objects themselves in a very realistic manner. She defined them as 'junk not worth a light'. We could surmise that the pleasure of bargains is related to the search and find elements of this act. That the act of 'getting' the bargain may be equally important as actually finding something. That is, the anticipated 'eureka' feeling of finding something that one had not expected to discover, regardless of whether in fact one does manage to find this item.



## **The pleasures and dissatisfactions of shopping with others**

Shopping is a social situation. This is illustrated by reference to the fact that the shopping world is a public space in which one is likely to encounter others. People also sometimes choose or are constrained to conduct the act of shopping with others.

Consumer research only acknowledges this constraint or pleasure with reference to the varying degree of influence husbands and wives have upon each other (see Chapter Two) in terms of the purchasing decision. For many of the interviewees it was the actual experience of shopping together, regardless of whether an actual purchase is made, which is important to them. They thus spoke of the experience of going with others in either negative or positive terms.

With respect to the positive aspects of going with others, some people spoke of how they would use the act as a means to socialise with their friends or family, a point that was expressed by many of the shoppers. For example, one of the women suggested:

"I can ring a friend up and say 'Oh I'm fed up do you fancy going off [shopping]?' and...[we] just spend an hour, have a coffee and it's lovely." (Sharon, E: 18).

The empirical data suggests that going shopping can be also be used as a means to meet others. The retail world provides a social space for such encounters, where people can walk and talk together. This was made apparent in the respondents accounts, for example, one woman spoke of the likelihood that she would meet people and "have a chat." (Kerry, B: 8). This point was also illustrated by one of the Finnish women who spoke of how she would conduct her shopping with family or friends in order to 'communicate

and being together', she thus defined the act as a "form of socializing" (Ulla, III: 3).

Some shoppers even associated going with others as time in which they were more likely to browse. The opposite side of this equation were those instances when people did want, or had to, purchase something. In this situation co-shoppers were defined in a more negative light. As one of the women sought to explain: "If I'm going for something I prefer to be on my own really...cause if I'm with somebody I don't get to look at all that I want to look at." (E: 18). Co-shoppers such as one's own children or partner were particularly likely to be construed as constraints upon their shopping experience. A point which will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Eight.

### **Shopping and moods**

The empirical data from the interviews suggests that some people use the activity of shopping to make themselves happy. That is to say, the act can be used to enhance their moods. The sources for this pleasure were interesting in themselves as for some shoppers, as one might conventionally expect, satisfaction was derived from the act of purchasing:

"If you're down in the dumps it's nice to go out and spend money on yourself." (Sandra, A: 19)

"I'm usually in a depressed mood and I think I'm going to go and I'm going to spend all my bill money and I'm going to make myself dead happy." (Sheila, C: 11)

"If I'm a bit down I go and treat myself to something and it sort of boosts me up." (Sharon, E: 14).

For these respondents a state of depression could be relieved by spending money on oneself. However, others disagreed, with this belief that one could make oneself happy through buying things by stating the likely consequences:



IR            You never buy to cheer yourself up?  
David        No it doesn't work, it makes me more depressed...because  
              you've bought something you didn't want and spent money that  
              you haven't got to spend...I think it's better if you're in a good  
              mood to get something that way it makes you on even more of a  
              high." (1: 27).

For other people, the act of simply shopping, regardless of whether anything was purchased, could provide an alternative, but similar level of satisfaction and stimulation as that offered by buying: "I don't even have to buy anything I just like being in shops." (Ruth, A: 11). Or as another woman suggested: "If I'm in a bad mood walking around *Tesco's* it makes me feel very good." (Elenor, E: 7). A point emphasized by another woman's talk of the kind of satisfactions she gains from looking around garden centres:

"I can totally lose myself in a garden centre...I just love it, looking at different plants and just being amongst them. Just if it's just for half an hour I feel totally different when I've been and had a look around." (Emma, E: 16).

For this respondent, her mood can be altered by simply looking around shops. The act of shopping can provide a means of 'losing', or more specifically, finding oneself. This was further illustrated in terms of those people who used the act of going shopping to escape the confines of their own homes and presumably the daily routines and chores that are associated with this social space:

"I just like going out [to shop] and I think it's just nice to get out."  
(Sue, A: 33).

"Shopping just gets me away from the house for a few hours."  
(Angela, E: 31)

"Just spend two or three hours wandering around [shopping, because]...when you're at home through the day you're quite often glad of an outlet." (Patrick, 2: 13).

Shopping in these examples equates with a kind of time out from one's daily routines and chores. The act through this definition can be used to make

oneself happy in ways not wholly intended by retailers or marketers. This suggests that not only must we address the processes of shopping, if we are to understand its appeal, but also that we should pay attention to the wider social context in which it takes place. It is toward an examination of such influences that the analysis shifts to in Chapter Six in which the situated nature of this activity is explored.

## **Conclusion**

"The purchase of goods may be incidental to the experience of shopping" argues Frederick W. Langrehr in his article 'Retail Shopping mall semiotics and Hedonic Consumption' (1991). He continues by stating: "People buy so they can shop, NOT so they can buy. Thus consumers shop not only for goods and services or specific information but for experiential and emotional reasons." (1991: 428). This chapter has sought to extend this perspective by looking at the act of shopping in its own right. Going shopping has been treated as an event worthy of academic analysis. The main finding has been that the act of shopping is an experience that can provide people with a range of pleasures regardless of whether or not they actually spend any money.

One should however be cautious of jumping to the conclusion that this experience of shopping is in any way universal. Instead, we need to be aware of the diversity of opinions present in the empirical data. Differences manifest in the uses people made of shopping, the pleasures they obtained and their dissatisfactions.

This chapter has followed the lead of previous consumer research in theorising the shopper as both a non-gendered and non-situated category. The following chapters will outline the extent to which many of these

differences can be clearly associated with the gender of the person who is speaking.

In chapter five we will move on to a further elucidation of this argument. The aim will be to outline male and female differences in terms of how they construe the shopping act and the styles or ways of conducting it that they say they prefer.



## Notes

- 1 Indeed the only bodily sense that was not made explicit by the respondents was that of taste. Although, from my own experience it is apparent that even this pleasure can be gained from shopping. An example is supermarkets or wine retailers who offer free tasting sessions to their customers.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

# **GENDER DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE EXPERIENCE OF SHOPPING**

### **Introduction**

In the previous chapter an argument was proposed which sought to disentangle the act of shopping from the clutches of consumer research theory and its treatment of this topic. The main thesis was that shopping should be analysed as an 'experience' in its own right. Having established this point it is necessary to qualify this claim because the experience of shopping does not appear to be universal. The blanket statement 'I shop therefore I am' which was analysed in Chapter One does not appear to apply to all people.

From analysing the empirical material one can present strong evidence to suggest that this experience of shopping is differentiated according to the gender of an individual. This is a significant finding because as we found in Chapter Two previous consumer research literature has tended to bracket such questions of difference through its focus on the consumer behaviour of women. As a result, we know very little about the sort of variations which may exist between men's and women's attitudes to shopping. In the data collected for this study there is evidence which suggests that men differ from women along a number of crucial dimensions in their appraisal of this activity. For example, in terms of the: first, the kinds of products they prefer to shop for; second, how much time they are likely to spend; third, how they construe this activity; fourth, when they consider it necessary to go shopping; fifth, how they discuss the process of shopping in terms of their own consumer behaviour. This chapter moves on from the previous analysis, in which the shopper was treated as a non-gendered category, by outlining the main lines

of distinction expressed between the male and female respondents who were interviewed. Subsequent chapters will seek to address why such differences may exist and on what basis we can explain them.

### **Male and Female product preferences**

Perhaps the most basic difference between the men and women was expressed in terms of the kinds of items which they enjoyed shopping for. In Chapter Four, information was presented which illustrated the kinds of shopping people 'love' and the types that they 'detest' (see Table Five, Chapter Four). These preferences tended to be distinguishable between men and women<sup>1</sup>.

For the women, their 'favourite' kind of shopping was likely to be for clothes, as one of the women commented on her preference: "I don't like shopping for food but I like shopping for clothes." (Mary, A: 3). In addition, the kind of shopping which the women appeared to 'detest' the most was for food. Obviously there were exceptions to this rule but the majority of women tended to fit into this characterisation.

For the men, their 'favourite' kind of shopping was more likely to be for what they termed 'gadgets', these included televisions, computers, and videos. As one of the male respondents expressed his opinion on this matter: "I'd say it's anything electrical...or stuff like that, something that you don't have to pull over your head." (Richard, 3: 6).

Many of the men were not as favourable to clothes shopping as the women who were interviewed. As one of the male respondents stated: "I can't stand looking in clothes shops." (Ben, 3: 6); or as another man repeated this theme: "I like food shopping but when it comes to clothes I don't like it whatsoever." (Nigel, 1: 11). In this manner, the men's aversion to clothes shopping was countered with their more favourable attitude to food shopping.



These findings are corroborated by previous research on the kinds of items men and women prefer to purchase (Pahl, 1990; 1989; Family Expenditure Survey, 1989). Much of this work indicates a similar trend toward gendered patterns of spending (see Chapter Two). Unfortunately, this data tells us little about why such differences in product preferences may exist. In terms of beginning to explain these differences it is not sufficient to concentrate solely upon the kinds of products people might purchase as these two kinds of shopping also implicate a range of other variations, from the kinds of shops frequented, to the logistics of the trip itself. For example, what is bought, where they go (shops frequented) and what they do whilst there (having coffee or lunch out etc.). That is to say, we need to delve deeper and seek to understand the varying kinds of shopping experience which men and women say they prefer. In addition to these differences these two kinds of shopping are also linked to contrasting perceptions of the extent to which they are associated with an individual's work-role. An aspect of shopping which will become much clearer when we begin to situate the act of shopping in Chapter Six.

### **How long they are likely to spend shopping**

For the present it is necessary to refer to other data from the interviews which suggests that men and women may have a different shopping experience. One of the significant gender variations was expressed in terms of how much of their time that they suggest they will devote to the activity of shopping. For the men, shopping is an activity which they like to do quickly. This can be illustrated in terms of how long they state they will spend at this task. For example, as one of the men recounted: "I could say within twenty minutes I've got my [item]." (Daniel, 1: 34).

For the women, it was apparent that they were willing and even preferred to spend more time at this task: "I can't just go for an hour" (Kay, B: 4). Some of the women even stated that they would spend whole days shopping: "I could just wander all day" (Kathy, D: 11); "I've been with friends where we've gone in at ten o'clock in the morning and I've come out at three" (Kay, B: 5).

This divide is corroborated by time-budget data which was previously referred to in Chapter Two. This material suggests that men and women do indeed spend differing amounts of their 'free time' shopping. The material of Gershuny and Jones (1987) indicates that while the average woman will spend thirty-seven minutes per day shopping, the average man will spend only twenty-eight minutes per day. More up-to-date material is provided by the Henley Centre in their *Leisure Futures* (1991) publication. They report that women employed full-time spend 4.2 hours per week whereas the equivalent figure for men in the same position is only 3.3 hours. For the unemployed, the division is even more noticeable with women spending 5.1 hours and men only 3.1 hours.

Once again we could argue that such quantitative data tells us very little about how men and women construe the act of shopping, and even less about how they might prefer to conduct this task. Evidence that men and women construe this activity differently can be uncovered by analysing their attitudes to shopping, especially those instances where they express pleasure or dissatisfaction with this activity.

### **Expressing pleasure or dissatisfaction about shopping**

The women and the men who were interviewed tended to use highly differentiated language to express their attitudes toward the activity. Their



usage of contrasting phrases can be understood as a further dimension along which men and women differ.

For the men, shopping is typically a 'chore', an activity which they 'have to do' and which they perceive as a 'necessity'. This negative view is illustrated by the typical phrases with which men preface their attitude toward shopping. For example, it was the men who were far more likely to speak of their displeasure at 'having to shop' in an unequivocal way. In addition, they were more likely to speak of their 'hatred' toward shopping, as Daniel suggested: "I hate shopping anything even buying clothes." (1: 9). Other men highlighted specific types of shopping which they viewed in these terms, as Nigel stated: "I hate clothes shopping." (1: 11). Such displeasure toward specific kinds of shopping was matched by their dissatisfaction with the particular forms which the trip could take: "I hate going shopping with her." (Peter, 2: 5). This discontent toward shopping with their partners will be explored further in Chapter Seven when we examine on the question of shopping with others and the particular sources of men's and women's unhappiness with each other. Men were also critical of specific shopping locales: "I hate going shopping in town." (Terry, 3: 5).

In contrast, when we come to analyse the statements of satisfaction with shopping it is significant that these were found in greater numbers amongst the discussions with the female respondents. Furthermore, the women were much more likely to speak of their 'love' for shopping. For example, Kay's unequivocal assertion "I love shopping." (B: 2). This typically undifferentiated stance toward shopping was not true of all the women, some preferred to reserve such judgements for their 'favourite' types of shopping. For example, Sharon's fairly ubiquitous "I love clothes shopping" (E: 5) statement. Some women, as we found in Chapter Four, preferred shopping for others, in most cases this was either for their own children or their partners:



"I love shopping for the children" (Elizabeth, A: 22); "I love shopping for my husband's clothes." (Elenor, E: 29).

For the men, instances where they expressed their 'love' for any attributes of the shopping experience were uncommon. For example, only one man construed his attitude to shopping in this way, and this was for his preference for bargain-hunting, as he stated: "I love a bargain" (Nigel, 1: 2). The men were more likely to use the less equivocal and more guarded "like to shop" statement when expressing such a preference toward shopping and such a usage tended to be related to only particular types of shopping, such as Patrick's preference for food shopping: "I've always liked doing it." (2: 2). For other men, the main preference was for shopping for computers and technological ('black') goods, such as Ben's "I like gadgets" (3: 6) statement<sup>2</sup>.

### **Men and the question of when to shop**

Stronger evidence for the contrast between how men and women experience this activity is provided by analysing how they define the act of shopping in terms of when it is considered necessary that they 'must' go shopping. For the men who we interviewed shopping was largely construed as an instrumental act. This can be illustrated by their focus on the functional nature of this task: "I shop just when I need 'owt." (Grant, 1: 2); "Food shopping is when it becomes that I need something to eat" (Aidan, 1: 1); "I wouldn't do any shopping if I didn't have to." (Daniel, 1: 9).

For the men, the question of when to shop is answered by their 'need' for specific items. Or as one of the Finnish men commented: "Let's say that I don't go shopping if I don't need to buy anything. I only go if I need something." (Marko, IV: 6). This orientation toward shopping may be understandable when it is for food, however the men also spoke of shopping for clothes in a similar fashion:

"...if you *need* some new clothes. I wouldn't say I, it's a pleasurable experience like I wouldn't chose to go in and wander around for three hours" (Aidan, 1: 7).

For such men we could suggest that shopping is defined in the following way: firstly, it is about assuaging one's needs; and secondly, this definition excludes the possibility of the experience being pleasurable or enjoyable. The interesting feature of such talk is the resemblance between this kind of logic and that employed by economists in their examination of this act. As I outlined in Chapter Two, for economists shopping is an information game in which an individual identifies a specific need they have for a particular item and then visits a range of retail outlets to assuage this need. The significant point which emerged from the interviews with the men was the degree to which their perception of this act approximates to the model of 'rational economic man' applied in neo-classical economics. The men's effort were thus concentrated upon cutting down the range of shops which they need to visit before making a purchase. An association which is perhaps best illustrated through one of the male respondents statements on how he perceives this activity:

"I think you do it because it's there and it's got to be done even if it is buying clothes...you've got it in mind *that you need to buy food or some clothes* so you just go and do it regardless of what day or what sort of mood you're in." (Roger, 1: 28).

The primary purpose of shopping, for such men as these, is to buy something which they believe they 'need'. Hence, the act of shopping for the men is associated with the sub-act of buying a specific object.



## Women and the question of when to shop

For the women, in contrast to the men, the act of shopping is not only equated with buying and assuaging their needs; rather this activity embraces a whole range of supplementary uses and functions, not least of which is to enjoy oneself through 'going'. Shopping by this definition appears to offer them much more of a pleasure-potential. A list of the benefits, which many of the women spoke about, and associated with the process of shopping, would include: meeting friends, talking to other people (especially the staff in shops), cheering themselves up and finally using it as a means to escape the confines of the home.

Stronger evidence for this contrast is provided by the women's reluctance to refer solely to the buying act when talking about the importance of shopping. For the women, the pleasures of this act were far more commonly associated with those instances when they did not purchase anything. For example, this can be illustrated by their talk of how they define shopping in terms of the non-purchasing activity of browsing: "It's [shopping] just about looking." (Tiina, III: 8); "I love going in the market...and not have anything in mind that I've gone to buy you know just have a look around" (Kay, B: 2).

The question of when it is necessary to go shopping was not answered by the women in terms of when they needed something, rather the desire to enjoy the experience could be posed as a justification in itself for going. "Even if I'm not buying I do like to look round clothes shops, big stores especially." (Kerry, B: 2).

Men and women through this perspective express contrasting answers to the questions of why they shop and when a trip is necessary. For the men, the reply would be simply "when I [they] need 'owt" (Grant, 1: 2). For the women, the list of responses would be much longer and would include not



only those occasions when they go to find something that they 'want', but also when they want to 'just look', or to 'get out' from their homes, or to 'cheer themselves up' as they suggested that the act of shopping could provide them with a much needed 'boost'.

### **The how of shopping<sup>3</sup> - Gendered styles**

The largely negative attitudes of the men, and the more favourable opinions of the women toward the activity of shopping, can be correlated with how they say they will shop. The term 'shopping style' is employed to characterise the distinctive ways of conducting this activity peculiar to men and women. The fundamental difference appears to be in terms of how men and women say they will perform this action. This usage contrasts with the research conducted by the Birmingham School in which they spotlighted the particular cultural 'style' of specific subcultures (see Chapter One). In their usage style refers to "intentional communication" (Hebdige, 1987: 100); as Hebdige explains: "The communication of a significant difference then (and the parallel communication of a group identity), is the 'point' behind the style of all spectacular subcultures." (Hebdige, 1987: 102). In other words, style is conveyed through the particular configuration and use of everyday objects.

For the current analysis, the term 'style' attempts to convey the notion of the contrasting ways of 'doing shopping'. Style in this instance refers to an action or the way of conducting an activity. The main focus is a question posed initially in the Prus and Dawson article (1991), previously referred to in Chapter Two, of how people say they will accomplish their shopping activity. The term 'shopping style' is also employed to express how the men and women assert that they will shop, as was discussed in Chapter Three, the use of interview material does not allow us to draw any conclusions about their actual retail behaviour.

## The male shopping style

The men who we interviewed tended to have a distinctive way of talking about how they would shop. A 'shopping style' which emphasizes some aspects of this process, but also discounts and denigrates<sup>4</sup> other potential activities. For the men, we have already noted that they propose that they will spend as little time as possible when shopping. In addition, their dissatisfaction can be associated with the following four strategies: first, to shop less often; second, as was noted earlier, to shop only when they 'need' something; third, if they are 'forced' to shop to complete the activity quickly; fourth, and the best indicator of the men's dissatisfaction was their tendency to order from catalogues rather than actually going shopping.

At this point I would like to expand upon what men say about their shopping, especially the question of how men say they shop. The men attempt to assert that when they do shop they will perform this action in a distinct way. This manner of behaviour is illustrated in terms of the stress they place upon the quickness that they prefer to shop, as the following quotes express this preference: "I do it begrudgingly rush in and rush out." (Andrew, 1: 7); "I like to go, buy it and come out." (Stephen, 3: 23). Shopping, is thus an activity to be completed as quickly as possible, in the minimum of time.

To shop in this manner the men in the interviews sought to argue that they would develop a specific orientation toward shopping in which they knew exactly what they wanted, or in their own words 'needed', before they set out from their homes: "I would make sure I knew what I was after, go to a couple of places where I know sell them." (Aidan, 1: 7). Or as another of the men reflected on his way of shopping: "...if I'm going to buy something, I know what I want, I go in the first shop I see with a reasonable choice I'll just buy that." (Peter, 2: 5).



The men's basic orientation toward shopping is one in which the basic rule of thumb is that "you must have some idea of what you want." (Grant, 1: 8). The chief characteristics of the men's shopping style are those of prioritizing their needs over their wants. In this situation they believe that they know what they 'need'. Or as one of the Finnish women detailed this apparent male preference: "[men] have to have a goal" (1: 22). Moreover, the men attempt to (or prefer to) conduct the acquisition of such objects in the minimum of time, or as one of the men asserted: "I think my time is valuable, and I don't like to waste my time hunting around." (Andrew, 1: 26).

This issue, of the men's perception of the time they use shopping, will be addressed more fully in the next chapter when we seek to explain why such styles might exist<sup>5</sup>. For the men, one method that they spoke of as enabling them to shop in their preferred style was to use retail catalogues, such as those provided by retail outlets like *Argos* and *Index*. As the following men commented:

- |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ben    | I like the catalogues. I like to browse at home...and then go out and buy things then.                                                                                                                    |
| Terry  | It's alright cause it gives you an idea of what you're going out to look for in shops...you look it up in catalogue and say it's a £150 and you go into town and you can find it somewhere else for £120. |
| Robert | ...I like to go through the <i>Argos</i> catalogue...it's like a good comparison... <i>it sort of takes the sting out of it.</i>                                                                          |
| Ben    | You can compare the prices at home, you've got <i>Index</i> and <i>Argos</i> same products in both catalogues, which one is cheaper, right I'll go to that one (3: 25-26).                                |

For these men, catalogues aid their shopping style since they preclude the necessity of shopping around or browsing. Browsing for the men would thus be defined as leafing through one or two catalogues in order to check which store has the item for the cheapest price. Shopping is thus the act of actually acquiring this product. The men's talk centres specifically upon financial considerations, although saving time appears equally important to them. For



example, one of the respondents asserted that such retail publications served to 'take the sting out of it [shopping]'. Shopping in this example is equated with the typical definition of "sting" as a "sharp, sudden or smarting pain" (*Collins Pocket English Dictionary*, 1985), which is presumably relieved by not doing it too often, and when it has to be done, doing it in the minimum of time.

In this manner, many of the men appeared to suggest that the experiencing of pleasure was not something that they would associate with going shopping. Quite the contrary, because much of their talk sought to refute that shopping could be a pleasurable activity in its own right. Consequently, the men appeared unwilling to make the activity of shopping an important experience in its own right. It is in this way that we might suggest that men do not shop to shop, rather they shop simply to buy things.

### **The female shopping style**

The attitudes of the women can also be analysed as expressing a distinct shopping style. The men's object-driven way of shopping is brought into sharper relief if we compare these two styles. For the women, as we noted earlier, they are more likely to speak of this activity in a favourable manner, and also to suggest that they will spend longer periods of their 'free time' shopping. In addition, to these differences the women's shopping style did not place a premium upon knowing what one 'needs' before one sets out. It is in this sense that the women's way of shopping appeared much less planned, especially when compared to the men's. The women appeared much more willing to utilise the resources of the retail world to facilitate and encourage such choices: "I don't plan anything I just go." (Sharon, E: 10). Or as another woman spoke of her way of shopping:

"I sometimes go into town just to, I suppose to have a look but I usually try and go mid week as well just to have a look round...It

doesn't bother me, window shopping. I mean I go into town have a look around. If I see something I buy it and if I don't it doesn't matter. I'm not upset about it or anything like that. I don't really ever go to town with the intention of buying anything." (Megan, C: 18).

Megan's suggestion that she does not "go to town with the intention of buying anything" illustrates a contrasting use of this social space. For this woman she is not going simply because she 'needs' something in particular, such as a dress, but because she might find something there that she does 'want'. On the whole the women were reluctant to focus upon the acquisition of objects as the major motivation for going shopping, as the men had argued. This can be illustrated by the women's greater talk about such non-purchasing activities as browsing and window shopping:

"I like going to *Macro*, places like that, that have everything... Places where you can spend a long time meandering about." (Karen, E: 21).

The pattern of shopping behaviour which the women suggested was very distinct from that outlined by the men. For example, two of the women explained how they tend to shop:

"I tend to go to Leeds or somewhere like that, but I don't head for one particular shop. I tend to sort of look around and see if something catches my eye in a window." (Helen, F: 4).

This more opportunist way of shopping was echoed by another of the female respondents: "I [go] anywhere. I don't even remember the names of the shops. I just look in the windows, if it looks alright I go in." (Pamela, C: 4).

Shopping for the women in this manner was not a one-shop affair, shops were not targeted on the basis of specific goods but for their potential for browsing. The women thus preferred trips in which they could spend a much longer period of time viewing what was available in the stores, and



combining this with a range of other activities (see below). One of the women even defined herself in these terms when she suggested: "I'm a browser." (Kerry, B: 2). Another woman further elaborated upon this theme of the importance of browsing to the activity of shopping when she asserted that "You need to have a good look round" (Rebecca, C: 3) to shop.

The question of why women may prefer such a 'style' is open to debate and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Six and Seven of the thesis. But we can conclude from the interview material that the kind of shopping which the women appeared most dissatisfied with, was exactly the kind which the men asserted they enjoyed the most, that is, shopping in which they had to purchase a specific item. For example, because they were going out that night or to a special occasion such as a party or wedding; as one of the women suggested: "I hate going [to town] if you're looking for a particular thing...say if you're going to a wedding" (Pamela, C: 18). In this situation the women's sister wanted her to wear a specific colour:

"And I had to buy something to go with it and could I hummers [by 'eck] find the handbag that colour. I hate doing shopping like that when you've got to go for a particular thing and a particular colour." (Pamela, C: 18).

Shopping in this context appears to be experienced as overly-constrained by the women. Pamela continues by explaining why this may be so: "You see stuff you'd rather have otherwise and you have to go and get that." (Pamela, C: 18). Another woman repeated this theme but spoke more of her experience of shopping for such goods:

"...if I want something for a special occasion I can walk around town until I'm absolutely dizzy and I can't find anything...but you can just be wandering around and spot something." (Carrie, B: 17).



Pamela herself spoke of how she would be likely to "walk round in circles and circles and still never find it." (C: 18). One of the Finnish women also spoke of the contrast, analysed in Chapter Four, between 'having to shop' and just 'going'. Her comment may give us some clues as to why shopping may be experienced in this manner:

"Shopping for clothes is stupid when you absolutely have to find something...it's horrible to have to look for it under constraint. When you find something just impulsively...then it's fun." (Teija, I: 5).

From the interviews with the women it was apparent that they preferred shopping when it was not constrained by the need to have to purchase a specific item which is well defined or 'needed'. Whereas as we have discovered with the men, they appear to prefer the form of shopping which the women detest most, that is when you 'have to find something'.

For the women, shopping when it is not constrained by this need to purchase an item can be experienced as more pleasurable. Furthermore, the purchasing of goods appears to be not as essential to the enjoyment the women gain from the shopping experience, as it was for the men.

The women's use of catalogues further illustrates this contrast from the male shopping style. For the men, as we saw earlier, catalogues were used to facilitate purchasing. The women spoke of using catalogues for specific shops such as *Woolworth's*, *British Home Stores*, *C & A's* and *Mothercare*, they also spoke of reading general women's magazines such as *Best* and *Chat* which might include articles on what was considered fashionable. For both sorts of literature the women spoke of using such publications for 'ideas' as the following women suggested:

IR	Would you look at magazines?
Sharon	I like to look through magazines
Karen	Yes
Tina	Catalogues

Virginia	I like catalogues...
Karen	And get ideas
Lucy	The colours, the styles, price. (E: 25)

For the women, such items appeared to be primarily used to gather information on what was fashionable, although there was also a general resistance to fashion *per se*.

### **Shopping as a social situation**

In Chapter Four it was proposed that the activity of shopping can be used as a means to be with other people. Shopping has an important social dimension. One way of conducting this act was to go with others. The men and women who were interviewed also differed in terms of their preference for going with others.

With respect to the question of shopping with friends, it was more likely that the women would shop in this manner. There were no instances of men suggesting that they would shop with friends. A finding which as we have seen is consistent with the men's evaluation of shopping as an instrumental activity. The lack of importance of this aspect for the men was given greater significance by the extent to which the female respondents highlighted this aspect of the shopping experience. For such women, shopping appeared as an excuse and way of meeting such friends: "I can ring a friend up and say 'Oh I'm fed up do you fancy going off' and we'll go [shopping]." (Sharon, E: 18); "I like shopping with girlfriends." (Helen, F: 3).

Shopping with one's friends could also mean that the trip itself was lengthened through having one's lunch out or just going for a coffee. These views were also present in the Finnish data amongst the women's talk:

"It [shopping] is nice when you manage to make a date with some friend or happen to go to town at the same time with her it's nice to go together." (Tiina, III: 4)



"You just go in female company and spend the Saturday shopping." (Hilkka, III: 2).

Or as another of the Finnish women spoke of shopping with her family: "It's a kind of form of socializing...you get to take care of your family at the same time." (Ulla, III: 3).

The evidence that women used shopping as a means to meet others and the fact that the men appear less likely to shop in this way further illustrates the divide between men and women. For the women, shopping is an experience, and other people enhance this experience by either prolonging it or making it possible to visit cafes. For the men, shopping as we have seen tends to be equated with buying and they rarely speak of their desire to prolong this trip beyond the necessary time that it takes to buy what they want.

The interviews with the men were also significant in the fact that they rarely spoke of how they would shop with friends. The majority of their shopping in contrast to the references within the interviews with the women centred on how they would shop with either their partners or their children. It is for this reason that I shall be examining the nature of the social interaction which appears to occur between men and their partners (see Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight).

This focus on those shopping experiences which occur with others should not however be taken to suggest that men and women do not shop alone. As from the interviews, it was made clear that both the male and female respondents stated that they also enjoyed going shopping when it was on their own.



**Summarising the differences in the shopper styles**

This chapter has proposed that fundamental differences exist between how men and women construe the activity of shopping. The main variations in their shopping styles can be outlined through the following crude binary oppositions:

<b>For men shopping is?</b>	<b>For women shopping is?</b>
A 'chore'/'necessity'	'Fun'/'enjoyable'
Object-driven	Experience-driven
Laborious	Recreational
A means to an end	An end in itself
Asocial	Social
Solitary	Relational
A waste of time	A good way to spend time

To simplify this distinction we could paraphrase Langrehr (1991) to that women shop so they can shop, whereas men prefer to shop only so that they can buy something. These differences fit in with previous research on men's and women's attitudes to shopping, which was previously discussed in Chapter Two. For example, Lunt and Livingstone (1992) found that men were more likely to be 'routine' shoppers, whereas the women tended to view shopping as a 'leisure' activity. Miriam Tatzel (1982) in her analysis of attitudes toward clothes shopping, found that men tended to be 'apathetic'. In addition, John F. Peters' (1989) analysis of Canadian youths and shopping, found that the girls were more likely to perceive shopping as a social activity.

However, I would like to argue that there is more to these differences than such analyses have previously revealed. Further questions such as the complementarity of such shopping styles; and whose interests do they serve

to enhance most will be dealt with in subsequent chapters. For the present, a slight detour into the questions which are raised by these gender differences is necessary.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have sought to outline in a somewhat schematic and idealised manner the range of gender differences present within the empirical data. Further questions suggest themselves in our task to explain the existence of these contrasting 'shopping styles' exhibited by men and women. For example, were the men deliberately misrepresenting their behaviour in the interviews? This in itself is an interesting sociological topic. Why, in other words, do these two gendered vocabularies surround the activity of shopping? Can this be explained by reference to the status of shopping as a female preoccupation? Can we suggest that the men and women felt peer pressure to conform to the dominant consensus of the groups? Or is the fact that there was a consensus indicative of the extent to which a preexisting dominant attitude toward shopping was common amongst the men and women interviewed?

Having outlined these gender differences it is necessary to move on by addressing the question of how we can begin to understand and explain why these variations may exist between the men's and women's accounts of shopping. We must always remember that these variations are in no way essential or natural to men and women; they are not innate as men and women are not as the slogan writers would have us believe 'born to shop'. In contrast, it is proposed that we gain our knowledge and assumptions about this task through lived experiences.

The next chapter will begin this process of trying to understand and unravel why such differences may exist. Chapter Six will provide an analysis

which situates the act of shopping in terms of people's broader socio-economic lives. It looks at such aspects as whether people have the time or money to spend. In addition, it analyses the extent to which shopping should be understood as women's work. In Chapter Seven I present an alternative explanation for such differences between the male and female respondents which highlights the significant role which gender appears to play in the determination of their attitudes and views of how shopping should be conducted. I thus argue for the existence of gendered 'ideologies of shopping' related to the stereotypes which the male and female respondents had about each other's shopping behaviour.

In the final chapter of the thesis I examine the relationship between the findings which have been established in the current study and theories of consumer culture. I note a number of areas of disagreement and attempt to outline the ways in which the current perspective furthers our sociological understanding of people's attitudes to shopping.



Notes

- 1        The male and female preferences for different types of shopping can be seen from Table Six below:

Table Six: Male and Female Shopping Preferences:

	Food	Clothes	Home*	Gadgets	Plants	Sports Equipment
<b>Men</b>						
Enjoy	3	5	9	12	0	3
Dislike	10	10	1	0	0	0
<b>Women</b>						
Enjoy	10	21	21	0	9	0
Dislike	14	3	0	0	0	0

\*        This category included items such as beds, sofas, kitchenware etc..

- 2        A final difference which will be analysed in greater depth in Chapter Seven of the thesis is that when the men did express such preferences they were much more likely to be quizzed by the other men in the groups. As I shall argue in Chapter Seven this provides strong evidence for the existence of gendered ideologies surrounding the act of shopping.
- 3        The posing of the ‘how’ in sociological research is an aspect which I originally found in the work of David Morley (1992) in his analysis of television viewing patterns within households.

- 4 See Chapter Seven for a wider discussion of how men and women criticize each other's shopping conduct.
- 5 The question of the men's perception of time is interesting because their stress on this aspect of shopping is not corroborated by time-budget data which demonstrates a declining temporal difference between men and women in terms of how long they will spend. The men thus appear to be over-exaggerating the extent to which they will simply "go and get it".

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SITUATING THE SHOPPING ACT**

#### **Introduction**

In Chapters Four and Five of the thesis the main research findings which were obtained from the shopping study were outlined in detail. Essentially these centred on the notion that attention from the act and process of shopping has been neglected. The main claim was that shopping should be understood as both a practice and experience in its own right. In Chapter Five data was presented which sought to argue that this experience is not universal, as men and women talk about this activity in a number of contrasting ways.

This chapter seeks to advance the thesis by attempting to explain the basis upon which such gender differences may exist. To address this issue attention is turned to the wider context within which the act of shopping is situated. This activity does not exist within a socio-economic-temporal vacuum. In Chapter One it was argued that current theories of consumer culture have tended to abstract this act from its wider social context. Evidence from the interviews can be used to support the argument that this act is situated within a particular social framework. This chapter will address these factors by examining the extent to which reference to this wider context allows us to make sense of people's attitudes to shopping. In doing so, the act of shopping is situated within a configuration of personal circumstances and objective 'constraints'. An effort is thus made to situate the men's and women's comments in relation to their expected social roles.

Four hypotheses are examined for their ability to explain people's varying attitudes to shopping. An answer is thus sought to the question of why



the male and female respondents perception of the shopping act differs so markedly. These four explanations are as follows: first, having the necessary time may affect how people shop; second, having the available resources of money may affect how people shop; third, the question of the association between shopping and meeting others through this act; and finally, the question of shopping as a form of work or leisure.

### **Situating the act**

If we are to begin to answer the question of why the differences between the men and women appear to be so stark it is necessary to situate the shopping act within the broader socio-economic and temporal context. What do we know about the objective everyday circumstances of these shoppers? One fundamental difference which emerged during the interviews was that the men were more likely to be in full-time paid employment as compared to the women. This can be illustrated quantitatively, for example, of the English shoppers 63% of the men and only 43% of the women referred to their experience of paid employment in some way or another during the interviews. In addition, from the women's comments we can conclude that their experience of paid employment was more likely to be that of working part-time, figures which mirror broader social trends for Britain (see Charles, 1993). For many of the women who were interviewed their socio-economic position could be classified as housewives, some with small children to look after during the day.

The Finnish data previously referred to in Chapter Three is used for the purposes of comparison as this material includes information on full-time working women with an academic degree and clerical employees. Moreover, we can compare their views with the English women who were housewives to gauge the degree of difference and convergence.

Evidence from both the Finnish and English interviews suggests that the differing socio-economic positions of the men and women may have a significant influence upon how they construe shopping. For example, obvious differences would relate to the amount of spare time that they have at their disposal in which to shop, the monetary restraints placed upon what they can purchase, and the opportunities for social contact which they have within their lives. A final difference is in the extent to which shopping is perceived as part of an individual's work-role.

### **Having the time to shop**

To shop takes time. Activities such as browsing, finding and selecting what one wants and simply strolling around all suggest such a usage of this resource. The 'male' and 'female' shopping styles outlined in Chapter Five imply a contrasting attitude to the question of how long it should take to shop. For the women, the dominant opinion is that "you've got to have plenty of time [to shop]" (Nicola, F: 9). This was made clear in terms of the women's preference for time-consuming shopping activities such as looking around and the likelihood that they will frequent a much larger range of stores than the men in their quest for what they want. For the men, shopping does not take time. Their shopping style details a contrary way of accomplishing one's shopping. The suggestion is that they define what they 'need' and then will target one retail outlet in order to assuage this need. A style and use of time which is characterised by the "rush in, rush out" (Andrew, 1: 8) opinion of one of the men interviewed.

How are we to explain this disjunction in terms of the men's and women's use of time? One explanation for this contrast would be to relate such behaviour and opinions to the available resources of 'free time'<sup>1</sup> which the male and female respondents have at their disposal. For example, if the



men are in full-time employment and the women are employed part-time, or as housewives, we could argue that their resources of free time will differ both quantitatively and qualitatively.

To confirm such an argument it is necessary to consult time-budget data compiled by the Henley Centre (1991) to substantiate such a conclusion but also to critique this argument (see Table Seven).

**Table Seven: Time use by sex and employment status**

	Full-time employees		Part-time	Unemployed		Housewives
	Males	Females		Males	Females	
<u>Hours spent on</u>						
Employment and travel	41	37.2	17	2.5	0.8	0.1
Essential activities*	68.8	78.9	66.8	26.7	35.8	45.1
Free time**2	50.2	40.1	52.2	92.3	83.2	73.9
Shopping	3.3	4.3	5.2	3.1	5.1	6.6

\* Includes cooking, cleaning, paid employment and travel to and from work.

\*\* Assuming seven hours sleep per day

Source: Henley Centre (1991)

Sample size: 2130

For full-time employed men we can hypothesize that they are likely to have less ‘free time’ than housewives due to their work-related commitments. From these findings we could present the following hypothesis: that such men will have less ‘free time’ than women and hence they will attempt to conduct their shopping with haste in order to save time. In contrast, that is to the housewives, as the Henley material suggests that they have much 73.9 hours of weekly ‘free time’ at their disposal. Consequently, we might hypothesize



that the female respondents will have more time to spare in their lives which they might be willing to devote to such time-consuming shopping activities as looking around and browsing. However, the strength of this argument begins to appear less convincing when we consider the nature and quality of such time.

The figures provided by the Henley Centre suggest that the average housewife has 73.9 hours per week to spend as she pleases. In contrast, men who are employed full-time, are said to have only 50.2 hours per week to spare. These statistics may be misleading as there is evidence to suggest that a housewife's or even a househusband's time is rigidly constrained by their social position. Studies of the daily lives of housewives (Comer, 1974; Oakley, 1974) qualify our understanding of the kind of 'free time' which is granted to such women. In Ann Oakley's study of housewives she details that the average working week for the women was seventy-seven hours (1974: 93). Oakley suggests that the housewife may be 'free from' supervision, but she is not 'free to' do as she pleases (1974: 44). Findings which are illustrated by Lee Comer's suggestion: "What this free time and lack of supervision amounts to is that she is free to choose whether to wash on Mondays and shop on Tuesdays or iron on Wednesdays or clean on Fridays. As for free time - with small children *there is no free time.*" (Comer, 1974: 103, italics in original).

For the men who we interviewed shopping is construed as a post-work activity which uses up their resources of free time. Most of the men's comments referred to how they 'have to' go food shopping 'after work'. Consequently, the men spoke of such an activity in mainly negative terms, for example, one man referred to this activity as an 'ordeal' and another remarked that "it just gets a bit grinding after you've had a hard day at work." (David, 1: 5). The precious and finite nature of the men's free time appeared to create a situation in which they believed that time spent shopping was a 'waste' of such a resource and therefore to be avoided. If we are to link this dominant opinion

with the men's shopping style we could suggest that their manner of conducting this activity enables them to save time. Available time under these circumstances appears to influence how people say they will shop. A point illustrated by one of the male respondents who stated the reason for his own view of shopping: "I think my time is valuable and I don't like to waste my time hunting around." (Andrew, 1: 26). Or as another male respondent suggested he would shop: "I would make sure I knew what I was after." (Aidan, 1: 7). In other words, in order to minimize the time which one spends shopping it is necessary to know what one wants before one sets off.

Support for why the men appear to desire to 'get it over and done with' can be provided by analysing the type of free time which is available to them. For example, if we presume that the average man will work Mondays to Fridays from nine in the morning to five in the evening we could suggest that this leaves them very little actual time with which to shop, especially when we consider that most shops close in the evening. The only days of the week when they are able to shop would thus be on a Saturday, or a Sunday for some forms of shopping. Some of the men who we interviewed confirmed this conclusion, for example, one man stated that "the only sort of day that is available" to shop is on a Saturday (Roger, 1: 3). Unfortunately such shopping days also correspond with the least favourable times to shop, that is when they are most crowded, or as one of the men remarked "like hell" (Andrew, 1: 6).

This negative attitude toward shopping on a Saturday was further confirmed in the women's talk. The dominant attitude was that to shop on such a day was a mistake, as two of the women suggested: "I don't like shopping when it's busy...Saturday's, weekends." (H: 14-15); "Saturday's...I don't like to go to town because it's too crowded." (Ritva, II: 4).

The fact that such male and female attitudes correspond is, perhaps, not surprising. The fundamental difference appears in terms of when people can shop. For the women who were housewives or worked part-time we



could argue that a greater latitude existed in terms of the choice of when they can go shopping. Such people, in other words, can pick the times when the shops might be least crowded with other people. Furthermore we could suggest that under these circumstances the just looking style of shopping is both facilitated and engendered. One of the men who we interviewed, who appeared to have responsibility for his household's food shopping, spoke of the act in this manner: "I've got a lot of spare time with my job... [so] I can take me time and I can go to different places, I can go when I want." (Nigel, 1: 4).

In this manner, we could suggest that the fact that men do not enjoy shopping can be associated with the lack of choice in terms of when they can go shopping. That is to say, if we assume that are male respondents are full-time employed and working in a nine to five occupation we could argue that they are forced to shop at the least favourable shopping times such as during the evenings or at weekends. In contrast, women who are housewives have much more leeway in this choice. Doubt is cast upon the strength of this argument if we turn to those women who were also in full-time employment. The time-budget material indicates that these women, due to the increased participation of women in essential activities (see Table Seven), actually have less 'free time' than their male counterparts. For many of these women the question of the scarcity of their time was of paramount importance and appeared to influence how they would shop. For example, Alison suggested: "I don't have time to look...I'm so busy and have so much to do that I go down, I grab what I need and I come away." (Alison, B: 6); or as one of the Finnish women remarked: "I don't have time to wander around." (Riita-Liisa, III: 2).

The fact that such women appear to have less 'free time' than men in a similar position did not correspond with either their general attitude to shopping or their style of conducting this activity. That is to say, although the women have less 'free time', and may under certain circumstances "grab what...[they] need and come away" (Alison, B: 6), however the lack of



available time to shop was never perceived by them as an absolute constraint. This was clearly illustrated through their attempts to 'make time' to shop, a method which presumably enables them to maximise the use of their available free time. The women spoke of a number of ways to achieve this: first, to finish work early so as to "mosey down to the bus stop, in and out of shops" (Ruth, A: 11); and secondly, to shop during their lunch breaks. The question of why the women sought to 'make time' to shop is open to debate, but one explanation is that it reflects not the constraints placed upon their time, but their preferences toward how they would like to spend their time (see Chapter Seven). Another explanation for the women's behaviour which will be addressed later in this chapter is that many forms of shopping still remain women's work.

For the men, contrary to the women's attempts to make time to shop, was their desire to use the fact that they were working as an excuse to not have to go shopping. For example, one of the men in Group Three spoke of how he would inform his wife to begin shopping when he was at work, he would then purposefully finish work later and arrive to pay the bill and carry the bags to the car. This story received praise from the other men in the group who congratulated him on his ingenuity, as one of the men stated "well done" (Stephen, 3: 3).

This belief that the men's free time was more valuable than their own was largely confirmed by the views which the women voiced on this subject. Some of the women were thus willing to excuse their partner's non-participation in the act of shopping on this basis. For example, Maggie spoke of the fact that men are "working" (A: 18) and how "it's the time with my husband" (Maggie, A: 18). Another woman legitimated her partner's non-involvement by remarking: "He's not at home a lot." (B: 3).

The argument previously outlined that men's and women's experiences of paid employment can account for the differences in their shopping styles

does not appear entirely convincing. Despite the limitations of this hypothesis we must acknowledge the ways in which the men's experiences of the act of shopping are influenced by their participation in the employment sphere and the extent to which this may constrain or hamper their shopping choices. For example, one such influence is that they cannot just shop when they want to due to the structured nature of their days. The fact that they are constrained in this choice results in a situation in which when they can shop corresponds with the most busy times, when the retail environment is most crowded. However, the fact that many of the women in a similar socio-economic position still look for and gain pleasure from the shopping experience tends to refute the men's claims for the finiteness and value of their 'free time'. For the women, 'making time' to shop despite a hectic life is an essential prerequisite for the enjoyment of this act. For the men, in contrast, the constraint of time due to the competing demands made upon them is employed to justify their non-participation.

### **Having the money to shop**

Going shopping not only takes time it also includes the possibility that one will spend some money whilst there. An alternative explanation for why the men and women construe this activity as they do would associate their shopping styles with the differential monetary resources which they might have available to them in their lives.

If the men in are study are working full-time we would expect that they would experience far less problems when it comes to purchasing items which they want. Jan Pahl's study of *Money and Marriage* (1989) confirms such an outcome. She found that the men in her sample would typically hold back a larger percentage of their wages for their own consumption then would the women. The suggestion is thus that men have more money to spend but that



they actually shop less than women. Evidence that the men experience less problems than the women when it comes to spending money was made clear in the interviews. On the whole, the men appeared less price-conscious than the women. For example, one of the men offered the following comment:

"The thing is there are so many other things other than price I find, I mean the convenience of it means a lot to me, if I go somewhere I would just not dream of going across town on a long journey on the off-chance that I might get a bargain, I will go to a specific place and if they've got what I want I will buy it."  
(Andrew, 1: 30).

For such a man the question of the price he pays for consumer goods does not appear to exert a considerable influence over how he will shop. His style of shopping, in which he refuses to browse and compare prices, suggests that such a consideration as cost is not an important factor in explaining his stated behaviour. Another male respondent voiced a similar opinion when he remarked: "if you see something buy it, but I don't particularly go around looking for bargains" (Phillip, 2: 17).

On the other hand the factor of money appears to have a greater significance for how the women shop. The female respondents' just looking style can be interpreted as a means of making the most of their available monetary resources. As one of the women remarked: "you've got to compare or to look to see if you see anything better" (Carrie, B: 24). An answer to why women might shop in this way was provided in the following talk:

Pamela	You might be able to find it cheaper somewhere else
Megan	That's right and have a look round
Pamela	...I like to look round because I think there's nothing more annoying if you're buying something and then you see it somewhere else for £2 or £3 cheaper. (C: 35).



The just looking style in this interpretation serves the purpose of allowing the women to ensure that they have paid the cheapest price for an item which they want.

Why the women experience greater problems when spending must be related to the source of such money. From the women's comments during the interviews it became clear that they would be more likely than the men to use the 'housekeeping'<sup>3</sup> fund as a pool of money to enable them to purchase items when they were shopping. This source was defined in a number of ways by the female respondents, some women, for example, spoke of their use of the 'bill money', 'the family allowance' or money set aside for the household's 'food' requirements. This is how women in Group C spoke of such money:

IR	What sort of mood do you have to be in to go clothes shop?
Sheila	I'm usually in a depressed mood, and I think 'I'm going to go and I'm going to spend all my bill money and I'm going to make myself dead happy', and I go in and I spend everything.
Maureen	I sometimes do that with the housekeeping.
Sheila	If you know you should be spending it on something else. Like I'll save all my telephone money up, you know to pay my telephone bill, and I mean I have got a £52 telephone bill at home, and I spent £28 of it yesterday at <i>Tradex</i> . But it's just, you know. (C: 11).

None of the male respondents who we interviewed spoke of having to use similar resources for their shopping requirements.

Several of the women spoke of the problems which they encountered when having to justify purchases to themselves, but also more importantly to partners (see below). For example, one woman suggested: "I sometimes feel guilty about buying myself things." (Claire, D: 16). And another woman remarked: "We all have the guilt that we think you know well should I have it." (Kathy, D: 16). In much of the women's talk there was the suggestion that they would conduct dialogues with themselves on the issue of purchasing, as Helen's comment highlights: "Oh shall I have it, shan't I have it?" (Helen, F: 26).

Lee Comer's study of housewives entitled *Wedlocked Women* (1974) extends our understanding of the kind of financial problems which women experience when she comments that "[The housewife] feels no guilt in spending money on the children, but like skimping on the housework, it would be immoral to spend money she hasn't earned on herself." (Comer, 1974: 125). From our own interviews it became apparent that many of the women would put the clothing needs of their children above their own, as Megan commented: "...it's very rare actually that I get myself anything 'cause all my money I spend on the baby...I don't even think about myself...as long as she looks nice" (Megan, C: 8). Or as one of Comer's informants suggested: "I wouldn't dream of spending money on myself." (1974: 127).

If housewives, who have no money of their own to spend upon themselves, experience such problems when shopping, one might expect working women to occupy a different socio-economic position. If we use the Finnish data for comparison we find that even those women who were working full-time experienced problems when faced with the situation of purchasing an item which they wanted. For example, Marketa a financial planner suggested: "I've got a really conflicting attitude towards this whole thing about buying, a kind of love-hate relationship. I've got this *enormous need to buy, but then my reason says that I shouldn't.*" (Marketa, II: 13). Or as Tiina, a clerical assistant for a Finnish computer firm remarked: "I've got this education going on with myself, so practically each time I buy something *my conscience gives me a reminder*, even if I actually needed the thing and even if I had the money for it." (Tiina, III: 18).

Data from the English women interviewed confirms this conclusion of the extent to which the money that they earn is tied to the household's needs. For example, one of the women recounted how she used to shop: "I found when I lived on my own and I worked full-time and looked after myself and my daughter I used to go mad then." (Claire, D: 14). Later in the interview she was



asked if she felt guilty about spending such money, she calmly replied: "No 'cause I used to think, I'm working for this" (Claire, D: 14). However, she then commented on how she no longer would shop in this manner: "I just don't go mad at all...and yet I am still working." (Claire, D: 14). The question of why her behaviour had changed in this way was answered by one of the other women in the group: "But it's not your's any more though is it, it's ours." (Rachel, D: 14). In other words, here we have an instance of what Pahl terms an 'ideology of collectivism' (1989) in which the money which men and women earn no longer belongs to the individual but is shared and pooled for the household's requirements.

Further evidence of the extent to which the women's money was tied in this manner was reflected through the talk which focused on the extent to which they would have to justify their purchases to their partner's, regardless of whether they were working or not. For example, Teija spoke of the kind of reception she would receive when she returned home after shopping: "[He] looks at me and says, 'So you've bought new clothes again, did you have the money?'" (Teija, I: 7). In a similar fashion Heidi remarked that her partner's first question was always: "How much did it cost?" (Heidi, I: 7-8)

For the English women it became apparent that they would employ a number of strategies to overcome their economically constrained position. Evidence that the women employ other strategies to overcome their financially constrained position can be used to substantiate this claim. One such method was to not inform their partners about what they had bought, another was to hide away the clothes in their wardrobes until as one of the women commented "he's in a decent mood" (Heather, F: 8). A final strategy was to inform their partners that they had paid less for the item than they in fact had. Sometimes these strategies could be combined, as one of the women recounted:



"If I go out and buy something I've got to knock a few quid off the price when I tell the husband, I've got to wait until he's in a decent mood, that jumper I got, I waited three days before I told him I'd bought it and then I knocked fifteen quid off the price." (Heather, F: 8).

The just looking style of shopping could be interpreted as an extreme response to the women's economic position. The women's shopping style, in other words, reflects their lack of financial resources and the problems they perceive they will incur if they do spend money on themselves. Just looking under these circumstances is an escapist activity which enables the women to shop without having to budget. Alternatively we could argue that the concentration on browsing permits the women to make the most of a limited budget, since the emphasis is placed upon finding the best deal at the lowest price. In contrast that is to the men's shopping style in which attention is placed upon finding the object in the minimum of time, regardless of the extra financial expenditure which might ensue from not looking around.

I have provided evidence which has sought to explain the differing attitudes which men and women express about shopping in terms of their differing financial positions. Although such evidence must be taken into account in our search for a suitable explanation for the shopping styles it does not appear entirely convincing. Perhaps the strongest counter-argument is that this explanation of enforced shopping denies the pleasures people may derive from the process of just looking itself. Monetary resources in this manner although influencing how men and women might choose to shop, and especially when and if they can purchase anything, does not wholly explain why they shop as they do. This is so because the interviews provided us with evidence that there might be other reasons for why the women shop as they say they do. This was made clear in terms of how the women would associate the activity of shopping with meeting others or spending time with their friends.

## Shopping as an occasion to meet others

Another explanation for the way in which women take their time over the act of shopping would relate this to the probability that on such occasions they are more likely to go with others, especially female friends. Most recent sociological studies of the activity of shopping as I discussed in Chapter One have outlined this social element and its importance (Miller, 1993; Lehtonen, 1993; Beng, 1992; Gronmo and Lavik, 1988; Jansen-Verbeke, 1987). To further such research we must ask why people might want to use shopping as a means to engender social contact with others, which people speak of this factor of the experience the most and under what circumstances.

Edward Tauber in his early analysis of motives for shopping spoke of the act providing "social experiences outside the home" (1972: 48). Our own research extends this conclusion through the suggestion that it was the women, especially those confined in the home, who were most likely to use shopping as a means for meeting others. Moreover, it was the women who could be termed housewives who placed this aspect of the experience to the fore. Why may this be so? To answer both questions it is necessary to situate the shoppers with respect to their broader social lives.

If we turn to studies of the kinds of social lives which housewives lead we are given an answer to this question of why such people might seek to use shopping in this manner. Studies by Ann Oakley (1980; 1974) and Lee Comer (1974) both emphasize the social isolation which is the defining feature of the housewife role. Ann Oakley in her study asked the question "Do you ever feel as though you're on your own too much in the daytime?" (1974: 88). Twenty-two of the forty women interviewed replied by stating 'yes' to this question. How might the activity of shopping compensate for such feelings of loneliness. To answer this question we need to address the public nature of the activity of shopping. An aspect of the activity which Oakley's housewives pinpointed in



their talk of the advantages of going shopping, as the two favourable uses of this activity included 'getting out of the house' and 'meeting people' (1974: 56).

Evidence from our own interviews indicates similar uses of the act of shopping. The important distinguishing feature being that it is only women and not men who refer to such social uses of the act. For example, one of the women commented that: "I can ring a friend up and say 'Oh I'm fed up do you fancy going off and we'll go [shopping together].'" (Sharon, E: 18). Or as another women spoke of the benefits of going shopping: "you always might meet someone there and have a chat instead of staying at home...you wouldn't meet anyone would yer [you]" (Kerry, B: 7).

How does the just looking shopping style fit in with such social uses? We could suggest that the just looking style enables them to prolong the shopping trip since it is not constrained by having the necessary money to spend. In support of this conclusion we can demonstrate that the women preferred to not be looking for 'something specific' when shopping with others. In contrast the women preferred to be engaged in a range of other activities which they could share with such other women, these included having a coffee, or lunch out. Both of which enable women to spend time together and to chat. Research by Sigmund Gronmo and Randi Lavik on 'Shopping Behaviour and Social Interaction' (1988) confirms this hypothesis. They suggest that shopping trips which include this element of social interaction tend to have a longer duration than ones without this aspect (1988: 108).

For the men, there was little talk of the social uses of shopping. The men who we interviewed never spoke of shopping with other men, the only co-shoppers the men did mention were their partners and children (see Chapter Seven). For both types of shopping negative attitudes were expressed. Most of the men appeared to prefer shopping on their own, with the main effort placed not on escaping the home but on returning to it as quickly as possible.



To understand why these differences exist it is useful to compare the experience of housework with that of employed work. Ann Oakley in her study (1974) provides data which correlates work satisfaction with the number of 'social contacts'<sup>4</sup> people have. For working men and women, most types of paid employment include the likelihood that one will have others to talk to during the day. Some studies of shopping have detailed the extent to which men might use shopping as a means of meeting others. George Lewis (1990) writes of how both young male youths and the elderly use American shopping malls for the creation of social worlds, or more parochially as meeting places. In a similar fashion, Daniel Miller's (1993) research on shopping in Trinidad details the men who 'lime' in such shopping spaces. For our own data, there were no similar instances of men who would use shopping as a social activity. Moreover we must remember that for the women social interaction is derived *through* the process of shopping, whereas for the men such a use is derived from standing *outside* of this process and the very anonymity of the environment:

IR                      What do you enjoy about it [food shopping]?  
Patrick                I like, I enjoy it because firstly it's me, I'm on me own and I find it very sort of I don't know how to describe it but it's a kind of anonymous place and you know really everybody is concentrating on what they're doing and not on each other, I like it, I've always liked doing it, always found it sort of therapeutic you know you just go into a shop a big shop like *Macro* or anywhere where it's big and you know just enjoy it...sometimes I'll go when it's very busy but I haven't got the kids with me and everybody else is struggling and I'm on me own. That's, I mean that sounds really awful but I do that not on purpose but that makes me feel a bit better as well, at times you know. (2: 2).

How do working women fit into this scenario? One would expect them to talk less of the social uses of shopping than those women who were housewives. This conclusion was not however confirmed in the interviews, rather such people still engaged in the activity of shopping with their female friends. As three of the Finnish women's talk highlights: "if you go with

someone, then that's the main purpose of it [shopping]. You get to talk for the first time in a while." (Hilkka, III: 3); "[Shopping] it's a kind of form of socializing...if we go shopping, for example on Saturdays...we just talk and talk and talk." (Ulla, III: 3); "We've made it a habit with my friend to go to the centre of town during the weekend...It's fun going around like that, you're not in a hurry to be somewhere at some time. It's like leisure time when you go shopping. It's not the main thing that you've bought anything. You've just spent time and seen people" (Heidi, I: 4).

The argument that women shop as they do because of their need for social contacts has been shown to be not entirely convincing. For example, it avoids those men who are also househusbands but still appear to not use shopping in this fashion. Moreover, it is unable to account for women who are employed, and who are still concerned to include this social element within their shopping praxis. However, the fact that shopping is used in this manner does call attention to a further dimension along which the men and women also differ, this is in their access to leisure opportunities.

### **Shopping as a leisure activity**

Heidi's earlier remark on the extent to which shopping can be experienced as a form of 'leisure time' raises another difference between the men and women. This is the extent to which they perceive this activity as a form of leisure. The noticeable difference in the interviews was the greater likelihood that women would construe this activity in this manner. Studies on the leisure opportunities available to women tend to confirm and illustrate this conclusion of why women might attempt to make shopping into a form of leisure.

For the men, shopping is a functional and instrumental task. To explain why the men do not perceive shopping as leisure we need to address the



other leisure opportunities available to men. Green, Hebron and Woodward (1989) present data from both the *General Household Survey* and *NOP* research which demonstrates that men are more likely to engage in sporting activities, to go out drinking and to gamble (1989: 59). On this basis, we could argue that it is not necessary for men to use shopping as a form of leisure since they have other choices available to them.

For the women who we interviewed shopping was perceived as a form of leisure, a conclusion supported by Rosemary Deem's study of women in Milton Keynes, where she found that shopping was a popular leisure choice (1986: 53). Before this conclusion is accepted it is necessary to make one important qualification, this is that shopping is leisure for the women when it tends to not resemble work. The just looking style with its emphasis upon browsing, getting out from the home and meeting others can be interpreted as the antithesis to the housewife role.

Research from both the Sheffield (Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1989) and Milton Keynes (Deem, 1986) studies provides material on the kinds of constraints which surround the women's experience of leisure, these included lack of money, the fear of going out alone, but most importantly for the present study the disapproval of their husband's. Shopping, and more importantly the women's style of shopping with its emphasis upon browsing, appears to solve two of these problems. That is to say, shopping typically takes place during the day time within a public space in which the fear of being attacked is reduced, moreover, as we have discovered one does not necessarily have to purchase anything when one goes. The question of the influence the opinions of one's partner is likely to have upon how men and women shop will be addressed much more fully in Chapters Seven and Eight, in which the implications of such talk as an influence in its own right upon how people act is analysed.



The argument that shopping is perceived as a form of leisure for the women because of the lack of such opportunities open to them in their wider lives, whereas for the men other choices are available, is not entirely convincing. The main reason for this is that it ignores the data which pertains to the influence that the factor of gender is likely to have upon how people make sense of their own conduct. Another reason for the insufficiency of this explanation is that it ignores the data which relates to the extent to which many forms of this activity are still commonly defined as part of the women's 'work role'. Shopping by this explanation must be analysed as a form of women's work in which we examine the household division of this labour.

### **Shopping as women's work**

In Chapter One I analysed the historical literature on the topic of shopping which details how this activity came to be associated with women and through time defined as their work. This unequal distribution of the division of shopping labour was also made clear in the current study. On the whole we can conclude that the women appeared to contribute an increased amount of their labour and time to the major forms of shopping. This included food shopping, both for daily requirements and for the weekly 'bulk' shop. But also for clothes shopping, whether it be for themselves, their children or their partners. One of the female respondents illustrated the kind of responsibility she exercised over the shopping by defining it as her "job" (Patricia, C: 6).

If we take shopping for their partner's clothes as an example, thirty-four per cent of the women who were interviewed suggested that they would purchase their partner's clothes for them. As some of these women asserted: "I don't think my husband has even bought a sock." (Ruth, A: 4); "He never buys a thing for himself, not even shoes." (Elenor, E: 29); "My husband never gets his own [clothes]" (Claire, D: 22). One of the women summed up her

opinion of who shops for whom when she suggested: "Most husband's I know get their wives to shop for them." (Kathy, D: 22).

In contrast few of the male respondents suggested that they would in a similar fashion shop for their partner's clothes. Instead the only instances in which they suggested that they would purchase items for their partner's was as gifts and presents. Peter Corrigan sums up this contrast between men and women when he argues that for women purchasing clothes for their partners is very much a 'mundane' and weekly event, whereas for men it is reserved for special occasions (1989: 516).

The interviews did provide further evidence of how men manage to delegate such labour to their partners. One of the female respondents in this manner suggested: "...my husband will say, 'When you're in town or if you're going to the market get me a jumper.'" (Anne, D: 22). One of the other women was more expressive about the kind of control her partner exercised: "Mine will spot something in a magazine or something and tell me to go and get it for him." (Lisa, A: 17). This comment was quizzed by the interviewer, who asked why he could not shop for such items himself, to which she replied: "Oh no, I have to go and get it for him." (Lisa, A: 17).

Many of the men's comments illustrated the extent to which they took-for-granted the fact that their wives were shopping for them, as one of the male respondents stated: "She does a lot of shopping for my clothes" (Chris, 3: 7). Or as another of the men commented: "I think they [women] feel more responsible or one person should be more responsible for what they're buying." (Robert, 3: 24). No evidence from the interviews focused on either the extent to which men acknowledged that an unequal division of labour existed or that they were appreciative of their partner's efforts. In contrast, the men appeared to attribute this imbalance in participation to the fact that women were said to enjoy shopping more.



Shopping for their children's clothes was a similar activity which the women appeared to exercise much more responsibility over as compared to the role of the men. For the men, the only references they made about such purchasing was once again as gifts for their daughters or sons. The women in contrast spoke in greater detail of the trials and tribulations of having to shop for and with their children for their clothes.

For food shopping it was the women who once again exercised the most responsibility over this activity. This was true whether it was for daily requirements such as fresh milk or bread or for the weekly food shop. Many of the men appeared to only participate in the 'bulk shop' which as I suggested in Chapter Four would occur in a larger supermarket and would necessitate some kind of travel. The nature of male participation in this event is also revealing of the degree to which even this act is assumed to be women's work. Evidence from the interviews revealed that even on those occasions when it was the men who were performing this activity, that they would be using a list which was prepared for them by their partners, as one of the Finnish men admitted: "my wife makes a list of what we need" (Lassi, IV: 5). Or as one of the English women commented when asked how often she would shop for food: "grocery shopping well in fact very rare because my husband does it. I just give him a list." (Claire, D: 1). For these men, their role appears much more as assistants, acting under the orders of their female partners.

For other people this weekly food shop was more likely to take the form of a joint trip in which they would go together. Evidence from the interviews further suggested that even on these occasions the nature of male and female participation confirmed the conclusion that such shopping remains women's work. This was made clear through the kind of duties the men would perform as compared to the women. That is to say, the men would be pushing the trolley and carrying the bags while the women selected the food which would constitute that week's meals and dinners, as one of the respondents



remarked: "Leave them in one corner do your shopping and then give them what you've got and pay for it." (Elizabeth, A: 3).

The women's talk of the men's participation in food shopping was also represented in the men's own comments. One of the male respondents sought to explain why he goes food shopping, and how he participates in this activity:

Jim	She doesn't drive so I've no choice to go.
IR	Right, and do you actually go round with her?
Jim	Yeah I push the trolley (3: 5).

Or as another of the men explained his dissatisfaction with food shopping and why he leaves it to his partner: "[I] just can't stand it...going round supermarkets, she knows what she wants, I get things like dog food and bottles of coke, packets of crisps." (Chris, 3: 22).

For the majority of the women we interviewed their negative evaluation of food shopping can be associated with the degree to which this activity is very much 'work' and not a form of 'leisure'. Whereas for some of the men the fact that they did not have responsibility over the selection of goods and merely accompanied their partners was significant in their evaluation of this act as a form of leisure.

The fact that women are more prepared to 'make time' to shop may equally be due to the likelihood that shopping is presumed to be their responsibility. The working women thus expressed the double burden of having to work, but still having to combine this with catering for the household's needs through shopping. This does not however wholly explain the women's shopping style with the priority it places on the pleasures they gain from just looking. It also does not address why the men may be so interested in doing the shopping in the minimum of time.

## Conclusion

In this chapter the main aim has been to explain on what basis the shopping styles exist. In doing so, shopping has been situated within the larger social context of its existence. A number of factors and explanations have been analysed in the attempt to explain the shopping styles. Four such interpretations have been provided: first, that men and women shop as they do because of the differing temporal constraints in their lives; second, that this divide is related to the differential monetary resources at their disposal; third, that women use shopping as a means to facilitate contact with others and their shopping style enhances this; and four, that shopping is experienced as a leisure activity if a person has a lack of other such opportunities in their lives. The final explanation has sought to expand this framework by examining the extent to which many forms of shopping are assumed to be women's work.

All of the explanations go some way to explaining why men and women might shop as they do. All of the interpretations are supported by evidence from the shoppers own talk so it is difficult to dismiss their influence upon their behaviour. However, none of the hypotheses appear entirely convincing, and the main reason for this is that they do not go far enough in explaining why the differences between the men and women are so stark. Moreover, evidence that the styles are founded on another basis is ignored. However, the explanations do contribute to our broader understanding of the kind of factors which are likely to have an influence upon how people shop.

In the next chapter an alternative explanation for the way people talk about shopping will be outlined. This will attempt to argue that the shopping styles are not so much related to the constraints which surround people's objective experience, rather to understand such differences it is necessary to attend to the values and attitudes which inform people's preferences and behaviour.

## Notes

- 1 For the current study 'free time' is defined as that time which an individual can choose to spend as they wish.
- 2 Unfortunately, the Henley centre (1991) material does not define the term 'free time', but presumably for them it refers to time which is not assigned to duties such as cleaning, cooking, paid work and travel to and from work.
- 3 The 'housekeeping' is a term employed to define the sum of money which is set aside for the daily living expenses of the household. This would thus include money for the payment of bills, for food, and the clothing of one's children, partner or self.
- 4 Ann Oakley defines 'social contacts' as "any individual, not a residential member of the housewife's family, with whom she experiences social interaction." (1974: 90).



## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **IDEOLOGIES OF SHOPPING**

#### **Introduction**

In the last chapter an analysis was provided of the range of factors which may explain the different shopping styles exhibited by men and women. The shopping act was in this way situated with respect to the hypothesized social, economic and personal circumstances which may have an influence upon how people shop. In the light of the evidence provided it was concluded that although such factors as time and money may have an influence upon how people construe shopping they do not wholly explain the variations expressed between men and women.

Are there any other explanations which might explain the differing conceptions of shopping which men and women hold? A final interpretation is that the attitudes, values and beliefs about shopping serve a ideological function. Shopping by this account is embedded in an ideological framework which is related to the gendered and feminine status of the act. In other words, men and women have certain expectations of how they should behave as 'men' and 'women' when shopping. Rowena Chapman expresses this idea when she suggests: "Gender stereotypes are the bearers of ideology, the channels by which power replicates itself, the means by which behaviour is ascribed." (1988: 235). The notion of ideologies of shopping will be employed in this chapter to make sense of the variations in the men's and women's comments about shopping.

## Attitudes toward shopping

In the interviews the men and women were asked about their general attitude to shopping. Their responses to this question of 'do you like shopping' differed to such an extent that it is necessary to take these variations seriously and attempt to account for why they appear so pronounced.

Attitudes toward shopping range along a number of dimensions. These include attitudes towards such attributes of the retail environment as the decor of the store, the staff in the shops and other shoppers. Differing attitudes were also expressed toward the many forms of shopping, for example, when they shopped for clothes, or food, or things for the 'home'. In the last chapter we examined the extent to which the men's and women's attitudes to the questions of time and money also varied. Attitudes were also expressed toward the act of shopping itself, that is the form the trip itself took, i.e. how many shops were frequented, how long was spent etc., but also toward the general importance of this act through evaluations of its significance to their lives. Before we attend to these crucial variations it is necessary to take account of previous research and findings on this selfsame topic of attitudes toward shopping.

Myriam Jansen-Verbeke in her analysis of 'Women, shopping and leisure' (1987) sets out to challenge the contemporary belief that shopping appeals more to women than men (1987: 71). In support of this claim Jansen-Verbeke presents material from two surveys conducted in the Netherlands on the men's and women's different attitudes to shopping. Jansen-Verbeke argues that with respect to such retail attributes as the variety of shops, the importance of the store decor, and the number of catering facilities men and women do not differ to any considerable extent<sup>1</sup>.



Data provided by a recent Gallup Poll (Keynote, 1992a) tends to confirm Jansen-Verbeke's conclusions. For example, 79% of men and 77% of women consider friendly staff an important attribute of shops; 53% of men and 51% of women prefer a wide range of products when shopping and 56% of men and 62% of women want speedy service at the check-out counter.

How are we to understand the lack of any significant gender differences in both the Jansen-Verbeke and Gallup studies? To answer this question it is necessary to turn to our own results. On the whole confirmation for both the Jansen-Verbeke and Gallup findings can be deduced from the data. That is to say, men and women tend to offer similar attitudes with respect to such factors as the importance of the store environment, their view of the retail staff, and other shoppers. With respect to attitudes toward the retail environment both men and women agreed upon the importance of this aspect of the experience. Men and women were however largely negative about the staff they encountered in shops: "You don't get a chance to look" (Elenor, E: 21); "They're never there when you want them." (Sue, A: 31); or as one of the men echoed these sentiments: "I don't like the assistants that jump on to you" (Jim, 3: 12). Moreover, both men and women appeared to dislike another aspect of the experience of shopping, this was when it was crowded with other shoppers, especially on a Saturday (see Chapter Six).

This degree of attitudinal convergence between the men and women does however serve to conceal an important area in which they do differ. The fundamental difference between men and women occurs with respect to their attitudes towards the processes of shopping itself, and more importantly how they believe the act *should be* accomplished. That is, with respect to such practical considerations as how much time should the act take, and how many shops should be frequented, but also more evaluative considerations such as the importance which is ascribed to this act.



## What the men think about shopping

As outlined in Chapter Four, the men's attitude toward shopping was generally negative. They tended to construe shopping as a 'chore' or 'necessity'. This was also reflected in their attitudes toward the act, as the following men's talk confirms: "I can't be bothered." (Bob, 2: 12); "I find it very tedious." (Roger, 1: 5); "I do it begrudgingly" (Andrew, 1: 7); "Clothes shopping I can't stand." (Ben, 3: 7).

Such men who expressed an aversion toward particular types of shopping were joined by others who appeared generally indifferent toward the whole activity of shopping, as one of them explains:

"I just go because you've got to do it, it's not something I enjoy or dislike, it's just something to do, you know you've got to eat so you just do it." (Tim, 2: 3).

For the majority of the men, a general aversion toward the act or practice (see Chapter Four) of shopping was expressed. This can be illustrated in terms of their dissatisfaction with the process of looking itself:

IR	The process of going round, going up and down the aisles and selecting the items you don't mind that?
Ben	Uck [expression of disapproval], I don't desperately...I don't like it, but if it's the things that I want you know beans I quite like it but the rest of it I find a chore. (3: 4).

In other words, it is the process of looking for goods, or as one of the men aptly expressed "shopping for 'em" (Terry, 3: 8), that they dislike the most. Concomitant with such attitudes was the dissatisfaction they expressed with the process of browsing, and the ways they sought to conduct their shopping through other means, as the following men's quotes illustrate: "I like to browse at home [by using catalogues]" (Ben, 3: 25); "I like shopping on the phone." (Daniel, 1: 9).

The men's aversion to the process of shopping is further illustrated through their talk of how they dislike shopping with their partners. An aspect which will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Eight where we attend to the topic of joint shopping.

### **What the women think about shopping**

For the women we interviewed a wholly different conception and perception of the act of shopping was illustrated. In contrast to the men's negative attitudes the women spoke much more favourably about this activity. The central contrast was with respect to their willingness and preference for browsing activity: "I like to look" (Carrie, B: 22); "I like to look round" (Pamela, C: 35); "I like to browse, yes even if I'm not buying I do like to look round" (Kerry, B: 2).

This female preference was expressed through both the number of stores which they were likely to frequent (see Chapter Five) and in terms of the kinds of shopping they preferred. For the men, favourite types of shopping included shopping for music, computers and electronic equipment, and the few men who enjoyed food shopping. For the women, a far greater diversity of types of shopping which they enjoyed was marked. The ones spoken about included for 'kiddies clothes', craft stalls, bookshops, kitchen shops, perfume and jewellery and finally the most 'favourite' type clothes shopping.

In Chapter Six an analysis was provided which sought to interpret such differences between men and women as the outcome of the varying social, economic and personal circumstances which may constrain their choices. Perhaps a more convincing and straightforward explanation for the differences would be to argue that men and women prefer to shop as they do. The shopping styles in this way have much more to do with their preferences toward how shopping is conducted rather than the constraints imposed upon



them by such factors as time, money and other people. For example, in the last chapter we observed the efforts the women would make to go shopping, by attempting to resolve the dilemmas produced by the constraints of time and money. Women under this interpretation "make time to shop"; whereas men are more likely to find reasons for not going. In this manner, we can understand such efforts as equally produced by their preferences, and the importance they ascribe to this act, rather than simply the constraints placed upon them. However it is also possible that the men's and women's attitudes to shopping serve other uses, these are clearly suggested and illustrated in terms of the differing evaluations men and women make about the act.

### **The men's evaluation of shopping**

For many of the men a stance which sought to attach little value to the act of shopping was typical. This was achieved through their suggestion that shopping was merely about satisfying one's needs (see Chapter Five); but also through their more explicit statements which devalued the actual process of shopping. Comments which tended to suggest that pleasure was not something the men associated with this activity. This became most evident when the men were asked about how important the act of shopping was to them. One of the men replied to this question by stating: "If the goods appeared I think you wouldn't miss going shopping...it's way down on my list." (Chris, 3: 27). Other men ranked going for a drink in a 'pub' or watching television above shopping in terms of the enjoyment such activities offered to them.

The men's talk and prescriptions for how to shop represent the strongest evidence we have for the lack of importance and value men attach to the act of shopping. For the men, as we discovered in Chapter Four, they attempt to argue that they will only participate in this activity if and when they



need something specific: "I shop just when I need 'owt [anything]" (Grant, 1: 2); "...if I don't want anything which can be for many many months at a time I just don't go shopping." (Ben, 3: 27); "I wouldn't do any shopping if I didn't have to." (Daniel, 1: 9). In other words, we can interpret the men's unwillingness to spend time shopping, their efforts to purchase what they want in the first store which they go into, and their attempts to conduct this activity as quickly as possible as a reflection of the low and negative evaluation which they hold toward this act.

### **The women's evaluation of shopping**

The women's favourable attitudes to shopping are similarly reflected in the importance they ascribe and attach to this activity. If the men appear to attach little importance to this act, the women in contrast attach far greater importance to shopping, as illustrated when one of the women stated: "I live for shopping...That's all I do...I haven't time for anything else." (Patricia, C: 2). Or as one of the Finnish women expressed: "I like shopping for clothes" (Heidi, I: 5). When asked how often she would go she replied "any time". This same question was asked of the men their reply highlights how they view shopping: "only when I need something".

When asked specifically about how important shopping was to them the women tended to respond far more favourably than the men previously quoted.

IR	Would you regard say going shopping into the city centre to buy clothes for yourself as pleasant as what can we say, going to the cinema to watch a film, having a meal out?
Kay	Yes
Kerry	Possibly more so (B: 4).

Another woman who was interviewed individually replied to the question of how important shopping was to her whole life by stating: "I'd be disappointed if I could never go shopping again." (H: 13).

The women's shopping style itself attempts to argue for the increased importance of this act to their daily lives. This is witnessed with respect to their efforts to argue that shopping should be understood as an experience (see Chapter Four), but also with respect to the importance they attach to finding the right item, even if this means looking in every store in town, and taking a whole day.

### **Shopping as a gendered activity**

How are we to explain these variations in terms of: first, the men's and women's attitudes to shopping; second, their evaluations of its importance; and third, how they say they will conduct this activity? A final explanation for the contrast between the men's and women's attitudes, evaluations and shopping styles would be to relate such differences to the gendered status of this activity. In Chapter Two studies of the history of shopping were documented, the one significant feature of such analyses is the conspicuousness of women in this sphere. This is not surprising since in classical capitalist societies masculine identity has become inextricably tied to the breadwinner role, whereas the role commonly assigned to women has been that of the consumer (Fraser, 1987). Peter Lunt and Sonia Livingstone's (1992) analysis of shopping confirms this suggestion, with the notion of wives acting as the shopping agents for their partners since the coming of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. Ann Oakley's (1974) analysis of the duties and responsibilities of the modern housewife echoes this conclusion. Colin Campbell's (1993b) analysis of shopping is more explicit when he suggests that the consumer role is associated with the female role; whereas the male



role is defined in terms of the 'breadwinner' (1993b: 4). Media images of the consumer also tend to reflect this gender division (see Appendix Two).

What are the implications of this traditional view of shopping and the consumer role? How do they fit with what has already been said about the way men and women construe the activity of shopping. A final explanation for these variations is the suggestion that the ideas men and women hold about shopping are a corollary to this gendered status since they serve a number of specific uses and functions which will be outlined in this and the next chapter. Before this analysis can proceed it is necessary to introduce the concept of ideology which will be used as a heuristic tool in this examination.

### **Using the concept of ideology**

To understand and make sense of what the men and women say about shopping it is necessary to introduce the concept of ideology. This term has a very long and checkered history within sociological analyses of modern capitalism<sup>2</sup>. In this manner, it is necessary to provide a schematic guide of such previous uses to avoid unnecessary confusion and ambiguity. Moreover, such a discussion will make easier the task of clarifying the uses to which the term will be put in our own analysis of the act of shopping.

John B. Thompson's history of the concept of ideology (1994) is useful for our understanding of this term. Thompson discusses how the term originated with the writing of Destutt de Tracy at the end of the eighteenth century with his attempt to define a 'science of ideas'. It was subsequently used by Napoleon in a much more pejorative way in his critique of the 'ideologues'. However, it is with the writings of Karl Marx that much contemporary understanding of the term originates. For Marx, the term is associated with the ideas of the ruling class, and the 'false consciousness' which is the product of an individual's class position. In addition, Marx



suggests that ideologies represent a partial view of the world which generalize the limited interests of the ruling class into universally accepted ones, to produce a version of reality which is intrinsically distorted. Moreover, ideas by this estimation serve the function of legitimating, but more importantly disguising and mystifying their domination. John B. Thompson succinctly details this usage when he argues: *"to study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of domination."* (1994: 56, italics in original).

For Marx, such domination is always tangled up in class relationships or the sphere of economic production. Other theorists have sought to reapply Marx's notion to the arena of gender relations. Michelle Barrett's analysis of *Women's Oppression Today* (1988) is a case in point, where she examines the ideological constraints surrounding women's experience. However, in a later examination of the term and its general applicability, Michelle Barrett cautions against the use of the term due to its "dubious resonances" (1991: 168), namely the affinity between ideology and class interest. Michel Foucault in an interview entitled 'Truth and Power' (1988) also provides cause for concern when he criticises the use of the concept on three grounds. For Foucault,

"The notion of ideology appears to me to be difficult to make use of, for three reasons. The first is that, like it or not, it always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth. Now I believe that the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false. The second drawback is that the concept of ideology refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject. Thirdly, ideology stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant" (1988: 118).

Foucault thus concludes that the term should not be used "without circumspection" (1988: 118).

In the current analysis it is argued that it is the very "resonances" of the term which are beneficial to our understanding of shopping. The continuing appeal and value of the concept is however dependent on the concept being purged of its Marxian past. The implicit suggestion in Marx's account of the ideas of the ruling class is that they appear to exist within a one-way system of domination. Subsequent conceptualisations have sought to revise this notion since it is unable to deal with social change, conflict and resistance. Louis Althusser, for example, distinguishes between 'dominant' and 'dominated' ideologies. That is to say, dominated ideologies may within a certain context give expression to the grievances of exploited classes (Larrain, 1979: 157). The Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci, in a similar fashion employs the term 'hegemony'. For Gramsci, "it is untrue that all individual opinions have 'exactly equal weight. Ideas and opinions are not spontaneously 'born' in each individual brain; they have had a centre of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, of persuasion" (1986: 200).

Pierre Bourdieu prefers the term 'symbolic power' to that of ideology, he defines this concept as "a power of constituting the given through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world" (1992b: 170). For Bourdieu, like Marx, such 'cultural capital' is always employed in the service of the competing classes, as he himself graphically details in his analysis of taste in *Distinction* (1992a). For Bourdieu, in this manner, classes are said to be "engaged in a symbolic struggle...one aimed at imposing the definition of the social world that is best suited to their interests." (1992b: 167). The salience of such ideas for the analysis of gender relations within the shopping act will be a question which will concern the current analysis in this and the next chapter.



## **Ideologies of shopping**

How are we to understand these many different uses in the context of shopping and how can they further our understanding of the processes at work? The question of the usefulness of the term centres on the extent to which it enables us to examine the act of shopping in terms of wider sociological concerns. Hitherto analysis of the act of shopping has remained absent from sociological inquiry (see Chapter One). Talk of shopping as an arena of struggle by this evaluation strikes one as somewhat novel. For shopping, as I have demonstrated the crucial questions pertain to its gendered status. That is, the way in which the consumer role is associated with women in modern society and how men may respond to this situation. The other value of the concept of ideologies of shopping is that it enables us to explore questions pertaining to the balance of power between the sexes and how this is enacted in the shopping act.

'Ideologies of shopping' perform an evaluative function. This is supported by a pejorative and more disparaging usage to which such ideas are put. This was illustrated through the extent to which they served to condemn and belittle what others believe and how they might behave when shopping. Ideologies by this analysis are conflictual, negotiated in a dialectic with how and what others think. In the shopping context this is understood as the struggle over the importance and meaning of shopping, but also in terms of how the act itself should be conducted. For example, if we take Marx's notion of ideologies as offering a partial and distorted account of the way things are, we can argue that for shopping the conflict is expressed in terms of people's attitudes, beliefs and evaluations of this act, but more importantly through the comments men and women offer about each other's behaviour.

The concept of ideologies of shopping also has another usage, this is the sense in which the term is employed to refer to beliefs, attitudes and



opinions which form a 'set' (*Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, 1986). Under this more general usage, people's ideas about shopping could be analysed as acting as a kind of philosophy. Colin Campbell (1993b) employs just such a usage in his account of the same data set, where he argues that such beliefs and attitudes serve a particular purpose of "defin[ing] and justify[ing] the activity in ways which are pre-eminently masculine and hence can function to counter its popular and widespread feminine image." (1993b: 7). Ideologies by this evaluation enable people to make sense of their own conduct by reference to wider cultural norms of behaviour. Men's and women's comments and evaluations about this act can thus be linked to broader conceptions of masculinity and femininity. It is toward a more in depth analysis of this usage that this study now turns.

### **Men and the masculine ideology of shopping**

Nancy Fraser (1987) in a critique of Jurgen Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action* makes an interesting and important point about men and the consumer role, she suggests: "Men occupy it with *conceptual strain and cognitive dissonance*, much as women occupy the role of worker." (1987: 43, italics added). Cognitive dissonance is a psychological term which refers to "an emotional state set up when two simultaneously held attitudes or cognitions are inconsistent or when there is a conflict between belief and overt behaviour." (*Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, 1985). The masculine ideology of shopping with its typical devaluation of this act thus hints at the kind of relationship they have with this act. Their comments thus can be seen to fulfil the function of resolving the conflict they may feel when shopping, or expressing attitudes toward this act.

The men's ideology of shopping can thus be perceived as enabling men to participate in this activity but in a qualitatively different way than how

they believed women would in order to displace the "conceptual strain and cognitive dissonance" (Fraser, 1987: 43) which they may feel when doing women's work. Colin Campbell argues a similar point when he suggests that such ideas about shopping enable men "to shop without endangering their masculine image" (Campbell, 1993b: 7). In this manner, the struggle over the meaning and importance of this activity, and the question of how it should be conducted exists as proof of the gendered nature of this act.

Data which is consistent with this argument can be found in the work of Ann Oakley. In her study of the lives of housewives, she argues: "There are husbands who will not go in shops, husbands who will go in shops but who will not carry the shopping bag for fear of being labelled 'effeminate'." (1974: 93)

On this basis we can argue that the men's attitudes and evaluations serve to protect their cognitive interpretation of the act (Blackburn, 1988: 227). For example, their devaluations create a context in which it is permissible for them to stand outside from the act. This is represented in their discourse through their argument that the act is unworthy of their time and participation. but it is also present in their talk of their own actions, in terms of those men who do not enter clothes shops or other such places for fear of being labelled a "plonker" (Terry, 3: 25). This is consistent with the frequent observation which is made that men typically stand outside of shops. A recent article in *The Times* entitled 'Men trail along as wives relish another M & S day' lends support to this conclusion. As Kate Alderson (1994) explains: "On seats for the infirm and tired to rest upon, men took up their customary Saturday afternoon perch, laden with shopping bags and uninterested in their wives' and girlfriends' purchases." (1994: 2).

Erving Goffman's term of 'role distance' which he employed in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1990) to express the subjective detachment which performers may adopt from a social role. This term is useful for understanding the men's views and behaviour since it illustrates the



kind of 'distance' which they appear to desire from the act of shopping. For Goffman, such distance takes a behavioural form, for example a student reading Tolstoy whilst sweeping the floor, however the data from the current study allows us no direct observation of people's everyday behaviour. This is not a significant problem since the interview material provides us with linguistic expressions which illustrate that the men attempt a similar degree of detachment.

### **Shopping disclaimers**

Fraser's suggestion that men who occupy the consumer role may experience what she terms "conceptual strain and cognitive dissonance" (1987: 43) is expanded but also qualified in important ways if we turn to our own interviews. The suggestion that men experience difficulties in admitting to others that they enjoy certain aspects of shopping was illustrated through the disclaimers with which the men preface their statements of preferences.

Under certain circumstances shopping as a pleasurable activity appeared readily acceptable and permissible to the other men in the groups. This was especially so if the goods they were looking at were of a technical nature. The collection *Technology and Women's Voices* (1988) edited by Cheris Kramarae illustrates the male appropriation of the technical sphere<sup>3</sup>. For shopping, we can add that it is the men who were more interested in browsing for a very specific kind of technological goods. The male respondents did not refer to shopping for domestic technology such as dishwashers or fridges. Instead the majority of their talk was centred on typically defined 'black' consumer goods such as hi-fi's and televisions, or computers. As one of the male respondents referred to this gender division in his attempt to define what interests him: "our's are more technical stuff whereas their's isn't" (Jim, 3: 24).



However, if the source of pleasure was derived from more female preoccupations such as browsing for aesthetic items such as clothing a conflict arose in which the traditional conception of masculinity appeared to be threatened. The consequences of this situation were made clear when one of the men stated: "I'm almost as bad as she is cause I like to go round different [clothes shops]." (Jim, 3: 7). In this instance, Jim assumes an interest in clothes shopping is 'bad', although he qualifies his statement with the word 'almost'.

Another example was more explicit in terms of the association which was made between finding shopping pleasurable and "effeminate" or unmanly behaviour. This was when one of the men spoke in a similar way of how he enjoyed purchasing a dinner set: "I bought/*sounds really pouffe*/but I bought a dinner set a while back...I've fancied a nice one for quite some time" (Phillip, 2: 22)<sup>4</sup>. In this instance we need to address why Phillip hesitates and feels it is necessary to add the "disclaimer" (Semin and Manstead, 1982) phrase "*sounds really pouffe*" when talking about the pleasure he gained to others. Semin and Manstead argue that such talk usually precedes a "potentially offensive act" (1983: 76). Their function being to dissipate negative evaluations in advance or as Semin and Manstead argue: "they seek to excuse or justify the forthcoming act in advance" (1983: 78). In this case what the speaker clearly feels might be regarded as an offensive act is the admission that he enjoyed shopping for a dinner service. Phillip's talk and that of the other men we have analysed performs such a function, that is, through labelling their own behaviour as in some way deviant they serve to preempt others doing so. Phillip's expression '*sounds really pouffe*' is also useful in illustrating the extent to which he realises that it is the other men in the group who might view his opinion with suspicion. In this respect we can utilise Scott and Lyman's discussion of accounts, which as they argue serve as a "linguistic device employed whenever an action is subjected to valiative enquiry." (1968:

46). Phillip's previously discussed remark can in this manner be understood to highlight that he considers that his behaviour and attitudes might be seen as deviant by the other members of the group. Consequently we could conclude that such disclaimers do not relate to the strain or dissonance men might feel toward the act itself, but to the difficulties they have in expressing such preferences amongst other men. Their disclaimers make visible the notion of a masculine stereotype or ideology of shopping which they are aware that they could be considered to be transgressing.

The gendered status of shopping is expressed in discussion with other men, where they are exposed to their 'valuative enquiry' (Scott and Lyman, 1968). For example, we must remember that all their comments were uttered in groups ranging from four to eight other men<sup>5</sup>. We could suggest that such comments serve to placate and conciliate such others since they expect the other men in the groups to react to their statements negatively. For example, the context for Jim's comment was a group of six other men, many of whom had already stated that they disliked the activity of clothes shopping. For example, Ben had suggested, "I can't stand clothes shopping" and Stephen had remarked "Clothes shopping I can't stand." (3: 7).

Consequently it is comments such as these which establish the consensus view of the group on the gendered status of shopping as an activity. The men's comments which counter this group norm are thus prefaced by such "disclaimer" statements. A final example will illustrate this point, in this instance one of the men replied: "I don't find that as bad actually *strangely enough* I don't mind going round town looking in the shops." (Robert, 3: 5). It is Robert's 'strangely enough' phrase which reveals the extent to which he is framing his response to what past participants have said. In this case, it was Ben's forthright assertion that clothes shopping was "the pits" (3: 5). Once again, a man anticipates that other men may perceive his attitudes toward shopping as deviant or "strange".



## **The pejorative use of Ideas about shopping**

To date, we have examined the extent to which people's ideas about shopping served the function of legitimating their own conduct. In addition to this use, ideologies also appeared to serve as a means of disparaging and denigrating the conduct of others. This aspect was made clear through the kinds of criticisms which the men and women offered about each other's shopping conduct. For example, when asked if they thought men or women shopped any differently from themselves both the men and women offered a general stereotype of each other's behaviour.

## **The men's criticisms of women as shoppers**

When asked if they thought women shopped any differently from themselves the men who we interviewed replied by stating a number of clear lines of contrast. As one might expect, given the priority placed upon time in the men's shopping style, the most significant difference for many of the men was the greater amount of time which women would spend shopping, the number of stores which they would frequent and whether or not they would purchase anything, as Peter's dissatisfaction toward shopping with his partner illustrates:

"I hate going shopping with her [his partner] because she insists on going in every single shop in Leeds, trying on hundreds of things and not buying anything." (Peter, 2: 5).

In this instance, a man evaluates his partners shopping style as a waste of time because of the increased number of stores that she feels it is necessary to



look in and the fact that she does not buy anything even after having visited all these retail outlets.

The division which the men highlighted between themselves and how women in general would shop thus centred on the issue of how shopping should be conducted; or as one of the men stated: "I think women like to browse around and look at things, whereas men tend to go and get what they want." (Stephen, 3: 23). This respondents comment lacks an evaluative element in his appraisal of his partner's behaviour, other men were more outspoken in their condemnation of shopping together. For example, men spoke of how such shopping would "drive" them "mad" (Robert, 3: 4) or "absolutely potty" (Ben, 3: 4) because of their partner's "dilly dallying" (Richard, 3: 23).

The men's evaluations of the shopping conduct of the women were employed in a pejorative manner. This was most in evidence when they sought to explain why women shop as they do. For the men, the women's shopping style was not attributed to the pleasures which women gained from the experience of shopping, but explained as a product of their partner's indecision. Or as one of the men suggested: "They need so much reassurance that it's the right thing, they'll go somewhere else and somewhere else" (Aidan, 1: 34). Or as another man commented on his role in such decision-making situations: "...my wife likes me to be involved with it [shopping] as well because she doesn't have confidence in her own taste." (Bob, 2: 23). One of the men in Group One stated matter-of-factly "it seems a major task for women to make up their minds over something." (1: 34).

This issue of how the men interpreted the women's shopping style as the product of their inability to make up their minds was illustrated through those men who spoke of how their partner's would 'go back to the first shop'. As one of the men commented: "[She] goes back to the first shop and buys the first thing she tried on." (Tim, 2: 5). One of the Finnish men implied that

women are day-dreamers because they waste time through going shopping: "The sales at Stockmann's seem to be very close to their hearts...but there isn't any way to get me to go there...when I go there I know what I'm getting so I take it and go pay for it, I don't go there just to finger things 'Oh how lovely this would be.'" (Marko, IV: 23). Marko begins by defining his own stance toward shopping, which places a priority on 'knowing' what he wants, and then uses this framework to critique how his partner does shop, with her preference for merely 'fingering'.

In contrast, the men appeared concerned to argue that they could shop for items in less time than their partners. For example, one of the men suggested: "we could spend four hours clothes shopping for her." (Peter, 2: 5). Another man was more explicit in the comparison: "when we did go into town we could both be going for something, I could say within twenty minutes I've got mine...[and then] four hours later we're still looking [for her's]." (Daniel, 1: 34). The crucial aspect of such assertions appeared to be the attempt by the men to argue that their views and behaviour was more rational than the women's.

This theme was similarly repeated in terms of the men's argument that women are wasteful shoppers with respect to not only the time which they spend shopping, but also their views on how women spend money. For many the myth of the extravagant wife spending her husband's money still seemed to prevail, for example, one of the men stated: "I've always found that if they [women] wanted a skirt or something, used to give her twenty quid and I would never see a penny of that twenty quid, if I gave her a tenner she would be happy with that." (Frank, 1: 35). Or as another of the men reflected on his parent's experience: "...my dad's come home with this certain wage at the end of the week, he's given her the housekeeping and she's taken twenty quid out and she's gone and shopped, bought less on food...and then gone and bought herself something" (Roger, 1: 35).



The fact that men appear unwilling or unable to perceive that women obtain pleasure from the act of shopping is significant. It illustrates what Dale Spender refers to as a kind of 'tunnel vision' (in Kramarae, 1988: 26). The importance of the men's interpretation resides in their acceptance of a one-sided or biased definition of shopping. The women's action are perceived through an ideological framework. A perception which would be put at risk if they accepted the women's interpretation, since this would mean that there was a flaw in their own logic and conduct. In this respect we can employ the ideas of Boudon and Bourricaud to enable us to make sense of what the men are doing: "The actor who wishes to persuade himself of the truth of his beliefs tends to accept at face value any 'theory'...which 'proves' their validity. This is why any belief carries with it the risk of intolerance." (1989: 210). The men's beliefs by this account seek to frame the women's attitudes, evaluations and shopping behaviour as illogical and they assert their own difference from how they believe such others will perceive, construe and accomplish their shopping. At this point it is helpful to introduce Jonathan Rutherford's assertion of the dialectical nature of masculinity, which is said to "be given meaning through its culturally constructed difference from femininity." (1992: 76).

The degree of difference between how men believe they behave and how they believe women are said to act is fundamental in the process of constructing a 'masculine' identity. Men appear to be distinguishing appropriate masculine behaviour and the degree of fit between how they themselves behave. Moreover, this appears to be acted out on a daily basis which in the interviews was expressed through those situations in which men and women do shop together. Evidence that this may be the case can be gleaned from those instances in which men spoke of how they refused to go shopping with their partners: "I never go clothes shopping with my wife." (Bob, 2: 5); "I used to look around the shops more with my wife... but I mean of late



I've just let her go to town with her friends." (Ben, 3: 21). One of the major reasons given was the suggestion that the women's shopping style would impinge upon how the men believed shopping should be conducted. A point which will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Eight.

The men's views of the obstacles their partner's presented to how they shopped were similarly reflected in the women's comments about how men shop. That is to say, the men's criticisms did not appear to be taken without a fight, the women in other words sought to offer a counter 'theory' which centred on the value and importance of shopping. It is toward an understanding of the kinds of criticisms which the women make about men that the analysis now turns.

### **The women's criticisms of men as shoppers**

When asked if they thought men shopped any differently from themselves the women who we interviewed replied by stating a number of clear lines of division. Much of their talk focused upon the difficulties experienced when shopping together. As some of the women's comments illustrate: "They rush you about don't they just to get you out of the shop." (Katherine, F: 3); "if he comes with me and I'm getting a new outfit for myself every outfit I try on he says 'Yes that's nice'...really he means yes lets hurry up and lets get home." (Lisa, A: 17); "...if I take mine all he does is stand at the side of me...going 'For God's sake just get one [mimics him huffing and puffing]." (Sheila, C: 5); "we have to get it over with quickly, can't stay and think about anything too long." (Eeva, V: 20). Shopping with one's partner was thus termed 'difficult' and many of the problems appear to stem from the way men expect their partners to 'just get' an item, that is with the minimum of browsing. Many of the women, like the men, stated that they would not shop

with their partners because of these problems: "I don't go with my husband to go shopping, no chance." (Heather, F: 3).

The women offered a clear image of men's attitudes toward shopping and how they preferred to shop in a manner which mirrors and reinforces the male shopping style outlined above. In terms of the men's attitudes to shopping, these are illustrated by the following women: "He doesn't like shopping at all." (Anne, D: 22); "I think my husband is just not interested [in shopping]" (Alison, B: 24); "I don't think they [men] like the idea of shops." (Betty, D: 22). Some of the women even repeated this theme that men only shop when they 'need' a particular item: "He only goes to a clothes shop if he needs to buy something." (Virpi, V: 9); "He only buys a thing when he needs it." (Tuula, V: 19).

The women also revealed their knowledge of how their partners or men in general would shop: "They'll just go and pick something up and walk out." (Alison, B: 24); "They see something they like, buy it and that's it." (Megan, C: 35); "They tend to go to one shop and make sure they come out [with something]." (Lisa, A: 17).

In terms of offering an explanation for why men shop as they do, many of the women implied that it was due to a lack of interest on the part of their partners or men in general. For example, Lisa commented that: "I don't think they've got the patience to walk from one shop to another like we do." (Lisa, A: 17). Or as Marketa remarked: "Men don't go shopping, because they get bored of buying clothes." (H: 2). The inference here is that men are indifferent to shopping, or as one of the women stated in stronger terms: "I think they're just lazy." (Kay, B: 23). Consequently the correct way to shop is as the women do.

This theme was reflected when the women were asked more explicitly about whether they thought men knew how to shop. On the whole the women tended to offer negative evaluations for the shopping capabilities of their



partners, for example, one of the women replied to this question with the following remark: "He thinks he does. He's in and out in an hour" (Pamela, C: 34). Or as another women asserted: "He thinks you should go to one shop find what you want and buy it." (Carrie, B: 25).

Implicit in such remarks is a sense in which the women feel that the men's shopping style is illogical. Some of the women were more explicit about their antagonism toward the logic of the male style. One of the main criticisms was that it denies the need to browse for items: "He can't understand that you've got to compare or to look to see if you see anything better at the other shops." (Carrie, B: 25).

Another criticism which the women offered about their partner's shopping style was that because it did not include the process of browsing it was uneconomic. For example, as the following women concur:

Megan	I don't think they care about money either. You know they see something they like, buy it and that's it. Whereas if I saw something I liked I might think well...
Pamela	You might be able to find it cheaper somewhere else.
Megan	That's right and have a look round, but they have no idea about money (C: 35).

The women's argument that men are wasteful shoppers was reiterated in the Finnish transcripts. For example, some of the women remarked: "Men can't do it properly...if you send them food shopping they'll buy expensive eggs even though there are some for a reduced price next to them." (Tiina, I: 23); "My husband, he spends a lot more money doing it. I buy much more economically than he does." (Heidi, I: 23).

By this evaluation both men and women appear concerned to argue that their opposite is irrational with respect to their views of shopping and how they conduct this activity.



## Women who devalue men who enjoy to shop

Having outlined the extent to which women appeared dissatisfied with the way men shop one would expect that the women would be pleased if men professed pleasure for shopping. This point appears particularly salient given the pleasure that they themselves derive from going shopping. However, it was made clear in the interviews, that just like the men tend to castigate other men who enjoy the process of shopping, some women would perceive men in a similar fashion.

One of the women, for example, spoke of her husband's shopping behaviour in this way: "Paul, Oh God he'll go in and say 'I like them, what do you think?' That's nice put it on. 'Oh I'm not sure' and he will go in every shop in town for a shirt." (Sheila, C: 35). For this woman, the fact that her husband takes an interest in buying the right clothes is not met with jubilation, but frustration. For Sheila, the main problem appears to be that he does not shop as she believes he should, rather he shops in her own words "*like a woman would*" (C: 35).

Other examples repeated this theme of the dissatisfaction which women felt toward men who did enjoy shopping. For example, the women referred to men, usually young men, who enjoyed to shop as "as bad as girls" (Betty, D: 23). Another woman echoed this theme when she defined such men as "worse than girls" (Claire, D: 23). Moreover, once again the notion that an interest in this activity is negative is highlighted since the women appear to be denigrating their own pleasures (see Chapter Eight). The women, as the men did earlier, were more likely to quiz men who spoke of their preference for shopping.

We need to ask ourselves why is it that some women appear dissatisfied when men do enjoy shopping. Ann Oakley's study of *The Sociology of Housework* (1974) has data which suggests a similar conclusion,

which is that some women are not particularly enamoured with men who enjoy activities which are traditionally associated with women. For example, one of Oakley's informants asserted: "I don't agree with men doing housework - I don't think it's a man's job...I like a man to be a man." (1974: 93).

This apparent anomaly and inconsistency on the part of the women disappears if we regard the women's comments as serving an ideological function. For example, we could suggest that some women want men to be men, and the traditional differentiation of gender roles maintained. Moreover, we could argue that the conflict in terms of how shopping should be conducted grants the women a basis on which to criticise the behaviour of men, consequently if men change (or women admitted that men had changed) they would lose this resource. Another ideological explanation for the dissatisfaction women feel toward men who enjoy shopping is the suggestion that women gain a number of benefits from the activity. These include the potential empowering situation of deciding what one wants or what the family eats and wears and the autonomy which this provides them with. Consequently, they seek to defend their predominance and interests from the incursion of men and the main means by which this can be achieved is through the criticisms which they offer. Women by this evaluation could be said to have an ideological 'interest' in maintaining the differences between how they and men act since they serve to preserve the exclusive nature of shopping as a woman's sphere. A point which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

However, a possible weakness in this line of argument is that some of the women who we interviewed did appear quite satisfied with the activity of shopping with their partners. To account for this difference it would be necessary to suggest that such women have a much more egalitarian outlook with respect to gender differences, especially when compared to the more traditional ideology so far outlined which surrounds shopping.



## Conclusion

Men and women appear to inhabit different worlds given their very contrasting experiences when shopping. This chapter has focused on providing an explanation for the attitudes and evaluations which men and women hold toward shopping. It has outlined the degree of convergence and divergence of their views and proposed an explanation for these variations. The central claims are that: firstly, the differences are of an ideological nature; and secondly, that these variations are associated with the gendered status of the shopping act. In our attempt to understand the uses to which these views are put the notion of ideologies of shopping was proposed. This term focuses upon the cognitive function of such attitudes and evaluations and the way in which they serve to protect an individual's perception of the act and beliefs, with respect to how the act should be conducted. It was suggested that the men's ideology of shopping permitted some of the men to participate in this activity but in an implicitly masculine way. In addition, to this cognitive function, the ideologies of shopping also perform both evaluative and pejorative uses in which they not only support one's own conduct but also challenge the principles and assumptions underlying how other's behave. People's ideas by this evaluation serve to critique the basis on which others think and act. This usage was expressed in terms of the attempts by the men and women to critique how their partner or men and women in general are believed to behave when shopping.

In the next chapter we address the implications of such ideologies of shopping as they raise a number of important issues, such as what kind of power is enacted, by whom, and under what circumstances in the shopping act. The important question which is raised by this analysis is whose ideas about shopping appear most dominant, and whose remain dominated. To



answer this question it is necessary to broaden the discussion to include wider societal and cultural changes, especially in terms of the spheres of consumption and production. The usefulness of applying the concept of ideology to the act of shopping will become apparent in this discussion, as will some of its intrinsic limitations for theorizing power relations.

## Notes

- 1 Myriam Jansen Verbeke's results from her two studies are that 21.4% of women and 14.4% of the men are negative about the lack of variety in terms of the shops available to them. She also found that 90.5% of the women and 85% of the men consider the decor of the store to be important. In addition, 90% of the women and 86% of the men considered the availability of catering facilities as important to their shopping experience (1987: 80-81).
- 2 For useful analyses and sociological discussions of the term 'ideology' see Jorge Larraín's *The Concept of Ideology* (1979); John B. Thompson's *Ideology and Modern Culture* (1994) and Michelle Barrett's *The Politics of Truth* (1991). For a more applied and empirical analysis of the term see R.M. Blackburn's article 'Ideologies of Work' (1988).
- 3 An article by Margaret Lowe Benston (1988) in the volume edited by Cheris Kramarae (1988) suggests that this male appropriation of the technical sphere is largely achieved through their control over and understanding of *technique* (1988: 16). Women, Lowe Benston argues, are largely excluded from any understanding of the principles by which machines and tools operate.
- 4 The term 'pouffe' as the *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (1984) reveals has an alternative spelling of 'poofy'. However, the original meaning of the term 'poof' is quite clear, that is a male homosexual. Although, a later meaning is that it refers to "an effeminate-looking man not necessarily homosexual". The dash used in this quotation is illustrative of the extent to which this respondent hesitates prior to and after he has stated the phrase 'sounds really pouffe'.

5      These figures include the interviewer who in all three cases was a male.



## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **IDEOLOGIES, POWER AND SHOPPING**

#### **Introduction**

In 1978 Robert Nathan Mayer (1978) urged sociologists to explore current theories of contemporary society through an analysis of consumers<sup>1</sup>. His plea has not initiated much empirical research in this direction. As was argued in Chapter One current sociological research on this topic suffers from a number of inherent limitations. One of the main weaknesses of this approach is not the link between shopping and identity-formation, but the tendency to focus solely on the purchasing moment as the most significant aspect of this activity. A similar perspective on the topic of shopping was identified in current consumer research (see Chapter Two), in such studies the central concern is the question of why people purchase what they do.

This thesis has provided an alternative way of analysing the activity of shopping. This approach has centred on understanding the act of shopping in its own right. It has been argued that shopping is best understood as a cultural practice and the notion of a 'shopping style' is indicative of this research intent (see Chapter Five). In addition, the thesis has demonstrated that gender continues to play an important role in people's perception of the activity of shopping. To understand the kind of influence this factor continues to play the notion of 'male' and 'female' ideologies of shopping was proposed in Chapter Seven. In using the concept of ideology to understand the context of gender relations within the sphere of shopping we need to classify the precise sense in which this term operates. The analysis of people's attitudes about shopping as constituting an ideology leads us to a consideration of relations of dominance, power and authority within this sphere.

This chapter will begin with a discussion of the kinds of power that men hold and seek to win in the shopping context. To answer this question it is necessary to review previous sociological approaches to the question of power. A discussion is then provided of how these concepts help us to understand the question of masculine power in the shopping context. I will argue that the male ideology shows signs of dominance, but that it is not possible to conclude that it is dominant, as elements of resistance can be highlighted within the female ideology.

To illustrate this argument I will focus on the sexual division of labour, and the extent to which men and women accept this without question. Subsequent questions, will centre on who decides what is bought and the degree to which women can be said to be in control of this process. In addition, attention is given to the way women formulate their pleasures in the logic of the masculine ideology. However, rather than accepting this conclusion on the dominance of men the chapter moves on to a discussion of the potential for empowerment that is offered to women through the activity of shopping. It will be argued that the female ideology of shopping is not dominated, rather their comments show that they demonstrate clear signs of dissent against the patriarchal authority of the men. This is made clear in terms of the shopping knowledge which they assert that they possess, but also through their suggestion that men are too incompetent to shop. The next section addresses the question of who controls the nature of the trip itself. While the final section of the chapter focuses on the question of change, the discrepancy between theories of consumer culture and the findings of the current study.

To initiate this analysis it is helpful to outline the terms to be employed, and the way they are to be understood in the shopping context.



## **Classical sociological distinctions and shopping: dominance, power and patriarchy.**

Is it possible for us to talk of a dominant ideology within the shopping context? If this is so, whose ideology is dominant? Is it the masculine or feminine perspectives on this activity? What kinds of power and authority are being enacted in this sphere, by whom and under what circumstances?

In order to answer these questions it is necessary to define and apply some classical concepts to the shopping context, these are the notions of power and dominance. Max Weber offers the following sociological definition of the concept of domination: "*By domination is meant the opportunity to have a command of a given specified content obeyed by a given group of persons.*" (1962: 117, italics in original). Domination in this usage implies the ability to issue commands. Weber proposed a contrary definition for power relations, which he sees as the "opportunity existing within a social relationship which permits one to carry out one's own will even against the resistance [of others]" (1962: 117).

The standard sociological illustration of these terms begins with the Marxist account. For Marx and Engels, in *The German Ideology* (1985) this concept is understood in terms of the dominance one class may possess over another class, its clearest expression being the 'cash-nexus'<sup>2</sup>.

The meaning of these terms takes on a completely different complexion when they are translated to the sphere of gender relations. Feminists have attempted to re-apply many these notions of domination and power to the relationships that operate in contemporary society between men and women (Walby, 1990; Millett, 1971). To do so, they have employed the term patriarchy to refer to the system of "social structures and practices through which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1990: 20). Sylvia Walby in the book *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1990) distinguishes six main structures through



which this system operates, they range from paid work, to housework, sexuality, culture, violence and the state.

The concept of masculinity expresses the asymmetrical dominance and prestige that is granted to the activities of men in contemporary society. Linda Imray and Audrey Middleton express this imbalance when they state: "Throughout human societies what men do is valued above what women do, even if both men and women do the same things in the same places at the same time." (1983: 14). Cultural systems are thus said to grant greater authority to the activities of men. The best example is within the world of work, where the man becomes the 'breadwinner' and the woman working for 'pin money'.

Arthur Brittan (1989) defines masculinity as the ideology of patriarchy. To convey the notion that men benefit from the subordination of women, writers refer to the operation of 'hegemonic masculinity'. A term that Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell and John Lee define as: "how particular groups of men inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance." (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1987: 179). The concept of hegemony was first used by Antonio Gramsci to understand how the domination of one class over others is achieved through ideological means<sup>3</sup>.

Antonio Gramsci's use of the term hegemony has a number of benefits over the orthodox Marxist interpretation for understanding the kind of power exerted by the ruling class. One of the main advantages is that it concentrates attention on the maintenance of dominance through popular beliefs, and the institutions of civil society, such as the family and Church. Gramsci's usage also addresses the issue of how such consent is won. He believed that this process of hegemony was never complete, rather the possibility always exists for subordinate groups to counter this dominant view with their own ideas. Gramsci also focused on how 'dominated' groups may respond, as he states:

"...the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised, and that a certain compromise equilibrium should be formed." (Bennett *et al.*, 1986: 197). Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987) outline three means by which this system of domination is consolidated and perpetuated in the sphere of gender relations. They include the role of the state, but also the sexual division of labour and persuasion, as perpetuated by the mass media. The first means is not apparent in the shopping data, however I will outline how the control of men is expressed in terms of the division of the shopping labour and the struggle over how it should be accomplished, that is, who controls the nature of the trip, as gained from their own comments. It is also necessary to look at the 'interests' of the women, to ask what they gain from doing the shopping. How is their consent, in other words, won? And what is the nature of their disempowerment? Before moving on to a discussion of the potential for female empowerment offered through the act of shopping.

### **Masculine power and shopping**

Having outlined the terms to be employed it is necessary to question whether the men's ideas about shopping can be considered as any way hegemonic within the sphere of shopping. One of the clearest examples, within the research data, that illustrates this point is the extent to which a number of types of shopping continue to be perceived as women's work. The significant question that must be addressed is thus who shops for whom<sup>4</sup> since this may implicate the kind of power men possess over women, in its most naked form this would be the power to issue commands and have them obeyed.

In Chapter Six it was established that certain types of shopping remain women's work. The most obvious types being for the daily food requirements



of the household, but also for their partner's and children's clothes. The shopping material does however only reveal half of the story, in that it does not reveal household duties that are accepted as men's work, or how men might repay women for their efforts. However, the majority of studies emphasize that an unequal division of household labour still persists in Britain<sup>5</sup>. Jan Pahl offers an interpretation of this imbalance, which can be applied to the shopping context, when she argues: "being able to offload certain decisions and certain money-handling chores on to the other spouse can itself be a sign of power." (in Anne Murcott, 1983: 89). This was illustrated in terms of shopping through the examples of men who were able to delegate such labour to their partners, as one of the female respondents reported: "...my husband will say, 'When you're in town or if you're going in the market get me a jumper.'" (Anne, D: 22). One of the other women was more expressive about the degree of control exercised by her partner: "Mine will spot something in a magazine or something and tell me to go and get it for him." (Lisa, A: 17). This comment was quizzed by the interviewer, who asked her why he would not shop for such items himself, to which she simply stated: "Oh no, I have to go and get it for him." (Lisa, A: 17). It is in this way, that we might suggest that it is the extent to which this woman feels that it is her responsibility to shop for her partner that best illustrates the nature of the power that men exact over women.

The power of men within the shopping context can also be gathered by analysing further the constrained position of women. For the majority of women's shopping we can suggest that it is *for others*. This appears to have a significant impact upon the role that women play in the determination of what is bought. The fact that much of the shopping that women do is for another is important since it has a bearing on the degree of control and autonomy that they may exert in these situations. Consequently, we might suggest that the women's choices over what is purchased are constrained by a series of



sanctions that effectively curtail the possible authority of the women within the shopping act. These range from the pressing need to take account of their partner or children's preferences, as two of the women spoke about shopping for clothes for their children: "My little boy won't have anything from the market." (Patricia, C: 21); "Mine's only eight...but he wants designer trainers." (Kay, B:13). This also appeared to be the case if the women were purchasing items of clothing for their partners:

"I buy for my husband but it's still awkward. I mean he couldn't get into town on Saturday and I went into town for something else and he said, 'Will you buy me a jumper?' Well I had a rough idea but it could have been any kind of jumper...until he saw it I couldn't be sure that he would like it because I can buy some things...[and] he'll say 'Oh dear!'" (Carrie, B: 13).

It is this woman's suggestion that such purchasing may be experienced as "awkward", because she has only a "rough idea" of what he wants, which alerts us to the fact that the women are not entirely free to purchase what they please for either their children or partners, rather their choices are subject to a range of controls and sanctions. This appears to be less true of the men's shopping since the interviews provided no examples of shopping which was regarded as men's work.

This suggestion, leads us on to another indicator of the kind of power and authority that men possess in the shopping context. This can be gathered from analysing the way in which some of the men, unlike the women, are able to dissociate themselves from aspects of shopping that they do not enjoy. Indeed, few types of shopping appear to be perceived as men's work. Concomitant with this perspective is the argument that while men are able to 'lumber' women with the shopping work that they do not want to do, they are also able to gain control over the types of shopping that they do enjoy and consider it "worthwhile to shop around" for. The classic examples in the interviews which were previously discussed in Chapter Five were for such

items as televisions, hi-fi's and computer goods. However, one of the women indicated another form of 'shopping' that her partner enjoyed: "Give him a car shop and he'll browse for hours." (Alison, B: 26). One explanation for the men's pleasure in these forms of shopping and their willingness to browse may stem from the possibility that for these items it is they who will be the ones who decide what is purchased, whereas for the other types they will be "outvoted" (Stephen, 3: 17).

The final illustration of the nature of masculine power in the shopping context is the extent to which the women experience feelings of guilt when purchasing items for themselves. This point was discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six, and for the present argument it is sufficient to state that no such talk was apparent in the men's responses. The ability of the men to create such feelings was clearly expressed in those instances in which they would 'cross-question' their partners on whether or not they 'needed' an item. These instances can be interpreted as a means by which the authority of men is legitimated and reproduced. For example, one of the women spoke of how she had to ask her partner before she bought clothing for herself: "I said the other day [to him] 'Can I have a new dress?'" (Rachel, D: 21). She continued by stating that he had responded to this request by asking her: "When did you get your last one?" (Rachel, D: 21). Other women spoke in similar terms of the 'guilt thing': "I think we all do don't we. I think we all have that guilt...we think you know 'Well should I have it'" (Kathy, D: 14). Others spoke of how they would try to prevent their partners from seeing the purchases that they had made for themselves, but also how they would say that the money had come from some other source:

Anne	I would probably hide it for a week
Kathy	I've had it ages
Anne	You know the money you gave me for my birthday.
Claire	It's gone a long way that money. (D: 23).



One of the Finnish women was more explicit about this link when she revealed her partner's reaction to her going shopping and buying things: "So you've bought new clothes again, did you have the money?" (Teija, I: 7). To avoid this situation, women spoke of how they would tell their partners that they had paid less for an item than they actually had: "If I go out and buy something I've got to knock a few quid off the price when I tell the husband" (Heather, F: 8). The men's comments can thus be viewed as perpetuating the women's feelings of guilt when purchasing items for themselves.

The sense of guilt that some of the women associated with shopping was even apparent when they were extolling the pleasures that they gained from shopping. The responses of some of the women suggest that they are involved in a process of belittling their own preferences. This became clear in those instances in which women sought to explain the kinds of pleasures they gained from shopping. One of the women for example used a metaphor of addiction to describe such satisfactions:

Sheila	It's a great feeling [going shopping].
Patricia	Like someone's giving you an injection. (C: 11).

This theme was repeated by another woman who spoke of how she got "quite a kick out of [shopping]" (Emma, E: 16). In these examples, women associated the pleasure they derive from shopping with a lack of control that they may experience in this situation. As one of the female respondents illustrates: "You have to drag me out of *The Body Shop*...I'm dreadful, I just love it." (Helen, F: 12).

Further evidence can be gathered from the women's use of the term 'fetish' to define their relationship with particular products. The *Collins Pocket English Dictionary* (1985) defines this term as "anything to which one is irrationally devoted". For the female respondents it was apparent that they would link the pleasure they gained from shopping for anything from plants to



shoes to this interpretation. As two one of the women stated: "I've got a foot fetish...I'm afraid so" (Jenny, B: 11); "I would say plants...I have a plant fetish...I do love plants very much" (Elenor, E: 17).

One way of understanding such comments is to focus on the "defensive" (Campbell, 1993b) elements within the female ideology of shopping. To explain why this may be so it is useful to apply Louis Althusser's distinction between 'dominant' and 'dominated ideologies'. Jorge Larraín in his book *The Concept of Ideology* (1979) illustrates the usefulness of this distinction when he suggests: "dominated ideologies are always subordinate, and spontaneously formulate their grievances in the language and logic of the dominant class." (Larraín, 1979: 157).

One way of interpreting the way the women link the pleasures they gain from shopping with such negative assessments is as a confirmation of their dominated status. In terms of the present thesis this means that some of the women may be willing to accept the authority of the men's devaluation of this activity (see Chapter Seven). The work of David Morley (1992) on the familial relations that surround the act of television viewing lends support to this conclusion. Morley discovered that the men in his sample exercised the most control over what was watched. For the women, he found that some expressed a feeling of guilt about their own preferences for soap operas, due to the fact that they are widely regarded as trivial. Morley sums up his interpretation of these findings when he suggests: "What is at issue here is the guilt that most of these women feel about their own pleasures. They are, on the whole, prepared to concede that the drama and soap opera they like is 'silly' or 'badly acted' or inconsequential. They accept the terms of a masculine hegemony which defines their preferences as having low status." (1992: 154). This is comparable to the situation in which some women feel guilty about the pleasures offered to them by the act of shopping.

At this point it is necessary to question this conclusion. For example, to say that the women's ideology of shopping is 'dominated' by the hegemonic position occupied by the men is misleading. The main reason for this is that it fails to provide an explanation for why the women should accept the authority of the male interpretation. Moreover, this argument grants little attention to the elements of resistance within the female ideology of this activity and the extent to which they challenge the authority of the male perspective. As we witnessed in Chapter Seven the women appear quite prepared to denounce the male interpretation of this act through the argument that construes shopping as a skill. Moreover, they assert the benefits they gain from doing the shopping. This is in accordance with the findings of Abercrombie *et al.* (1986) on *The Dominant Ideology Thesis*. In this book they were able to challenge the assumed total control exerted by dominant ideologies. They achieved this through a historical examination of the effect of feudalism upon the population, to illustrate that within any society a great deal of value dissent may exist to the dominant order (1986: 153). For shopping, it is necessary to question the assumed pervasiveness of the masculine ideology and to consider the limits to its dominance. To examine the kinds of benefits that the women may be gaining from this situation, and the nature of their own dissent to the male devaluation of this activity, allows us to question the basis upon which the men's authority might be accepted.

In this manner, before we accept that the feminine ideology of shopping is dominated by the hegemonic position occupied by men and the nature of such masculine power it is necessary to address the degree to which power equally appears to lie in the hands of the women when shopping.



## **Feminine power and shopping**

John Fiske (1992; 1989; 1987) in a series of books has attempted to link understanding of the act of shopping with notions of power. For Fiske (1989) buying is an empowering moment for the people involved. He illustrates this by talk of the role of women. Fiske notes that the ideology of capitalism with its patriarchal bias has typically ascribed the activity of spending to women, while the job of earning is more likely to be associated with men (1989: 22). The fact that women are said to make over eighty per cent of the purchasing decisions tends to add weight to Fiske's view. Fiske uses this quantitative difference to argue that women, rather than being oppressed through the fact that a large amount of shopping is assumed to be their work, may be empowered through the control they exercise over this act. As he himself reveals his viewpoint: "If money is power in capitalism, then buying, particularly if the act is voluntary, is an empowering moment for those whom the economic system otherwise subordinates." (1989: 26). For Fiske, women are said to use the act of shopping as a resource for gaining self-esteem and respect. He illustrates the potential for empowerment through shopping by citing the instance of a woman spending her partner's money. He uses Rachel Bowlby's (1987) example, originally used by Wendt and Kogan (1952), of a congressman's wife who advises women to go out and spend their partner's money (see Chapter One). For Fiske such an act unequivocally represents a form of resistance to patriarchal authority.

On the basis of the evidence so far provided it is possible to question and qualify the many positive assertions that Fiske notes about women and shopping. As we have already seen there are a number of negative features which stem from the responsibility that women have over conducting the shopping. In many ways, this division of labour is not 'voluntary' as Fiske assumes, rather many women as we saw in Chapter Six do the shopping



because they feel that they ought to since it is part of their work-role. Another problem with Fiske's assessment is related to how he believes such empowerment may be gained, he argues that one of the primary means is through the self-esteem that women are said to gain over shopping. However, a problem with this approach arises from the simple fact that men appear to not acknowledge the women's efforts in this sphere. Quite the contrary, as we saw in the last chapter, the men appear engaged in an ideological struggle that is expressed in terms of their devaluation of this activity, but also through the assertion that women do not conduct it properly.

To outline the significance of this male critique it is necessary to focus on studies that have revealed the consequences of a lack of reciprocation for an individual's feelings of self-esteem. Stephen Edgell in his analysis of middle-class housewives (1980) found that a "major source of [their] discontent seemed to revolve around a lack of a sense of achievement beyond the private world of the family." (1980: 96). Daniel Miller in his ethnographic study of the uses people make of their kitchens also found that a significant cause for his respondents' feelings of depression lay in the lack of 'valorization' of the changes that they had completed (1994: 10). For our own shoppers, we might conclude that this situation is worse, since many of the men appeared actively involved in a programme of devaluing the act of shopping (see Chapter Seven).

The thesis has attempted to qualify many of Fiske's views concerning the empowerment that is offered to women by the activity of shopping. However, it is not possible to dispute Fiske's claims entirely, and the evidence from the interviews does enable us to extend some of his claims.

In Chapter Seven I argued that the male ideology of shopping coexists with a female body of ideas that seeks to assert the value of this activity. Not only this, this feminine ideology is forceful in its critique of the male interpretation of this activity. The women effectively argue as a group that

shopping is a skill, but also that men do not conduct this activity properly (see Chapter Seven). A point that was illustrated by one of the women's suggestions that the reason why men do not shop is that they are "lazy" or that they have not bothered to "learn" how to do it.

If we were to accept that men have ultimate power in the shopping context we would have to be able to demonstrate, as Max Weber highlighted, that they get their way despite the resistance offered by their partners (1962: 117). This does not appear to be the case. One of the reasons for the limitation of this argument is that it fails to address how the women's consent may be won for the present arrangements. This interpretation fails to come to terms with the benefits that women may be gaining from their participation and responsibility for the shopping, and the role such pleasures may have in securing their consent.

One of the clearest forms of benefits that the women appear to gain is that of pleasure from going shopping. Some of the women in this manner were willing to highlight the satisfactions they gained from the control they exercised over what the family ate (see Elenor, E) or how their partners dressed (see Ruth, A). This view is adequately expressed through the assertions of one of the female respondents: "I love shopping for my husband's clothes." (Elenor, E: 29). One of the pleasures that the women did reveal that they gained from this situation was the felt sense of control they had over their partner's appearance, as one of the women stated: "He looks like I want him to look" (Ruth, A: 4). Earlier it was suggested that the majority of women's shopping is for others, and the negative consequences of this situation were outlined. However, for some women such shopping appears to provide them with the pleasure of self-denial. The knowledge that they are sacrificing their own wants for the needs of others, as one of the women commented: "I love to shop for everybody and always put myself last which most women do. But I get more pleasure out of buying for my husband and



the kids." (Tina, E: 24). A view echoed when one of the other women reflected upon her own experience: "...it's very rare actually that I get myself anything because all my money I spend on the baby and I really really enjoy doing it, I mean it gives me so much pleasure in buying stuff for her that I don't think about myself." (Megan, C: 8).

Another aspect of women's shopping which leads to a qualification of the argument that masculine power is expressed in this domain is the scepticism women express about the competence of their partners to shop for themselves. The apparent distrust that the women felt toward their partner's making their own choices of what clothes they wear is significant, it illustrates the point that many women feel that their partners lack the necessary expertise to shop for themselves, an argument illustrated through several of the women's comments on their partner's lack of shopping know-how: "I like to go when he's buying clothes...because he's no idea. Sack cloth and wellies [Wellington Boots]." (Charlotte, F: 4); "Alan he'll go out and he'll come back with this horrible bold coloured thing like a rugby shirt." (Claire, D: 23). A view that was supported by one the comments made in the Finnish study: "...most of the men I know need women to be there [when men are clothes shopping] to tell them that 'Yes that looks good' or 'don't buy that tie'." (Riita-Liisa, III: 21). The point about all these quotes is that women may be the shopping agents for their partners, because they do the shopping for them, but that many of these women still appear to (or at least believe that they do) exercise a high degree of control over what their partners will wear.

The control that the women appeared to possess over their partner's appearance was also true of a number of other kinds of shopping. The main forms of this phenomenon being the choice over what their children wear, but also what is put on the table for the evening meal (see also Murcott, 1983), and the kind of household objects that are selected. An interpretation that can be supported by referring to one of the women's comments on the subject of



how she would decide upon what to buy: "...generally if I'm buying owt [anything] big for the house I won't even tell him until I've got it. And then I'd say 'Oh by the way I've ordered a video today.'" (Sheila, C: 13).

The women's strong assertions of the control they possess in this purchasing situation must however be qualified. One woman was prepared to offer a more realistic assessment of the control she possessed, as this respondent explained:

"I do decide, to a certain extent, what his trousers are going to be like for the holiday and his shirts." (Claire, D: 23).

It is Lynda's "to a certain extent" that may indicate the limits of feminine power within this context.

Earlier it was stated that the men may be able to offload involvement in aspects of shopping that they do not enjoy, for example, for clothes, in order to be left with the kind of decisions that they do enjoy making such as over a television or video. However, before we can conclude that this is an indication of male power it is necessary to attend to how the women regard such shopping. In the interviews with the women it was noticeable that such types of shopping were either not referred to or were regarded as unimportant in terms of the pleasure which they would yield. This might lead us to conclude that for the women these kinds of shopping, for say a television or hi-fi, are not deemed either enjoyable or important. This conclusion can be supported by one of the comments of the male respondents who spoke of his partner's view toward such consumer durables: "a telly [television] is a telly to her" (Richard, 3: 9). In this situation there appears to be little potential for a conflict of interest as the women do not appear to seek control over these spheres of shopping.

Using these examples one could present a strong argument to support the idea that it is men who are effectively disempowered in the shopping context. If knowledge is power, as the work of Foucault suggests (1988), then

it is the men who appear most powerless since they lack the 'cultural capital' to shop. This interpretation runs contrary to one offered by Colin Campbell (1993b), who suggests that the male ideology of shopping 'successfully neuters' the superior expertise wielded by the women (1993b: 12) in the shopping context through their efforts to belittle how women shop (see Chapter Seven).

To illustrate this argument further it is necessary to attend to the kind of role that the men do appear to be playing. If we take the example of food shopping to substantiate this claim, many of the men appeared to be acting as the assistants to their wives. To support this view we can focus on those men who reported that even when they were food shopping for the household on their own they would employ a list that was prepared for them by their partners, as one of the Finnish men suggested: "my wives makes a list of what we need" (Lassi, IV: 5). Some of the men revealed that this would also apply to their own clothes shopping, as one of them stated: "what she says goes because...I find it's an easy life...if she approves of something then I get it if she doesn't then I won't." (David, 1: 20). The message from many of the men appeared to be that of "she knows what she wants" (Chris, 3: 22) even when it came to clothes that they would wear. The men thus appeared as the 'helpers' to their partners, rather than accepting any responsibility for such duties.

In a similar way, two of the men expressed their preference for shopping for their own clothes alone. The main reason for this choice was to avoid the situation in which their partner's decisions would dominate, as one of the men stated: "I like to pick what I want, what I want to wear, not what she wants me to wear." (Jim, 3: 12). Another man was more expressive about his desire for control and the constraint posed by his partner:

"She's always hassling me to buy something that I don't like.  
When I'm on me own I can just go out and buy it and if she



doesn't like it it's tough, can't wear it with her though." (Tim, 2: 4).

It is the apparent disjunction between this man's "it's tough" statement and his admission that he would not be able to wear such clothes if he went out with her that most clearly demonstrates the constrained position that many of the men appear to occupy when shopping for themselves.

This argument, that women view men as lacking the necessary cultural capital to shop, was also expressed in terms of the situation in which comments are expected concerning the suitability of clothes that are tried on. On the whole, the data tends to suggest that women do not trust the opinions of their partners, as one of the respondents stated: "My husband he's hopeless, he'll just say yes to anything [she tries on] just to get out [of the shop]" (Alison, B: 9). Or as another of the women asserted: "John will say 'well get it' and I'll say for me you've got to be kidding, I'll look awful in it." (Helen, F: 27). One of the women interviewed singularly expressed this view of her partner's lack of ability in the following terms: "I usually do the opposite of what he says...if he says that doesn't suit you then that's usually my best bet" (G: 6).

This conclusion on the control that women may possess, in terms of the choice over what clothes are chosen, was echoed in the discussions with the men, as one of them stated: "Have you noticed though if you are buying with a female, clothes especially, that they tend to be able to sway you into what to buy, but you can never sway them." (Nigel, 1: 11). A comment that prompted this remark from another of the men in the group: "That's always been the case hasn't it, [women are] pretty persuasive." (Frank, 1: 11). In these situations men come close to an open admission of the kind of control that is exercised by the women, and their own lack of control. The women appear to possess greater influence than the men, in terms of the ability to persuade



somebody else that an item is suitable. One of the Finnish men spoke, in this manner, of his partner as the "arbiter of taste" (Rauno, VI: 4) within their family.

A comment made by Mica Nava (1992) serves to expand this notion. She suggests that the reason why men appear to expend so much of their time and energy in criticising women as shoppers may stem from their anxiety over the kind of economic power that women possess in this sphere (1992: 190). In this interpretation it is necessary to refer back to the "defensive" elements within the male ideology itself. These are best expressed through the discussion of shopping disclaimers that were previously referred to in Chapter Seven. Through reference to these our understanding of the kind of relationship that men appear to have with the shopping act is expanded. At the same time, our belief in the pervasiveness and persuasiveness of masculine power and authority in this sphere is qualified.

To explore this theme further it is necessary to compare the differing bases upon which the male and female authority in the shopping sphere rests. For many of the men the fact that they are in paid employment (see Chapter Six) appears to justify the fact that their partners' shop for them. However, the male ideology of shopping also attempts to gain another basis for their authority, that is the legitimacy, of rationality. For the men, as we saw in Chapter Seven, their shopping style is rational since it focuses primarily on need over desire; secondly, it attempts to assert that they will not waste their time shopping, rather they will get what they need in the minimum of time, that is through targeting specific retail outlets rather than browsing.

Rationality is a quality which masculinity has sought to appropriate for itself since Max Weber's famous description of the Protestant Work ethic (1976). Victor Seidler (1987) offers a similar assessment when he argues:

"In Western Europe since the period of the Enlightenment in the Seventeenth Century, men have assumed a strong connection between their rationality and their sense of masculine identity. They have learned to appropriate rationality as if it were an

exclusive male quality denied to others, especially women." (1987: 82).

Arthur Brittan in his evaluation of masculinity argues that it is closely associated with rationality as expressed through the appropriated values of impartiality, objectivity and intentionality (1989: 199). For shopping, the male ideology of this act is the clearest expression of the men's attempt to appropriate such values as their own.

For the women, we might counter this view with the suggestion that their authority in the shopping sphere is more closely associated with an alternative mechanism of legitimacy, that of expertise. Women thus seek to undermine the male appropriation of authority with the argument that it is they, and not men, who are the experts in this domain since they possess the 'cultural capital' to shop 'correctly'. An interpretation that the men are not prepared to openly acknowledge. However, the fact that some men do not appreciate the women's efforts in this sphere does not appear to bother the women. One of the main reasons for this is that women appear to be recognised and applauded by other women. The interviews were exchanges in which women could present their knowledge and skills to others. The fact that women often prefer to shop together (see Chapter Six) can be theorised as another opportunity for such exchanges to occur.

From the evidence we have so far discussed it is possible to present two contrary views over the ideological struggle surrounding the act of shopping. One interpretation centres on analysing the degree to which masculine power is expressed through this activity. However, an alternative reading of this situation is the suggestion that women may be empowered through the control that they exercise over the shopping act. A perspective that enables us to examine the dynamic nature of the relations of dominance within the shopping context, but also the potential for resistance. This is most clearly illustrated if we consider such arrangements as a 'lived condition' that is



enacted daily, a view that can be expressed in terms of the struggle over how the act itself should be accomplished.

### **Controlling how the shopping is done**

For power relations to exist there must be some evidence of a 'conflict of interests'. Steven Lukes in his analysis of the concept of power offers the following description for this term: "*A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests.*" (1982: 34, italics in original). This definition is especially relevant when we consider the conflict of interests that occurs when men and women shop together. Throughout the thesis the importance of analysing shopping as a cultural practice has been foregrounded. In Chapter Four I argued that shopping is best understood as a practice or experience. In Chapters Five and Seven an analysis was provided of the apparent gender differences in the kind of shopping experiences that they prefer and how they believe their shopping should be accomplished.

This struggle appears to have a material existence that is best expressed through the respondents talk of going shopping together. In this situation we could argue that a conflict of interest does exist in terms of the questions over the nature of the trip itself. The general motto that applies to both the men's and women's interpretations of shopping could be summed up as: 'It ain't what you buy, it's the way that you shop' that appears most important for any sociological analysis of this activity.

This is obviously a question that needs further research in terms of ethnographic material to substantiate its importance, effects and consequences. However, from the interview material it is possible to make some tentative conclusions about this activity. The significant question thus becomes: who controls the way the act itself is accomplished?



From the interview material and the notion of shopping styles proposed in Chapter Five it is possible to argue that a significant potential for 'conflict' exists between men and women when they shop together. In Chapter Seven the kinds of criticisms that men and women offer about each other's way of shopping were outlined. We can summarise these differences by stating that the men feel that the women take too long, whereas the women feel that when they go with their partner's they are hurried. People spoke of how such joint shopping would "drive" them "mad" (Peter, 2: 5), and the main reason appeared to be the fact that they were "dragged around" (Peter, 2: 5) by their partners. One of the female respondents chose to elaborate on this theme of the nature of joint shopping:

"You spend three hours looking around a record shop, when you finally got to where you want to go they've [her partner] had enough." (Rachel, D: 6).

The main locus of dissent appears to arise from the lack of control that the individual has over such decisions as how long is spent, what kinds of shops and how many are visited. The importance of such comments lies in the fact that in these instances we are given evidence of people, to paraphrase Max Weber, carrying out their will despite resistance (1962: 117).

The interview material did, however, suggest a number of resolutions to this apparent conflict that demonstrated how and in what ways individuals attempt to resist the control imposed upon them by others. One such strategy was for the men and women to go to town together, but to then agree to meet each other at a prearranged time and place. This would then allow each party to go to the shops that they wanted to visit, as one of the male respondents stated: "I go round my shops and she goes round her shops." (Ben, 3: 6). This strategy of 'meeting up' later appears to resolve the apparent differences between the male and female shopping styles outlined in Chapters Five and

Seven. This method enables men and women to shop in the 'style' of their own choosing, although it presumably still means that either men or women will have to shop less or a little longer than they would appear to have wanted.

Another resolution centres on negotiating the 'hassle' of shopping by allowing the woman to do the 'leg-work' while the male partner is only involved in the later stages of decision-making. This method also suits both, since it provides women with the opportunity to browse and look around, while the man is only involved in the later stage of acquiring the pre-selected object. Some of the women appeared to use this strategy as an opportunity to gain greater control over what was purchased: "I usually go and decide what I like and then I tell David and then he'll come and look at what I like." (Megan, C: 13). One of the other female respondents spoke of how she decided upon a four-poster bed in this manner. She spoke of how she had browsed around all the retail outlets on her own and then informed her partner of what she had seen in terms of the appearance and cost, he then informed her to "go and get it" (Heather, F: 21). The question of who may control the act itself is only answered if we refer to people's talk about their daily experiences. Having done this we can conclude that this is a shifting balance which can change according to the situation.

### **Change, ideology and shopping**

If we are to understand the shifting balance of power relations between men and women over the activity of shopping it is also necessary to address contemporary cultural changes which appear to be influencing our perception of the shopping activity.

Theorists of consumer culture, as was demonstrated in Chapter One, have put the act of shopping on to the sociological agenda. They have asserted the need to understand consumer processes, without generally



substantiating their claims with empirical evidence. One of their main arguments appears to be that this so-called consumer society is what Rob Shields terms "trans-gender" (1992: 12). Rather than analysing such "weighty and earthbound" questions Shields prefers to focus on the "lightness of being" which he sees as shopping (1992: 12). This despite the fact that he uses Susan Porter Benson's term 'Adamless Eden' with little attention to the gendered implications of this statement (see Chapter One).

The views of other theorists appear to share many of Shields assessments. Robert Bocock, for example, in his analysis of *Consumption* (1993) says "Men have become as much a part of modern consumerism as women. Their construction of a sense of who they are is accomplished as much through style, clothing, body image and the right look as is women's" (1993: 102). The overall view for these theorists, as I demonstrated in Chapter One, is that masculinity is increasingly expressed through consumer practices.

The evidence presented in Chapters Five and Seven on the theme of a male shopping style and ideology of this act is not consistent with these theories. The data allows us to qualify the nature of current conclusions made by theories of consumer culture since it suggests that amongst the younger male shoppers (those aged between 25 and 35) a greater willingness to go clothes shopping was present, for example one of the male respondents stated:

"It's something I enjoy that [clothes shopping]...you've got to get the right stuff, you've got to look nice haven't you, and you can't just go out and think I'll have that...you've got to have a good look around and see what you can get." (Tim, 2: 4).

However, this man's willingness to 'look around' appears to be motivated by the desire to 'look nice' rather than any intrinsic satisfaction which he associates with the act of shopping. The comments of the women on such men tended to support this conclusion. Many of the female respondents



distinguished between young men who were said to "fashion conscious" and thus "into" shopping, and the "average middle age husband" (Karen, E: 40) for whom a much more negative assessment of this act was predicted.

The comments of the men tended to reflect the views of this "average middle age husband". For many of the men a general aversion to clothes shopping was confirmed. A dissatisfaction that appeared to increase as they had grown older, as one of the men commented: "I think the older I get the more I get to hate it [shopping] and can do without it." (Roger, 1: 36). Moreover, many of these men appeared all too willing to leave such shopping to their partners.

In terms of understanding the change that the men did cite, this tended to occur with respect to, not clothes shopping, but for items to put in their 'homes'. In one of the groups (see Group Two, pp.26-27) a discussion ensued which was prompted by one of the men's remarks that he had enjoyed buying a dinner set for himself<sup>6</sup>. One of the other men in this manner remarked: "We're changing aren't we, because I mean I'd of enjoyed buying that." (Patrick, 2: 22). He further elaborated on this theme when he recounted how he had enjoyed shopping with his wife for items for their new kitchen. He then added the comment: "[O]ur dads wouldn't of been into that at all." (Patrick, 2: 22). Another man in the group supported this view with the comment that: "[You] wouldn't catch my dad going and buying a dinner service" (Peter, 2: 22). Through these remarks we gain further evidence of the extent to which shopping is assumed to be women's work (see Chapter Six), but also the suggestion that this situation may be changing.

However, such comments do raise the possibility that men have undergone a generational shift with respect to their attitudes to this kind of shopping or is it simply that their own lifestyles have changed? Many men attributed their negative assessments of shopping to the fact that they now had more responsibilities, such as those associated with having children and

the financial constraint of a mortgage to pay. This is a topic which deserves a much fuller study than the current analysis can provide.

In Chapter One the gendered nature of the shopping environment of the nineteenth century was analysed in terms of the discussion of the department store as a female world (Reekie, 1992; Benson, 1986). Recent findings have tended to suggest that this may still be the case. In 1979 John Carroll remarked that over eighty per cent of people buying at *Shoppers World* were suburban wives (1979: 15). Jon Goss (1993) provides more up-to-date material that suggests that sixty-seven per cent of shopping centre users are women (1993: 19)<sup>7</sup>. These findings question the conclusion that men have changed in any significant fashion with respect to their attitudes to shopping.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to open up a new field of enquiry with regard to the topic of shopping. To analyse the shifting relations of dominance and power expressed between men and women through the act of shopping. This insight has significant implications for the current concept of a consumer society. Theories of consumer culture are diverse in their conclusions, but one feature unites all these studies. This is the central place that is accorded to consumption activities in the formation of individual identity. In Chapter One it was established that such theories of consumption are identity-centric.

This view can be illustrated by referring to the work of Zygmunt Bauman (1990; 1988a; 1988b; 1987). For Bauman, understanding consumption is essential for any analysis of modern society. He illustrates this importance when he writes: "[I]n the present-day society, consumer conduct (consumer freedom geared to the consumer market) moves steadily into the position of, simultaneously, the cognitive and moral focus of life, integrative bond of the society, and the focus of systemic management." (1988b). However, Bauman



rarely writes of how this link is expressed in terms of people's everyday actions.

Other theorists have suggested that one aspect of behaviour through which this link can be verified is in terms of people's purchasing decisions. People in other words are said to express their individual identity through the kinds of consumer items they choose. A comment made by Judith Williamson (1988) can be used to illustrate this perspective, as she states: "The conscious, chosen meaning in most people's lives comes much more from what they consume than what they produce. Clothes, interiors, furniture, records, knick-knacks, all the things that we buy involve decisions and the exercise of our own judgement, choice, 'taste'...Buying and owning, in our society, offer a sense of control." (1988: 230).

The recent work of Anthony Giddens shares many of these preoccupations. Giddens proposes that one aspect of what he terms the 'reflexive project of the self'<sup>8</sup> is the way in which people express their identity through the kinds of goods that they desire. Moreover, he asserts that in this selection people are motivated by the attempt to construct a unique 'style of life' (1991: 198). However, Robert Bocock's analysis of *Consumption* (1993) perhaps best sums up this perspective on the topic, in which he says that: "Consumption is to be conceptualised as a process in which a purchaser of an item is actively engaged in trying to create and maintain a *sense of identity* through the display of purchased goods." (1993: 67, italics in original).

One problem with such an approach to consumption is that through the focus on buying and identity those people who are unable to purchase are effectively excluded from sociological enquiry, as are the men who do not purchase their own clothes. The current analysis of shopping has attempted to start from a more inductive approach to this activity. To ask, is there more to this activity than this simple focus on what is purchased? This perspective has led to a consideration of people's use of their own actions, but also a



consideration of such ideas as constituting a form of ideology. The ideologies of shopping have been illustrated to focus not on their true or false elements, but to highlight how people use such ideas to justify their everyday actions and attitudes. Men and women it could be argued are effectively playing with 'truth' so as to re-define reality to suit their specific interests, that is the pleasures and benefits they derive from the current situation surrounding the act of shopping. An association is thus proposed between identity-formation and what people do (or more correctly, say they do) when shopping. That is to say, in terms of the importance they themselves place on their consumer actions and the control that they exert over what is bought, and how this is decided. Equally we must focus upon the nature of the trip itself, and who controls this dimension of the activity rather than simply theorising the uses people make of what they purchase.

Through applying these research ambitions we can make some tentative suggestions about the link between identity and the act of shopping. Lauren Langman defines identity as "reflexive awareness of who one is" (1992: 55). Usually theories of consumer culture focus on the 'reflexive awareness' that is associated with the goods which people purchase, or in the words of Erich Fromm 'To have is to be'. The findings from the thesis enable us to extend this current notion of identity-formation by placing the emphasis upon people's talk of their own behaviour as an equally significant means of defining who they are and who they are not. This link between shopping and reflexivity is thus a complex area which demands further investigation into a range of other factors such as class, status and lifestyle. The tentative conclusion which can be drawn from the current analysis is that social subjects define themselves not only through what they consume, but equally through how they consume.

On the question of the dominance of the male and female ideologies it has been suggested that it is not possible to consider either of these

ideologies as hegemonic. The concept of ideology thus reveals the tendency and limitation to focus upon dominance rather than resistance. It has been suggested that neither of the ideologies can be considered as dominant since both contain "defensive" or adaptive elements. This conclusion is especially pertinent if we consider the shifting cultural evaluation of this activity. Shopping, as has been demonstrated, was once derided as a secondary and rather trivial aspect of our daily lives. This cultural definition has however been recast in recent years by journalists and social scientists. A conclusion that is best summed up in the 'I shop therefore I am' statement. The conclusions from this study suggest that men through their devaluation of this activity may be distancing themselves from active involvement in the consumer society. Colin Campbell (1993b) concludes that the 'future is female'. This may be overstating the case, and underestimating the power of men to appropriate this sphere. For as Rowena Chapman writes:

"Men change, but only in order to hold on to power, not to relinquish it...One of the features of patriarchy is its resilience, its ability to mutate in order to survive, undermining threats to its symbolic order by incorporating their critique, and adjusting its ideology." (1988: 235).

However, perhaps it is best to end with a the findings of a recent study conducted by the supermarket chain *Sainsbury's* which compared a man and woman in their ability to do the shopping, the somewhat appropriate title for the piece was: "Why can't a man be more like a woman?" (Wright, 1993: 52-55). The only answer we can provide at present is that it is not in their interests to change and 'be more like a woman'.



## Notes

- 1 Robert Nathan Mayer (1978) argues that analysis of the sphere of consumption will allow sociologists to rethink the concepts of social stratification, politics, bureaucracy and alienation.
- 2 Unfortunately a discussion of the limits of the Marxist account of power relations is beyond the current thesis, however I would recommend Michelle Barrett's *The Politics of Truth: From Marxism to Foucault* (1991) for a clear and useful discussion of this point.
- 3 A good introduction to Antonio Gramsci's main ideas is provided by the Bennett *et al.* reader *Culture, Ideology and Social Process* (1986).
- 4 Anne Murcott (1983) in her analysis of women and cooking asked a similar question to reveal the gendered ideology that surrounds the preparation of the evening meal - who cooks for whom?
- 5 Studies have demonstrated that the help men provide around the home has not drastically increased, despite the increasing participation of women in the sphere of paid employment (Henwood *et al.*, 1987). A recent study by Mintel conducted in 1994 reported that women still shoulder the greatest responsibility for household tasks (Nicholson-Lord, 1994; Picardie, 1994; Nicholson-Lord, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c). In a similar way, David Utting (1992) demonstrates that the amount of domestic labour that British men contribute lies behind that of their European counterparts. Findings that are supported by studies conducted by the Family Policy Studies centre and published in a report entitled *Inside the Family* (Henwood *et al.*, 1987) and Sharon Witherspoon's work on gender roles and the domestic economy (1985).



- 6 See Chapter Seven and the section on shopping disclaimers for the previous discussion on this point.
- 7 In a footnote Jon Goss (1993) remarks that in America there are two computer games based on the mall experience which are aimed at women, the purpose of one of these is to fill your shopping bags with merchandise and 'shop 'til you drop'. In Britain, there appear to be no such comparisons in terms of electronic games. However, *Early Learning Centres* in Britain do sell a range of shopping items, one such is 'Playfood' which comes in the form of plastic cans, vegetables or groceries, and which are described as "ideal for shopping pretend play". An interesting feature of these toys is that all the sets include a picture of children 'playing shop'. In both cases, the role of the shopper was played by the young girl, equipped with her 'pretend' basket and money, while the role of the shop assistant was played by the little boy, equipped with his cash register. On a similar theme, it is interesting that there is a ladies bicycle (i.e. with lowered main frame bar) called *The Shopper*, which comes with a basket on the front.
- 8 In the book *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991) Anthony Giddens provides a handy glossary of the concepts which he uses. In this he defines the 'reflexive project of the self' as "the process whereby self-identity is constituted by the reflexive ordering of self-narratives" (1991: 244).

## **CONCLUSION**

### **MAIN FINDINGS OF THE SHOPPING STUDY**

In this conclusion an overview will be provided of the main findings outlined earlier, together with their implications for current sociological theory on consumption. A final section will outline the direction future research on shopping might take.

In Chapter One of the thesis an examination was provided of current theories which have sought to understand the consumer. It was argued that these theories suffer from a number of weaknesses. One of the most significant being the gulf between theories which conceptualise the consumer as duped (Baudrillard, 1988) to those which propose an almost romantic perspective on the consumer as autonomous and powerful (Fiske, 1989; Fiske *et al.*, 1987). I have argued that one reason for this contradiction is the fact that most of these theories tend to be arrived at through theoretical deduction rather than empirical investigation, consequently, there is a lack of empirical research based on understanding such consumer activities as shopping in their own right. To overcome this problem, in Chapter Two I provided a review of research which had been conducted on people's consumer behaviour. Such work is mainly located within the field of consumer research, in the disciplines of marketing and retailing. In analysing such research it became apparent that, like the sociologists, the market researchers consider the most significant aspects of shopping to be why, where and when people purchase what they do. Such research was identified as purchase-centric and geared to short-term commercial interests. This may explain why the majority of this research is based on the experience of the female consumer, and why men are so conspicuously absent from the samples analysed, as studies have



revealed that it is women who do the majority of the spending in the household (Scott, 1976).

The study of shopping was thus initiated to overcome the problems within current theorizing and research on consumption. The justification for studying the act of shopping was in this way to remedy the lack of appropriate previous empirical research on understanding this activity in its own right, juxtaposed to the claims being made about this activity within the social sciences (see especially Shields, 1992).

The main aim was thus to provide a small-scale empirical analysis of people's attitudes to the activity of shopping, an analysis which would not only investigate women's attitudes to shopping, but also those of men, to gauge what the men thought about this activity and whether there were any significant gender differences. This was achieved through nine focus group interview sessions with over fifty people. In analysing this data the thesis sought to begin with an inductive approach to understanding the place of shopping in people's daily lives. In reviewing such comments a number of features about the act of shopping were revealed. The first, which provided the basis for Chapter Four, was that shopping should be understood in its own right, rather than the more typical focus on the acquisition of goods, which has revealed very little about the process of shopping itself. In examining shopping on this basis it became apparent that the act is best viewed as a 'practice'. This approach revealed that many of the pleasures which people gain from the act of shopping occur regardless of whether or not people actually spend any money. These included the hitherto unanalysed aspects of shopping such as browsing, accompanied shopping, and how the actual retail environment is experienced. A significant aspect of shopping which this exploration revealed is the importance to people of the manner in which they actually accomplished this activity. Shopping in this way is not a one-



dimensional activity centred on the purchasing act, but a complex social activity.

In Chapter Five this argument was illustrated through an outline of the differing 'experiences' of shopping which men and women prefer. By focusing on the gendered discourse which surrounds the act of shopping it was demonstrated that men and women exhibit contrasting 'shopping styles'. The notion of a 'shopping style' was employed to clarify the differences that exist in terms of how men and women talk about this act, but also with respect to their attitudes to it and the ways they suggest that they will accomplish their shopping. For the men in the study shopping tends to be viewed as either a 'chore' or 'necessity'. For such men, shopping is laborious and simply a means to an end. They consider time spent shopping as a 'waste', and thus display a object-oriented style which asserts that they will accomplish their shopping in the minimum of time, preferably on their own, but also that they will only shop if they 'need' a particular item. For the women in the study, in contrast, shopping was considered to be 'fun' and 'enjoyable'. Shopping, for such women, is a recreational activity which can be enjoyed as an end in itself. They consider shopping as an enjoyable way to spend their time and thus display an experience-oriented style which asserts the pleasures of 'just looking'. They also see shopping as a social event, one which focuses on the maintenance of social relations, with their family or friends.

To understand these gendered differences further, in Chapter Six, an analysis was provided which sought to situate this activity in the wider social and cultural context within which it is embedded. This chapter sought to explain why such differences between men and women are so apparent in the empirical data. A number of factors were considered for their ability to explain these gendered contrasts. These included the differing temporal and financial constraints which may stem from the fact that the men were more likely to be in paid full-time employment than the women. In addition, attention was

focused on the extent to which the women appeared more likely to use this act as a means of facilitating contact with others, especially through joint shopping with female friends. Finally, the analysis focused on the differing leisure opportunities open to men and women, and the extent to which the act of shopping is assumed to be part of the women's 'work' role of housewife.

In the conclusion to Chapter Six it was argued that although these explanations go some way to explaining why there may be differences between men and women, in terms of how they construe the act of shopping, they do not wholly explain such variations. This conclusion was reached on the basis of the men's and women's comments about each other's 'shopping styles' and the apparent uses to which they are put. Gail Reekie in a recent evaluation of shopping (1992) suggested that the history of men's relation to this act has yet to be written. This statement is still applicable, however the current study of people's attitudes to shopping is a beginning as it reveals the nature of the existing relationship which some men have to the act of shopping. In Chapter Seven this argument was outlined; it was argued that the act of shopping, in addition to its embeddedness within a particular social and cultural configuration, is also situated within an ideological framework which can be expressed through the perceived 'feminine' status of this task. In the attempt to understand the uses to which such ideas about shopping are put the concept of ideologies of shopping was proposed. This term conveys the cognitive function of such attitudes and evaluations. To illustrate this idea attention was given to the men's relationship with the act of shopping; it was argued that the men's ideology of shopping enables them to participate in an activity which is generally regarded as 'feminine' or as women's work but in a masculine manner. This was illustrated in terms of the cognitive dissonance which men appear to experience when they occupy the role of the shopper, as manifested through their shopping disclaimer statements. Further to this cognitive usage, it was argued that the ideologies of shopping perform



evaluative and pejorative uses which serve to criticise the manner in which others behave. This was expressed in terms of the men and women's criticisms of each other's shopping styles and the stereotypes which they both employed to understand and denigrate each other's actions.

Chapter Eight provided a discussion of the power relations which are associated with these gendered ideologies of shopping. Attention was focused on the degree to which masculine power replicates itself through the act of shopping. This was examined in terms of the consequences for the women of the likelihood that doing the shopping will be regarded as their work. A system of sanctions and controls were outlined which serve to effectively constrain the women's choices over what clothes they purchase for their children and partners, and what food is put on the table. The paradox is that women thus appear to be finding pleasure in an activity which serves to reaffirm their subordination to male authority. This was made clear through the feelings of guilt which they expressed about the situation in which they are purchasing items (especially clothing) for themselves, but also in the pleasures which they gain from this act.

An alternative interpretation was then offered of the shopping ideologies which considered them as a source of female empowerment within the sphere of shopping. To illustrate this theme attention was centred on the nature and strength of the female critique against the male interpretation of this activity. This focus enabled us to qualify the degree of control which the men exercise over the women, through an examination of the pleasures and benefits which women themselves assert that they gain from the fact that they do the shopping. A measure of feminine power within the sphere of shopping was illustrated in terms of the women's forthright criticisms of their male partners incompetence when doing this task. In this way, an alternative hypothesis was that shopping is a sphere in which it is men who are disempowered; a point which was made clear in terms of the 'lived experience' of the joint shopping



trip, and the question of who controls what shops are visited and how long is spent browsing.

To take this argument further, attention was given to the changing cultural definition of the act of shopping. Sociologists, as we discovered in Chapter One, have in recent years placed increasing importance upon understanding people's consumer behaviour (Bocock, 1993; Shields, 1992; Bauman, 1988a; 1988b). In a similar fashion, they have argued that the factor of gender is less important for understanding contemporary social differentiation in a consumer society (Shields, 1992). The results of the study contradict this conclusion. They suggest that men and women are integrated into society in different 'ways' as consumers. The evidence further suggests that men have a vested interest in maintaining these gender differences, since they serve to reproduce their power within contemporary society. Men thus seek to cling to the greater authority which is afforded to them through the producer role, but also to distance themselves from the consumer role. This was illustrated in Chapter Six where it was suggested that the men do not consider it worthwhile to 'learn' how to shop, rather they are content to argue that their time is valuable and hence should not be 'wasted' on shopping. For the women, the role of consumer is something which society assigns to them. In this situation, the women are forced to justify the time which they spend in the act of shopping by employing the values of the sphere of production. It thus appears worthwhile for them to shop around in order to save money; an interpretation, and justification for 'looking around' which the men are not prepared to accept.

Daniel Miller (1994) in a recent article asked the question: 'Could Shopping Ever Really Matter?' I have demonstrated the ways in which it does matter to the people involved, and what it is about the experience which is of most importance to them. For men and women priority is placed upon their conflicting interpretations which surround the valuation of this activity and how

it is best accomplished. This suggestion, as I have demonstrated, is equally significant to contemporary sociological theory. This is best expressed through the extent to which the ideologies of shopping justify patriarchal authority and contribute to the subordination of women, and the possibility that these arrangements can be inverted through a female re-evaluation of this sphere.

The study points to the need for ethnographic research to investigate further the relationship between stated attitudes and actual consumer behaviour. This research would not be simple or in any way straightforward given the public and commercial nature of the 'shopping experience', however it is required in order to examine further the place which the act of shopping does occupy in people's lives, but also, to test whether in fact men and women shop as they say they do and whether there are any other discernible gender differences which are not revealed through interviews.

In conclusion, it is necessary to restate the original aims and objectives of the thesis. The current study has provided a sociological analysis of the act of shopping. It has sought to analyse this act as a meaningful experience and to understand the importance which people themselves place upon their experience of going shopping. It has been argued that to understand this activity it is necessary to situate it within the broader social and cultural context within which it is embedded, alongside the ideological framework within which the act is situated. In addition it has been demonstrated that the factor of gender continues to play a significant role in the experience of shopping open to men and women. The conclusion is thus that people are involved in a process of defining themselves, not only in terms of what they consume, but equally through how and in what ways they shop.



## APPENDIX ONE

### SHOPPING TRANSCRIPT: GROUP ONE

Status: BC1  
Sex: Men  
Ages: 25-45 years.

IR Right if I can just start by introducing myself. My name is Paul Hewer and I'm a Research Student at York University. I don't think they told you, this is being done purely for academic research and it's not to sell detergents or something like that, it's purely for my own research actually. Because the problem with research on shopping is that it focuses on women and we're just trying to remedy that. I'll warn you that we're being videoed, if you hadn't of guessed by now and also being audioed. This is purely so that I can, when I'm transcribing at the end I can put faces to comments. OK. So you're all happy about that. It's going to be a bit hard for me to remember all your names but I'll try to anyway, I apologise if I forget some. If we can just go round.

Aidan, Daniel, David, Frank, Grant, Nigel, Andrew, Roger

IR Excellent. As I said my name's Paul. Right if we can just start of by talking generally about shopping, what I'm interested in is your shopping and buying habits. Ok. Can I start off by going round factually. How often do you go shopping?

Aidan Food shopping

IR Well any shopping

Aidan Food shopping is when it becomes that I need something to eat really. I don't do it on a weekly or monthly or fortnightly shop. I just go.

IR Does it work out every week?

Aidan Every couple of days. I don't do like a big shop. I don't go for a big shop. Just do odds and ends when I need it or something runs out or I've got to replace something and something for tea

Daniel Well I normally go once a month and buy a lot of stuff, I never buy anything fresh. I only buy meat and bread and stuff. But it's all tinned and frozen stuff.

David Go every Friday, every Friday.

IR Why do you go Fridays?

David It's the most convenient day for both of us.

Nigel You get paid as well I suppose.



- David            Yeah get paid and its the most convenient day for both of us.
- IR                And where do you go?
- David            *Morrisons.*
- Frank            I shop on Saturday Mornings in a Continental Supermarket.
- IR                Is it within this vicinity?
- Frank            There's one at Crossgates near where I live. It's cheaper and I find the quality as good as any of the English and I can save 20% on my bills.
- Grant            I shop just when I need 'owt. I get fed up going anyway after work. So I don't need much anyway.
- IR                Do you shop locally or do you go into town?
- Grant            I go to *Safeways*.
- Nigel            Everyday.
- IR                Everyday?
- Nigel            Everyday and I go where I can find the freshest produce, I go where the prices are cheapest, even if it's 5p cheaper I'll go a mile or two miles for that 5p, and that's not because I'm tight it's because I like the fact that people are selling something cheaper. I like to..
- IR                So you like to get a bargain?
- Nigel            I do. I love a bargain yes. Everyday, and I go to *Sainsbury's*, *Tesco's*, not so much *Grandways* because that's the worse Supermarket in my opinion, I've been to most of them, worse one going.. I go down to the market on Market days, not on a Monday because the fresh produce on a Monday is just brought over from the Saturday, the weekend, just kept there. So I generally shop around
- IR                Does anyone else of you go to the market at all?
- Grant            I usually go to the market for meat
- IR                Meatwise.
- Grant            The meat's always cheaper there.
- IR                Andrew?
- Andrew          Shop once a week normally on Saturdays. Normally at *Sainsbury's* but if I'm somewhere else I will go somewhere else.
- IR                And it's always the same day every week?

- Andrew Um most weeks, there's normally a reason if I can't go on a Saturday I might go one evening during the week for something if I've forgotten something, but it's fairly regular.
- Roger Yeah, normally it's Saturdays, the only sort of day that is available, again it varies from *Sainsbury's* or *Tesco*, occasionally if I'm out of town or out in another place somewhere I'll pop into *Marks and Spencer* and get it from there. About same price. Once a month do a bigger shop get all like the cleaning stuff. So like every Saturday it's just like food and stuff for that week.
- IR For that week. One thing which hasn't come up is whether you're actually doing this on your own or whether you're going with someone else?
- Frank Yes I shop on my own cause I live on my own so I shop for myself and the house.
- Nigel Yes I will go on my own even though I live with somebody, we both work, but I've got a bit more spare time, I prefer to shop on my own anyway
- laugh
- Nigel It's a lot less aggro, less hassle on my own.
- laughs
- Grant Especially if you
- IR Is this your wife you're talking about
- Grant Yeah
- laughs
- Grant Especially if you go to the market up and down up and down.
- David Go together.
- IR You go together, is it better that way or?
- David Um
- IR Does it save arguments?
- David Um it's probably slower, but better it's neither better or worse because we get more or less the same type of things every week just a very stable diet so.
- IR So it's just a job to do. Daniel?
- Daniel I used to go with my wife, but I'm separated now, but it's miles easier now..
- laughs



- Daniel You can buy anything you want no matter what it is just buy it. It takes half the time up just wondering what to buy in *Safeways*. Too much choice you know one jar of coffee is a jar of coffee, not according to her.
- Nigel You can argue over a jar of coffee can't you or a box of cornflakes
- Daniel No doubt. Much easier to doing it on your own
- IR Is it? Do any of you find it enjoyable? I mean what you've said so far would seem to indicate that?
- Nigel Oh I enjoy, I like shopping. I do enjoy shopping. But I've got a lot of spare time with my job. But if I had to rush it I wouldn't enjoy it as much.
- IR So it's actually that you've got loads of time to spare?
- Nigel Oh I'd still enjoy it, but I don't think I'd enjoy it as much because I can take me time and I can go to different places, I can go when I want, so I'm not, there's no force employed you know in as much as where I have to go, at what particular time. I do like shopping round, transport helps though, I think I mean if I hadn't got any transport it would be a completely different kettle of fish no doubt about that. I think you do need transport.
- IR It becomes a big hassle.
- Nigel Well it opens up the choice of where you can go if you've got transport. I mean I didn't have transport to not long ago, about two or three years ago and shopping was more of a hassle without transport then what it is with transport.
- Aidan Yeah that's true, You've have to go on a bus route don't you or something.
- Nigel Of course, yeah.
- IR You do end up going to the nearest place I suppose, within walking distance.
- Nigel You do yeah.
- IR If you haven't got a car I suppose.
- Grant That's why I go to *Safeway* it's just down the road.
- IR It's near then?
- Nigel Well I've actually spent I don't know how much it is but, I don't know how much the petrol I use is, but I probably spend something like a pound going somewhere to save 50p, 5p or something, you know what I mean, jump in your car and you're not bothered where you go or however far it is, if you like that particular place, such as my favourite, I don't know what everybody's favourite is around here is *Sainsbury's* at the moment for shopping.



- IR            Anyone else sort of like shopping, food shopping?
- Roger        Do it out of necessity really.
- Frank        Yeah, I find it very tedious.
- Roger        Sometimes it's alright, but sometimes I just want to get in there and get out. And as soon as you get in there your mind goes blank of what you're going to buy, and you're just walking around endlessly.
- Andrew      I don't actively dislike it though, I mean it can be quite soothing sometimes going around a supermarket after a hassled week or something. Sometimes it's not too bad an experience, it's just if you've got other things on your mind.
- IR            Is it if it's busy? What makes it worse?
- Andrew      Oh, if the aisles are jammed, it becomes a nightmare trying to push a trolley through as quickly as possible.
- IR            You mentioned you liked it Frank?
- Frank        I tend to find it very tedious and I tend to go at about 9.30 or something before the onslaught of the rush comes you know.
- IR            The good thing about going late is that they always reduce things, in my *Tesco* they reduce the bread.
- Frank        It's not the overriding factor price, it's I have to eat out of necessity, to live kind of thing, so I do it on an early morning when there's hardly anybody there, so I couldn't bear this 12.30 when there's forty people in front of me or anything like that, drive me crazy.
- Grant        I usually go to *Safeways* when they reduce meat and stuff on a Saturday, big saving.
- David        I think it's better if you're hungry.
- IR            If you're hungry? It usually works the other way.
- laughs
- IR            I never go when I'm hungry because I'm always worried I'll spend a lot more.
- David        Well cause I finish work, we go straight from work so I'm always hungry then, so like then it seems not so bad but otherwise I just get annoyed with all these people with trolleys being stupid, and just going everywhere and it's like chaos. Because there's always, Friday nights is always really really busy, it just gets a bit grinding after you've had a hard day at work and you're thinking get out of the way type of thing.
- Frank        I tend to go one place when I shop and make a point of just making it that one place, otherwise if you walk out of a

supermarket and you see the butchers over the road or something, you're thinking you know shall I have some beef or whatever. You've already bought some lamb chops out of the freezer or something so I tend to restrict myself to one place.

Nigel Those reductions you don't get them as much now, with this, have you noticed with this Sunday opening, because they used to be late Saturday nights, but with this Sunday opening they no, I've noticed on a Saturday night in a few places you go round at the time when those reductions in the bread and everything, they're taking the bread off the shelves, they're taking it actually off the shelves so they can sell it again on Sunday, even *Sainsbury's* that's why I saw it.

IR If we could just move on to any other kind of shopping that you enjoy? Any other forms?

Nigel I like going to ethnic food stores, Indian food stores and all the Asian food stores, I mean I live not far from here so you've got plenty of Asian food stores really, and they do, some of them, some of them are rubbish, but the good ones they actually go to a lot of trouble to have a hell of a lot of different varieties on the shelf, stuff that might not sell, that will have a long shelf life and they might not push to much of it but they do go to the trouble to have it.

Andrew I only tend to enjoy shopping if I'm going out when I know it's not going to be particularly crowded. So I take a day off to go shopping, beef or whatever I mean if I'm going to town to wander around, actually the enjoyable part is I'm in control it's when you've got people with, old biddies with trolleys and things ramming your legs that it becomes very very unpleasurable.

IR Yes, what about other kinds of shopping? I mean where you don't get trolleys.

Andrew No but I mean I'm not just talking about shopping for food, it's like pushchairs, the whole lot. I mean Saturday outside *Marks and Spencer* in town is like hell, but um, but any sort of shopping clothes shopping or whatever it's pleasurable as long as it's in my time, and I'd rather not go on a Saturday if I have to go to town.

Roger Clothes shopping I do like, especially when I've got money to do it.

Andrew There's nothing like shopping when you've got money.

Roger But you've got to have the money, but yeah I do like that. I could spend hours, going from one place to another, I do enjoy that, again it would not, like Andrew said it would not be on a Saturday, it would have to be during sometime in the week, I just hate crowds.

IR Do you not have a problem with that though, in that if you're working all week, Monday to Friday then Saturday becomes the only free time that you've got?



- Andrew Because that's just Saturday is for your necessity stuff it's like food.
- IR And you have to get it out of the way?
- Andrew Yeah, it's like supermarket stuff or what-have-you. I rarely have a reason where I would have to go to town on a Saturday, and if I have to I do it begrudgingly, rush in and rush out. In reasonable control of my time in that I can say like I'm going out or just take leave or whatever.
- IR Are you alright? Do any of the others do shopping which you enjoy?
- Aidan No, it's I really have, again same as food if you need some new clothes. I wouldn't say I, it's a pleasurable experience like I wouldn't choose to go in and wander around town for three hours, four hours, so I would make sure I knew what I was after, go to a couple of places where I know sell them, just do it.
- IR You won't spend time browsing?
- Aidan No
- IR Going round looking at new items
- Aidan No, no
- IR Do any of you do that?
- Frank I do.
- IR You do?
- Frank Yeah, a couple of *Great Clothes* I've got a card for them and another outlet in Leeds called *Tradex* and yeah I spend half an hour in there, I'll walk around twice.
- Nigel Even if you're not buying anything?
- Frank Yeah well I might see a Van Heusen shirt at about £5, and I'll buy it, but I usually go in there initially to buy something, and then I won't go over the top but I'll buy anything that I think I may need, a shirt something like that..
- IR Right
- Frank About two weeks time or something if it's there at that time and at the right price. But I do like, as I say, the big cash and carry places yeah, love it.
- IR What about clothes shops in town?
- Frank No, don't shop in town.
- IR Steer clear of it?
- Frank I tend to use the cards for all the ones in the suburbs.



- Andrew I could spend hours browsing if I've got the time, I'm quite happy to just browse round, I mean I might buy a lot of things as well, yeah, but no I'm..
- IR But you don't go out with a specific, like I want to buy a shirt?
- Andrew I would say I rarely wanted to buy clothes, no I definitely see something when I'm trying not to buy it, it's normally when I've got least money or something I will buy clothing but it's definitely impulse buying.
- Grant If you're going to buy something and you've got some idea of what you want anyway, so go to market or something like that.
- IR Yeah I mean I can go out sometimes and just look round, yeah like an afternoon to spare and just like.
- Nigel I never do that do you?
- Frank No
- Nigel I never actually/I know well supposedly, women supposedly do that this window shopping, I can't say I've ever done that, I can't say, make a journey down into town or I wouldn't come up here and go looking in shop windows.
- Frank If you didn't have any intention
- Nigel ...of buying something no way. What about everybody else, would you?
- Grant As I'm saying you must have some idea of what you want.
- IR And you just go and get it?
- Roger If I've got the money to spend and I don't know what I want, yeah, if I've got spare cash and I don't know exactly what I want.
- Nigel But if you've got spare cash, if I've got spare cash I don't have to spend it.
- Roger No you don't have to, but that is where everybody else is different and that is what I sometimes do if I've got the cash if I've got nothing else to spend it on.
- David If you've got money in my pocket and you go out shopping for no reason but you end up with bags full of stuff, that you don't really want or even need. But you've just gone out and spent it for the sake it. But most of the time I can't be bothered to go out shopping for the sake of one item.
- Roger I've gone out looking for something, not particularly wanting something and going out looking and spend £300 or £400 pounds in an afternoon and it's all been on clothes when I specifically didn't want to clothes, maybe it's because I wanted a tape and gone into *HMV* and it's not been nothing so I've thought I've got to spend something and ended.

Nigel Well, I mean I can't remember exactly what I bought but I remember last week I went in just one day I had to get some Kittocat, because I've got some cats and I only wanted two cans of Kittocat and I actually ended up spending over £50.

IR What on?

Nigel Everything that I could see, I mean I'm compulsive in so much as if I've got the money in my pocket I'm not bothered about spending it, I bought joints of meat, I bought all sorts of things which I didn't go down there to buy, which I could of bought anytime and put them in the freezer. I actually ended up spending £50 quid on something else. Oh I know what it was, I went out to buy some Kittocat and then I ended up, I bought about £2's worth of Kittocat. And I thought I'll go and have a look in *Tradex* as well, at the same time and I ended up spending it were £70 actually on bedcovers and things, yeah, and I'd only gone up there. Let me start again, this is a different one, a different one, the one when I went down and spent £50 was all on food, for the freezer right. When I'd gone out to get the Kittocat, I'd gone up to *Tradex* to buy two bottles of Chilli pickles which they had, now they didn't even have the chilli pickles, right they'd run out of them, so then I went looking around, I ended up buying two, what are those things you sleep under?

David Duvets

Nigel Two duvets, two duvet covers, two pillowcases and all this business came to £80 quid.

Nigel So those chilli pickles which I didn't get ended up mushrooming to £80, which if I'd been asked by a lass lets go and buy this stuff I'd have said there's no way I'm spending that amount of money.

IR Do any others of you find that?

Aidan I wouldn't.

Daniel No, I wouldn't do any shopping if I didn't have to. I hate shopping, anything even buying clothes, I'd much rather sit on settee and go through the *Next Directory*.

IR So you like to do home shopping?

Daniel ..ring up and say send me this and this and this. It comes in two days, that's great, I like shopping on the phone.

IR What is it you hate though?

Daniel Shopping, I just can't be bothered with the actual shopping.

IR Yeah

Daniel I can always think of something better to do.

IR What is it the hassle of being with people or?



- Daniel Well No I can just always think of something else to do rather than shopping.
- IR Yes
- Daniel I'd much rather sit in pub for two hours then go around *Sainsbury's* for two hours (laughs). I mean I'm not saying that I always do that but rather then go shopping, cause there are times I've got to go, so I never do any shopping on the weekend Saturdays are for, Saturdays are certainly not for shopping. So it's during the week, drive home, coming past the hospital on the way home so call in and do it then. But if I didn't have to do it I wouldn't go, if the woman next door said, the little old lady said "I'll get it while I do mine", I'd say okay.
- Frank I think as you grow older, I can honestly say I'm a senior citizen here, I think as you grow older you tend to spend less, in my opinion, unless you suddenly come into a fortune something like Armani suits or Gucci shoes you know, which I would buy if somebody gave me a thousand quid I'd be straight out, but I won't save up and buy them for the sake of it, designer labels I'm not into, but the thing is twenty years ago I used to have a suit made maybe three times a year. Made, you go to a tailor and have it made. Now of course it's all on the peg, but I tend to spend less now on clothes now than I did, a lot less, probably about you know cut my budget by about two-thirds, I spend in real terms in comparison to today's value of the pound and that, probably spend a third of what I did twenty years ago.
- IR Is that because you've got, you know, you're wardrobe is expanding and you've got this available clothes store?
- Frank No, it's because you know you've got a house to keep and you've got a mortgage and a car to keep going, and you didn't have them when you were twenty at least I didn't or twenty-five so in that respect I don't spend as much as I used to. I'm careful with what I buy as well I do look for suits for about £50 or £60 instead of £150, and yeah care.
- IR Do you go with your wife at all?
- Frank No
- IR Do any of the rest of you buy clothes with your girlfriends or wives?
- David Yeah, most of the time. Because I can't make up my own mind, so I need somebody to tell me what to buy, otherwise I could be in there all day trying things on and going round town just trying things on and not buying anything. So I need somebody just to point me in the right direction, and say that'll suit you buy that and then it's over and done with and I can go but if I go by myself I just walk round town in a daze going.
- Daniel What about all these things, "Oh yeah that's alright" and she's says "ugh".
- David That's right yeah.



- Daniel            And you end up, you're back at square one aren't you.
- David            That's right.
- Andrew           I actually prefer going on my own, because then you don't have to hang around while they're trying things on, I mean you can be much more intentional you can go in and even if you're browsing and taking your time, it's your time and..
- IR                You go to the shops that you want to go to?
- Andrew           Yeah, I mean I can make a decision about what I want if I don't like it, I won't buy it, but I can't stand being dragged around shops with other people, particularly if I've no intention of buying something.
- Roger            I like to um, if I see something I'll buy it or won't so go back out and then think about it for a week or two, no I'll get, but no I'll buy it there and then because I've got the money to do that, if I haven't got it I haven't got it
- Nigel            Have you noticed though, if you're are buying with a female, clothes especially that they tend to be able to sway you into what to buy but you can never sway them in what to buy.
- Frank            That's always been the case hasn't it, pretty persuasive.
- laughs
- Nigel            It's a fact that women, they're much more choosy as well, I think about clothes as well. It seems what they perceive of what they want to buy. I mean me, say I try three pairs of shoes on or something and I didn't like any of them, I'd be likely to buy the fourth pair just for the fact that I was sick and tired of looking round for something that suited me. I would, it just wants to be, I mean I hate clothes shopping. I like food shopping, but when it comes to clothes I don't like it whatsoever.
- David            No
- Nigel            And I don't like the places you go to, they always seem packed, too many people and assistants, assistants trying to get you to buy things (indicating David). Because David works in a shop, he works selling Hifi and it's, the worse thing if you're going to buy anything like that, you know you're going to have to shell out quite a bit on that gear, you want to browse around and you want to see something that comes down and hits you, because you don't, the worse thing is somebody tapping you on the shoulder saying "Can I help you Sir?", initially you say no, no I'm just looking, and then you run a mile if they, if they carry on too much don't you, just don't need that kind of hassle and that is hassle in shops, sometimes, you get that from assistants
- IR                Do any of the rest of you have problems with that, assistants in shops?
- Roger            Yeah I mean if I'm hassled more then twice, that's it I walk out.

- Aidan It is off putting you're right. If you want to buy something you'd ask them.
- Roger I mean if it wasn't for politeness I'd just tell them to xxx off with it, because it is really annoying me.
- Andrew Because it's polite to ask once.
- Nigel Sure.
- Andrew But beyond that they're just harrassing you, and it helps to make them know that.
- Nigel They're treating you like a moron aren't they. Or you think that way.
- Andrew But you do it in return you'd leave
- Nigel Of course yeah
- Frank I used to be an Assistant Shop Manager years ago and the guy who owned, there were a change of Army stores in Leicester, these Army and Navy type stores that sell jeans and wool sweaters and the chap who owned it used to come out, always ask them if they want something else, it's totally not me at all that but I can see it from the other side, I hate people coming up to me, if I go into a shop, a clothes shop or whatever, a large one, I know what I want and when I see it I want to ask them, as opposed to them coming and saying, "Yes sir, do you want to try it on?" and all this, I can't stand it.
- Nigel Like you said, it's polite for them to ask you once, to offer their services.
- IR Other than them being just too busy?
- Nigel Yeah sure.
- Roger Isn't it strange because there's a lot of documentaries on T.V. about their selling techniques and from a retailing point of view they perceive that as what the customer wants, this pestering all the time, but really when you look at it, what the customer wants, they don't want that.
- Andrew Yes but it can very much depend on the shopkeeper, and it can work very well as a technique if I'm in a shop that I like then quite often that offer of help can actually get them somewhere. I may have been just browsing and that offer of help is all I need to push me over the edge.
- Roger No but they're there if you want that help, aren't they to ask.
- Andrew Yeah, but I might not of done.
- Roger That's why they're there.
- Andrew Yes, but I might not of done.



- Nigel Yeah, I see the point you're making.
- Andrew I may of suddenly of thought oh I'm going, I'll be strong-willed and leave, but if they ask you it's that hook that graps you.
- Nigel Or you might of just wandered in and left without even thinking of buying.
- Andrew But the times that you wander in they ask you for help, and you actually accept their offer, you don't remember it. You only remember the times you've felt hassled and left.
- Nigel Yes
- Andrew So quite a lot of the time its probably worked quite effectively.
- Nigel Sure.
- Roger No matter how much I like to shop if I was hassled I just would not buy it on principle, they can go and stuff it, you know go somewhere else.
- Nigel And yet most times it's not actually the assistants fault, you know as I know there's quite a lot of pressure put on assistants to hassle customers by management or owners whatever it is and its not actually the assistants who are feeling like that they've got to give this hard sell, they're getting hassled if they don't do it then the management think they're not doing the job right
- Roger Because a lot of it is commission basis isn't it, you get commission, so if they don't sell they don't get the commission.
- IR What about when it comes to actually trying the clothes on and you've got this assistant trying to give you opinions?
- Nigel Following you into changing room
- Roger Just don't listen to them
- Frank I never try anything on unless I really really like it
- Roger So I just completely ignore their advice
- Frank Yeah you know it's I think it's an absolute waste of time trying things on something, you've got to like it and you've got to like it instantly.
- IR So you'll decide before you even try it on?
- Roger But you've got to see if it fits you though haven't you.
- Frank Before I even take it off the peg or whatever, I'll look at the style and if it's grey with a pin-stripe or whatever and that's what I want, then I'll try it, if it doesn't, if it isn't right I won't say to them can you get me one for next week, I just won't bother, you know, cause when it comes to next week it might be £20 dearer or whatever. But I've got to really like it, it's pointless just trying



things on if you don't like 'em, and you know, it just hits you that's the way I shop

Roger Just completely ignore them, because half the time they're probably just lying to you just to get that sale.

Nigel Well I know somebody who owns a, a friend of mine actually, he owns an electrical shops, he's got about three or four around, I won't give the name but whatever and he said to me the worst person, this is a guy who owns it, he said the worst person to ask for advice is the shop assistant, or the shop representative, or whatever you, I mean in other words you're putting you're head on the block. And that comes from a guy who earns his living selling it.

IR What about your clothes shopping Daniel?

Daniel Well, I..

IR You said you hated shopping?

Daniel As I said I'd much rather, as I said use things like *Next Directory*, where you can look at it.

IR Catalogue shopping?

Daniel Yes, it is difficult to guage, like you look at a shirt and when you get it you sometimes think, it's not how it looks on the picture. It's probably because the guy is 6ft 4", and you think it fitted him alright um..

IR So it never lives up to your expectation?

Daniel Oh it does most of the time it does, it's very rarely that I ever actually send something back. The only thing that you've got to watch there is that you get something and it's not quite right and you think well it's a pain in the arse sending things back so I'll keep it, you know that's the only thing, so you've got to be, you've got to be fairly sure. But you know if I've bought, I bought a suit, so I ordered the same suit in two sizes, knowing that I would send one back

IR Oh, I see.

Daniel It doesn't cost me anything to send it back, so they send me the same suit in a short and a regular, they do some quite short fat suits, so I bought that one.

laughs

IR Do you ever go down town and do shopping?

Daniel No, not unless I've got to go into town for something else.

IR So, it's all home shopping?

Daniel Yeah, if at all possible or places like um I live over towards Pudsey and they've built a new *Asda* and *Marks and Spencer*

there, and that's not bad, cause I can go to *Asda*, do some food shopping and just sort of have a look in *Marks and Spencer* see if its packed or whatever and I can have a look in there.

Nigel Is this mail order what you're talking about?

Daniel Yeah

Nigel Which firm do you go through?

Daniel *Next*

Nigel *Next*. I used to do the same as that, you've just reminded me..

Frank *George Davis*

Nigel ..where you'd order three different sizes and then you'd send the other one's back.

IR What you used to shop like that?

Nigel Well, it was actually somebody a girl that I lived with who used to do so, so of course I went along with it, um and as soon as we split up I never bothered with it again cause I'm not into um, I'm not in um, I didn't find the prices very competitive, but it were nice the fact that you could buy it and then pay later obviously and all that business.

Frank That's one thing I couldn't do catalogue shop

Nigel And like you say it..

Frank ..No chance in the world

Nigel ..it certainly always looks better in the pictures then it does when you get it home

Daniel Well I wouldn't say it always does, sometimes I look at him and think, it looks better on me pal, often it's the sort of environment.

Frank I thought that sort of shopping went out in the sixties with *Grattans* and what do you call the others

Nigel The trouble is, you like the gear when you see it but then there's a gap of about two or three weeks isn't there before you get it.

Daniel Ah but this one's 48 hours

Nigel Is that all it is.

Daniel You can phone, you know I can sit at home at 11 O'clock when you come home from pub, which sometimes isn't the best time to do it

laughs

Daniel Well, send one of them as well. You can ring up to midnight and it is 48 hours and then they knock on the door and that's it



Nigel Oh, I didn't realise

Daniel To buy your stuff

IR Do you use this then Aidan?

Aidan Yes, but I do go into town as well, I do combine the two like but yeah it's good, it's great service. Mum used to do like a *Grattans* or a *Kays* when I was at home and like I get things for me mum but that always took a while, a week or two to arrive..

IR Yes, they've really cut down on the time

Aidan ... but this one with *Next* is brilliant yeah, like Daniel says its a good choice and you can send them back for nought, it didn't cost you any post and they collect it off you when it convenient for you. It's just a lazy way of doing things.

Grant But is it very expensive? More expensive.

Aidan It is yeah, but *Next* shops are expensive.

Daniel You won't pay anymore in the catalogue then going into town and getting it.

Grant I thought you did.

Daniel The quality you know that when you get it it's going to be good.

Nigel Oh, that sounds really convenient, I didn't realise you could have things with a couple of days.

Aidan Oh I.

Frank No I'd have to see it, and examine the stitches.

Aidan But you can can't you.

Frank ...to make sure that they were sewed properly, very finnickky me, has to be spot on.

Daniel Oh yeah, I mean if anything doesn't come up to scratch.

Frank They'd have to run perfect you know.

Daniel I've never had anything damaged, I've had things that you know when I've got it I haven't liked it, so you just send it back.

IR Just moving on a bit what would you say is your favourite shopping?

David Things for the house.

IR Things for the house?



- David Things for the house, furniture or DIY, things for the house just generally but not food or clothes shopping, but furniture and things like that I enjoy that.
- Frank Yeah, definitely the house, chinese rugs or whatever you know, cause you know they've got a life, probably have them twenty or thirty years, you're not going to have this (lifting lapel on suit) more then five you know, so you take a pride in buying good stuff, I do anyway for the house, that's where me money goes, good wallpaper or whatever it's worth it.
- IR Why do you think that is that you prefer buying things for the house rather than the way you look?
- Frank Because it's an investment, whatever you, good carpets or good rugs or good whatever, curtains whatever if you buy good quality stuff it lasts you for years and years and years, if you buy cheap stuff out of *Marks and Sparks* [*Spencers*] it'll go out of fashion in no time and it's gone. That's the way I think I look at it as a long-term investment, that's what I like, I like to shop and when I do shop to get the best that I can possibly afford at the time, even stretch myself so I can have it.
- IR What about you Grant? What is your favourite shopping?
- Grant I haven't got any, got none mate.
- IR Going to DIY stores?
- Grant Not really no, as I say if I want ought I just go into town and have a look around, some idea of what you want.
- IR Roger?
- Roger I would say it would be clothes.
- IR Clothes? And why would you say that is?
- Roger I think if the truth was said I think I'm selfish and I enjoy spending money on myself, if I've got the money why should I spend it on anybody else but myself, you know I've worked for it so why not me get the benefit rather than anybody else. It would be clothes.
- IR What about Andrew?
- Andrew I only enjoy shopping when it's impulsive and I don't need the item, it could be for the house or it could be clothes or anything, um
- IR It doesn't matter what it is?
- Andrew No, I find if I plan the shopping I'm always disappointed, if I go to look for something specific I will always be disappointed and never find it, whereas if it's just something I see and I buy it, that I can that can be quite enjoyable, but it doesn't really matter what it is, it could be a piece of furniture, it could be clothes or whatever.

- IR           What about fashion, sort of connected to clothes, how important would you say fashion is to you?
- Aidan       Um, only in as much as it looks good at the time, if you wearing something completely out of fashion you just look, you just look at of place don't you. I mean I think most people conform don't they to what they think is the norm and if that is what fashion is then just go along.
- IR           Then you're just you don't know you're own style?
- Aidan       Apart from wearing jeans and t-shirts, trackshirts all the time, then that would be my style I suppose. But even within jeans, t-shirts and tracksuits are in fashion at the time every couple of years just move on a bit, you just buy whatever is in the shops I suppose as well. I wouldn't go out of my way to buy something because it was the latest designer label or it was on t.v. or something.
- IR           Any others?
- David       I just buy things which are comfortable to an extent that it has to run along, it can be something outrageously different from the normal type of thing, but something that feels comfortable and doesn't look totally stupid
- IR           Fits in with your own look?
- David       Fits in, but not, I wouldn't go out and get something just for the sake of it because everybody else was wearing it on *Top of the Pops* or whatever I wouldn't do that at all
- IR           Or the *Clothes Show*?
- David       No, not at all I wouldn't it's neither here nor there people should dress how they feel comfortable not how someone else dictates they should dress.
- Andrew     It's not necessarily what you're particularly conscious of, I mean you could go into a shop and they have pre-determined a whole set of fashion that you're going to buy so you're just going..
- Aidan       You buy whats in the shop.
- Andrew     ..so you go in and buy whats there but immediately, they have something labelled then you necessarily labelling yourself.
- Daniel      Fashion could be the plainest white shirt, but because they're all of a certain style, if you look they're all slightly different but they're all exactly the same really, so like you say there, the shops are deciding for you whats fashionable and whats not, rather than you.
- Frank       I purposely mix my suits I've got double-breasts, the modern styles, I've got these singles with double pleats in the back and button down collars, I mix it cause I don't like being labelled, don't like to be categorized or anything like that. But having said



that, I've always been, I've worn suits all me life, in my job, always had a shirt and tie job all my life.

IR Where do you get your ideas from for fashion, you know the idea is that you follow t.v. or something like that, I mean do you follow you're mates at all?

Roger I think with me it's the older you get the more casual you get, now I prefer just baggy tops and just jeans and trainers, boots, that's me now, I don't want to, I can't be bothered now with all the *Clothes Show* type fashions, you know occassionally if you're going anywhere special it's nice to get the latest fashion suit or outfit, but over the all no even if I were going out in town it would be jeans and t-shirt, baggy top it would be nothing out of the ordinary.

IR What about dressing for work?

Roger Yeah I mean, I think *Marks and Spencer's* suits they're always up-to-date, and they're reasonably priced and good quality, so I just go in and get a suit from there, apart from that I won't. A couple, two or three years ago I probably would have been more fashion conscious then I am now, but now I'm just not bothered, as long as you're comfortable.

IR Andrew?

Andrew I don't know to some degree similar. I suppose only I tend to go in for classic things that I don't think are going to age overnight, I don't

IR What is this classic thing?

Andrew Well you can have a nicely cut suit or you can have a nicely cut pair of trousers that are not outrageously baggy or not outrageously sort of tight, and it's like jeans and t-shirts all that sort of thing, fairly perennial things that have been around for years, um a nice jacket, I'd rather have pure, good quality basic items that aren't going to age then have loads and loads of frivolous things in lots of different designs, although I have in the past been more likely to do that, in the past what was okay this month was not alright this month. But now, it's just things that I can wear year in and year out, and there's more a degree of replacing items with the same sort of thing, so if I try on a pair of jeans I might buy another pair of jeans to replace. I may not be buying something totally different just kind of stocking up. I mean I would be much more fashion-conscious if I had special occasion or something, if there was something specifically that I had to go to, then I might think about it a bit more, but I would say my fashion is determined essentially by the shops that I go in, I think some of those can be very fashionable but I'm not conscious of it, I go in I like the shop, I like their clothes, I like the quality of those clothes or whatever and I'll buy them, but it's..

IR Do your friends offer you comments on your clothes? You'll buy something and someone will say that looks nice, does that happen at all, is that important?



- Andrew It would probably happen more when I was a bit younger, because people might notice more. Nowadays it would be very rare that anybody would comment, oh I like that particular item and that's quite nice. But the lack of comment wouldn't bother me. But in fact even if they said something against it if I personally liked it, it wouldn't bother me either, unless I had doubts about it, I mean if I had doubts about something I'd bought it on impulse and then they say they didn't like it then it would probably never see the light of day again, but no other people's views don't bother me too much.
- IR Does anyone else think that other people's comments are important?
- Daniel The only people that
- Frank It's usually family that comments..
- Aidan Yes
- Frank ..or primarily the family, that's the only people I take notice of anyway.
- Grant I get a lot of comments when I put me suit on a weekend don't I.
- Nigel Yes, but it's so unusual for you to wear a suit Grant.
- IR Are they always approving or?
- Grant Oh yeah, you look smart, you know what I mean.
- IR Yeah, but what about when you actually go out and buy something new, do they say something then, or is it just because you've got a suit on?
- Grant And a tie as well yeah.
- IR What about you (David), you said you shopped with your girlfriend or is it wife?
- David With my girlfriend. Well what she says goes, because that's I find that it's an easy life you know to an extent, not everything but like if she approves of something then I get it but if she don't then I won't. But most of the time she comes shopping with me anyway, so it's more or less what she says that I'll get, providing I've chosen it, she won't choose it for me, I'll choose it but if she says yes or no, and I don't know then more or less go along with what she says, but no one else I just don't care it's her opinion that matters to me, not anyone else's is.
- IR Is there sometimes she doesn't offer her opinion?
- David Um
- Daniel No women can't do that
- laughs

- David            Yeah, occasionally but then you just buy it and just hope for the best.
- IR                Any others of you? Aidan, do you have any comments at all on your fashion?
- Aidan            Um
- Daniel           Down the pub on a Saturday Night.
- Aidan            Yes, just get a few mickey taking comments, if it's something like, like I said before it's something out of the ordinary and I wouldn't buy it anyway I don't think, ah I can't think of an instance where that happened, but if it is a bright colour or something I'm sure I'll get some comments from, like Daniel says, from me mates or something.
- IR                Just to move on to a different topic, still shopping? Would you say, have you bought anything recently that has given you some pleasure, which you've I don't know saved up for?
- Daniel           Not saved up for, but I have just bought a new hifi but I didn't have to save up for it. I bought it when I shouldn't have bought it but I thought ah why not, old one was on its way out, I needed a new one, but I suppose it depends on how you qualify it.
- IR                Did you go into town?
- Daniel           No I bought it in *Comet* on Armley Road/in a lunch hour.
- IR                What was the actual pleasure in that, was the actual buying it?
- Daniel           Well no, it wasn't buying it, it was getting it home and playing it.
- IR                Getting it home and actually using it.
- Daniel           It wasn't going and buying it because it was over so soon. Apart from that I mean there's no pleasure in giving somebody four hundred quid that, then thinking where I'm going to get it from.
- IR                It's a lot of money isn't it.
- Daniel           Oh yes, it is, but buying something like that you know it's something that you want, it's something you're going to get pleasure out of it whenever you want.
- IR                For a long time, a major purchase.
- Daniel           It's like the only other thing like that I can think of is like that is buying golf clubs or cricket bats and things, it's something that you go out and play with.
- IR                You get a lot of use out of.
- Daniel           The pleasure of purchasing, you might be pleased about buying it but that's only because you know that when you get it home it's yours you can do what you want with it.



- IR Did you look round all the hifi shops, or did you go straight to *Comet*?
- Daniel I just went straight there, I was actually going to the Stationer's next door thought I'll look in, I went to buy some pens for work like.
- IR Expensive pencils.
- Daniel Yes very expensive came back with a four hundred quid hifi, but it was a special offer, I had a look and I thought it's a lot cheaper than it should have been, so I thought yeah why not, I'll have it. So I bought it, I think if I'd of thought about going and buying one, I probably wouldn't have done, but, I'd have sat at home and thought I need a new hifi, I'll have to go and get one, it would have taken me months and months to actually get up off me bum and go down whereas with that I just walked passed and saw it and thought oh I do actually need one, so I might as well have it. Easy.
- IR Any of the others of you bought something recently in that sort of category of getting a lot of pleasure out of it?
- Roger Not recently I have spent anything.
- Frank I bought a double-breasted navy blue suit about a month ago, from *Tradex* for ah £40, pure wool.
- IR Was it the fact that it was a bargain?
- Frank It was fantastic, pure wool? It was just one off the end of the line, just happened to fit me so you know.
- Nigel You get a kick out of getting a bargain everybody does..
- Frank Absolutely
- Nigel ..whatever it is, whether it's something that cost 50p and that should be a quid, to what you're talking about and what you're talking about.
- Andrew I disagree absolutely I just do not, I wouldn't notice if it was one price or another. I look at it and think can I afford it or not, that is the only consideration, I don't, I'd never dream of specifically looking at something for a bargain, I just go, if I want it I buy it and it's just a case of can I or not afford it.
- Aidan I'm the opposite completely to that, see if I go out shopping, like I said before for something that I need or want, I'll look at things that have been reduced first, actually look at the original price, then if it's been reduced a lot I'll think well that must be good then or that must be, so I must be a sales assistants dream then if they're putting these sale tickets on I'm seeing them and I'm taking notice of their marketing ploy like.
- Daniel That's probably why he's goes for things like jellied eels and things like that, labels on.



- Aidan That's definitely true, things that I buy I always look at it and it's got to be a bargain like.
- IR And you go into sales because of that?
- Aidan Yeah.
- IR You know spotlight going into a sale?
- Aidan I won't just go into a shop because it's got a sale on, but because it's got something I'm after, be it clothes, jeans or jacket whatever it is, sports gear or something. But I'll look in the shops where I know they have reduced things first like sports goods that I'm always buying, there's a couple of shops that I know definitely have sales on or reduced.
- IR Yes
- Aidan Yes I'm a sucker for a bargain I'm afraid.
- IR Have you bought anything recently like that?
- Aidan No, not for the last couple of months I don't think, nothing that I can think of.
- IR Right
- Frank I think you're pre-programmed with all the advertising on T.Vv. you know if you want hifi ah *Comet*, it's there isn't it, hifi, I think anyway or..
- IR I see what you mean.
- Frank You know you say to me do you want transistor oh I must go to *Comet*, it's on telly.
- Nigel Well round this area it's *Amriks* isn't it, where you get the cheapest things.
- Frank No I don't think so, *Comet* is just locked into my mind.
- Nigel In mine for some reason it's *Amriks* I always feel with *Comet*.
- Frank It's like E.T. on telly and bang it's there.
- Nigel I reckon *Comet* with the amount of advertising they do can't get the best price.
- Frank Well that's, no, I mean I don't go and shop at *Comet* but I'm saying if I wanted hifi, that's the first place I would go, cause I couldn't think of another one.
- Nigel It just sticks in my mind that the first people ever to say, we shall beat any price anybody else any genuine price anybody else quotes you was *Amriks*, that the first one that ever did it around this area.
- Frank Yes but he's small fry isn't he, I never see him on T.V. so much.

- Nigel No, they've got everything what *Comet's* got.
- Frank I know they have because your wife works there and you've got all their stuff.
- Nigel I knew this before I ever met her.
- Frank Before you came tonight anyway.
- Nigel And the fact is they have absolutely everything there, all that sticks in my mind about the place is the fact that they say on any genuine quotation we will give it less, even if its five or ten quid less, but I mean you're..
- Frank I know we don't all walk round like robots, but I honestly believe that we're sub..sub-consciously, ah programmed to recognise a certain thing and you equate it with another certain company you know, whether it's like *Thomas Cook* going abroad, or you know go I think there is that.
- Nigel Well I even do shop around on holidays, go for cheapest, if it's going where I want to go, I'll go and look around, I will I mean why the hell, I mean you earn the money, you'll be moaning half the time when you're in work about not enjoying what you're friggin' doing, won't you, well whatever, but about what you're doing, so why the hell go and throw money to the wind I just don't understand, I'll just go whoever's giving me what I want at the cheapest price. We're in a market economy we're told that over the last thirteen years by the Tories who hopefully might be ousted tomorrow, we're told that time and time again, market economy try to get people to bring things in at the cheapest price possible. So what I do I know what I want, but I don't always know exactly what I want of course, sometimes you do need a bit of help, for people to explain exactly what you want, but I know basically what I want, and I know I want the cheapest price going because there's nothing worse then going on holiday and I'm sure most of you have experienced it and you wake up on the first morning there and you're talking to your new next door neighbours for the next couple of weeks or whatever you're there, and you say, oh yeah it cost me £300 quid or whatever and they say oh I got it for £200 or £175 quid last minute bargain you know and all that, and it ruins it
- Frank And you fall off the balcony laughing.
- Nigel No you push them off the balcony.
- Roger See that wouldn't ruin it for me.
- Nigel No it doesn't ruin your holiday but I'm on about that it doesn't exactly add to the fact.
- IR What you're saying it wouldn't ruin it that somebody else had got it at a cheaper price?
- Roger No it wouldn't bother me at all.



- David I think if you're out buying something and you like it, buy it, if you can afford it you buy it, if you can't you don't, it doesn't saving 10 quid here or 10 quid there is neither here nor there, if you like it at the time you get it, it doesn't bother me.
- Nigel Oh it would certainly bother me.
- Andrew The thing is there are so many other things other than price I find, I mean the convenience of it means a lot to me, if I go somewhere I would just not dream of going across town on a long journey on the off-chance that I might get a bargain, I will go to a specific place and if they've got what I want I will buy it and if it's not the right price I won't buy it, but that doesn't have to say it's reduced or anything like that, it's just..
- IR So you're not prepared to waste you're time in that sort of way?
- Andrew .. No, not really.
- Frank I don't travel to shop, where I do my shopping is all within fifteen yards of my house, so I don't travel as you say across town, some people may do, no I don't.
- Nigel I certainly do I..
- Frank I shop on my doorstep where it's as close to home as possible.
- Nigel If I knew a cheaper shop in York I'd go to York, even if I ended up losing out.
- Frank That's uneconomic to do that, it's uneconomic
- Nigel Yeah, but that doesn't come into it, I mean this is the absolute opposite of what you're talking about..
- Frank You mean you're a spendthrift aren't you
- Nigel ..No it's the absolute opposite actually of what he's talking about, I spend money stupidly in other areas, but when it comes to going to shops, I don't, I'm not bothered what I spend up to a point, if I want something I'll buy it, but I want to know in my mind, whether I'm a bit crazy I don't know, but I wanted to know that I've got the best bargain that I can get for whatever I'm buying simple as that. And I think if everybody was like you, and what you're saying like you prices would go through roof.
- Frank Why?
- Nigel Because..
- Andrew Look I probably don't spend anymore because I don't go running around.
- Nigel Oh no you won't no.
- Andrew I just couldn't dream of sailing across town..
- Nigel No



- Andrew ..using all the petrol and I mean, I value my time, I mean that's that is the key thing, I mean half an hour in a traffic jam or something going across town would drive me insane.
- IR What about the actual pleasure of shopping? The pleasure of going into shops?
- Andrew The pleasure, I mean the atmosphere, the location, all that can have a big big influence and it, I'm not, I don't know what makes me decide what I want, but if say I'm in town and I go somewhere and I like it I will buy it and it maybe something that is more likely to be a more unique item, the only time I will buy something really expensive is if it's quite unusual and it's possibly just that shop which will sell it in which case there's not much point bargain-hunting elsewhere, but I think my time is valuable, and I don't like to waste my time hunting around.
- Nigel Can you imagine the effect on prices though if shopkeepers thought that prices didn't mean anything
- Andrew That's not what I'm saying
- Nigel I'm not saying specifically what you're saying what I'm saying is, if shopkeepers thought people need these items so just shove them in the shops at these prices, and they'd just come running for it, no way it don't work like that, it's so competitive it's so competitive out there amongst shops, price is the main thing, quality comes second, price is the main thing that sells items whether it's food or whether it's um white goods or whatever it is. It's the price that sells it to people, certainly to most people
- Andrew It depends what you're shopping for, I have to admit, I mean if you're going for a
- Nigel Oh of course
- Andrew The bigger the item
- Nigel Well if you're buying a painting or jewellery, then you've know way to compare it and yet you'll find that painting and jewellery amongst other things have the biggest mark-up going, because they know you've got nothing to compare it with
- Andrew But the bigger the item the more important the price. If you're going to buy say a washing machine or a car, then I mean I would at certainly least certainly at least phone around..
- Nigel Right
- Andrew ..before I buy. I mean I may not physically go there but I may phone around for prices because the saving you're talking about is so much more..
- Frank That's right that's a very important point that.
- Andrew ..but on things that I consider everyday, clothes or what-have-you then I mean if I'm saving a pound or something that wouldn't

be a great deal to me. That's not to say that if there is a sale going on I will not go in and have a look around, but it will be the choice I'd make would be on what I like and if it happens to be in a sale great, but being in a sale isn't just great precursor.

Nigel It's hard to say but the price you pay for certain things, like clothes, like paintings, like jewellery because unless you've got something to compare it with specifically, usually have one line in one set of shops and all that business it's hard to put a price on it, if you really like it if you really like something you're going to buy it, aren't you but I'm talking about everyday I suppose mundane items you know like a loaf of bread that might be 29 or 30p, well for example me you go into *Mate-O* and you can get a loaf of bread for 29p well it's the same bread but in a different wrapper, and go into *Grandways* and you won't get it below 59p, now you're talking about 30p for a loaf of bread

IR Can I just change the topic there a bit, do you ever think that moods are important to shopping? Is there some type of days that you feel that I'll go shopping today and other days you just don't feel like it?

David Got to be in a good mood to go shopping.

IR What sort of mood is it?

David A happy mood or a silly mood, if I'm in a silly mood I'll spend a lot more.

IR Yeah

David Just go out buy whatever for the sake of it

IR What do you mean by silly mood?

David Well

IR Sort of frivolous or

David Frivolous, childish mood. Type of just feel like what the hell, but I mean if you're fed up for some reason then I cannot be bothered to go shopping at all.

IR You never buy to cheer yourself up?

David No, it doesn't work, it makes me more depressed because you've spent money on something you didn't want.

IR So you have done that in the past?

David I've done that to go and thought I'll buy something to cheer myself up, and you just come home even more depressed, because you've bought something you didn't want and spent money that you haven't got to spend, so it's like you're making yourself more depressed by doing it, I think it's better if you're in a good mood to get something, that way it makes you on even more of a high as it were.



- IR           What about the rest of you? You don't attach a certain mood with your shopping?
- Aidan       No
- Roger       I think you do it because it's there and it's got to be done, even if it is buying clothes which you can put off unlike food, but then again I think it's got to be done, you've got it in your mind that you need to buy food or some clothes so you just go and do it regardless of what day or what sort of mood you're in.
- Nigel       I think personally well with me personally there's only one thing that I ever buy when I am in a good mood and that's holidays, now going out I do feel exhilarated and that's the only things that I ever feel exhilarated doing buying holidays
- Roger       I don't think I'm shopping on holidays.
- Nigel       There again I'm afraid I'm shopping around again for most things.
- Roger       No to me that is a necessity, see it's not shopping.
- Nigel       But you know where to go, you know where you want to go don't you.
- Roger       Well you know where you're going, yeah that is it I know where I'm going, so to me it is not shopping.
- Nigel       You look around though.
- Roger       It's like..
- Nigel       You can spend a helluva lot of money on holidays.
- Roger       Oh yeah, I don't know exactly but I wouldn't class it as shopping.
- Nigel       Well to me it is, to me it is certainly I mean I'll go to, I'll certainly go through different brochures, I'll have a pile of different brochures, and I'll generally know where I want to go, though obviously you'll change your mind if you see something that leaps out, but you might want to go to the Med or America or whatever and you're wanting to get the best price, or certainly best price cause it can make a lot of difference.
- Roger       Oh yeah, I'll look through prices in brochures, and glance through but I won't um if there was something for £100 cheaper in another brochure I wouldn't necessarily go for that cheaper one.
- Nigel       No sure, you'd want to know why it was cheaper.
- Roger       I would look, but to me that's not shopping.
- Daniel      It's just something you've got to spend money on.
- Roger       Yeah.



Nigel You're shopping around though..

Roger You are.

Nigel ..all the shops

Roger To me it's not shopping, it's a necessity, it's a good necessity, it's not shopping.

Daniel You just take it for granted that at one point you're going to spend money on a holiday.

Nigel Oh no way, okay you know you're going to spend the money, but it doesn't mean you've got to spend anymore then you have to do.

Frank I wouldn't research holidays out of catalogues me, I'd ask people if they'd been to Crete or Rhodes, Greece or whatever, or Malta.

IR You say research?

Frank Yes I'd research from people as opposed to catalogues.

IR You research with buying

Frank Yeah there's somebody everywhere that has been to Greece.

Roger There's a bit of both of that, though isn't there of looking through brochures and going to shows, like last year I was going to go to Xante, and I heard afterwards.

Nigel Oh I went there last year.

Aidan Yeah, I've been there.

Roger But people at work were telling me that it was awful so I changed it, I'd picked it out of a brochure.

Aidan Have you been there as well.

Nigel I've got a friend who went there and he had a great time, I went there and I thought it were rubbish, worse place I'd been.

Roger Yeah, yeah everybody, I spoke to said you don't want to go there, so I did on that change it.

Nigel Which you would do, you would do wouldn't you.

Roger I don't know

Daniel I don't know whether you would because..

Nigel I would.

Daniel Because he would of picked it for his own reason and thought well it looks good it looks like what I want and then somebody else, "wow" you don't want to do that

- Roger I'm glad I did because the place I went to was better, but I've talked to people where I went to last year and we went there and it was awful, so you're back into that same sort of thing you know
- Daniel "You don't want to go there"
- David Yeah, but everybody goes on holiday for different reasons some people want to get pissed everynight
- Nigel But you can go somewhere where you thinks absolutely rubbish or people have, it's like a film isn't it you say what do you think of that film and everybody says what a rubbish film, you go and you enjoy it, it's up to you what you make of it obviously, but you're still, I think when you're buying these things you do take notice of people don't you
- IR So do you buy a holiday to cheer yourself up?
- Roger Oh I, yes.
- Nigel Oh yes, but I'd be going anywhere. Well what it would be, what it would be I'd be going anywhere on holiday, but the time I would go, say I were feeling a bit down or whatever, I'd say right cheer yourself up go out and buy the holiday today because.
- IR Oh I see book it early.
- Nigel Yeah, you'd be going anyway obviously, but that does cheer, I mean I love the thought it just.
- IR What about different things though?
- Nigel Ah but I get pleasure out of going out and buying a piece of steak, I mean I'd travel fifteen miles out near Selby to buy steak.
- Aidan Shops 'til he drops.
- laughs
- Nigel Yes, but that's my great pleasure you see in life is food, I mean that is my big pleasure, buying food, I love it, I love it
- IR What is the actual pleasure in it though?
- Nigel It's the anticipation of, of transforming this raw produce into something that tastes beautiful, so it's ah, it's you get the pleasure out of actually buying what you want and actually go down to the market and feeling your cabbage or feeling your broccoli, feeling your spinach or whatever
- Roger Don't do that
- Nigel And knowing what it feels like. Right then you stuff it into your bag, right it comes into it going down to the market because I could get it at *Sainsbury's*, but it costs a lot more, so there again it's coming into it the fact that it's cheaper in the market, it's a nice feeling when you've got your carrier bags full of this fresh



produce and you're taking it home, and you're looking forward to the evening to make a meal, for you and whoever you're with, you know for pair of you, and then I take great pleasure in cooking it and eating it with a few glasses of wine, I mean that's my you know most a, I mean during the week what do you usually have to look forward to, so I make it an all day, all revolving around that.

Roger See if I could afford it, I go out to a restaurant every night, if I could afford it.

Nigel And yet I wouldn't, I wouldn't do that, I've done it and all I ever end up doing when I go to the restaurant is moaning about the price of it and the fact that it's not as nice as I could make myself, and you don't get as much of the nice, as much of the gear as what you would do at home

David But if you didn't enjoy cooking or say you had busier day? Say you...

Nigel It would be completely different David,

David It would be different. Would you still enjoy shopping though?

Nigel No, No but I wouldn't have the time would I, I mean I'd have a dinner hour, right and I wouldn't be able to get down into town, and all this business, like you're saying it's all to do with the kind of job that I do, where I have a helluva lot of free time, but I'm sure I'd still be of a food freak I really would I just love it and I've been like that when I've had other jobs as well.

David But I mean wouldn't you just prefer to go home and have something, get something out of the freezer.

Nigel Oh no.

David No

IR Is anyone else like that? You know finds shopping enjoyable?

Andrew It can be if it's a particular special occasion, like I'm cooking for other people, I enjoy cooking at the weekend because I've got the time to do it, but not particularly during the week.

Roger If I had people coming round I'd take them out

laughs

Roger Or get a..

Daniel A takeaway

Roger ..yeah get a pizza delivered or something, I mean I do cook but only if I did, it's money, if I did have the money I would go out a lot more.

IR How important would you say the environment of the shop is, the actual atmosphere, decor?



Nigel I'd say very important wouldn't you

Daniel Yeah, I mean even me who doesn't like going shopping, but I occasionally, I'll never go to *Morrisons* at Bromley again it's all mucky and horrible, you know, little kids outside swearing at you and saying things, I won't go in there again.

laughs

Daniel I think it's maybe because I go so few times that you actually notice it, I might actually notice it more, when you go to *Asda* and it's all shiney and new.

IR Yeah

Daniel You know you're quite impressed.

IR I don't know I always do that, I'll always go to the same shop and enjoy that, the size of the aisles and things.

Daniel Yeah but I suppose *Asda* they're big.

IR What about other types of shopping, things like clothes shops, you know the environment of those sorts of shops? You mentioned assistants I mean that's a large part of shops, because you mentioned assistants that's a large part of the environment? But there would also be shops like now that are very sparse, like sort of warehouses..

Daniel Yeah, there's a shelf here and there

IR Where everything's black and white you know and very few actual commodities?

Roger But you can always tell that, they're more or less the expensive ones.

Daniel Because there's no prices on clothes, if you have to ask to you can't afford it so.

Roger You very rarely go in there unless you've got two hundred pound to spare for a top.

IR Yes I see

Andrew I like shops where you can go in to unfold things, so other people can fold them all back up again.

IR Sorry?

Andrew You know these displays where all the jumpers are folded, for some peculiar reason it looks nice but very impractical.

Nigel You're just a sadist

laughs

- Andrew Well I have to say, I used to be intimidated, I used to be intimidated by them and I'd look at them but now I think what a bloody stupid way to display things and just take them all over the place, and people chase after you putting them all back, and the environment is important yes, but sometimes you could be put off by it, I used to be put off by that, I'm very put off if I go into a very expensive, very sparse shop, if there is especially things like clothes or something if you've just got one item on a table or something you look at it more like a sculpture or something and you don't want to ruin their display and you sometimes get the feeling from the shop assistants that you are ruining their display, and that can be very unpleasant.
- Daniel Don't buy cause they'll have to take it off the stand.
- Frank These sort of avant-garde type of display shops, you walk in and its got a marble floor and a brass staircase up onto the open landing and just two suits up there you know right in the corner or a million miles away. It appeals to how should I say this, I reckon about 2 or 3% of the population, we may change our minds in thirty or forty years I don't know, we may all shop like that, but at the moment I like to see bags and bags and bags of racks of pullovers where I can have a good choice and a you know a..
- Roger Yeah but I want to be able to see what I want but I don't like too much but I don't like too less.
- Frank I like loads of stuff.
- Roger I want to be able to see what I like.
- Frank Five hundreds suits on a rack you know, and I can go through them and it's terrific, you know why not.
- IR Do you never feel that the more there..
- Andrew The more harder it is to decide
- IR ..or the less value they are? I always feel that if there's one.
- Frank I know what you mean, yeah.
- IR You know what I mean, like I'm getting a one-off here, the last one on the peg.
- Frank We decorate our place like this because we only sell the very selective stuff kind of the premises are trying to put that impression over to you, that we are the best and if it's a thousand pound in the one over the road it's two hundred, well the thousand pound must be a better one..
- IR Yes
- Frank ..but I don't think I swallow a lot of that
- Nigel Have you ever been in these places? Where they don't have anything do they



- Aidan There's a woman's shop that I know of in a is it *Victoria Quarter*, there's one that I know there, because I went past it once, the women inside talking to each other.
- Nigel I mean Saville Row I suppose, would be like that of course wouldn't it because you go in there and I suppose you have a couple of dummies with a suit on or something but you're going in there to be measured up aren't you, I never been in, all my life I've never been in where they haven't had everything on display, never, which place are you talking about.
- IR Can I just change the topic there because we're running out of time a bit. I've got a couple more questions to ask and that should be it. One question is do you think women shop any differently to men?
- Aidan Yes
- Nigel It appears that way
- Daniel I think they take a lot more time, I can only speak through experience of what when I was married if we/but on the odd occasions when we did go into town we could both be going for something you know I could say within twenty minutes I've got mine...four hours later we're still looking, but it could be I don't know the most innocuous item, and it seems to be a major task for women to make up their minds over something.
- Roger Yes, I get the impression that and it leads on from there that they'll spend hours but they're only going to wear it that once they're never going to wear it, but whereas blokes you'll will buy something more practical where you're going to wear and wear over and over again, but it's would be very rare to see a woman buy something she'll probably wear it once or twice every six months.
- Daniel I think if you asked my wife now if she's quicker shopping now she would also say yes, because she comes out and says "Do you like it", and I go yeah, "No you don't do you" (laughs), yeah I do it's if you like it I like it, it's alright buy it.
- Aidan Yes
- Daniel And they don't believe you, they go to the first shop that you went into four hours ago.
- Aidan That's right
- Roger The first one.
- Aidan ..my girlfriend though she tried to explain why they do like the first shop they go into they'll see something they want and they're happy and like it or anything and they'll try it on, it probably looks quite nice and everything but they need so much reassurance that it's the right thing, they'll go somewhere else and somewhere else and somewhere then come back to the very



first shop again, it might of gone or it might of closed or something

Nigel And yet it's the very opposite in supermarkets isn't it come to think about it..

Aidan Organised up and down the aisle.

Nigel ..women just seem to pick things up off the aisles whereas men are saying look at that thing, you know, get their own brands for 5p cheaper, or I am anyway.

Aidan I am as well.

Nigel But yet we're saying that women are very selective when it comes to clothes and things like that and yet in a supermarket they'll just pile it all in and they won't think about it.

Andrew It depends on the situation you see them in though doesn't it though, I mean I think then that women if their shopping for clothes we're much more impatient, you can sit there but if you do not want something they seem to be taking a helluva lot longer then they may necessarily be taking, if the situation was reversed and they have no interest with being out and you wanted to buy something then they might feel that you take a long time.

Nigel That's true.

Andrew They do though. I mean they can go from shop to shop and what-have-you.

Frank I've always found that if they wanted a skirt or something, used to give her twenty quid, and I would never see a penny out of that twenty quid if I gave her a tenner she would be happy with that as well, get a skirt for a tenner or twenty, I might only have twenty you see..

Nigel Never any change.

Frank ..I didn't have any change this is it.

Roger I've never noticed it myself, I've noticed it with my parents, my parents my dad's come home with this certain wage at the end of the week, he's given her the housekeeping and she's taken twenty quid out and she's gone and shopped, bought less on food, and bought their own brands rather than buying something like Heinz and then gone and bought herself something on a Saturday afternoon in town.

Andrew I think the speed around the supermarket though is interesting though because first of all a lot of it is familiarity if they go shopping more often.

Roger Um

- Andrew ..but I don't, I think that if men are familiar with supermarkets it can often be the other way and literally just rocket around because you don't really want to be there.
- Nigel Yes, but I'm very familiar with all supermarkets and yet I still browse because I just find it so fascinating seeing all the different gear.
- IR What about you Grant, do you think women shop differently?
- Grant When I used to go with wife she used to buy stuff while I was there, "Do you like this?", like he says you nearly always end up back at first shop you first went to, you know what I mean, up and down, up and down, up and down all day.
- IR So you feel that your comments are not taken seriously. Any others, No. Final question would you say you shop any differently now compared to how you used to when you were younger?
- Frank I'll take that one first, most definitely much more cautious with money.
- IR Yeah, you were saying you that you buy a lot less.
- Frank I believe anyway, unless you come into an inheritance you know you wouldn't give a toss then you'd buy anything//I think when you're on a limited income you know you budget for your week or month or your however you pay, you know
- Roger I can't honestly say that I have changed if it's anything it's mellowed down with the fashion side with clothes.
- IR Sort of a lot less fashion conscious.
- Roger But apart from that nothing else has changed in the way I shop, apart from the, I think the older I get the more I get to hate it and can do without it, I think at first when you move out you start living on your own you don't think about it being all that brilliant but you don't regret doing it, I suppose the older you get, when you're forced to do it out of necessity.
- David It just becomes less frequent, as you grow older it becomes less frequent, you think well get something when something runs out and just then, but not just go shopping because you've been, because you've got some money spare, you just go when you need it really
- IR Yeah, Aidan
- Aidan No ah I've got more money then I had say five years ago, so I spend more money but no actual change in the pattern or anything, none at all, I spend more.
- IR I'm just going to check the video for a second if you'd like to talk amongst yourselves

Nigel            That's generally true what you said isn't it, I mean most people when they progress you do have more money don't you, no doubt about it, so you've got more money to spend

Andrew        You can have more outgoings though.

Roger          But what do you do..

David          More responsibilities

Roger          But what do you do you buy more things or would you buy more things or would you buy better quality.

David          Bills and things.

Aidan          Quality things.

Roger          What do you do?

Andrew        Less trash.

Nigel          Probably better quality there's no doubt about it.

IR              Well that's it chaps, thanks all for your help it's been really good. I mean I'm at a preliminary stage in the research at the moment but it's been good.



## APPENDIX ONE

### SHOPPING TRANSCRIPT: GROUP TWO

Sex: Men  
Status: BC1  
Ages: 25-35 years.

IR People dropping out so it should of been a bigger group but it's more cosy. I'll just introduce myself, my name is Paul Hewer and I'm a Research Student at York University, and I'm interested in men's shopping and buying habits. This is purely for academic research it's not, you know I'm not interested in selling a detergent to you or things like that. We're also being videoed, I hope you don't mind that, it just helps me when I come to actually transcribing the tape, putting faces to comments, okay. As I said my name is Paul, it would help if I could just go round asking people their names

Phillip, Tim, Peter, Patrick

IR As I said I'm interested in your shopping habits and just to start off with some factual questions. If we could go round, how often do you go shopping?

Phillip Usually every Saturday.

IR Is this to the same place?

Phillip No, I go somewhere else Monday and Friday.

IR Tim?

Tim I usually go with my girlfriend to *Tesco's*. I used to go on my own when I were at home to *Kwik Save*.

IR So what do you do now you don't go very often?

Tim I usually go with her just helping out, lifting and carrying bags.

IR How often does that work out?

Tim About once a week.

IR Once a week?

Peter Yes, I go once a week to *Sainsbury's*.

IR Is that on your own or?

Peter Yes, well it used to be with my girlfriend but she can't cook so I have to do the shopping.

IR Oh I see, so does she not go with you shopping?

- Peter No, so I shop and cook.
- IR Patrick?
- Patrick I go once a fortnight for a main shop and every two or three days for incidental things because that's my job. I look after the kids through the day, I run my own business weekends, evenings.
- IR So you're in charge of shopping?
- Patrick Sure, yeah I've always done that ever since I've been married.
- IR And you go to the same place?
- Patrick Always to the same supermarket, *Sainsbury's* because it's local and because it's familiar.
- IR Does your wife work then?
- Patrick Yes she works full time.
- IR And you go when she's working?
- Patrick I go when she's working, I go when I can fit it in, and I go through the day, if my little boy is at play school or otherwise. I'll go on an evening if I haven't got a job or particularly evening, it differs from summer to winter, because I'm busy in summer, slack in winter.
- IR One of the main things I'm interested in is whether you actually enjoy food shopping, or any kinds of shopping actually, but we can start with food shopping?
- Patrick Yeah, I enjoy food shopping yeah.
- IR What do you enjoy about it?
- Patrick I like, I enjoy it because firstly it's me, I'm on me own and I find it very sort of I don't know how to describe it but it's a kind of anonymous place and you know really everybody is concentrating on what they're doing and not on each other, I like it, I've always liked doing it, always found it sort of therapeutic you know you just go into a shop a big shop like *Macro* or anywhere where it's big and you know just enjoy it.
- IR Is it because it's not busy when you go?
- Patrick No sometimes, no you see and that's another side of it, sometimes I'll go when it's very busy but I haven't got the kids with me and everybody else is struggling and I'm on me own. That's, I mean that sounds really awful but I do that not on purpose but that makes me feel a bit better as well, at times you know.
- IR Is it a hassle taking the kids?



- Patrick Oh yes, I do not take them if I can avoid it, it also costs much more.
- IR Anyone else feel that way about food shopping?
- Phillip I go every week, sometimes as Patrick said you have to go through the week now and again to get things that you have forgotten. I quite enjoy it buying things for myself.
- IR What do you enjoy about it?
- Phillip Well I come from quite a big family and you know there was never that much on the table, there was never a lot of choice, and going for yourself it's a lot nicer, buying things that you like.
- IR Is that because it was a big family, because I come from a big family and you had big pots..
- Phillip Well you don't have a choice, there's no, every now and then it's nice to get a packet of chocolate biscuits.
- IR So it's the freedom element?
- Tim I just go because you've got to do it, it's not something I enjoy or dislike, it's just something you do, you know you've got to eat so you just do it.
- IR There's no pleasure at all in it?
- Tim Well it's you know, it's just an ordeal and there's no pleasure and I don't dislike it or really enjoy going.
- IR It's just functional
- Tim Yes, something you do, nothing special, get fun other ways.
- Peter The same as him (Tim). I just go because I have to, sometimes if there's some nice looking girls walking round that's about it.
- IR What assistants?
- Peter Well normally assistants aren't that good looking, it's normally housewives who are walking round shopping.
- Tim How do you know they're housewives, you don't know do you they're just there on their own?
- IR A picking-up ground.
- Peter No, just look.
- IR If we can move on to other forms of shopping that you do?
- Phillip Buying clothes.
- IR And how do you feel about buying clothes?
- Phillip I quite enjoy that as well, I don't do that every week but..



- IR Do you go into town to buy clothes?
- Phillip Yes, I buy when I need to buy, take me time, try things on.
- IR Do you tend to stick to the same shops?
- Phillip Yes I do actually, but not always, but most of the times I do, I've got friends that own shops so I tend to go there and get a bit of discount. Yeah I quite enjoy buying clothes when I can afford to.
- IR What about the rest of you for clothes shopping?
- Tim Yes it's something I enjoy that.
- IR Oh you actually enjoy that.
- Tim I
- IR What is it about clothes shopping rather than?
- Tim Well you've got to get the right stuff, you've got to look nice haven't you and you can't just go out and think I'll have that. I don't know I just enjoy looking around trying to find best deal as well. I don't just go to one shop and buy that you've got to have a good look around see what you can get.
- IR What for prices?
- Tim Well you can find same gear all at different prices, depending on where you go, you've just got to look around, usually got to drag girlfriend around with me, "Oh I don't like you in that", go on me own as well.
- IR Oh, you go on your own?
- Tim It's much easier, "Oh try this on, try that on", no I don't like it, "No try it on it's nice it'll suit you". But she's always hassling me to buy something that I don't like, when I'm on me own I can just go out and buy it and if she doesn't like it it's tough, can't wear it with her though.
- IR Do you go to specific clothes shops?
- Tim No
- IR You do the whole range?
- Tim Yes, if there's something I like in a certain shop I'll go in but I don't go back to specific shops, I go in *Top Man* sometimes, just to look around.
- IR How do you feel about trying things on when it comes to clothes?
- Peter Don't like it, I know my sizes 32 leg 40 chest so I just go in and..
- IR So you don't actually try them on?

- Peter No if it looks nice I buy it, but when it comes to clothes-shopping, I mean if I'm going to buy something, right I know what I want I go into the first shop and see with a reasonable choice I'll just buy that and come home, but if I'm shopping for something smart to wear I go into *Vis-a-Vis* which is just down the road a bit..
- IR Where's that?
- Peter It's just next door practically so I can just buy something, but with work clothes I just go to *Bankrupt Clothing Company* for jeans and stuff. Whereas if I go with my girlfriend, I hate going shopping with her because she insists on going in every single shop in Leeds, trying on hundreds of things and not buying anything which drives me mad.
- Tim Or goes back to first shop and buys first thing she tried on.
- Peter We spend four hours clothes shopping for her being dragged round and just sit there absolutely worn out, I've had enough of this I'm going home.
- IR What about you Patrick you said you enjoyed food shopping, is it the same?
- Patrick No I don't enjoy, no as you can see from my appearance I'm not really into clothes. I just buy clothes when I have to, when they're threadbare and I'll live in jeans if I'm in the house, and the kind of work I do is outside work, rough work, and I mean I just wear denims and working jeans, you know rough shirts and stuff and I don't have to buy I've got a suit and I've got..
- IR Oh I see
- Patrick That's it, so I don't enjoy it, I've never enjoyed it really. Oh I like to go out you know, it's not what turns me on at all is that. Clothes I hate trying them on in shops, I never go clothes shopping with my wife, we never..
- IR Why is that?
- Patrick What are we talking about shopping for me?
- IR Yes
- Patrick Well because she's got..it's not her interest at all. I mean she just, she buys nice clothes and she thinks, she likes clothes, but I do not, which is not me, she would not want to go with me to buy clothes because I've no interest in it and I'm bad tempered when I have to do it so//it's not sort of my thing at all that.
- IR How often does it work out that you do go?
- Patrick Oh well let's put it this way when I go to buy clothes I get a shock because the prices have gone up. I expect to be able to buy a shirt for £6.99 and stuff like that, but I come home with nothing, god what's happened, it's like I've been away or something and



you know//so really I mean I think clothes are a rip-off and I don't, I really resent them for a lot of money, I'd resent the mark-up on them.

IR You just resent paying too much for something?

Patrick I just resent, yeah it's just not. It's with having two young kids and everything and..

IR Do you buy clothes for them as well?

Patrick No as a matter of fact funnily I don't because she's in own, she works in town and that's one side of ah, although we, we're not a total role reversal us, we're more of a sort of split we've always had a very Soviet outlook on everything split down the middle there's no demarcation but she does tend to buy the clothes because it's convenient and she always has done that, for the children she buys their clothes. If it's I buy them it's just something I've seen I buy on an impulse sort of thing, cause I think my little girl will look nice in it or something, but we're talking 100-1 shot with that, no.

IR What about when it comes to buying your wife buying clothes do you go around with her then?

Patrick No because you see she tends to buy clothes in her lunchtime, not that she's madly extravagant because we just don't have that kind of money but she tends to buy clothes on a lunch time and she works in an office she has a lunchtime

IR Is the office in town?

Patrick Yes, so you see where on a weekend I'm working and she's with the kids the opportunity for far too many things, the opportunity to buy together doesn't occur, unfortunately with some things, like wallpaper and kitchen flooring. But at the moment we don't have chance to buy together at all in fact we have to make a special arrangement to go shopping, but clothes I don't miss it, I don't miss it at all.

IR What about you Phillip do you like clothes shopping?

Phillip I don't mind it, you see I think that people at sometimes can be quite frightened of buying clothes because they always see the assistant as somebody trying to push them into it, whereas I, I will I'll take me time, I'll try putting things on and if I don't buy anything so be it.

IR How do you feel about assistants?

Tim They do seem a bit pushy sometimes.

Phillip No but you've just got to ignore them.

Peter It seems to depend on what shop you go to, you go to like *Burton's* or somewhere like that, the assistants like, "Can I help you and do you want to do this credit card thing, while we're at it", that sort of thing, whereas if you go into one of these well like



*Vis-a-Vis*, they stand back and let you look around. You say have you got such and such a boot and then they'll come over and help you.

Phillip I think they try and pressurize you sometimes, just take your time, it's your time and enjoy yourself.

IR What about general fashion would you say that was important to you, being fashionable and dressing fashionable?

Phillip Definitely you've got to look smart.

IR Do you have to look smart for your job?

Phillip No, no just wear jeans. I wear jeans nearly all the time and t-shirts. I wear suits if I have to go to a wedding or a funeral whenever they occur. I like to look smart-casual I suppose.

IR So you would describe yourself as casual?

Phillip Yeah, I'm not up at the top anyway, but I think jeans look smart with a nice t-shirt or a sweatshirt that sort of thing, that'll do.

IR Anyone else on fashion?

Peter Well you see it depends don't it if I'm going out, if I'm going to a nightclub I do get dressed up, I like to be fashionable for that, but I'd say for work it doesn't matter I drive, I mean today I was wearing black jeans and a blue denim jacket, boots, so fashion is not very important for work.

Phillip There's so many different ranges and styles to fashion, there's so many different styles, as long as it suits you best.

IR What about you Tim?

Tim Well if I like summat and it's in style I'll wear it but I don't, you know I don't go for fashion if I like something I'll buy it, not any particular style, you know these trainers £150 trainers what's the point they don't last any longer.

IR It's a bit obscene paying that sort of price?

Peter My wardrobe is like fashion through the ages, cause all the old stuff gets pushed to the back and it's still there and there's some horrible stuff in there, just think my God did I wear that.

IR It's quite a hard thing throwing clothes out?

Peter Well I sort of think look at an empty cupboard, oh I'll have to get something, to get some clothes.

Phillip I tend to wear jeans quite a lot, cause I wear it for work. I don't really have a lot of old clothes. I don't wear a lot of clothes that are wholly wrecked because I wear them for work then I just sling them, start anew, whenever I've had them for a while.

IR Is it enjoyable going out and buying clothes?

- Phillip      Yeah, when you've saved up for it yes, I mean you work hard and you're saving money and you've got to spend it, that's what it's for.
- IR            Where would you say you get your ideas of fashion from?
- Phillip      Looking round. Whatever you feel comfortable in you know fashion there's so many variations to it and it's whatever you feel comfortable in, that looks best.
- IR            What about you Patrick?
- Patrick      Well I get/if it's in shops, it must be from there, unless you go in somewhere like *Dunn & Co* or somewhere like there and you think shops it must be alright. I mean I wouldn't like to walk around in flared trousers, something daft like that because I know that you know everybody would think..
- Peter        Ah but they've made a comeback.
- Patrick      There you go I'd better find some, but um I just think if it's in the shops it must be reasonably but I just haven't any interest in fashionable clothes at all you know as long as they're just serviceable, I like to go out looking smart, nice suit if I'm going to something very special like a wedding otherwise the kind of places that I go only require this kind of clothing really, I mean as the wife says "It doesn't really matter all you're going to do is go out, come back and fall down, eat a chinese" you know stuff like that it doesn't really matter I don't have to look smart.
- IR            Yes. So when you go out you're not dressing up?
- Patrick      No, you're talking jeans and maybe a nice sweatshirt if she's going with me or like tonight I'm going out I shall just go like this.
- IR            When you do buy clothes is it important the actual going out, putting them on?
- Peter        Well if you go out and spend a lot of money on something you've got to wear it, it's not like buying a say, well I bought a blazer it was £150 quid it's no good buying it and hanging it up in the wardrobe and not wearing it.
- Phillip      You've got to get use out of your clothes, because they're so expensive..
- Peter        Where I work//Yeah but the thing is where I you were saying where do you get your fashion ideas from, there's a guy who lives in our flats and he is a slave to fashion, in fact he was supposed to be coming tonight but because the night had been changed he'd got other plans for tonight. But he gets *GQ* magazine and stuff like that and he picks out all his clothes from *GQ* and *The Face* things like that, and I think well I like that so I go out and find something like it similar.
- IR            But a lot cheaper?



- Peter Well it depends because sometimes I go out and buy things a lot cheaper than his clothes and they always look a lot better and it makes him sick, because he hates that.
- IR Do you make a point of telling him?
- Peter See this, feel that quality mate, "How much was it £110", £75//Yeah but his hair is his main point, he's got bright red hair, but he puts on mousse and wax and gel and goes to hairdressers every three weeks. I go when it starts falling in me eyes, I've got to have my haircut. He's just a yuppie but he works for the Council.
- IR What about other forms of shopping, other than the two you've mentioned, are there any other kinds?
- Peter Well I'm shopping round for motorcycle gear, because I'm taking my test next Tuesday
- Tim I'm selling a bike me.
- Peter And I'm going to be I'm packing in my job and I'm going to go couriering, because it pays more, so I'm after a decent cheap bike which runs well.
- IR And some gear as well?
- Peter And some gear to go with it, I want some fancy boots so I can kick her around house (I think that's what he says)
- IR Have you started eyeing prices?
- Peter Well certainly cause helmets are expensive, leathers are expensive, I mean the bike is going to be, the bike is the most important thing.
- Tim You get what you pay for helmets though, you've got to pay for a decent one.
- Peter (Name of helmet?)
- Tim That's two hundred odd quid
- Peter But I came off, when I was learning I came off a 125, I went flying, ruined the leather jacket, ripped it all and it carved lines across the helmet, so £120 straight down the drain, but I was okay, but leather jacket were £80
- IR What about the rest of you on other kinds of shopping?
- Patrick He's talking about bikes it's sort of shopping isn't it because you're buying for your job. Like me, I have to buy equipment like mowers and chainsaws and stuff like that and yeah I do I like, I enjoy going around buying equipment like that, and..
- IR What is the enjoyment?



- Patrick Novelty, you get used to using something and it starts to wear and you know that next time you go to that job you've got new equipment. It makes it easier and I don't know it's the child in us I suppose, because...
- Peter Playing with new toys
- Patrick ...Well this is it, you know if it's a mower, if I'm buying a mower I guess there must be some novelty there or some childlike thing, it's shiny, it's new, it's not all gunged up, it's going to run, things like that, also it's buying equipment and something new again, innovation kinds of things//don't always work out but that's I suppose it's a kind of shopping isn't it really.
- IR Oh yeah
- Patrick Consumer, I can't think of anything else really, that I do apart from that.
- IR What about buying things like records and?
- Patrick Oh yeah I buy them.
- Peter I tend to buy cassettes because I haven't got a record player, but I only buy if I've listened to an album and I like them and I go and buy them. I won't think I haven't heard of those before I'll go out and buy a cassette, because it might be rubbish and I don't want to waste £8 or something, so I only buy something I like, I've got every single album of the Eurythmics, The Mission people like that, it's only because I like their stuff.
- IR But you like going to the actual record shops?
- Peter Uh no, because I'm beginning to feel a little bit old (Tim nods in agreement) when I go to record shops now, ancient, they're all kids, "Have you got anything by Aerosmith?", "Where's the Golden Oldies club?".
- Patrick And you go and try to buy something on Vinyl, they say you don't need that Grandad, you want you know. That happened to me at Christmas I went to buy an album and somebody wanted an album you know, so where's the LP's, that sort of thing, they looked at me like I were barmy.
- Peter Sorry this is on compact disc, but I haven't got a compact disc player.
- Patrick This was for somebody else but you know I had to go to another shop, felt a bit stupid, but I do like buying albums, records because I don't know it's a bit of a luxury I don't do that all the time by any means so..
- IR They're becoming very expensive now aren't they?
- Patrick Yeah, yeah
- IR Do you buy them often?

Patrick No, I don't personally no

IR Any of the other two?

Tim Well just recently me girlfriend joined Britannia record club, she gets CD's so I, she got a catalogue and there's a CD I like, I'll buy it then, but other than that no I don't, I don't go into *HMV* or ought like that, you're walking around and you can never find them.

Peter I've got a three pound gift voucher and it must be six years old now

IR Why is that?

Peter Because for once you can't buy anything for three pounds in *HMV*, and secondly..

Patrick You don't want to put the extra eight quid to it, I know I'm like that.

Peter So it's a gift voucher your grandma bought you when you were six.

Tim There only valid for a year aren't they.

Peter It's got a nice card on it though.

IR Phillip?

Phillip I don't buy them very often it's very rare, I tend to tape my things from other people, and I don't get chance to go and buy them. Well normally I always find it a disappointment, you buy an album that you want there's a record that you want and the rest of it is just a load of crap.

IR Do you ever get that, you know you buy an album and you really wanted it and then you just feel..

Phillip Yeah a load of crap.

Peter I went out and bought Brothers in Arms went it came out because everyone was saying "Oh you've got to have Brothers in Arms", so I played it and it were rubbish I gave it away and I gave it to somebody.

Phillip A big disappointment.

Peter It were pathetic. But I only buy albums because I know the group, and I like the group.

IR Do you ever feel that disappointment with anything else you buy? Like clothes?

Peter The only time I feel disappointment is if I buy something and think it's really smart and then I go out and see somebody else wearing the same thing and they look totally ridiculous in it, "Do I look like this?".



Patrick I buy clothes you know on spec and then regret it.

IR Do you?

Phillip I used to do that.

Patrick Yeah

IR Why?

Patrick It's because I can't be bothered. It's because I don't want to do it, I'm not you know I think oh that'll be alright.

IR It'll do.

Patrick Yeah, you get home and you think, you look at yourself and you think "no", you know, it's no good, I do that.

Phillip I used to do that a few years and now I enjoy just taking my time and I don't even feel put out if I just put something back and walk out of the shop anymore..

Patrick No

Phillip ..and let them fold it up. I mean I don't take no notice, I just take me time and ah

IR So this is like a deliberate?

Phillip You see everything varies and it might say a forty chest but half the time it's not, I think they down mark them.

Patrick That's very true.

Peter It's like where do you get this large measurement from.

Phillip Cause large must be a 36" so you've got to try stuff on, or else you get it home and it don't fit so you've got to take it back and look a fool, you know, so..

IR Any other disappointment you feel?

Tim When you buy something and you think ah it's really you've paid a lot for it, it should be good quality and you wash it and it's massive. You can't wear it again, well you can but you can't wear it for what you wanted it for and you buy a sweatshirt or something and you finish and it's down round your knees and the sleeves are down here.

IR You're buying in that sort of sense, do you deliberately go out and say I'll pay five quid extra for this jumper on the idea that it might be better quality and wear well?

Tim If I have the money I will yeah, but generally I try and keep price down because you know got a lot of other things to spend money on, so try and get it good quality but as cheap as possible.



- IR           What are these other things you spend money on?
- Tim          Me motorbike for a starter costs me a fortune, insurance and whatever, and I've got a car as well.
- IR           So it's the upkeep of these things?
- Tim          Yeah
- Peter       That's something I'll be shopping around for soon insurance for the bike, because insurance has gone through the roof this year.
- Tim          That's why I'm selling it because of insurance money.
- Peter       What you got?
- Tim          (Name of motorbike?)
- Peter       Have you? What you selling it for? How much you selling it for?
- IR           If I could just change the topic. What would you say is your favourite shopping if you had any?
- Phillip     Mine is buying food, I enjoy both food and clothes.
- IR           It's those two?
- Phillip     Treating yourself because most of it is boring stuff.
- IR           So you're way of spoiling yourself is buying nice food
- Phillip     Buying nice quality food, buying the best that I can, what's affordable, that's it.
- IR           What about you Patrick?
- Patrick     Christmas shopping.
- IR           Christmas shopping?
- Patrick     Weird I know, we've got a totally different kind of life maybe, in that I can get one per day you know I can go into town take the little one in, got one at school and the little boy at home you see and we can go into town one a day, one every couple of days and just spend two or three hours wandering around looking for, which sounds dead terrible but when you're at home through the day you're quite often glad of an outlet.
- IR           Is that, do you think that is the enjoyment getting out of the home?
- Patrick     To a certain extent but I also do enjoy buying nice things because it's again novelty in that they're things I wouldn't normally buy and looking for something nice at a price you can afford.
- IR           Do you enjoy buying for other people then?

- Patrick Well I guess I must do really without sounding you know pious, yeah I guess I must do.
- IR What's the enjoyment of buying for them?
- Patrick Well I've got, I married into quite a large well a big family and I come from quite a big family so I mean we're not talking fifty pound Christmas presents or anything like that we're talking sort of small gifts because well obviously with maybe thirty or twenty presents to buy you don't, what's the/I don't know we're all very close and I guess it just the pleasure in doing that.
- IR Yeah, giving a gift?
- Patrick Yeah, knowing people feeling that you know them and what they're like and what they want kind of thing.
- IR What about Christmas shopping for the rest of you?
- Peter I hate Christmas
- IR Do you have to buy for your girlfriends?
- Tim Um, you never know what to get.
- Peter Well I haven't actually bought anything, well I haven't had a girlfriend since christmas//but I like buying presents for my girlfriend on the spur of the moment if I see something I buy it because I know she'll be pleased and I'll get a reward//but I hate Christmas shopping, it's like I've only got three presents to buy that's me mum, me dad and me dog, who me mum treats like me little brother, me grandma and I'm like two days before Christmas eve, oh I haven't done Christmas shopping yet, because I do not know what to buy. I hate Christmas shopping.
- Tim Same thing with me. You go in and you think right I'll buy 'em that and you go in and you can't find it anywhere, oh no what shall I get now and you just don't know what to get, you think I'll get them that and they look at it and go, "It's really nice", you can tell..
- Peter That they don't like it.
- IR Is this when you buy things for your girlfriend?
- Tim Oh no, I get her to write a list out, what do you want for Christmas and she writes a list out. So it's alright I'll get that and go out and buy it and if I can't find that I've got rest of list to follow.
- IR Doesn't that spoil it a bit?
- Tim Well she knows, I always get her summat that isn't on list you know I just, nothing ought big, I always try to get her something that is not on the list but then I don't tell her I'm getting ought off list, she knows me, try not to tell her, or I listen as well if she's talking, says "oh I like that", you go right it goes in memory



somewhere, and when I'm in town I say oh she'll like that I'll get her that. It's just everyone else, brothers and sisters, mother and what-have-you, I just never know what to get, end up with a record.

Peter Yeah

Phillip Or a voucher.

Tim I think I've only fallen back on a voucher once, just get them a record.

IR What about buying other things such as toiletries or jewellery (no response), hi-fis?

Peter I quite like going shopping for jewellery but it has to be silver. I don't like gold prefer silver. So I've got about five of 'em I could if I wore them three for every finger because I like silver it's like a magpie for shiny things, so I don't like going shopping for silver.

IR Do you every go and buy things as a way of treating yourself?

Peter Oh yeah every week.

IR What do you buy?

Peter Oh it depends, I mean sometimes I do it everyday. Used see a programme this guy used to go "Rule 54: Every day take time out to be nice to yourself". So I buy like Danish custards and ice creams and ha ha, I'll buy myself an ice-cream and treat myself.

IR Yeah, does anyone else do that treating?

Phillip Yeah

IR You were saying food?

Phillip Yeah, food. If I had the choice I'd buy food, what I try and do is I can do with a stereo at the moment so I'm saving up. I'll try and buy a really good one because they change so fast I think it's best that you spend as much money as you possibly can, as you can afford buy the best you model that way it keeps current with everything else. Things change so fast, it's like CD it's something I haven't got it would be quite nice to have that, so I'm saving up for one of those, stereo with CD.

IR Do you ever feel that you're in a certain mood when you shop?

Peter If I go food shopping if I'm hungry when I go shopping I'll buy loads and loads of stuff if I've just had me tea or something.

Phillip Just buy the essentials.

Patrick Yes

Peter I'll go have some milk that's about it, I mean me shopping doubles if I'm hungry it's totally nonexistent when I'm not.



Patrick Mine does.

IR Does it?

Patrick Go over the amount I'm supposed to spend..

Peter £40

Patrick ...If I'm skint, um I'm always skint, if I'm hungry I know you tend to do that it's daft innit because..

IR What about if you're happy do you buy more then? (no response). Or if you're down?

Patrick No

IR As a way of treating yourself, making yourself feel better?

Patrick No I don't, I don't comfort eat like that.

IR What about buying things in that way?

Patrick I used to do that, I remember I actually used to do that. I used to work in an office years ago before, I was made redundant, I was really lucky and I used to do that, I used to go out on a lunchtime and go in places and buy records and books and you know novels it's all escapist stuff, novels and you know paperback books anything to get away from, yeah I used to do that.

IR What about book buying for the rest of you?

Peter Actually I do buy quite a few books.

Tim I try and buy one every month, science fiction and fantasy.

Patrick Yeah I do.

Peter Yeah I read a comic years ago called the *Vampireless Star* which was by Alan Rice but I only managed to get hold of one copy in the beginning. So I read this story and it said, more next week and they never printed another one, so I went into a shop the other day and there was a book called the *Vampireless Star*, so I thought ah, it were like that (motions with hands, "thick") and it were a fiver and I read it in three days, not stopping and then there was a book before it and a book after it, so I thought I'll have to get the book after it and see what happens next, that were a fiver and I read that in a couple of days. Now I've got to read the first one to find out what it's all about in the first place.

IR Do you enjoy going out and browsing for books?

Peter Yeah, I go to *Odyssey* in town.

IR The Sci-fi shop?

Tim Yeah

Peter And I buy *Goo the Wanderer* it's a paperback comic thing.

- IR Do you enjoy going into that shop?
- Peter Yeah, because there's all those weird people in there.
- IR Yeah, it's very atmospheric in there. What about you Tim?
- Tim Well what I tend to do is I go to the library get a book out and if I like the book I'll go and buy it, so I can read it again.
- IR Do you read it from the library?
- Tim Yeah, I get it and read it and then I buy it
- IR Why do you buy the actual book then?
- Tim I like to just keep them and read, so I can read it again, most of the books I've got I've read about five or six times.
- IR Oh, you read them a lot then?
- Tim Yeah
- Peter I tend to go through phases of if I see a good one I'll pick it up and think that's good I'll go out and buy something else by him, as long that author keeps me interested I'll keep buying his books. Like I read Sven Hassell and I thought there must be five or six of them and I went off them to something else.
- IR One of the things with books is that you can get bargains can't you, do you go for bargains at all? (Nods from Tim, Peter and Patrick) Not particularly books but clothes?
- Phillip No if you see something buy it, but I don't particularly go around looking for bargains, I don't have the time to be honest.
- IR What about sales?
- Phillip Yeah I'm oblivious (?)
- Peter You go and there's old ladies with shopping trolleys.
- IR Why do you keep away from sales?
- Tim It's all old woman innit, charging in and you can't get in. It's just hectic isn't it, it's like when you see them on the telly and they open the doors for sale like and all rush in.
- Peter They must be off their trees. I wouldn't sleep outside on the pavement for two days waiting for a shop to open.
- IR No?
- Patrick No, No, definitely not, all that sort of jumping from shop to shop to save half a quid and all that, no I wouldn't do that.
- IR Bargains?



- Patrick No, just wouldn't do it, I just buy cheap things anyway, I just wouldn't do it.
- Peter Usually in my opinion it's bargains and stuff they can't sell normally.
- Patrick Yes, you've got to be gullible haven't you, cause I mean all they're doing is getting the mark up that's all..
- Phillip Trying to clear up.
- Patrick ...taking the mark up, a little bit of a mark up, that's all they're doing I mean it's so, that always that's one thing that does get me you sometimes see that they get absolutely desperate, I don't believe that they are selling it at an actual loss, I mean you'll see a pair of shoes for some ridiculous price you know and they're desperate and you think they've been reduced from..the wife does this she'll come in and say look at these I've got them for £15 they were £40 and I think god what was the mark up when they were 40 you know there must be a mark up on them now, so no, I'm very sceptical of people in retail me.
- Peter I used to work for *Next*, in the warehouse on final dispatch and depending on where the clothes were going it depended on what price they went out with, like if they were for up here they were quite cheap but if they were for down south they were more expensive.
- Phillip Unless they sell better stuff down south, better quality?
- Peter No they don't send the better stuff down they just put the price up, you pay more money down south then up here.
- IR It's not the same in all shops, I know *Marks and Spencer* and they're the same.
- Peter If it's going down south or depending what class store it's going to.
- Phillip I suppose the rents are more expensive, so they've got to make it up.
- Patrick There is that aspect isn't there
- Phillip Yes
- IR What about second-hand shopping, buying second-hand clothes or shopping in markets?
- Patrick Oh I ain't got that bad, I don't buy second-hand clothes.
- Tim I go to the market, I've been I got some boots and I were trying them on and either they didn't have my size in the ones I liked, so I says come on we'll go back to market to girlfriend, she were with me at the time and she says "I can't go in market", I says why it's the same shoes and they were cheaper as well, because they're not paying as much rent, so I persuaded her eventually



and I got the pair I wanted in the end in there, you know right size and style I wanted and they were six quid cheaper than anywhere else were just for going in market/should of gone there first.

Patrick Yeah I like shopping in market, for stuff, for food mostly.

IR You do?

Patrick Yeah I do.

IR I mean the market here is quite good isn't it

Patrick Yeah

IR It's massive.

Phillip Should be good in a couple of years time when finish doing it.

Peter My old neighbour bought an item of clothing from the market it were a pair of jeans and it was an old girlfriend and I was trying to buy something without her seeing me when I was there, but no I didn't get away with it, she comes, I'll have these, "have you tried them on", er no, I didn't get away with anything, they didn't fit me anyway.

IR What about the environment of the shop? I mean the market is like that you go in the market and you're staring at the ceiling?

Peter Well at Leeds Market it's a granny stampede and they just bump into you I don't like going in there. Besides it's at the grotty end of town anyway.

IR What about environments of other shops though? I mean *Next* specialize in a certain environment and atmosphere?

Phillip Plenty of space.

IR Yeah too much space and not many clothes. Do you prefer that?

Phillip Yeah, I think it's nice to walk around a shop that's not cluttered.

IR I mean compared to *Burton* they're a lot?

Phillip They've got stuff everywhere you can't get through it can you.

Peter You're always knocking stuff off the hangers in *Burton* cause it's all so close together, whereas *Next* there's space you can have a wander or sit down. Prefer shops like that, it's even better boutiques along here they make you a cup of coffee, sit down and have a cup of coffee and a chat, it's like visiting friends.

IR What shops are these then?

Peter *Vis-a-Vis*

IR Oh these shops along here.

Peter I know the girl who runs it so I always get a cup of wine or coffee and invites to their fashion nights and stuff like that, the big expensive shops sometimes I just go in and go out with a pair of socks for a fiver or something, but you go in there you get coffee and biscuits and stuff it's great.

IR What about you Patrick?

Patrick What are we on about clothes?

IR Environments?

Patrick Environments in shops yeah I do like space.

IR You like space?

Patrick Yes, yeah I like to be room to just move about I don't like to feel too claustrophobic, so I tend to shop in places I don't know because I'm working on an evening I tend to go down to *Macro* when I've finished and that's, I know that's a sort of..

IR Is this sort of like a big warehouse?

Patrick ...It's yeah I mean it actually does wholesale food

IR Yeah

Phillip Wholesale anything.

Patrick It's wholesale everything.

IR Is it cheaper in those places?

Patrick No it isn't because they have to, they put VAT onto everything, but the advantage of it is that firstly it's open Sunday, it's open till 9.30 at night//they do have runs on things, they have bargains but I mean..

Phillip Specials

Patrick Yeah

Phillip Special offers

IR Is it like *Rackhams*?

Patrick Except it really isn't open to the public, I mean..

IR Oh you have to get a card?

Patrick ..It's hard to get a card, it's not like such as *Tradex* it's somewhere (sniggers) you've got to be..

IR What's this *Tradex*?

Peter It's a heap of a shop

Patrick Junk. They just sell..

Peter Rubbish.

Patrick ...sub-standard gear

IR Oh I see.

Tim Massive big anoraks that no one is ever going to buy.

Patrick Yes, there's been a bit of this lately, hasn't there by making out things are wholesale like..

Phillip Well what *Macro* do, there's *Tradex*, I think there's another one just opened, I'm trying to remember it..

Tim *Great Clothes*

Phillip *Great Clothes*

Patrick They pretend it's wholesale.

Phillip Exclusive

Patrick Yeah but places like *Macro* genuinely are, like if you ever try and get a card, you work for somebody or you've not got your own business you can't, I mean you really can't get one, they vet you, they want to see your account, your bank-manager and prove that you're bone-fide trader or something like that.

IR Do you shop in there a lot?

Patrick Yes because it's convenient.

IR Do the rest of you do that because it's near?

Tim No

Peter No, I've been to *Tradex*.

Tim Been once for a socket set, I needed a socket set, and it were cheaper, I'd seen one and it were about £15-20 quid more, the exact same one so I bought the, see the girlfriend's mother has got her own business, so I went with her card, but that's the only time I've been.

IR I'd just like you to think whether you've bought anything recently which has given you some pleasure?

Patrick Yeah we've covered it, it was a couple of CD's you know, so yeah certainly.

IR What was the pleasure in buying those?

Patrick Well I liked the band.

IR Do you not buy CD's very often?



- Patrick No, well I suppose so I don't buy them very often but no I think you're I just wanted, I was like looking forward to buying it because I wanted to play it, listen to it and enjoy it, really, why do we buy anything apart from essentials, because I wanted to listen to the music.
- IR Any of the others of you bought something?
- Tim I bought a leather jacket a while ago, there were a shop near *Lewis'* £50 quid for it, "Every Jacket £50 quid or less", and I was just passing and went in, saw this jacket I liked and I tried it on and it was large but it was too small, and they had an extra large one and it were just about right, I thought that's good it's cheaper then anywhere else.
- Patrick Oh, I'd of bought that.
- Tim I just thought yeah.
- IR Is that why you bought it because it was cheap?
- Tim Well I wanted a leather jacket but I couldn't afford £150 quid, so I saw that and thought it's alright, £50 quid you can't go wrong can you, so I bought it, girlfriend bought it but I gave her the money back.
- IR Phillip?
- Phillip I bought a dinner sounds really pouffe but I bought a dinner set a while back, but I haven't used it yet, but I've fancied a nice one for quite some time, never had full set, so I saved up and it was in a sale from *Habitat*.
- IR Did you look around all the places?
- Phillip I looked round yes, I liked the colours red, white and blue, it's a nice one from *Habitat* and you can add to it as well which is nice you can build it up, I'll buy a coffee jug and dish next.
- Tim So expensive
- Phillip Yes
- Patrick We're changing aren't we because I mean I'd of enjoyed buying that, we just bought, we just put in our own kitchen and we've gone round together and we've bought stuff like dinner service and our dads wouldn't of been into that at all.
- Peter Wouldn't catch my dad going and buying a dinner service.
- Patrick Or our grandads, that would of been for the wife but we've just bought kitchen units and we've put them in.
- Phillip You've got the choice.
- Patrick Oh yeah done it together tiling.
- IR Do you prefer it that way, is it better?

- Patrick Oh certainly yes I like to be involved, I do definitely, I think my wife likes me to be involved with it as well not because she doesn't have confidence in her own taste, if she was on her own she'd just do it but I suppose I've been married since I was quite young though, I've been married since I was nineteen and we've always done things like that, but I just got a lot of pleasure recently out of that's what made me think of it you brought it to mind because I completely overlooked the fact we'd just put in this kitchen.
- Phillip Well you go in deciding like it's a new thing.
- Patrick Yeah
- Phillip It's nice that a good feeling.
- IR What about buying for the home? Is that enjoyable?
- Phillip Yes
- Patrick It is for me.
- Phillip As long as you can afford it.
- Patrick It is for me yes, again if you can afford it I'm afraid it's something that.
- Phillip Just take your time, I've been in my house for about five years, I've still got two rooms to do, it's taking me a long time, but I enjoy spending picking up things, I would rather spend money on something and buy better quality you know if you get something cheap you've only got to replace it.
- Patrick True
- Phillip Buy the best you can and you look after it more as well you see.
- IR Would you say your shopping habits have changed, what you were saying would indicate that?
- Patrick Oh yeah
- IR As you've got older?
- Patrick As men you mean?
- IR As you've got older?
- Patrick Oh, as individuals, but not as a sex.
- IR Yes
- Patrick Well as I say I've been with my wife a long what a third of my life so..no it's always been like that throughout our marriage. I've always done that shopping, for food I think we got married she did it one week and we had a row, I didn't like it so she said "You bloody well do it then" and I did it forever and that was it. I've



always done it, but I've never found it a problem. So no my habits haven't changed they've always been the same.

IR Yeah, what about the rest of you?

Tim I think when I were younger, like sixteen or seventeen I used to go out of fashion or what were in style.

IR So you were more fashion-conscious?

Tim When I were young, but now I just wear what I like, as I've got older.

IR So you've got you're own style now, but has the quantity of what you buy gone down?

Tim I don't know, I don't really notice.

IR Do you buy less?

Tim Probably yeah, just buy when I need it yeah.

Peter My food shopping has actually doubled I would say because there's two I have to shop for two instead of just one but clothes shopping and everything else no, the most obvious thing I buy is jeans every so often because they wear out and that's it.

IR What about you Phillip?

Phillip Sorry

IR Whether you're shopping habits have changed as you've got older?

Phillip Yeah because as you get older and more responsible because you've got mortgages.

IR So you buy different things, you buy for the house?

Phillip Yes because you're money's going in different directions now, whereas kids have got more money then I have, a kid of eighteen has probably got more then I have on clothes.

Patrick Yes

Phillip On clothes, whereas I've got bills to pay and food to buy, my money is already gone before I've got it. So that's what I'm saying I have to save for things.

IR Yes, you always have to save.

Phillip Yeah and you save you're money and you buy what you want to buy, you tend to look after it more.

IR Would you say women shopped any differently to men?

Peter ...doesn't



- Phillip They're a pretty unknown quantity I think.
- Peter Yes, they're a lot more picky.
- Tim They buy something they're going to wear once that's what I think, she'll go out and buy a dress and she'll think oh I really like that and she'll get home and go I don't like it, and she's tried it on in shop and everything and she'll get home and she won't like it, or she'll wear it once and say I'm not wearing that again, and you never see it, it's back of wardrobe and that's it she could of spent forty quid on it.
- Patrick Yeah
- Phillip They have more choice, they've got a lot more variety.
- IR And they tend to be cheaper prices?
- Phillip They're cheaper yes.
- Peter My neighbour she opens the wardrobe, a cascade of clothes falls out and all mine are shoved at the side, and she says "No I've got nothing to wear I'll have to go shopping" and she goes off and buys something new, and I think "I think I'll wear my black trousers again".
- IR What about what you were saying earlier Tim, you said that your girlfriend, you'll go into a shop and you know look around all the rest of the shops and still end up coming back?
- Tim She's done it a few times when I go with her because I go with her because she would go and buy something stupid, that she won't she'll never like it, so I go with her and make sure she buys something I like.
- IR Is this when she's buying clothes for you or for herself?
- Tim No for herself, can't have her wearing something I don't like. But she'll go out and you're walking around town for a couple of hours then you start getting pissed off, fed up and she says we'll just go back and try that one on, oh no, and she gets there and you say "Do you like it" she says "Yeah", well buy it for gods sake and let's go home, she'll end up buying summat or she'll just go into one shop, "Oh I like that and buy it", instead of going into that shop first, but I don't suppose she would.
- Peter No, we always end up arguing because we get the "What do you think?", and I go it's alright, she goes "You don't like it do you", I like it do you like it, she goes "Oh I don't know, do you like it", I like it do you like it, and we end up rowing and she'll walk off in a huff and she won't buy the sodding dress but yeah I just say like it so we can go home.
- IR This is always the hassle the actual comments, which you give and they never seem?
- Patrick Oh yeah that's right.

Peter           It's like the guy on the *McDonald's* advert

Patrick        Yes

Peter           I've been in his position a hundred times, "Do you like it", I like it, everyone watching. I remember going round Leeds with Allison an old girlfriend and this couple like every shop we went to they were in there as well, he were looking down in the dumps and I were looking down and said "Don't worry mate it shuts in two hours" and we're walking and I say lets go home then and there's this guy sat outside all the women's' shops and I goes "We're going home now", and just as we walk past she says "Oh what's this?", and this guy just cracked up laughing.

IR              Okay I've just got to check next door with my colleague that I've asked all the questions, back in a second.

Peter           I don't know how you can like going Christmas shopping, it's a last minute..

Patrick        It takes all sorts

Peter           It's a last minute job every year.

Patrick        I don't like this being behind mirrors, like you're on stage, interview room I don't like that, I just keep forgetting about that because you're sort of conscious aren't you.

Peter           You can just see through.

Phillip         I'd like another beer.

Patrick        Yeah, I would.

Tim             I noticed when everyone was talking, everyone was going red.

Patrick        I was going to say that to him, you know he said what do you like doing, I like buying beer.

Phillip         That's a pleasure we haven't talked about innit.

Patrick        Yeah, I like doing that buying beer.

Peter           Going to Offey [Off Licence].

Patrick        That is an extension of being a kid buying sweets isn't it, if you want to look into it.

Peter           I still buy sweets as well but there you go.

Tim             Trying to cut down.

Peter           Four packets of crisps today.

Patrick        Cause you see that in offey blokes don't just walk in and pick up a four-pack of beers.

Peter           They go.



- Patrick They stand there looking at it like, wondering what they're going to.
- Phillip That's one way of spending money.
- Patrick That's another thing a do, that's desperate you know Wednesday night.
- IR One of the things is comparing the price on beers as well, you look at the alcohol content.
- Patrick Everybody does that don't they.
- IR You work out that they're all the same basically.
- Tim Or they give you thirty per cent extra on top.
- Peter It's like my friend the guru fashion, decided that it's trendy to drink Sol.
- Patrick You're kidding.
- Peter He drinks it, it's like water.
- Patrick Just give them anything but sugared bitter:
- Peter Me with XXXX.
- Tim That's the in lager at the moment.
- Phillip I like the Tennetts and the Lowenbrau, cause then there not watered down you're getting good strong beer there.
- Peter I like Guinness.
- IR But it's actually tasting it rather than comparing packages?
- Phillip It's tasting it, I go for the cheapest. I end up with headaches on cheap lagers.
- Patrick Oh I, it's all the additives and stuff.
- Peter In some pubs, like Budweiser, it gives me a bad hangover.
- IR One final question how important would you say shopping is to your lives?
- Peter Well you mean apart from starving to death if you don't go food shopping.
- Phillip It's a diversion//it's a diversion from the everyday, from going to work, from the normal routine.
- IR And you treat it like that?
- Phillip You can do it once a week or twice a week whatever you want it's something to do to fill your time up a little bit, I don't mind it I



quite enjoy it but I don't know what it's like shopping for a family I'm sure it's not easy.

IR What about in your life Patrick?

Patrick Um that's one of the reasons I like to do it by myself because I'm doing it they tend to, I tend to get to eat what I want to eat and I mean I'm not one of these that likes to sit down to meat and potatoes, we tend to eat oh god all kinds of food from all over the place so um it's individuality, sorry.

Phillip People's tastes have started to vary.

Patrick Oh they have haven't they, because you can actually buy these things now.

IR They're allowing you to buy, the variety has increased.

Patrick Yes, Yes I suppose that's just due to demand isn't it, more people travelling abroad and more food is coming in from abroad.

IR What about you Tim? How important is shopping to your life?

Tim I don't really/I think the only thing that bothered to me is when I go out and buy a pair of gloves for bike, crash helmet, boots you shop around for things like that to try and find the best, like £25 quid for a pair of gloves because if you come off they'll save your hands and as I say I bought a pair of gloves the other week and I came off bike and they saved me hands if I hadn't had them on I'd end up losing me hands.

IR So it's important because it saved your lives but what about the actual process of shopping?

Tim Well I enjoy going round all the different bike shops, you can look at bikes as well, eh I like that.

Peter I like going round *Eddies*.

Tim That's something I enjoy, clothes occasionally.

Peter Shopping for that, like he say for a bike, researching for gloves and stuff I like because it's like, it's just like getting a new toy, like you say, trying it on and I'll spend hours in *Eddies* trying on gloves and crash helmets and things but food shopping just going straight round supermarket, the only thing about food shopping itself is I don't have to eat sprouts and cabbage.

IR When you're shopping for these motorbikes do you go on your own?

Peter I go on me own when I go to supermarket.

Tim Sometimes.

IR No when you go round *Eddies*?

- Peter Well girlfriends not interested in motorcycles.
- IR Do you think that is part of the pleasure, that you're set free?
- Peter She won't even go on the back.
- IR What about actually going in the shops and buying the things on your own?
- Peter Well seeing how it's totally for me, like it's got nothing to do with her like I don't care whether she thinks I look silly in leathers or not, you know it's for me I know it's motorcycle leathers are not all that fashionable and you look like somebody from *Mad Max* or the *Terminator* when you've finished, but I say if I'm going to come off a bike at 30-40-50 miles an hour or faster even when I get a bigger one, I don't want to be wearing like fashion.
- Tim Yeah you want something that is functional, Gucci trousers.
- Peter Yeah
- Tim You said earlier that you bought a leather jacket for £80 I would never buy a leather jacket for bike because..
- Peter Did I, that was an old one, I bought it from *Next* actually.
- IR I think I'll wrap it up there. Thanks for you help and coming along. As I said at the start I'm at an early stage in the work here and I may be needing to interview you individually, Kate will be sorting out your payments so if you'd also like to indicate whether you'd be willing to take part in those interviews. That's it.



## APPENDIX ONE

### SHOPPING TRANSCRIPT: GROUP THREE

Sex Men  
Status: BC1  
Ages: 35-44 years.

IR Well thank you very much for coming. My name is Colin Campbell. I'm a Lecturer at the University of York and I'm doing some research on shopping. So thank you very much for coming and the research is purely academic. It's not part of any commercial activity, we won't be trying to sell you anything, anything like that and we're interested really in men and shopping because most of the work up to now has been done on women. They seem to have the idea the women are the one's doing most of the shopping and men don't do any, and we're trying to see if that's true or not. Can I just first of all see if I can find out your names, can't guarantee I'll remember them all but I'll try, can we just go round.

Richard, Stephen, Chris, Robert, Jim, Terry

IR Perhaps if I could just start by trying to get some facts clear, about how much shopping you do. If I could just go round, do you shop regularly?

Richard Yeah, about once a week.

IR About once a week.

Richard Yeah

IR That's food shopping is it we're talking about?

Richard Yeah

IR Okay. Do you go to the same place?

Richard Yeah

IR Where is that?

Richard *Morrisons*

IR Right

Stephen Once a week

IR Once a week?

Stephen *Tesco's*

IR Right, okay

Chris Once a week, *Morrisons*

IR Once a week *Morrisons* you don't go together do you.

laughs

Robert We go once a month.

IR Once a month

Robert We go to *Tesco's*.

(Knock at the door)

IR Right okay, is this our number seven. Hello, do sit down, I was just saying my name is Colin Campbell I'm from the University of York, doing some research on shopping.

Ben Okay

IR And your name was?

Ben Green

IR Your first name?

Ben Ben

IR As long as it's not John, that's the important crucial thing here, we've got three of those. I was just going round and checking with people about how they go shopping with just about actually got to Robert, you said once a month did you?

Robert Yeah

IR Where was that?

Robert *Tesco's*, basically because I can't stand shopping, so I mean we go once a month.

IR Right okay, Ben?

Ben Do you mean shopping on my own or with wife?

IR Whichever.

Ben Um

IR Food shopping I was thinking of basically?

Ben Food shopping, I'd probably go with my wife about once a month.

IR Right

Ben But I sometimes go for odd things.

IR And is that to the supermarket?

Ben *Sainsbury's*/yeah



IR Right, okay.

Jim Once a week to *Morrisons*

IR Right, okay. Fred, John?

Terry Probably once a fortnight, when there's occasional shops at the local shop thing.

IR Right

Terry It's *Safeways*

IR Right

Terry Just to be different

IR Okay, and do you enjoy it is the next question I'm going to ask or do you hate it. Can I just go round again and get any individual response.

Richard Right as quick as possible you know get it done as soon as you can I enjoy it then, not when you're dilly dallying down alleys.

laughs

IR Right, so this is the question of choosing the same kind of things each time, trying to get round as quickly as you can.

Stephen It's a chore.

IR It's a chore and there is nothing pleasurable about it at all?

Stephen Not usually no

IR If you could get somebody else to do it for you, you would?

Stephen Yes

IR Okay

Chris Can't stand it, it takes too long.

IR It takes to long?

Chris Yes, I usually can work it out right where wives done shopping and I just go and pay the bill.

laughs

Stephen Well done

IR Right, you don't go round with her then?

Chris Some, quite a lot of the times I do but if I can work it out right and I finish um finish a little bit later..

Richard        Yeah do that

Chris         ..say you go in and I'll pay the bill.

IR             Do you find it boring?

Chris         Oh yeah terrible.

IR             Robert?

Robert        I find it quite boring as well. It's terrible when we've got children with us, absolutely horrendous, horrendous you know I mean I don't mind as much when the children, I can plan it when they're at school, one in and the other one out, but generally..

IR             And if you could go, when you do go without the children you wouldn't still say you enjoyed it?

Robert        No I wouldn't enjoy it, I know my wife does, she likes looking at things "Oh that's nice", and puts it back, should I buy it should I buy it. No, that drives me mad, I just say buy the thing you know.

IR             Yeah

Chris         To me a tin of beans is a tin of beans, but we get..

Ben            You wrong there you haven't tried *Sainsbury's* beans.

Robert        No well

laughs

Ben            A thousand different ones of them//Yeah, I mean shopping with my wife in *Marks and Spencers* drives me absolutely potty, I hate that but shopping for/I don't know you see I like looking at all the beans, I'm a bean man I think, I like making chilli's and things, so I don't mind looking at things like that in *Sainsbury's*, seeing what's new. The thing that really drives me mad are the check-outs, yeah there must be about fifty check-outs there but only half of them are occupied, there's great big queues you think why can't they open them all up and get out of there. But in reality you can only be waiting for about five minutes, it's like a traffic jam, you're probably only waiting five minutes but it just drives you mad.

IR             Yeah, but the process of going round going up and down the aisles and selecting the items you don't mind that?

Ben            Uck//I don't desperately, I think they like it as much as I do. I don't like it, but if it's the things that I want you know beans I quite like it but the rest of it I find a chore, but I wouldn't say I hate it.

IR             You mean the food items you do like but the other things?

Ben            The food items that I like I don't mind I like looking at.



IR Right

Ben The rest of it I find a bit of a chore. But it's the actual check-outs that I hate the most.

IR Right, okay.

Jim Hate it

IR You hate the whole thing?

Jim She doesn't drive so I've no choice to go.

IR Right, and do you actually go round with her?

Jim Yeah, I push the trolley

laughs

IR So you push the trolley and you pay and you drive back and that's about it?

Jim Yes. That's every Thursday like tonight, I hate it.

IR I see, okay

Terry I don't mind it, it's alright.

IR Okay

Terry I usually go with wife and daughter like and daughter enjoys it so..

IR But you wouldn't go so far to say that you positively enjoy it?

Terry Ah no

IR No

Terry No, but I prefer it to going out and buying clothes and stuff like that, I hate going shopping in town.

Ben (Nodding head)

IR So that's even worse is it because that's what I was coming to next?

Ben That is the pits.

IR Okay

Robert I don't find that as bad actually, strangely enough. I don't mind going round town looking in the shops

IR Are we talking about by yourself or with your wife?

Robert No with my wife or I'm not bothered, I quite enjoy it.

Jim I enjoy it more if it's by yourself.

IR Okay

Ben You like to look at your own things. When I go to town it's usually I'll park the car and I'll meet you in two hours and then I go round my shops and she goes round her shops, then we meet up and then we go back to the car. So I like looking at my things but I mean I can't stand looking in clothes shops.

Richard No

IR So what is it you're looking at when you're going round?

Ben I like gadgets.

Jim Yeah

Ben Gadget man.

Jim Electronics, computers and things

Ben Yeah, walking round *Maplin* or something like that.

IR I'll come back to that in a minute, can I just follow up with everybody else about clothes so Richard clothes shopping?

Richard Yeah it's same what lad were saying it's, I think that *McDonald's* advert typifies it all.

Ben Oh yeah

Richard You know just go with her and you just say "yes" so you can get out as quick as you can.

IR This is when you are shopping with your wife?

Richard Yeah

IR And you're talking about buying things for her?

Richard Yeah, both

IR What about buying things for yourself?

Richard Both

IR You hate that as well?

Richard Yes

IR Do you choose those items or does she, or do you chose them together?

Richard Choose them together, but I just hate the hustle and bustle of sort of Leeds or wherever it is you know.



IR            So I mean if she said would go into town and get the things for you and bring them back without you having to go, would you be happy about that?

Richard     Lovely

laughs

Stephen     Ecstatic

IR            Okay, right you obviously hate clothes shopping just as much?

Stephen     Clothes shopping I can't stand no.

IR            Is there some sort of shopping you do like then?

Stephen     Computer shops

IR            Computers?

Stephen     Gadget shops, books that sort of thing.

Chris        No if my wife is going into town to buy something for herself she can go in cause there's no way I'm going to go trailing round shops for hours at least maybe half a dozen, a dozen shops but then she'll go back to the first shop.

Robert      That's right

Ben          It's the same shops I don't know why they do it.

Chris        She does a lot of shopping for my clothes as well. Most of my clothes she gets for me as well.

IR            And you're quite happy about that

Chris        Yeah, yeah, I do occasionally go in and buy my own stuff like but/it is occasionally.

IR            Right, who haven't I asked?

Jim          Well I'm almost as bad as she is, cause I like to go round different shops.

IR            For yourself?

Jim          For myself yeah.

IR            And you'd like to go by yourself, you don't want to go with her?

Jim          Go by myself

IR            So you do enjoy clothes shopping?

Jim          Yeah, I do yeah

IR            Can you tell everybody else what it is that you like about it, because they obviously don't share that?

- Jim I just like wearing different clothes.
- IR Right
- Jim And I like to pick what I want, what I want to wear not what she wants me to wear.
- IR You like the process of selecting?
- Jim I do yeah, I like choosing.
- Terry I think we all choose our clothing, it's shopping for 'em.
- Robert I don't mind going to town if it's not busy, you know a day in the week normally, if I have to go into town on a Saturday it's terrible
- Terry Save all shopping for Christmas it's great then, *Macro*.
- Jim Food is the same thing over and over again
- IR Yeah, but clothes is different?
- Jim Yeah well you're buying different clothes.
- IR Does that mean that fashion is important to you, would you say?
- Jim In a way, yeah generally clothes really
- IR Is there anywhere special where you get them from? Any shop that you would typically go to?
- Jim Well there's *Top Shop* go there//*Next*.
- IR Right, do you have an idea of what you're looking for when you go?
- Jim Yeah, if I know I'm going for a sweater I'll look for a sweater. I'll probably go round six or seven shops till she buys what she wants, and then go back to the first one again.
- Ben Like my girlfriend
- laughs
- Jim That's me so, I like to look for a bargain as well in clothes.
- IR Right, okay. Well let's come onto the shopping that people do like then, other than clothes shopping, cause it was Ben who started this you said was it gadget shopping?
- Ben Gadgets, computers, electronics, *Maplins* I find it fascinating to walk around there.
- IR So you're a...
- Ben Spend a fortune. Books, bookshops reading magazines in *[W.H.] Smiths* about electronics and things.



IR Are we talking about browsing here rather than buying?

Ben Both as long as you end up with something.

Terry Browsing

Stephen Yeah

IR Browsing

Terry Yeah

Stephen Browsing

IR I mean how long would you spend would you say in these kinds of shops, what's the pattern?

Stephen It's technology I think isn't it

Richard Yes, I think it's a fascination with what's coming out next, you know on these computers and that, gadgets and like he says.

IR So it's computers essentially for you those are the shops you go to?

Richard Yes, it's//I'd say it's anything electrical or

Stephen Um videos

Richard Or stuff like that, something that you don't have to pull over your head.

laughs

IR But how often do you buy these items?

Richard Not very often

IR You can't buy hi-fi equipment every week so?

Richard No, no

IR But how often would you go into the shops?

Richard I think it's more a comparison of what you've got at home, you think by heck I wish I had that like, you know that's certainly as good as mine or whatever.

IR Right, and you go into these places by yourselves you don't take the wife in?

Richard No

IR Hanging around waiting for you?

Richard She can't do with it, a telly is a telly to her or whatever it may be you know.

IR It's the same for you is it?

Stephen Record shops, bookshops. I go in them browsing round.

IR Would you typically come out without buying or what?

Stephen No come out without buying, occasionally I buy, see what's there.

IR Right. Records and books is that true for that?

Chris Yeah records for me that's all the shops I ever go into.

IR Really.

Chris Yeah

Robert Hi-fi's

IR And how many records you know do you buy records every week?

Chris Oh no, presents and things.

IR But you're happy to go in and just look around?

Chris Yeah just see what's going on, you go in a record shop now there is everything in there videos and..

Richard I

Stephen Um

Chris T-shirts and badges and all kinds

IR So is there a pleasure in just looking at these items even if you go out without having bought anything, you think?

Chris Yeah

Terry Well it's better then looking at jeans and t-shirts

Chris Yeah

Terry Or a top and dress

IR Far be it for me to make any comment? We've had computer shops, bookshops and record shops, any others?

Ben Do it yourselfing.

Richard I do.

Ben I like look around or wander in *Homebase*.

Richard Yeah

- Chris I don't mind going round carpet centre
- Ben Yeah
- Richard Yeah
- IR And this is the same thing, just browsing?
- Chris Yes, I don't actually buy anything, I come out without anything there.
- IR It's not a question of finding some items that you end up automatically buying whenever you go out you find you come back with a record or a book?
- Ben It's whatever takes your fancy
- Richard It's whatever's left in your pocket after food shopping I think.
- IR Right. What about the actual environments of the shops themselves, whether they're food shops or clothes shops or any other shops, does it matter to you whether it's pleasant or whether the assistants are around, whether there's music playing or. What do you feel about the actual environment?
- Stephen As long as there's space that you can get round, you're not barging into everybody that's it.
- Terry I tend to look at items in there because that's what I do for a living like you know line design. So you tend to go in and have a look around.
- IR So there's a professional interest?
- Terry Yeah, sort of
- IR What do you feel about shop assistants? Do you have any strong views on shop assistants?
- Ben I like them to be knowledgeable I must admit, you know you go into hi-fi shops and you ask them a few questions and they haven't got a clue. Whereas some shops I went down, I bought a piece of specialized equipment in Bradford in a hi-fi shop and it was a specialized shop and it was wonderful, you could chat to the assistant in technical terms and he'd answer back in technical terms and it was wonderful and I ended up buying my equipment there for that reason. Whereas you go to some other shops and they have like the Saturday boy there and they haven't got a clue, like in *Dixons* you know "MsDos what's this", um I hate that I think they might as well not be there.
- IR Right, is this true for the others of you for going into computer shops? You expect the assistant to be knowledgeable?//You don't ah/what about if they come up to you and ask if they can help you do you mind?
- Richard It's not so bad with some of the younger lads because they're brought up on it now but some of the well the older assistants



they're lost with it, in my opinion like, but some of the younger kids they're brought up with it at school now, yeah.

IR What about Jim you go into clothes shops more then anybody else here?

Jim Yeah I go into computer shops an' all.

IR You do as well?

Jim Yeah I like to get magazines. Ones with the cheats, not specifically buy a magazine sometimes, memorize the cheat, but I occasionally do buy the magazine.

IR But you don't have any strong views on the environment of the clothes shops that you go in?

Jim I don't like the assistants that jump on to you. I don't like that.

Ben Yeah

Jim When they say what jeans do you want. I just like to look first, and pick what I want instead of them jumping out on you.

Ben I tell them I've just come in to get warm.

laughs

Richard I do and all, You're like this, going (not on video).

Jim Places like *Comet* they'll jump round "What you looking for", I like to look around first.

Chris It tends to put me off when they start pestering you

Richard Does me and all

Ben What you want is a knowledgeable assistant standing in the background so you can go and look what you want and then go over and say I want to ask a question and you can go up to them, that's what you want, you don't want somebody coming over your shoulder looking at a car, "Oh can I help you sir?"

Richard That's right

IR What about the shopping malls and so on, *Meadowhall* these kinds of things do these places have any interest for you?

Robert Yeah I enjoy them.

Terry Yes

Richard Yes

Robert Very much so

Jim There's everything there, like she can go there

- Robert That's true
- Richard I tell you what it is as well it's your car parking as well. You're directly there you haven't far to walk, from any of the car parks in them sorts of complexes, no, plus there's plenty of room for pushchairs.
- IR Robert you said you liked them?
- Robert Yeah, I, we've got two young children and it's quite a nightmare going round town with them really and generally there you know it's going to be safe, there's no cars, there's no, you know you can just let them go and run off and you know within reason and it's just a nice atmosphere, I mean you can take your coat off, you don't have to put your coat on, you know to go into town now it's bad enough you've got to a) find a parking space, it costs you a fortune and by the time you've parked it could be half way to Sheffield anyway, you know so I don't mind going there at all, it's quite nice.
- IR But what do you do when you get there though I mean do you wander round all the shops or do you go straight to the?
- Robert No I'm quite happy to wander round, she's quite...because she'll go into the shops that I want to go in, so it's about 50-50 really, but there's a limit I suppose you know I get fed up after maybe the tenth shop and say "Look what do you want?"/Yeah I mean the difference is like if I want to buy something like a/t-shirt I'll go out and buy a t-shirt whereas she'll go out and want to buy a t-shirt as well as a pair of shoes which annoys me you know but's that's the big difference I think.
- IR Can I ask each of you if you've bought something recently that you particularly enjoyed, that gave you great pleasure to buy? John, something in this category?
- Richard No not really//I just bought lass a drier.
- laughs
- Richard It was her pleasure, not specific no.
- Stephen I bought some tapes the other day.
- IR Right, what was the actual most enjoyable part of the whole process, planning to buy them, actually handing over the money, taking them home?
- Stephen Listening to them afterwards
- IR Listening to them afterwards okay. Chris?
- Chris I think it was the my last CD that I bought/ which was about two months ago.
- IR And what was the most pleasurable part of the process?
- Chris Just listening to it afterwards.



- Robert At the moment I'm looking for a CD and um I//I can't really think of anything but getting great pleasure in comparing one make against the other, so I made up my mind I was going to buy one and..
- IR And how long had you been doing that?
- Robert For about a month, I was basically just saving up to buy one.
- IR Ben?
- Ben The last thing I bought was a Surround Stand Processor (? - something technical) for my hi-fi. I think the best pleasure was reading up about it first, I quite enjoyed that.
- Robert Yeah, finding out
- Ben Finding out about it, making enquiries, travelling to various places to discuss it with people about it, that was the best thing about it.
- IR The actual researching?
- Ben The research behind it, getting an idea in my mind and then I can go down, culminating in buying it yeah.
- IR Right, but the purchase itself after it wasn't a disappointment?
- Ben No, no, no ..
- Jim It was a hi-fi for my daughter, even though it wasn't for me it was for her it was nice buying it.
- IR Yeah, what was the most pleasurable part? Giving it to her?
- Jim Ah yeah getting it for her yeah, not actually paying over the money (Ben laughs) but getting it for her, but it had to be done.
- Terry Mine was same thing buying toys for the youngster, it was her birthday see so I bought an electronic toy for her, seeing her eyes light up when she got it like//that pleases me that she enjoys it so..
- IR How does that compare with buying things for yourself? Do you get more pleasure buying things for the children?
- Terry Well yes obviously I mean if you're buying things for them, and you can see they're actually enjoying it rather than playing with cardboard box that it came in.
- IR Um
- Terry You've chosen well.
- IR You mentioned Christmas earlier did you, about buying presents?



- Terry Oh Christmas I was joking, I said I'd been shopping at Christmas, the last time.
- IR Oh I see you only went at Christmas. In this process of actually buying things how important is the question that we're actually getting a bargain in this whole process, is that important to any of you?
- Robert I think it depends what it is
- Stephen If you get a bargain for something you want, then you can be quite happy but
- Robert Like if you buy a pair of jeans and you try two pairs and you just take one is ten pounds cheaper, then I'll buy the one which is ten pounds cheaper if they're the same, sometimes you get different makes of Levi's it doesn't make any difference to me.
- Ben I think bargains aren't really bargains actually.
- Robert No
- Ben Yes sometimes like they say "Interest-free credit", if you pay cash we'll knock 30% off, it's very rare that you actually get a genuine reduction, I've found, there's maybe a reason for it, it's broken or something, but I mean a genuine/you know reduction um//like with most things, like I was buying a video and *Dixons* said we'll give you £20 off but the actual/ wherever you went they all gave you £20's off, it was the standard price was £20 off, they just advertise it a bit more. So as I say, in reality I think it's very rare to actually find a bargain.
- IR You wouldn't be particularly attracted to a place because they had a sale?
- Ben I find these sale things are either things that are just rubbish stuff that are imported for the sales specially..
- Jim Sub-standard lines or something
- Ben Yeah, any time some of these places advertise bargains like *MacroMail* does, I don't know if anybody goes to *Macro* warehouse, they call it a warehouse so you can shop on a Sunday legally, otherwise it's just a shop really um but they send this magazine round with lots of leaders to attract you in ah and some of those are very cheap actually um but you've got to be careful that you only buy what's in there and not what's on the shelf because they're just as dear by the time you add the VAT on. So that's one place if you play the game right you can get a bargain, but genuine you know I find mainly there's no such thing as a bargain there's always a catch or a string.
- IR Right, cause there some people that are particularly concerned to see that they get a bargain they go into a shop they automatically go to the reduced section first and that doesn't apply to you?

Jim I tend to have a look in any reduced sections, even shopping food they usually have a massive great table with reduced stuff like that, tend to have a look, she does.

IR What about buying things second-hand would you consider buying anything second-hand?

Jim Not electric goods

Ben I bought a roof rack for my car which was about eighty quid, or something and I got it second-hand for about thirty.

IR But you wouldn't consider buying hi-fi

Ben No

Jim No

Robert (Shaking head)

IR Is there anything you'd consider buying second-hand?

Jim Cars

Ben Um

IR Not clothes

Jim No

Ben It's funny though there's a big second-hand market there because a lot of people, we were in this house a few years ago and we had all sorts of things like bathroom suite and carpets and I either took them to the dump or, or just gave them away to the builder who was doing the work for us for nothing and people were telling me that they'd had similar things and they'd advertised an old carpet you know sort of worn out for about fifty quid in the weekly news and they've had people ringing up all the time. So I mean there must be a big market for these things.

Terry My wife likes going round car-boot sales.

IR She does?

Terry For some strange reason she enjoys them, I don't like them.

Jim I go to them just for computer games.

IR So you're happy to buy those then?

Jim Um, well they're not second-hand they're just..

Ben Ripped off

Jim ..copies

laughs



Jim That's the only reason I go there.

IR Right

Jim That's it I've had it now.

IR What about things for the home? Do you buy things for the home second-hand? You've just bought a drier you wouldn't buy a second-hand one?

Richard No, No//cause you'll probably use it for a week and it'll go wrong so double or as much anyway.

IR What about buying things for the home generally? Would you enjoy the process of buying carpets and furniture and so-on or is that a chore?

Richard No I enjoy buying stuff really, it's basically//whether it's a new pan set or a television it's part of your home improvements scheme isn't it you know.

IR So that's quite pleasurable you don't mind going and choosing them?

Richard No I don't mind

Stephen Not furniture and things, I always get outvoted anyway whatever I say, so I give in. But electrical goods or something like that I enjoy going to look for.

IR Right

Chris We bought a suite second-hand too, a couple of years ago, it's alright, still going strong.

IR You're happy with that?

Chris Yeah very happy.

IR Were you pleased about buy that I mean?

Chris Yeah, we needed one for spare room anyway.

IR Right, that was an activity of shopping that you quite enjoyed?

Chris Yeah

Robert I quite enjoy shopping for furniture, it all depends as I say the most boring places in the world are places like carpet shops, until you actually go in and buy a carpet, do you know what a mean.

IR Yes

Robert Um it's like sometimes you see a..

Jim That's a nice roll. (laughs)



- Robert      You know what I mean it's one someone wouldn't give a second glimpse but in a way when you're looking for a carpet you go into a/I know it seems odd but I quite enjoy that.
- IR            Okay. Ben
- Ben           I'm just thinking about carpets, I find it difficult. We bought some carpet a couple of years ago some are in square yards, some in square metres, some are 9ft wide and 12ft wide. I find it very difficult to work out what you really needed and what was//and comparing between shops you know whether they're the same quality or, actually I've forgotten the question sorry.
- IR            I was just trying to establish whether buying anything for the house, doesn't have to be a carpet, but buying those kinds of items..
- Ben           I find that pleasurable
- IR            ..whether you enjoyed that?
- Ben           Yeah I, I like buying things that I know you're going to keep, like wife's clothes she'll wear it a few times and then it's in the wardrobe or the kids clothes they wear it once. I find that I always think it's a waste of money because they've worn it once and it's gone in the cupboard. Whereas things like furnishings, pots, pans, televisions are things you use and have for hopefully keep for a couple of years. And I find it worthwhile to shop around and enjoy it.
- IR            But that wouldn't rate as enjoyable as going in a computer shop or anything like that?
- Ben           Um no I think they're on a par actually, I like things for the house.
- Jim           Um, yeah if you're decorating a room from top to bottom it's nice to see the finished product, so it's nice buying all the equipment first and seeing the end product.
- IR            John?
- Terry        I bought an house eighteen months ago and I paid for the carpet and things extra like you know, just to save me going round shopping, because I find it tedious, you know because you go through three or four carpet shops and there's two of you and you're arguing like I don't like that shade of grey so I mean we didn't get a bigger choice like but it was there it was going to get fitted and it came with price of house so, it's a weight off your mind.
- IR            And you avoided all the..
- Terry        We avoided all the shops.
- IR            ...chores
- Terry        Oh yes

- IR            Okay. Can I ask you a question about being in a particular mood to actually shop and buy. A lot of people say that they have to be in the right mood if they're going to buy something, does that apply to you?
- Jim           If it's for myself I can go any time
- IR            Okay
- Jim           But say it's for somebody else you have to find time it's a bit harder.
- IR            So you're saying you're always in the mood to buy things?
- Jim           For myself yes, always in the mood to buy something. But if it's Saturday it has to be quick. But everybody else no.
- IR            And you don't have any problems finding something to buy I mean?
- Jim           It depends what I'm buying. If I'm going for a specific thing I will find it but like I say it will take a while.
- IR            Okay, but you're fairly confident that you could get that?
- Jim           Yes
- IR            What about the rest of you. Do you have to be in the right mood to enjoy buying your CD's or your hi-fi's?
- Richard      Depends on how hard a day you've had at work at times/you know, sometimes you come home and all you want to do is, well especially during winter time is, once you've had your tea just get your feet up or whatever.
- IR            Yes so it requires a certain amount of energy, apart from that do you think you have to be in a happy mood to be able to buy or?
- Stephen      I think if it's something you want you are in a happy mood aren't you if you're going out to buy it.
- IR            Right, I'll just put it the other way some people actually buy things to cheer themselves up, or to reward themselves.
- Richard      No
- Robert      No
- IR            No, you've never done that.
- Terry        If I've got plenty of money to spend I'm in a happy mood and I might go shopping then.
- IR            So it's the money not the shopping?
- Terry        Well obviously I mean it all comes down to money doesn't it, if you've got it then go out and spend it, if you haven't you might



as well stay at home and watch t.v. or do up house or something, D.I.Y.

IR Are there any other items which you like buying that we haven't mentioned? Jewellery perhaps..

(No response: Ben and Jim shaking head)

IR ..or had somebody the other day saying they got quite excited about buying holidays?

Jim Yeah, I like to buy a holiday I must admit that's quite good twelve months to wait it's quite hard, it's nice booking a holiday then going to work

Ben I go on lots of little holidays rather than one big expensive one, I hate that twelve month wait.

Jim Yes

IR And is the research you do for holidays is that important as well?

Jim Yes it is, it is for me.

Ben Sometimes

Chris We usually go down two weeks beforehand. It's a nice surprise when you don't know where you're going.

IR Alright, and do you, what is often related to moods, do you impulse buy would you say, can you remember actually buying things on impulse?

Ben Yes

IR Yes

Ben When I go to *Maplin*, something catches my eye.

IR Can you give us an example of something you didn't set out to buy but you ended up buying?

Ben Space things, switches or connectors or something.

IR And you didn't regret it when you got home?

Ben Not really.

IR Anybody else think they impulse buy?

Stephen If I see a CD or a record or something you want you just happen to see it and buy it and take it home, I don't think you regret it.

Terry And it's cheap, if it's going cheap. Like if you go down *Macro* they do t.v. games or computer games that you can get four for the price of one, yeah buy it.



- IR Would you say that you're shopping habits have changed over the years? That you shop differently from the way you used to shop at some stage? Jim do you think you shop differently from the way you used to?
- Jim If you're married with a family you have different ways of shopping.
- IR Yes
- Jim Moneywise of course, you can't just go out and buy things you've got to watch the pennies.
- IR So you think you're more careful then you used to be?
- Jim Yeah if you're going to buy electrical stuff, you just save up for it first and then go and buy it.
- IR Right
- Jim Or when you've got a family you sometimes have the money and then you don't.
- IR Okay. Ben do you think you have changed?
- Ben I can't remember, um//I used to look around the shops more with my wife come to think of it we used to go out to town and not meet up, you know we used to go round together many years ago before we were married, but I mean of late I've just let her go to town with her friends so that's different.
- IR So you now shop more by yourself?
- Ben More solely yes rather than together.
- IR What about before you were married, was your shopping pattern then the same as it is now?
- Ben No as I was saying, do you mean before I got married. I can't remember that far back.
- Robert Before you got married.
- IR Robert has your shopping changed?
- Robert I think very much like Jim, Jim said you know that with being married things have, obviously you can't afford the things you used to be able to afford, you know like now I've had to save up for the CD, before I was married I couldn't afford it, ah//just generally a lot more careful with things.
- IR Right
- Robert And you know obviously buying different things as well like as the children grow up I've had to buy a cot, you've got to buy a bed, buying beds is an unusual experience.
- IR Okay

- Chris I don't think I go as much now, since I've got married. I used to go down town shopping with her but I won't go now.
- IR Why is that?
- Chris Don't know, just can't stand it, it's ah//um going round supermarkets she knows what she wants//I get the things like dog food and then bottles of coke, packets of crisps.
- IR I mean if, is there anything that the shops themselves could do to make shopping more enjoyable to you, do you think? Some people who hate shopping, or don't like it as much as you appear to do.
- Chris You tend to bump into people and they don't know which way they're going and they're stood there you're trying to get past them, aisles are not wide enough, I don't know.
- Stephen The thing with food shopping is that you want to get there and get out, soon as possible
- Richard That's right
- Stephen When things get in a way then that's an annoyance.
- IR The whole thing is just a hassle for you?
- Stephen Yes
- Ben I think that the shops that I enjoy looking at I think I like the ones that are bigger and you can browse around I like that, you can walk around the shelves whereas a small shop where there's somebody stood there/I find that off putting and I walk out the door again.
- IR Boutiques for example, fashion boutiques and you hate that kind of shop?
- Ben Yeah I don't look at things anyway
- IR No
- Ben The thing is I'd rather a big open store that you, that the aisles are big as well, that you can wander around easily, and not sort of be pushed about and so on and spend as much time as you want or whatever um without somebody stood over you looking at you, "Have you found what you want Sir?", feel free that's what I like.
- IR Well this has come up in a way but I'd like to specifically to get your response to this, about the differences which you think exist between the ways men and women shop? Your views of how women shop really are interesting to me as well as your views on how you shop? John what would you say were the main differences between men and women?



Richard Speed//you know I think most blokes tend to say well I'm going into that shop for that thing, whereas a woman will go in for some/for that particular thing but she will also look at something else, you know when you're going shopping.

IR So that's why they take longer is it?

Richard I think so yeah, you know it's//I like to go you know I don't mind going shopping but I like to go in and come out straight away you know/I don't like the dilly dallying, that's why I'm more tending towards places like *Meadowhall*, you know where it's all in one you know you're not having to cross streets, especially with kids and that these days. That is the main problem, it's not so bad if you're like Robert says like you can pile them off to your parents or in-laws or whatever but when you've got them with you it becomes a chore.

Stephen I think women like to browse round and look at things, whereas men tend to go and get what they want and they'll go to that shop and if it's got it I'll take it, whereas women will say, "I'll just have a look at that one see what it's like compared to that", they'll wander around a bit, that's what I tend to do, I like to go, buy it come out.

IR Right, have you done that?

Stephen Yes

IR I mean you've actually you do typically go into a shop and know what you want, buy it and then come straight out again?

Stephen Yes

Richard Yes

Chris They take far too long, even if they go for a birthday card or something like that..

Terry Four or five shops

Chris ..take ages.

IR Why do you think that is? Have you any idea why they take so long?

Chris Well I don't know, but when I go for one for wife and I get her one I don't read the verse or (laughs) anything like that just go and pick it up..

Laughs

Chris ..right I've done it right. But you know, "Did you read the verse", oh yeah and she opens it and reads the verse, puts it back, goes round picks another one up.

Terry You're surprised when she tells you it's a lovely card that you've picked up



IR Robert?

Robert I don't know I think they feel more responsible or one person should be more responsible for what they're buying, or maybe I don't know, maybe it's because that's why they take so long at times//you know as I say the most annoying thing is that when she's looking for something and she buys something else and I think why, you know she's gone out and said "I must get this" you know and then wish that she hadn't bought it and bought something else, that's what I can't understand/it's beyond me.

IR Okay

Ben I mean my wife would probably kill me if she knew what I was saying, (laughs) I mean she absolutely loves *Marks and Spencers*, I mean we've been to a few capitals around Europe but we've been in more *Marks and Spencers* I'm sure than anybody has been.

IR This is the clothes *Marks and Spencers*?

Ben The clothes *Marks and Spencers*, you know you name it Brussels, Paris we've been in the *Marks and Spencers* there ah we even went to Montreal once and we had to find the *Marks and Spencers* there. What it is about it I've no idea, you know my wife can go one day to the one in town and the next day it's the one out at *Owlcote*, as far as I can see they're exactly the same clothes whichever *Marks and Spencers* you're in, if we go away to for the day to Blackpool we go in *Marks and Spencer*//it's the same things and they're all the same prices, standard, but I can't see the point//and the other thing that they like doing is buying lots of things on a Saturday and taking it all back next week.

Laughs

Richard Yes

Ben You know I can't see the point, you know we've got to go to Bradford to take them back or something//I, I just find it pointless.

IR Okay

Jim I don't know/it's just they'll do it with clothes and food halls and we probably do it with electronic companies, just the same stores, we could spend an hour in there just like they can in food or a clothes store, they like what they like and you don't like it, so I don't really know.

IR You don't really think there's any difference it's just the actual products that men are interested in?

Jim Yeah our's are more technical stuff, you know whereas their's isn't in a way.

Ben Yeah but I can't see many men going round 55 *Dixons* stores round the country.

Jim No but if you..

Ben Or taking it back.

Jim ..if you go in a store you can be there an hour.

Ben Yes

Jim See what I mean.

Ben But you've been in one *Dixons*

Jim Yes

Ben Whereas women sort of say you know I'll go to *Marks and Spencer*. I mean all her friends are like this too, it's not just my wife//go to *Owl/cotes* out at Pudsey and it's wonderful but it's the same things.

Terry I tend to go into the electrical shops and my wife goes into something like *Body Shop* cause it's next door.

Ben Yes

Terry Wander around there until she's finished, cause sometimes you feel a plonker standing outside don't you..

laughs

Terry ..people watching you

Ben ..I get it myself

IR What about the prospect of actually buying things through mail order, if you don't like actually going in the shop does that appeal to anybody, anybody use mail order?

Jim I have done, yeah I bought a computer through that like, saved a lot of money yeah where you can get the same product from the High Street store and if you get it through the mail order you can get it about two-hundred pounds worth of stuff free with it, that's what I do.

IR Well you can do almost anything through mail order can't you?

Ben I like the catalogues. I like to browse at home.

Jim Yes

Ben Yes and then//go out and buy things then.

Terry It's alright cause it gives you an idea of what you're going out to look for in shops.

IR That's right.

Ben There's a blurb with it.



- Terry You look it up in catalogue and you say it's a £150 and you go into town and you can find it somewhere else for £120.
- Robert I mean I like to go through the *Argos* catalogue.
- Ben Yeah I'll go
- Robert You know it's like a good comparison and then sort of say oh we need some pans well go and look in the *Argos* book, go to there and see what they've got//it sort of takes the sting out of it I suppose.
- IR Well I mean it's a growing practice, more and more people seem to be using it, particularly *Index*, the new *Next Directory*.
- Ben You can compare the prices at home, you've got *Index* and *Argos*, same products in both catalogues which one is cheaper, right I'll go to that one.
- Robert I mean I wouldn't buy anything from *Grattans* or anything like that, you know send away I think it's a very very expensive way of shopping, but you know if you look in the *Argos*/I mean you still have to go and they take it to your door, there is a big difference and ah// um you know that *Index* or *Argos* are going to be pretty reasonable.
- IR I just wondered for the people who hated shopping so much whether that would solve the problem about getting things, ordering through catalogues?
- Chris No
- IR No, that doesn't appeal either?
- Stephen I think if you want something you look it up in catalogue if it's there it's easy to get and it's as cheap you get it so that cost still comes into it.
- IR Right I'm just going to check the video, my colleague next door.
- Robert Apart from the European ones I bet I've been in more *Marks [and Spencers]* then you have.
- Ben Been to Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris
- IR Fine, did I tell you, you were being videoed.
- Ben No
- IR Should of done. It's only really to help me when we come to look at the transcripts you know the actual recording with so many people it's often difficult to know who is saying what, you see so just refer to that. Um you've been very helpful can I just ask you one sort of final general question about shopping, if I can actually phrase in a very general way about how you would rate shopping as an activity of importance in your life, you know is it fairly trivial, fairly central?//if you never had to do in shopping, if



you had to give up shopping would it matter to you? Is shopping an important activity?

Ben (shaking head)

Richard It is a little bit I suppose, but you know like we've been saying I/there's quite a bit of the food shopping sometimes becomes a chore but you know that it's got to be done, that's the thing with the food shopping whereas sort of hi-fi or whatever you know it's not a necessity.

IR But that's the pleasant part of shopping isn't it as far as you're concerned, what I'm trying to get at is how pleasant is that as an activity. I mean is that as pleasant as..

Ben Essential or anything.

IR Pardon.

Ben Is it essential if you like.

IR Well no because you don't have to go and spend all your time in a hi-fi shop do you?

IR How pleasant is it? Is it as pleasant as going down and having a drink in a pub?// No

Chris If the goods appeared I think you wouldn't miss going shopping.

IR Right

Chris If you didn't have to go

IR Okay fair enough.

Chris It's way down on my list

IR Way down on your list, fine fair enough.

Robert It's in the middle really.

IR Okay

Ben When I want something I enjoy going to get it..

Robert Yes

Ben ..if I don't want anything which can be for many many months at a time I just don't go shopping.

IR Okay

Jim Um I'm the same, like a big kid when you actually get it..

(Agreement - Ben)

IR So I mean you would miss it if that didn't happen you never went shopping but you don't feel the need to go very often?

Jim            No, I don't go very often, but when I do I get what I wanted originally.

Terry        I'd rather stay at home.

IR            You wouldn't miss it at all?

Terry        No

IR            Dedicated non-shopper would you say?

Terry        I don't mind going shopping but if for some reason that I couldn't go shopping again, I'd hardly..

IR            Yes

Terry        ..sit up at night worrying.

IR            Right

Terry        ...that's it no more shopping fine.

IR            Okay. One last thing I'll say and that this is research that is in the early stage, it's possible we might like to come back to some of you and talk to you individually about your shopping, if you are happy with that, you don't have to you're not under any pressure, but if we could just take your telephone when you leave if you are happy to do that. Okay, thanks very much indeed for coming along and tearing yourself away from the..

Terry        Shopping

IR            Electoral coverage, half an hour to go.

Richard     We'll go shopping. (laughs)

# APPENDIX ONE

## SHOPPING TRANSCRIPT: TAPE A

Sex Women  
Status BC1  
Age 25-34

IR Also behind there, believe it or not, there's a video camera which you have probably already realised. Now don't let that put you off it's one of those things which, in fact, it's very easy to get used to. I've been videoed myself often enough. It actually helps us enormously when we come to look at the tape because if you can imagine somebody trying to type up the audio-tape, you know, and they don't know whose talking and it's a bit difficult to identify one person from another so it's useful to have a video tape which they can, you know, consult, look at. So that's why that's there. So, this isn't sponsored by any manufacturers or it's not an investigation into soap powders, or anything like that it's just really my opportunity to talk to people about shopping and then go away and think about what you've just said. Right. Now I apologise first of all for the fact that I don't know your names, whether I shall actually learn your names or not I don't know but it might be useful if people could say who they are because you don't know each other presumably either, or do you? So I wonder if we could just very quickly go round and everybody can say who they are.

Lisa, Elizabeth, Sandra, Mary, Jane, Ruth, Sue, Maggie.

IR I don't know how many of those you remember. If you remember some of them you are doing very well indeed. Right I would like to start if I may just with straight forward factual questions about shopping, which hopefully you can all answer without any trouble. In fact we'll just very quickly go round. Now you're all from fairly nearby I presume. I mean you haven't come very far today have you, so that your principal shopping area, your main shopping area presumably is Leeds itself. But shopping also includes, presumably, going to perhaps nearby shops and so on. Can I just go round and ask you how often a week you would go shopping?

Lisa Bulk shopping you mean?

IR Well, for any kind of shopping first of all. You would go to the local shops would you?

Lisa Every day usually.

IR Every day?

Lisa To the local shops.

IR And how often would you go further afield than that?

Lisa Once a week.

IR About once a week, right.

Elizabeth I'm virtually the same, everyday, Fridays normally.



- IR Right. Everyday you're going to the local shops for groceries and things of that sort.
- Elizabeth Even if you call for a paper, you know....
- IR Right, OK. Then once a week you would go where, into Leeds itself?
- Elizabeth Into Leeds, yes.
- Mary More or less the same as Elizabeth.
- IR Does that happen to nearly everybody?
- Mary Yes.
- Ruth Not me. I just shop once a week.
- IR Yes.
- Ruth It's rare that I have to get anything in between.
- IR And where do you go for your once a week shopping?
- Ruth I go to Garforth.
- IR The same pattern for everyone else?
- Maggie I get some bits every day and bulk shop once a week.
- IR Right, and when you go shopping do you go by yourselves?
- Lisa Husband.
- Elizabeth Husband.
- IR Is that once a week or?
- Mary Once a week, yes.
- IR Right. So how many people, as it were, go shopping with somebody else?
- Mary I go shopping once a week at the weekends with my husband, but sort of during the week if I go to the shops I go on my own.
- Maggie Yes, I go on my own all the time.
- IR You go on your own all the time?
- Maggie I like going on my own.
- IR Well that's the sort of thing I am interested in actually.
- Maggie For food shopping.
- IR Yes, right. But when you say that your husband comes with, you is that for food shopping?
- Maggie Yes. For the bulk one yes, you need him to carry.

- IR Who else prefers to shop by themselves rather than with someone?
- Elizabeth I prefer it but it helps when he comes.
- IR Right. Now they are a stroke combined sort of chauffeur and porter are they?
- Elizabeth Leave them in one corner. Do your shopping and then give them what you've got and pay for it.
- IR And pay for it? Right, OK. What I would really like to move on to is whether you like shopping and what it is you enjoy about it and what it is you don't like about it. Now who really enjoys shopping?
- Maggie I do, I love it.
- Ruth For food?
- IR Any kind of shopping at the moment.
- Maggie I do.
- IR You love shopping for food? That's true for you, as well?
- Maggie Yes, I love shopping for anything. Mainly clothes but anything.
- IR Well yes, does that mean for the rest of you there's a big difference between shopping for food and the other sort of shopping?
- Mary Yes, I don't like shopping for food but I like shopping for clothes.
- IR Yes, Ok. Is there anyone who doesn't like shopping for clothes?
- IR Right, so you all like shopping, when I say shopping for clothes are we talking about shopping for yourselves, you know rather than children?
- Sandra No, not necessarily. House things.
- Lisa Children, and house things.
- IR Right, so everybody enjoys some sort of shopping and some people. What is it about shopping for clothes that makes it so much more enjoyable than shopping for food?
- Mary Well, I think when you're shopping for clothes it obviously cheers you up more than when it does for shopping, you know.
- Sue You're treating yourself aren't you.
- Mary My husband loves shopping.
- IR He does?
- Mary Yes, that's why he comes once a week with me. He likes shopping more than I do when it comes to groceries.
- IR Right. What does he enjoy about it, do you know?

- Mary            He just loves walking round shops looking at sort of different varieties of things, and new things that come into the shop and that. He really loves his food. He loves trying different things you know if something new comes in.
- IR                But that doesn't appeal to you?
- Mary            No, I don't like shopping for groceries at all.
- Sue              I think it depends how long you've been married although you can't say that can you 'cause you've been married quite a long time.
- Maggie         I always seem to have done it on my own, but I just enjoy it.
- IR                Is that because your husband doesn't like shopping or because you prefer it on your own anyway?
- Maggie         Well he gets home quite late-ish and I've just normally got on with it myself during the day. And I'm quite happy to do it on my own. He'd come with me if I wanted him to but I'm quite happy to do it on my own.
- IR                When it comes to clothes for your husband do you have to buy them for him or does he go shopping for his own?
- Maggie         No, he buys most of them himself.
- IR                Would he go by himself to do that or would you go with him?
- Maggie         Sometimes, but usually he likes me to go with him.
- IR                Sorry, yes you said...
- Ruth             I don't think my husband has even bought a sock or a pair of ...
- Sue              Nor mine.
- IR                So you do all his shopping for him?
- Ruth             Yes, everything.
- IR                Do you enjoy that?
- Ruth             Love it.
- IR                You do? So you're quite happy with that?
- Ruth             He looks like I want him to look then.
- IR                Right. So you wouldn't trust him to shop by himself?
- Ruth             No.
- IR                But he wouldn't enjoy it anyway presumably?
- Ruth             No. He'd go into one shop, buy a rig-out and come away.
- IR                Right. Now you said you enjoyed food shopping didn't you as well as the... What is it about the food shopping part you enjoy?



- Ruth I think it is the same as that lady there. I like to compare new lines and things like that. I don't know, I just.. I like eating as well, food and.... and just new lines that come in.
- IR Right, so it isn't a chore for you. But for some of you it is actually a chore is it, to go and buy food. Is it something you think oh dear you'd rather be in Leeds buying clothes than spending your time buying food? Do you? Lets talk about the buying clothes part and leaving the food alone now for the moment. This is something, is it, that you actually look forward to. If you were going to go, say tomorrow, if you were going to go into Leeds to buy shopping you'd be looking forward to that. That's something that would be a pleasure for you. What's the nicest part about it? What is it you really enjoy about the whole process? What is it that gives you ...?
- Jane Just when you find something nice that you like and you're going somewhere special and you've got something....
- Lisa When you try something on and it looks nice, you don't think that it will and you try it on and it looks really nice.
- IR Could you maybe enjoy it even if you came back without having bought anything?
- Lisa Not really.
- IR No. So it does depend on actually finding something?
- Elizabeth Yes.
- IR Yes, so...
- Ruth I think I'd mind if I hadn't find anything. I'd rather go several days rather than come back with something that, you know, I wasn't too keen on.
- IR But you'd still be looking forward to going again?
- Ruth Yes.
- IR Right. And what particular sort of items give you the greatest pleasure. Let me put that another way, have you bought, can you remember buying something within the last few months that really gave you pleasure. You know the actual buying of something that you look back on now, that was wonderful I really enjoyed that.
- Sue Yes.
- IR Can you tell us?
- Sue Yes I went into Leeds, I think it was last Thursday or whatever, not to get anything for myself but to get something for Tina, that's my daughter, and I'd seen this jumper in a magazine which was advertised in *Wallis*. So I went into *Wallis* and had a look at the jumper which was awful but, I saw this rather wonderful jumper which I bought instead. So I was quite thrilled.
- IR Right, and when you saw this other one did you immediately when you saw it think, that's nice?

- Sue Yes, I thought that's it, yes. That's the thing that I've been looking for.
- IR Right, and when you got it back home, as it were, was your daughter with you.
- Sue Yes.
- IR Did you try it on?
- Sue I tried it on in the shop yes, in the changing room, and I said to her 'what do you think?' and she said 'Yes'.
- IR And you are still quite happy about that purchase now, you still think it works well?
- Sue Yes.
- IR Can anybody else tell us about something that they really enjoyed buying? You think that was a lovely experience buying that....?
- Mary I think it's mainly the point of sort of getting to *Debenhams* or something like that and there's a sale on, I think you enjoy it better than what you would have if there wasn't a sale. You know, because you know you're getting a bargain then don't you?
- IR Yes, I was going to ask how important that is. I mean that makes it all the more pleasurable.
- Mary It makes is more exciting really because you know you've got a bargain, you know.
- Maggie Yes, but I tend to buy things in the sale that I wouldn't buy if they weren't in the sale.
- Lisa If I buy something in a sale I'm always, when I get it home, I'm always a bit...like that about that about it.
- Sue Have you bought it because you like it or....
- Lisa If I pay though the nose for something I get it home and I really like it, appreciate it more.
- Maggie I enjoy buying things when you've really saved up for them no matter what it is, but like, if I've worked and saved up for something whether its for the home or myself or one of the children, I get a lot of pleasure out of it.
- IR Can you give us an example of something?
- Maggie Like I saved up for some new curtains not so long ago for my living room and I got a lot of pleasure when I'd saved up for them and bought some that I really liked.
- IR Had you any idea which curtains you were going buy from the very beginning when you were saving?
- Maggie Yes, I had a good idea what I wanted.



- IR                    So you had an image in your mind all the way along. Did it work out alright, do they look alright, you're still happy with them? 'cause sometimes we can have great pleasure can't we from buying things and then when we get home we think 'oh dear what did we buy this for' it all goes sour on us. Has that happened?
- Elizabeth        Yes. This week.
- IR                    Did it, with what?
- Elizabeth        Wall lights. I bought for my hall, and I was right excited and I bought my paper and everything I thought they all went lovely together and they're totally awful together. They're going back. It's a great disappointment.
- IR                    It is isn't it? Particularly when you were thrilled in the first place about it all. Has that happened to other people? How many of the items is it, if you can think of it this way, that you've got in your wardrobe now at home, clothes, if they were all clean and smart and you know pressed and they were put back on the rack in the shop, how many of them would you buy again?
- Sue                You've said it now.
- IR                    Would you buy any of them?
- Ruth              Some.
- Sue                I'd buy me jumper again.
- Ruth              Most of them.
- IR                    Most of them? So you're still happy with the things that you bought, I mean you haven't, you know, become disillusion with them?
- Elizabeth        I think it depends, as well, how trendy, what kind of person you are as well. I mean you can buy some things that go out of fashion so fast there's no way you can wear them again. But if you're going to dress, I call lady dressing, you know then they last a lot longer. Mine don't last long at all, when I'm not wearing the same....
- IR                    You'll have to tell me what lady dressing is. That sounds interesting.
- Elizabeth        Well it's, oh gosh...
- Sue                Classic dressing.
- Elizabeth        That's right, Classic. Whereas I prefer to go out....
- Sue                Always look nice do you mean.
- Elizabeth        That's right. I've got three sisters and they are all like that. I'm totally not like that.
- IR                    These are clothes that don't go out of fashion, you're talking about?
- Sue                That's right, that always look nice. Like a good suit or something you know, that you pay a lot of money for and is always there.
- Maggie            That's right.



- IR And is it more important to you to have, as it were, lady clothes than fashionable clothes or do you like them both?
- Elizabeth No, I don't, I don't wear lady clothes. I sound nice don't I. I prefer to you know, go out and like I bought a suit in January for a wedding. It was £90. and it's in my wardrobe and I couldn't wear it again because it's gone out of fashion. You know, I'm silly really but I prefer that I enjoy it more, you know, when I go out and...
- IR Right, so it's important to you that you should be in fashion.
- Elizabeth So nothing after the baby is born, nothing in my wardrobe is suitable.
- IR Is that true for other people, that fashion is important?
- Ruth No.
- IR No. What's important for you then?
- Ruth Classic looking clothes that I can get out year after year after year. I know they'll take all the laundering and ironing and whatever and they won't date.
- IR Well that's obviously how you feel about your wardrobe because you said you'd buy these clothes again.
- Ruth Yes. I can get stuff out that I've had six or seven years and it still looks ok. Well I think it does anyway.
- IR How do you react then to looking at fashion magazines, you know which as it were, always apparently trying to persuade you to change and buy something new, you're not interested in looking at fashion magazines.
- Ruth No.
- IR Does anybody else feel like this, that they must be in fashion, that they would rather be fashionable than....
- Mary Well I don't like to be old fashioned but I don't go out every week to try and keep up with fashion, you know.
- Sue I think it depends on your age.
- Mary I mean I suppose it all depends on your age as well that's it yes. And if you're going to buy a new suit and you pay a lot of money for it and looks good and classy, as she says that could last you for years, you know, but looks good.
- Ruth I don't think age has got anything to do with it, you know, you..
- Maggie You can be fashionable for your age.
- Mary I mean...can buy a plain suit, that never goes out of fashion really does it. I mean you can put brooches and all sorts on it.
- Ruth That's right.

- Sue I have a mixture of both. I have what I call casual stuff and then stuff, you know, like for going out on an evening and then sort of stuff for sort of weddings and stuff you know.
- IR Right. But if you were going to be fashionable presumably you would have to buy some new outfits every so often. How often would you have to buy them do you think?
- Ruth I buy them when I spot them.
- IR Right. But you're not so interested in fashion anyway, you're interested in classic clothes?
- Ruth Right, so when I spot something that's classic I've got to get it.
- IR Right. But if you wanted to be fashionable you'd have to buy a new outfit, what, twice a year or something?
- \* Elizabeth knows.
- Mary Once a month.
- IR This is what the magazines would try and persuade you to do wouldn't they? They would have the new seasons.
- Mary Yes. I'd go and see them every so many months or something like that, every couple of months. It depends if something catches my eye, you know. If I like it I'll buy it, you know. But I couldn't just buy two outfits a year.
- IR No. I wouldn't have thought so but that's what they try to persuade you to do, don't they? So do you all read fashion, look at fashion magazines in the hairdressers or anywhere else? No, you don't?
- Mary Well, I read a lot of magazines like *Best* and *Chat* and things like that because you get sort of knitting patterns and you get certain outfits in that, you know.
- IR Because I think what interests me in a way is how do you know what you're looking for when you're going through the racks?
- Sue You don't always.
- Maggie It's just what you fancy.
- Sue Yes, just what you see.
- IR And, do you think when you actually see something you like or something like that are you being influenced by the magazines you've read do you think?
- Sue No, 'cause a lot in these magazines are from say, you know they've got sort of like clothes in that you can only maybe get you know in London or whatever. Like this jumper that I'd seen, it said from *Fenwicks* or somewhere or *Wallis*, you know, so there's two branches of *Wallis* in Leeds.
- IR Right.



- Sue But when I got there it was quite a disappointment, they looked better in the magazine, but they did have something that I really went for.
- IR Right. So you were actually going to buy something specifically that you'd already seen?
- Sue Yes. When I was passing *Wallis* I thought, that's where the jumper is, yes.
- IR Right. But I assume for most of you that's not the case. I mean if you were going for your outfit, your wedding outfit, did you have an image in your mind before you went of what you were looking for? Nothing at all? No..
- Elizabeth No, because I've quite a wide choice of things and you know, I'm not a person that sticks to one. You know it could have been trousers, some people just like trousers, others like skirts different lengths. I like any. If I like them you know, if they suit me.
- IR Right. Does anybody go with an image in their mind, perhaps if you were all going to get an outfit for a wedding would you have an image in your mind before you even set of to what it was you were looking for?
- Mary I think the only image you would have would actually to say well you know the colour, wouldn't you.
- \* Yes.
- \* Yes.
- Mary What sort of colour you were looking for.
- IR Right, you said.
- Sue Yes, I think I would yes, I'd want sort of think what I'd want to look like and so I'd want something to fit in with that image you know.
- IR Yes. So you....
- Sue For different occasions you'd like to sort of project a different image don't you.
- IR Right.
- Sue I do anyway.
- IR No, I mean I think it's interesting, and the things that interest me of the whole process of about how we know what it is we want when we go shopping and very often we don't seem to be too clear about what it is we want until we actually meet it and that sort of thing. It's interesting isn't it? Interested in how that process happened and, if you like, sometimes how it goes wrong, lets say this looks right and when you get home you find it isn't, and you wonder what happened. Do you often see things that you really like but recognise that they wouldn't be right for you? I don't mean the wrong size, but I mean, oh that's lovely I couldn't wear that. That happens to you? Why do you decide you couldn't wear it?
- Maggie Say if it's a mini skirt. I think it depends on your figure as well, I think you've got to wear what suits your figure as well. So if it was maybe a



pencil you know, a pencil skirt or something, I'd be thinking oh my stomach will be bulging but I think oh it's nice.

IR Right, so there are lots of things that you would, you know, in an ideal world you'd like...

Maggie I think you get to know what suits you.

IR Right. Can I go back to the whole question of setting out and going shopping. Quite a lot of people say they have to be in the right mood to go shopping. Is that true for you or not?

Maggie I can go shopping any time.

IR You don't have to be in the right mood.

Maggie ... any time, quite easy.

IR If you enjoy it so much, do you regard it as a treat, do you reward yourself sometimes saying, "I deserve to go shopping", yes? What do you reward yourself for, what have you done to deserve it?

Jane Well you've probably just saved up, you've managed to keep something aside and you think 'well when I get to 'X' amount I'm going to go treat myself'.

Ruth Yes.

IR But are the times when you're doing something you don't like, when you say to yourself "Well at least I can go shopping and enjoy myself when I've done this", do you think like this. What do you think you're doing that you don't like?

Maggie Not particularly what I don't like but maybe if I'm at work, like I was yesterday and yesterday I was thinking Oh tomorrow I can please myself, look forward to it.

IR So the shopping is a way of rewarding yourself for doing something. You were nodding?

Ruth I just.. I don't even have to buy anything. I just like just being in shops. Sometimes I even finish work, you know, half an hour early just so that I can mosey down to the bus stop, in and out of shops instead of just having to go...I've not got any money to spend.

IR Right. And is this any kind of shop?

Ruth Any shop, fruit shop.

IR Fruit shop?

Ruth Yes, fruit shop that sells plants, near where I work. I can spend half an hour in there looking at plants and flowers and not buying any thing.

IR Not buying any and having enjoyed yourself. Well, I mean, we do too use the term window shopping, don't we, for situations where we're not buying but just looking. If the shop were closed and you were just looking through the window would you get the same sort of pleasure or not?

- Ruth I'd probably go back.
- IR You'd go back?
- Ruth Yes, if the window had something for me. I'd have to investigate what was inside when it was open.
- IR That's because there were things in the shop you can't see from...It's not because when it's opened you could possibly buy something?
- Ruth I don't know. I'm pretty strict. I know that, if I know I can't buy something I don't have to buy something.
- Sue I think you're too good, you. I think you want to give me lessons.
- Mary I know, 'cause if I see something I like and I know I can't afford it and I really like it I just go buy it.
- Elizabeth Yes.
- Mary Suffer later.
- IR How do you justify that to yourself afterwards or maybe to your husband or anyone else.
- Mary Well, when I get home, and I do it quite often if I buy something I see, you know, and we're a bit skint that month, you know, I put it in my wardrobe and I leave it there and in a couple of weeks time..
- Sue Oh, yes.
- Mary I mean he didn't say nowt really, he'd maybe have a lot of moan and groan at first and then I put it on, sometimes he didn't even notice.
- Sue But you've waited for a fortnight...
- Mary And then sometimes after that he'll turn and say to me, "oh that's new when...", I'll say "oh I got that weeks ago".
- Sue That's what I just..
- Mary And sometimes he doesn't even notice that I've bought anything.
- IR Yes.
- Mary He didn't investigate what's in my wardrobe and probably that's why you know.
- Maggie But you, you know that there wouldn't really be that..
- Mary He doesn't bother anyway. I mean really I could just buy it and say, oh I just bought this..
- Lisa Yes that's right.
- Maggie Yes, just you doing that.



- Jane I feel like that, you know.
- IR Right. Lets assume for a moment that there isn't a husband. I mean you don't have that problem of justifying it to someone else, there would still come a point where you felt really you couldn't afford to buy these things and maybe you shouldn't but you'd still have a struggle with yourself, wouldn't you, about whether you should or shouldn't. You must have stood there with clothes before now thinking, you know, 'can I afford that'.
- Mary If I've really liked it and know I can't afford it for definite and I'd really like it I'd still buy it.
- IR You'd still buy it?
- Mary I would still buy it, yes. I'd be frightened in case I went back week and that same thing wasn't there.
- IR Right. So you're more worried about having lost it..
- Mary Yes.
- IR ..than the question of whether you could afford it?
- Maggie No, I could control myself if I think I can't afford it I usually ..
- Elizabeth I just don't go if I know I can't afford it in case I see something.
- IR Stay away from temptation.
- Elizabeth I do, yes.
- Sue Yes, I do.
- Lisa Yes, that's the easiest part.
- Jane No use looking if you can't afford it. It's depressing isn't it?
- Elizabeth Yes.
- IR Can I go back to the window shopping that interests me. Do people get pleasure, do you get pleasure from just looking in the window when the shops are closed?
- Lisa No.
- Elizabeth Not really.
- Sue ... go to spend.
- IR No. Nobody likes it. There's no fun in going shopping when the shops are closed?
- Lisa No fun.
- IR No. So you've got.. So would you get pleasure from going in and just walking around and no buying?



- Lisa Not really. I usually have to buy something, even if its just something small and... I usually have to buy something.
- IR I know somebody who said they got pleasure, as it were, from knowing that there was nothing there that could be in their wardrobe. They'd established that there was nothing there that suited them. That wouldn't apply?
- Sue No.
- IR If we go through a sort of shopping trip, let's say that you're off to buy an outfit or whatever for a wedding and we set off and go to the shops, do you think beforehand, before you get there, about where you are going to go, do you plan your shopping trip?
- Lisa Um.
- IR You don't just wander around.
- Sue No.
- IR So you've got an image of which shops you are going to go into already. What you are going to be looking for when you get there and then trying it on and going through the whole process. What is the most enjoyable process of the actual bit, actually buying? Trying things on?
- Sue Actually spotting..
- Jane Finding it.
- Ruth Finding just what you've been looking for.
- Sue Something suitable.
- IR The discovery as it were.
- Maggie The discovery of it.
- IR That's it.
- Ruth Even before you get into the changing room just knowing that you've got just what you had in your minds eye.
- IR Right. Does that happen very quickly, sort of, do you instantly look and say, ah that must be it.
- Lisa It depends usually. Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't.
- IR Somebody I spoke to described it to me like falling in love, you know, 'AH', you know, instantly across a crowded room as it were. Has that ever happened to you?
- Mary Yes.
- Lisa Yes, when you've got a vision of what you want in your mind and then you go in a shop and you see just what you want the, yes.
- IR But you've got to have the vision in your mind beforehand?

- Lisa Yes. I usually have a vision in my mind beforehand.
- IR How detailed is that. I mean could you draw it? Do you know exactly what it looks like?
- Lisa Yes, I suppose so, yes.
- IR You could identify the colour and say have an image of yourself wearing this. Do you have an image of yourself wearing it in front of other people, do you have an audience in mind when you buy your clothes, do you think of whose going to see me wearing them?
- Maggie Yes.
- Sue It depends if you're buying it for a special occasion. I'm going to an 18th on Friday and obviously there are going to be a lot of younger people there because it's an 18th. So I don't want to look fuddy duddy. Then again I don't want to look a trendy-pop so I've got to find a half-way house somewhere. (Sigh) So what do I buy. Tell me?
- Maggie Shall we all come shopping with you.
- Sue Yes, I'm going after school today so.
- IR But that's were, if you're not buying clothes for a specific occasion, right, just buying your clothes, who are you buying to please. Is it yourself, is it your husband, is it. Who are you?
- Sue It's me.
- IR It's yourself.
- Lisa To please me.
- IR And it's really just a question of being happy with what you see in the mirror that matters? You know, some people say they've got other people in mind, you know. The people they work with perhaps and they think in terms of how they will see them.
- Mary No, I don't.
- \* I think you're right.
- Mary ...if I feel good in it and other people didn't like it, I mean that wouldn't bother me. If I liked it I'd wear it.
- Maggie It's nice to think other people think you look nice but if you feel happy with your wearing..
- IR It's not easy to know whether other people think you're looking..
- Maggie No that's it.
- Sue They'll say, that looks nice, where did you get that from. Don't they?
- Maggie That's right, yes.



- IR But does that cross your mind when your buying clothes, that maybe so-and-so will say you look nice in that?
- Sue Well, not so-and-so.
- Elizabeth Stephen, my husband, I'm silly like that really. I buy for myself but I really like it when I've got ready and I come downstairs and Stephen says, "you look lovely". It means a lot. If he sort of like looked and didn't comment I'd just..
- IR Right.
- Sue Yes, 'cause they're your first face aren't they. Your husbands your first face, after that everybody else can say or feel what they want. That's the first reaction you're going to meet that's going to be honest, isn't it?
- Elizabeth That's right, yes. Too honest sometimes.
- Maggie Yes.
- IR Does that pass through your mind when you're trying these things on in the shop. You know. I wonder what he'll think about it.
- Elizabeth Well no. No not really because he normally likes everything I buy. We've got the same tastes like that. But he does mean a lot when I come downstairs for him to comment. If he doesn't comment that means he doesn't like it. If I have to say, what do you think, that means he isn't struck but normally we have the same tastes.
- IR We have a problem here then, don't we, if we don't want them to notice it's new.
- Elizabeth Well I find the best way is to get it over with as soon as he comes in. 'I'd been shopping and I'd got this smashing pair of boots and, you know'. Get it over with that way.
- IR Right.
- Elizabeth He doesn't normally mind.
- IR Just to go back for a minute. The shopping for other people. You all presumably have an image of they'd look like in these clothes as well, I mean, you're concerned to make sure he looks right. So you've got this image beforehand. Do you take any notice of his reaction?
- Ruth He more or less leaves it up to me. I think he always thinks my decision is always the right one. If I think he looks ok in it well that's fine. "You say I look ok in it, then I look ok in it"
- IR Right.
- Elizabeth Stephen's like that but there again he's got his own... as well.
- Ruth But my husband never ever comments about fashion or clothes on television or magazines. He'd never go out of his way to say, oh that's nice. Or if I ever point anybody out and say, oh look at that suit she's got on, isn't it lovely love or...It just doesn't interest him.



Jane No.

Elizabeth No, no interest all.

Lisa Mine does. Mine will spot something in a magazine or something and tell me to go and get it for him.

IR Really.

Lisa Yes.

IR He wouldn't go and get it himself?

Lisa Oh no, I have to go and get it for him.

IR Some people have said that men never actually, most men never learn to shop. They don't actually know how to do it.

Lisa No.

IR Would you agree with that?

Ruth When I was courting my husband some of the stuff he used to turn up in. I used to nearly stay on the bus.

IR What it is that they actually have to learn, that they don't know what to do?

Sue Well co-ordination. I mean sometimes you think they're colour-blind don't you.

Ruth It's like learning to do anything new isn't it.

Lisa It's patience as well, I think. I don't think they've got the patience to walk from one shop to another like we do. They tend to go to one shop and make sure they come out..

Ruth Get the whole rig-out, yes. From inside to outside.

IR But you manage to enjoy it. Why can't they enjoy it? What is it you have to tell them to do?

Lisa He does. He enjoys it if we were spending money on him. But if it's me, if he comes with me and I'm getting new outfit for myself every outfit I try on he says, "Yes that's nice, yes that's nice", really he means "Yes lets hurry up and lets get home". But if it's him then he will...you know.

IR Will he spend as long?

Lisa Yes.

IR Because shop assistants they will tell you that men tend to come, go straight into a shop, pick something up, pay for it and go straight out.

Lisa Yes, they do.

Sue My husband..

- Mary           He doesn't like shopping for clothes you know and yet he likes shopping, but only when it's supermarkets and that. But when it comes to clothes he doesn't like shopping. I mean he'll go and see some trousers and he won't even try them on, you know. I'll say, try them on first, you know.
- IR             We've been saying, haven't we, that how pleasant it can be, how enjoyable it can be to actually browse round the shop looking at things and that's what you actually get pleasure from. And yet, here are all these men who don't seem to be able to get any pleasure from doing that.
- Ruth           I think men always have something else to do that they think is more important than shopping.
- Maggie        I think it's the time with my husband as much as anything.
- Sue            Yes, but we make time, don't we
- Elizabeth     Like we're all sat here really aren't we.
- Maggie        They're working.
- IR             But if you both go shopping together at the weekend, right, and this is theoretically free time isn't it for both of you, and you can go round the shop and enjoy yourself looking at these things and deciding whether you like it or not, they don't seem to be able to do that.
- Elizabeth     Oh, mine does.
- IR             He does?
- Elizabeth     Yes.
- IR             He gets as much pleasure as you do from looking at things?
- Elizabeth     Yes, he does. Sometimes, you know, if Stephen says, you know, nip to town, I'll say, go on your own, because he can look at clothes, electrical things, he just goes and he's there for hours and you haven't to rush him through a shop. I prefer him to go on his own sometimes.
- IR             It would be interesting to know if we could learn the secret wouldn't it of how we could pass this on from one person to another. It does seem that most women anyway don't have a problem here at all and an awful lot of men do. Interesting isn't it. We've concentrated on clothes. Does that mean that these are the things that give you the greatest pleasure in buying. I mean there are, we haven't mentioned jewellery for example or
- Sue            I think things for your home are enjoyable.
- Maggie        Yes.
- IR             You mentioned curtains yes. That gives you a much pleasure does it as buying clothes.
- Lisa           Yes.
- Maggie        More really. I bought some wallpaper this morning and I've right enjoyed myself looking for some.



- Elizabeth Yes, I did yesterday. I loved it.
- IR You say gives you more pleasure.
- Sue Yes it does really because the clothes thing is just a personal thing. If I put something on then I'm getting a buzz from it and everything else sort of dwindles out. But home, if it's home, then everybody sits in a nice lounge and there's nice curtains for everybody to look at. And a nice suite and a nice set up. Then everybody gets pleasure from it.
- IR Right. Although many of these things are, in a sense, necessities aren't they. I mean got to have some curtains and..
- Elizabeth Maybe not new ones though, you know. You might not need them but you've seen some that...it's nice getting them.
- IR Some people, have in fact, been very quiet down there haven't you. You haven't said very much. I'm sorry..
- Sandra Well I agree with most of what they're saying.
- IR Do you get as much pleasure from buying things from your house as you do buying clothes for yourself?
- Sandra Yes. Well I don't really know, I mean, I like just buying clothes really to be honest, I mean because it gives you that personal buzz. I seem to be getting back to you, agree with you ...
- Sandra I do prefer the personal buzz to be honest.
- IR It actually puts a smile on your face does it?
- Sandra Yes. If you're down in the dumps it's nice to go out and spend money on yourself.
- IR Do, I mean, yes it's interesting you say that. Have any of you actually done that, actually said to yourself, "I feel depressed, miserable, I'll go shopping to cheer myself up"?
- Jane Yes. Lots of times.
- Elizabeth Yes.
- Jane I have.
- IR Yes. Does it usually work?
- Jane Yes.
- Elizabeth Marvellous.
- IR Only as long as you buy something?
- Jane Yes.
- IR Only as long as you buy something?
- Elizabeth It doesn't matter how small.

IR Right. How long does that last, the buzz that you get?

Tracy Not very long.

Lisa When I get home, like if I've been on my own and I get home and I show my husband, once I've shown him half of that buzz has gone already then really.

Maggie Can't you wait to wear it then.

Lisa Well yes, after the first time that I've worn it then it's totally gone then.

Elizabeth It goes, it's gone.

Lisa By that time and then I need to go out and get other clothes.

Sue Buy something else.

Lisa Yes.

IR When does the buzz happen, this is what I was interested in before. When you buy it or on the way back? Can you remember.

Lisa I think, really, when, like when I have this vision of what I want and then I see it. When I spot it, that's when I first get the buzz.

IR Right.

Lisa And then 'cause I sometimes like unusual things and it's hard to spot them and when you do spot them then I get that buzz.

IR Right. And then that lasts with you what till you get home and try it on, then it begins to die away a bit.

Lisa It starts beginning already then. Yes.

IR And you have to go shopping again the next day.

Lisa And then when I've worn it once its gone, yes.

Sue Take it back.

Lisa And then you need something else, yes.

IR We are, assume, talking about new clothes here. You wouldn't get the same buzz from buying second-hand clothes.

Sue Well I don't tend to like...

Ruth I spend loads of time in charity shops, yes.

IR You could. Right. And that's..

Ruth As long as it's new to me it doesn't matter.

IR Well that's what I was wondering. So could you get the same sort of buzz from buying something second-hand.



- Ruth Yes. Or even if someone gave you something. If it was new to me.
- IR Right. But that wouldn't be true to you?
- Lisa Well no. It's not something that I usually do so.
- IR No. Well I was just trying to check whether, I assume to have been talking about buying new clothes but people do buy second-hand clothes and I was wondering...Nobody responded when I mentioned jewellery, nobody gets the same..
- Sue Yes, I do.
- IR You could get just as much pleasure from buying jewellery as buying clothes?
- Lisa Yes and accessories and things.
- IR What else can we think about that you might enjoy buying, for yourself in the first place. Records, music.
- Lisa Yes.
- IR Does that give you.
- Maggie Yes, I like music
- Jane I let the kids buy it.
- IR Well that's where most of the market is. I'm just trying to check. One of the other things that people buy to cheer themselves up are things they can eat. They buy chocolate to try to cheer themselves up.
- Sue No. Don't mention food, I's slimming.
- Maggie Always slimming
- IR Nobody ever done that?
- Lisa No.
- Jane No. Not really.
- Mary Sometimes I buy myself a box of chocolates or something like you know if we aren't going out on a weekend, you know, and I thought well, you know, if we buy a video or something I thought I'll treat myself. I'll get a great big box of maltesers or something you know.
- IR Right. That wasn't necessarily to cheer yourself up.
- Mary No, not to cheer myself up.
- IR No. And you mentioned a flower shop earlier. Does anybody buy flowers?
- Sue Yes.
- Maggie Yes, I do.

- Lisa I like flowers.
- IR And does that cheer you up or give you a buzz or whatever to buy flowers?
- Elizabeth Yes.
- Lisa When you get home and put them in a vase and they look really nice.
- IR Anything else that we haven't mentioned that comes into this category of things that you enjoy buying?
- Mary Perfume
- IR Perfume, right.
- Elizabeth I do, I love shopping for the children.
- IR When you say you enjoy buying everything does that include, let's try and think what the most utilitarian things we can think of I don't know I mean things like toilet rolls or..
- Maggie No. We just buy those because we need them.
- IR Right. This is what's so interesting in that there, I mean there are things that I find I have to buy that I don't enjoy buying. I mean I have to buy a new tyre for the car because the old one has no tread. I don't want a tyre, I've got to by law.
- Maggie You don't enjoy buying things like that because you feel it's, oh..
- IR I could be. Some people enjoy buying them I don't know but I certainly don't.
- Mary I don't like paying but I've got to.
- IR It's just this that we enjoy that I'm interested in. We haven't broken down different forms of clothes. Do you enjoy buying some sorts...There are some people who really enjoy buying shoes, for example. That sort of thing gives them a great thrill more than anything else.
- Ruth No, I enjoy buying everything.
- Mary Well I don't really buy a lot of shoes, you know, being in a car all the time I don't do a lot of walking anyway. So I don't buy a lot of shoes you know. But I like going into places and looking at nice underwear and things like that.
- IR So any other particular category people like buying. Say jumpers?
- Sue I'm a jumper person, yes.
- IR Right. So you..
- Sue I'm hooked on jumpers, I've got to say now. My secrets out.
- IR Yes. Right.



- Sue And not cheap ones either. Don't tell anybody Maggie. No but I like expensive, not this, not this, but I mean I like....
- IR That gives you more pleasure to buy a jumper than to buy other things normally.
- Sue Yes.
- IR Does that mean you've got lots of jumpers.?
- Sue Yes.
- 'Lots of laughter'
- Sue I don't know what it is. It's maybe a fetish.
- IR I'm sure most people are like this with something or other. Do you remember the President Marcos wife with all those shoes?
- Jane Shoes, yes.
- Sue Oh that's definitely a fetish. Shoes, definitely a fetish.
- IR Hundreds and hundreds of shoes that she had.
- Ruth The girl that sits next to me at work, I think she just buys about pair of shoes a week. They never fit her, they're never comfortable, she never gets to break them even.
- Sandra I'm like that.
- Sue Are you?
- Jane I don't buy them unless I need them. They've got to be dropping off my feet there's always something more important.
- Sandra I'm a bit like that.
- IR Sorry, did you say you were like that?
- Sandra With shoes, yes.
- IR You mean.... You could like buying shoes more than other things?
- Sandra No, I don't like buying them it's just that I've got right awkward feet and I convince myself when I go in a shoe shop, they're great.
- Sue They're great.
- Sandra And when I get them home....
- Ruth That's what she does.
- Sandra And I stuff them with paper to try to soften up the leather and everything and I wear them and they still cripple me so they go in the back of the wardrobe. Then I start again a few weeks after that.

- IR So it's actually because you have difficulty finding ones that fit properly, that's the problem.
- Sandra Yes.
- IR Yes. That's not the case with the jumpers. You've..... It is that you like having jumpers. So if I gave you some money and said "here go and buy yourself some jumpers", and you went and bought them, and came back the next day and gave you some more money you'd have no trouble in buying some more?
- Sue No. None at all.
- IR Right.
- Sue It's silly isn't it really? I'll have to curb this now.
- Mary I'd like to know where you find all these jumpers 'cause I can never find any.
- Sue Yes, well it's difficult. That's the difficulty now. I just keep my eyes open. Like the magazine you see.
- Janee If you knit them...?
- Sue Oh no, oh no. You've not seen my knitting. But I'm having an expensive one knit at the moment which I've seen in a book which I got out of the library and it's mohair and it's got all trailing roses on and the wool alone has cost quite a lot of money. I'm not telling anybody. But you see, then again, it must be....
- Sandra You didn't actually go in a shop for that then?
- Sue No, I saw it in this book. It was *Designer Jumpers*.
- Sandra So you can't knit them?
- Sue And I saw it and I found a lady who can do these intricate things and I bought the wool. The wool was very expensive, 100% wool, and she's doing now and it's going to be great.
- Ruth Can she do me one?
- Sue And I'm going to look good in it and I know exactly what I'm going to wear it with. And I'm going to have a skirt made or buy a skirt, that's it, going to be it.
- IR And that look that you've got a clear image of, you're trying to do, is that for a special occasion?
- Sue No. Well I suppose it will be coming up to Christmas won't it?
- IR Right.
- Sue Sneaking up to Christmas.
- IR You mentioned designer jumpers and there are a lot of, you know, clothes which are sold in terms of name aren't there, in terms of the label.



- Sue Yes.
- IR Is that important to you when you go shopping. Does that really matter, the label?
- Sue This lady is going to say, you know, yes.
- Lisa Yes.
- IR That's alright. You don't have to apologise. It does?
- Lisa Yes, it's like I say. If I get a bargain from somewhere I never feel as good like I do when I've paid through the nose for something. I know it's silly and daft you know....
- IR So it gives you more pleasure to buy something that has a really upmarket label to it. Could you tell us what these labels are?
- Lisa Well no, not necessarily the labels, it's shops, shops you go in.
- IR Right.
- Lisa Not necessarily a label.
- IR But it's the fact that this particular jumper or dress or whatever was bought in a particular shop that's important to you.
- Lisa Yes.
- Ruth Expense of it.
- Jane It is labels as well. I mean the children, my eldest one's only nine, and it's all labels. I mean it's got to be, I mean I just paid £40. for a tracksuit for the little one. He's only seven. But it's the one that they want, it's not that you're trying to, that you want to pay £40. for a tracksuit but that's the only one that they want and others, it's just not good enough.
- Sue They very conscious aren't they now at a very early age.
- IR That's a lot to do with the other children.
- Jane Oh yes, yes.
- Ruth Yes.
- IR In your case is it important that other people should know that you've bought the clothes from these particular shops?
- Lisa No. Not necessarily. No, it's just...
- IR Just important to you?
- Lisa Yes.
- Ruth You'd feel better though, wouldn't you, if somebody said, "That's a nice suit, where did you get that from?". You'd rather say, "I got it from um um rather than um um".

- Jane Yes.
- IR But the point is, you know where you got it from and therefore the important thing is that you feel better when you know it's come from a shop....
- Lisa If I put something on that I've sort of picked up for a bargain in like a cheap shop somewhere then I never feel good. But yet if I put something on that I really shouldn't have bought because it was far too expensive then no matter how it looks I feel good in it.
- Sue You know you've got that back up then, don't you?
- Ruth Especially if you wear it with the label hanging out.
- Sue Sews it on the outside.
- IR I was going to ask, is it important to you that other people should know this.
- Jane No, not really
- IR Of course there are some people who seem to give the impression that all they're trying to do all the time is impress somebody else with their clothes. They're trying to impress you with the quality of these clothes. Do you know people like that?
- Lisa My husbands a bit like that. He tells you how much it was and how much he's paid for it.
- IR It matters to him.
- Lisa If someone says to my husband, "that's a nice shirt, where did you get that?" He'll say, "I got it from so-and-so £54.99".
- Sue A real bargain.
- IR But that doesn't matter to you?
- Lisa Well yes, it embarrasses me actually sometimes but it's just how it is.
- IR Because one of the things that always interested me about this whole business of trying to impress other people with, it's not just clothes, it's cars and houses is how one knows the other people are impressed. I mean they might be but they might not be. They might be laughing up their sleeve at you, mightn't they?
- Lisa Well yes.
- IR Look at those silly people trying to show off. How do you know that you can impress them?
- Ruth I think it depends who you're trying to impress. There's different levels of people. If you think your trying to impress somebody who is higher than you then you don't try to impress them, but if they are lower than you then I think you've impressed them.



- Sue Oh I don't care. I just do what I want to do because I want to do it.
- Ruth I'm not speaking personally. I'm speaking about the impression level.
- Sue No, I mean. Yes, but I can't see that there are any sorts of levels anyway.
- Ruth You wouldn't start showing off.
- Mary Well I never got dressed up to impress anybody. If I felt good that's been it.
- Sue It's been a personal, yes, it's always a personal thing.
- Mary I mean, if I buy something I can't wait to it on. You know, I say I must go out the night you know 'cause I know I've had my hair done I've got a new suit on or something and like to go and show it off 'cause I think it looks nice, but I don't go out to impress anybody, you know.
- IR Now, you like somebody, you like other people to see it because you feel good in it?
- Mary Yes, because I feel good, yes.
- IR Right. I mean there wouldn't be a lot of point in buying all these clothes if nobody ever saw them.
- Mary Yes, that's it.
- IR I don't know, I mean you do get pleasure, don't you, standing in front of the mirror looking at you. You get pleasure say from having, you know, nice underwear even if nobody is going to see it?
- Mary That's right.
- Ruth Anticipation.
- Mary My hubby would see it.
- IR Well I expect the people who work on the assumption that they might be knocked down on the road and rushed off to the hospital and therefore somebody will see it.
- Mary It makes you feel good nice underwear though.
- Ruth You know you're good from the outside, from the inside out.
- Sue It looks nice, makes you feel good doesn't
- Ruth Yes it does, yes.
- Sandra I don't like to see people with tee-shirts like Gucci, I mean you can tell a Gucci tee-shirt, you don't need a label.
- Ruth That's right, that's right yes. You don't need it, constantly...
- Mary Like I always say to my husband.....
- Lisa It's something for the young kids with the money isn't it?

- Sandra Yes.
- Mary He's 18 you know
- Sandra Trying to impress..
- Lisa Name-droppers, things like that. I always say there's nothing that impresses a person more than the person who doesn't try to impress.
- Jane Exactly
- \* That's what I've always said.
- Lisa Don't impress me. But people that you don't know and like, you find out a sort of a long time afterwards...
- Ruth Yes, exactly.
- Sue Yes, you're more impressed.
- Maggie That impresses me.
- Lisa Like my husband if we get a new car or owt like that, he's got to go round everybody and show them it and things like that.
- Mary Yes, my husbands a bit like that.
- Lisa And I say, don't, just wait until they come and the see it. And that impresses people more than, you know, you trying to impress them all the time.
- Ruth I sometimes wonder how people can contain themselves thought when they've got so much top of ranges or whatever.
- Sue Like, how do you mean.
- Ruth Because sometimes I wonder if they're dying to jump out like a jack-in-a-box and say, you know, look at me I've got all the top stuff on and I'm not saying a word about it.
- Sue Oh I don't know.
- IR You can always tell, by looking at people, how the quality of the clothes they wear?
- Ruth Yes, definitely.
- IR You can.
- Ruth Yes.
- Sandra No, I don't agree with that. I think sometimes people that have the money to go spend don't bother.
- Jane Oh yes.
- Elizabeth That's true.



- Sandra There are actually some that leave themselves with no money and buy a £40. shirt just to impress other people.
- Jane Yes.
- Lisa They're not bothered.
- Jane That's right. They're not trying to impress anybody, they don't need to.
- Lisa Yes.
- Sue I don't think clothes...I used to work at a solicitors where we had this client who was very wealthy, in fact his brother sold you know, Princess Di and what's his name, Prince Charles, they sold some property, their house to them now and he's the equivalent of Yorkshire. And he used to come to the office in an old jacket and I used to say is this Major Ward-Oldham you know. We always used to look out the window and say, yes that's him. A real plain dressed guy and yet he was a multi-millionaire.
- Sandra 'Cause he had nothing to prove.
- Sue He had no need to have a flash car, nothing. Everybody fainted and you know, bowing down to him and scraping. He just breezed in, breezed out. Just ordinary gear, ordinary cars, ordinary spoken.
- Sandra We can all get a Porsche if we want to be in £40,000 worth of debt.
- \* Yes.
- \* You know.
- \* True.
- IR Well I don't know if I could actually but still.
- \* Yes, you probably do.
- IR Right. Can I just go back to the question of buying clothes because we're coming up to Christmas aren't we and we're talking about shopping. One of the things we'll all be doing very soon if we haven't already started is a lot of shopping in which you're not buying for yourself. You're buying for other people. I know I mentioned this before, and you were buying for your daughter and which you obviously enjoy. But this is often a bit of a problem buying for other people. Do you find Christmas shopping in that sense a chore.
- Sue Yes.
- Maggie I do. Yes, I do.
- IR Is that just as pleasurable as everything else for you, this buying for other people.
- Ruth Other people, outside my husband and my own two boys. No it's just a quick, I just write a list out, run into *Marks [and Spencers]* put it all in a basket and go and pay for it. And that's my Christmas shopping done.

- Sue Oh no. I never know what to get anybody.
- Maggie You think they might like or...
- Lisa Things are too expensive now to be able to buy what you would like to buy.
- Elizabeth That's right.
- Lisa Just buy what you can afford to buy.
- IR I have met people who seem to say that they enjoy just the spending money, you know they just actually enjoy spending money and paying for things, it doesn't matter really, it almost seems not to matter what it is they are buying.
- Sandra I'd rather walk out of the shop with the goods without paying for them. To be honest with you, it wouldn't be the handing over the money that gives me any pleasure.
- IR Yes. So it's not just the experience of actually buying things, is not itself pleasurable it's a question of what you're buying and for whom and under what circumstances makes it all worthwhile. Have you done any Christmas shopping yet.
- Elizabeth Just starting.
- Sue One or two yes.
- Jane Just started.
- Maggie Well I've started with the smaller gifts, like you said for others but my own children I've not started yet.
- Elizabeth I'm not going as wild as I did last year actually.
- Maggie No, I..
- Sue Ah, but don't you say that every year.
- Sandra I said it this year but then
- Elizabeth I'm trying to stick by my guns, I'm going to aim for... I hardly got my husband anything last year.
- IR I'm just going to check that the video camera's alright. I'll come back in a minute.
- \*All falling about in there laughing.
- \*Have you seen anybody in there or just.
- \*Yes I've seen people walking past.
- \*Yes. I've seen people walking past.
- \*Have you.
- \*Oh, they're getting my bad side as well Maggie.



\*I know. I was just thinking that as well.

\*It's like big daddies watching you.

\*all facing that way it will be won't it.

\*Mm, Mm.

\*You don't like looking do you.

IR Right, I think we've got you mortalized on film. Isn't that exciting for you.

Elizabeth On T.V.

Lisa As long as we're not on T.V.

IR Oh, it'll be a top selling video this will.

Sue At least 10 buyers.

IR You'll see it in all the shops. I didn't ask you particularly about how you're treated in the shops. You were mentioning particular types of shops you know, that were important to you. But of course there is very different context, isn't there, between shops. From the supermarket where we just help ourselves and pay and the one where all these people come rushing out and asking what you want, and can they help you.

Elizabeth Oh, I hate them. I could scream at them sometimes.

IR You don't like them.

Elizabeth No. No. Leave me alone.

Sue No, and they're never there when you want them, are they sometimes.

Sue No. That's it. And when you do want to pay for something you can't find them they're that busy chatting about what they did last night.

Maggie Yes.

IR So most of you prefer, in fact, to be left alone. You don't like that kind of....

Elizabeth Oh no.

Sue Pushy.

Lisa I don't think you can ever believe what they say, because I've never known any shop assistant tell you that it doesn't look good on you when you know, sometimes you try something on and you think, and then they come up to you and say, that looks lovely that.

Elizabeth And you know fine well it doesn't.

Sue You don't believe it.

Lisa Even if I'd just think they were just saying it so I would buy it.

- Elizabeth Well they are really, aren't they.
- Sue I hate it when you say, I can't think of where I've said but I know I've said it, you know, what size is this and then they say what size are you. How ridiculous. A things a certain size isn't it no matter what size you are. You know, well what size are you. Anyway I just refuse to ask them, answer them you know.
- IR But what about the actual, you know, environment of the shop. I mean there are some places now where you can go, where it's almost like being in a warehouse you know. There are just racks and racks of things and of course there are the beautiful laid out boutiques, you know little potted plants around, and piped music, is that important to you, the setting, the shop itself is nice.
- Maggie Yes. And I always like it if there's a bit of background music.
- Lisa Yes.
- Maggie I think that's nice and relaxing.
- Ruth Yes it is.
- IR Is that part of your enjoyment of going round shops, the actual physical set-up.
- Ruth Yes. I like to be in nice shops.
- IR Have you seen the advertisements for, it is *Meadowhall*?
- Sue Oh yes.
- Ruth *Meadowhall*.
- IR Have you been. Has anyone been.
- Sue No.
- Ruth Not yet.
- Maggie I'd like to go.
- IR Does that attract you. I mean you fancy the idea of going there. You think that would be a nice experience.
- Elizabeth I save up first.
- Sandra Yes.
- Lisa Places like that you've really got to have plenty of money to go with. Sort of if you could just drop into town.
- Maggie It's like if want to go to the *Metro[centre]* in Gateshead.
- Mary I've been to the *Metrocentre*.
- Sue Yes. It's lovely.



- IR Did you enjoy that.
- Mary Yes I did, yes. But I never got round it all 'cause it's so big.
- IR Did you buy very much.
- Mary Yes I did actually. Yes. You need a lot of money when you go to places like that though because there are so many shops. You know.
- Elizabeth Yes, that's right.
- Mary Everything that's in the shops that's in the town and the actual centre itself has got it. You know obviously more than that. But I found it a bit more expensive there than the shops in Leeds.
- IR They are. I mean you're paying for this extra, for the music and everything else.
- Maggie And it's sort of undercover as well.
- IR But they're working on the assumption that your prepared to pay the extra for that because you enjoy the whole environment, you know, that you're getting pleasure from going round the place that's nice to be in.
- Mary It's nice to go into nice shops I mean, even at the *Ridings* at Wakefield.
- Sue Yes, I like that.
- Mary You know, I've been there a few times and if I set my mind to go to the *Ridings* at Wakefield maybe one Saturday I look forward to it 'cause it's nice.
- Maggie Well you treat it as a day out I think.
- Mary Yes.
- Jane Because you make an effort to go.
- Elizabeth You can have your lunch and things like that, can't you.
- IR So do you think it would actually add to your pleasure of buying things, to have bought it in that situation rather than to buy it in an ordinary shop in down town Leeds.
- Mary Yes. I think I feel more excited about it if I'd been somewhere like, you know, the *Ridings* or somewhere like that and bought some, you know.
- IR Yes. Right well I think you've discussed nearly all the main topics that I wanted to discuss. Is there anything you want to ask me. I've been asking you all these questions.
- Mary Do you like shopping?
- Sue Do you like shopping?
- IR I do actually, yes. I do very much. I always have done.
- Sue I just like going out, and I think it's just nice to get out.

- IR I enjoy food shopping I think as well. One thing that intrigues me about that though, is that one gets great... Since you do it often you get into a habit very quickly don't you of what you buy.
- Elizabeth Yes quite easily.
- Lisa Yes I do.
- IR I find myself going round the shelves taking the same things every week. And I look in the basket and I think, why have I bought this? Because I bought it last week and the week before.
- Lisa Yes.
- IR You get into a rut don't you. Which is why I think they change the shelves around just to annoy you.
- Lisa Yes.
- IR So you can't do it.
- Mary I think it depends where you go shopping as well you know. If you go, for somebody that goes into *Tesco's*, every *Tesco* store has the same thing you know, I think *Sainsbury's* and *Safeways* at Garforth has got a better variety than any others.
- Sue Yes I think so as well.
- Sue Although things like, I tend to if I can remember get things like loo rolls and such for kitchen in bulk from *Macro* because it's such a drag going every week or whatever and getting the same, you know, so I just buy it in bulk and stuff it in the garage.
- IR So you don't have to bother about those things.
- Sue I don't have to bother about one or two trivialities like loo rolls and cat food..
- Maggie Sometimes she buys jumpers in bulk.
- Sue I do not. I wish I'd never said that about jumpers.
- IR When you're buying food, I mean when you enjoy buying food, do you deliberately buy different things each time so you can try something new. You wouldn't buy the same food each week would you.
- Ruth I like to think about what the end product is going to be like as well. If I change, or if I buy something I haven't bought before or not often before, even while I'm shopping I think I know what it's going to look when it's finished when I put that plate down. I like to see the end product.
- Sue Oh no I'm not as fussy as that.
- IR Well sometimes they offer suggestions, don't they I mean actually show you what it will be like.



- Mary I mean sometimes if I get free coupons and its something that I've never tried before I'll buy it because I've got a coupon. You think, 'I'll have a try at this because I've got a coupon'. You know I've bought other things like that. You know a new line comes in and I've got a coupon for it and I'll try that, but I would probably not have bought it if I'd not had a coupon.
- Lisa Yes, that's right.
- IR I like shopping in *Marks and Spencer* because I only have to put my hand out to go and buy something and someone will say over my shoulder, 'oh that's good I tried that last week'. You have this, you ever have this sort of camaraderie where everybody tells everybody else what things are like and, 'oh I wouldn't touch that' and 'that's very good', you don't need assistants do you?
- Lisa That's right.
- IR The only thing is that they keep changing it round and I've no sooner got used to my way round the isles that they've moved everything to a different position.
- Ruth They've changed it. Yes.
- IR And when I'm in a hurry I find that very irritating.
- Maggie Yes, especially when you've just gone in for the one thing, you've got half a dozen in by the time you've got to the till.
- Sue That's it, yes.
- \* That's lethal, yes.
- IR Right, well thank you very much indeed. Kate will escort you out, she escorted you in. We will probably doing some more of these sessions and it's quite possible that we would, in fact, like to talk to a smaller group, maybe individually. If any of you would, in fact, be happy to do that perhaps you could just indicate to Kate on the way out that you would be happy to come back on another occasion and have a chat. About roughly the same sort of thing.
- Sue About jumpers.

# APPENDIX ONE

## SHOPPING TRANSCRIPT: TAPE C

Status BC1  
Sex Women  
Age Range 25-34

IR Have any of you done anything like this before?

\* Yes.

IR Yes. One or two. I shall sort of briefly introduce myself. I'm called Kate, Kate Spencer and I'm doing this work, in fact it's not like, often sort of group discussions are done on consumer research is done for a company or a manufacturer that's wanting to produce a new produce. This is in fact for the University, University of York, who were wanting to do some research into what your attitudes are to shopping. So it's quite a different sort of piece of research in some ways. I imagine that some of you may know this but others of you might not. We do like to tape-record the sessions, I hope you don't mind and in fact in this case there is a two-way mirror behind me. And there's a video camera. Not that it need worry you, it's literally so that when I'm look through the tape afterwards I know exactly who said what. Sometimes from an audio tape you can't quite remember the faces you know, so it's not used in any other capacity I can assure you. Can I ask your names?

Megan

IR Gosh that's a nice unusual name.

Sheila, Rosemary, Pamela, Rebecca

IR No it's not. Well Kate's not particularly exciting either is it? Right, so I think I mentioned briefly the that the subject we want to chat about is shopping. I mean how often do you shop?

Rebecca All the time.

IR All the time?

Pamela Do my main shopping once a week but I have to go every day, for bread and food stuff like that.

IR Yes, so a main one and then topping up. Is that the same for you is it?

Megan Are we just talking about shopping for food?

IR Sorry.

Megan We're just talking about shopping for food?

IR Well not necessarily no. It's interesting you say that. What other sorts of shopping?

Megan Well clothes shopping and buying, well I mean I go somewhere particular for the nappies for the baby.



- IR Yes. How often would you do clothes shopping for example?
- Megan Well, probably about once a week.
- Sheila Lucky you.
- Megan Well definitely, you know, two or three times a month.
- Sheila I buy something once a week even if it's socks or .....
- Megan I mean things for the babies. They're growing out of them so quickly you do have to shop very very regularly.
- IR What about for yourself?
- Pamela Well I go once a year.
- Rebecca I live for shopping. That's all I do.
- IR Yes.
- Rebecca I haven't time for anything else.
- IR Now that's fascinating.
- Rebecca That's all I do. I do a lot of people's shopping as well. I do my sister's shopping for her, 'cause she works.
- IR Because she doesn't like it?
- Rebecca No. She works full time so I do her shopping for her and my auntie's and mum's. And I just love it.
- IR Do you love all types of shopping?
- Rebecca Yes. Anything. I like shopping for anything. I'm just stuck at the moment for a sixtieth birthday present. I've been trying to get to town but I'm not going 'till I know what I want.
- IR That's interesting. What about clothes shopping Rebecca, I mean..?
- Rebecca Oh yes, obsessed! It doesn't have to be for me it can be for anybody. If I see something my sister might like I'd have to buy it for her.
- IR Really.
- Rebecca Yes.
- Sheila Glad you.....
- IR How often would you go clothes shopping?
- Rebecca Four times a week, at least.
- IR Really.
- Rebecca I don't go to town Saturday, never.

- IR           What about the rest of you. What about shopping for yourselves?
- Pamela      What clothes?
- IR           Ummmm.
- Pamela      About once a year. Not very often. If it's my birthday I spend my birthday money.
- Rosemary    I'm just the same.
- Pamela      Not that I don't want to. Just that I can't afford to.
- Interruption - another lady coming into the room.
- IR           Can I just ask you name?
- Maureen
- IR           Maureen. Just briefly, I'm Kate and we're doing some research work in fact for the University of York. It's not for a manufacturing company of any kind and it's about shopping so we're just starting off chatting. You haven't missed much. We're talking about sort of clothes shopping. How often people shop, particularly clothes shopping. People were commenting variously. How often do you reckon you shop?
- Maureen     Clothes shopping?
- IR           Yes.
- Sheila      Well I go when ever I've got some spare money that I've managed to get out of the housekeeping one way or another. Or if it's my family allowance week I'll spend, spend all of it in one day, you know.
- IR           What about you Rosemary?
- Rosemary    Mine's just the same. Once I get, if I've got some spare money I'll go shopping for clothes.
- IR           I mean where would you decide to go. We're not thinking of supermarkets now but thinking of clothes shopping particularly, not food shopping anyway.
- Rebecca     Head for Leeds centre.
- IR           Leeds itself.
- Rebecca     There's basic little shops about but there's nothing...you need to have a good look round, there's nothing round here really.
- IR           Um. What would you do Maureen?
- Maureen     I always go to the same shops. *Marks and Spencer's, British Home Store's.* In Leeds centre mainly.
- IR           So you have a sort number of shops that you would always go to?



- Maureen Yes.
- Pamela I mean anywhere. I don't even remember the names of the shops. I just look in the windows, if it looks alright I go in.
- IR That's interesting.
- Pamela The market, anywhere. But for clothes normally, I don't know really, I don't even know the names of them. It's not very often I'm looking for myself but for kiddies, I like looking in kiddies clothes shops and stuff. Normally if I look and see owt in the window I'll just go and have a look.
- Maureen Oh no, I think what's in the windows depends on it, usually it's more for the younger person so I don't go by what's in the window.
- IR What about you?
- Rosemary I go anywhere really. If I see something that looks nice I'll go in and have a look at it and try it on. I mean I go to the market though for the kids clothes.
- IR That's interesting. So you go to different places for different...?
- Rosemary Yes.
- IR What about you Sheila, do you?
- Sheila I go everywhere me. You know, I like to go to *Readman's*, *Tradex*, I like to look everywhere. I won't buy from one place. I'll see something and think, 'I like that, but I won't get it yet 'cause I might see something I like better somewhere else'. Then I end up going home with nothing.
- Megan I know. It's like me. I go to *Tradex* and *Macro* and *Readman's*.
- Sheila I like to look round all them places.
- Megan I prefer to look round the big place before I go into Leeds because I hate going. I mean Leeds has got some wonderful shops and everything, but I hate going there.
- IR Why do you not like it?
- Megan Well 'cause I have to take the baby with me and it's like a nightmare having the pushchair..
- Sheila I think also now in places, I like things from *[British] Home Store's* and *Marks [and Spencers]* and so on but they're all duplicated. Everybody's... I mean I've taken my little girl to a party in a dress that cost me £20. and two other girls had the same dress on.
- Megan You find that from *Marks and Spencer's*.
- Sheila I thought, 'I'll go and I'll buy her a really nice one', you know, and I did and when I got there two other lasses had same dress on. I were dead mad.
- Megan For the baby's clothes I very very rarely go into town. I mean there are so many boutiques round here anyway.

- IR            You could drive to?
- Megan        That you just drive to and you can park right outside and you can go in, and there's one that's even got a play-pen in there and you just shove them in the play-pen, go and choose whatever you're wanting and it makes life so much easier. I guess you pay a bit more but it's easier at the same time, you know, you haven't got all the hassles with it. So I often shop at the boutiques simply for her.
- IR            Yes. I mean do you shop, if you're shopping, are you by yourself. I mean would you go out for example?
- Rebecca      I prefer to do it on my own or with a friend but not with the children, because they're bored in town.
- Sheila        I hate shopping with the kids.
- Rebecca      You can't look comfortably and think 'Oh I'll have to try this on'.
- Sheila        Well you're watching them and they're always under the clothes rails aren't they or pulling something down.
- Rebecca      Leave them with someone else.
- IR            Yes. You might be with a friend?
- Rebecca      Yes, I might be with a friend.
- Maureen     No, I'd be by myself.
- IR            You like doing it by yourself? Yes. Why in particular do you think you like doing it?
- Maureen     Well, it's either that or go with my husband and....
- Sheila        You don't need that. (lots of laughter)
- Rebecca      But I do like doing it on my own.
- IR            Yes.
- Megan        It makes it difficult.
- Sheila        "You don't need any more clothes", you know.
- Maureen     A great big sulk on their face, don't they.
- IR            Husbands, you think, are a problem.
- Sheila        Oh yes, if I take mine all he does is stand at side of me and I'm going, "Do you like this?" and he's going, "For Gods sake just get one" (mimics his huffing and puffing).
- Megan        Or he says "It looks nice on", "Oh I'm not buying it if it looks nice".
- Sheila        "Well it's alright." "Well that means you don't like it then if it's only alright." You know, I think 'God, just go yourself'.



- Pamela        Somebody else like me.
- IR             Do any of you like shopping with your husbands'?
- Megan        No I hate it. I hate, it applies with him as well.
- Sheila        He's worse than me. He spends hours and hours shopping, buying a pair of trousers.
- Pamela        He goes food shopping.
- IR             One at a time or I won't be able to pick it up on the tape. Yes you were saying.
- Pamela        I don't mind food shopping with him 'cause he'll put a few more stuff in. You know I'll say, "We need some beans". He'll put about six tins of beans in instead of...So when I do my shopping maybe the week after, I've had to go myself I don't have to buy them, so I can pocket it.
- Megan        I don't like it because whenever I go with him he always puts in loads of things that we don't need. He gets all the best cakes and everything like that, everything that we just don't need he just puts in.
- Sheila        My shopping bill goes up about £20. when I take him. "Oh they look nice, we'll have some of them." And I'm there thinking, 'Oh I don't need that, and I don't need that'. You have to follow him round you know, and half the things he doesn't even like. I don't know why he gets them you know. So, no definitely not I'd rather go on my own.
- IR             Can I go back to personal shopping. Do any of the rest of you shop with a friend at all, or..?
- Sheila        Yes. I usually go with my mum.
- Rosemary     Yes, me as well.
- Megan        I go with me mum, yes.
- Sheila        'Cause then when I see something I really like and I say, "Grandma would you like to get this for your grandchild?". She goes, "Oh". Well I say, "I'd like this for Gavin but I can't afford them one each really". Me mum'll say, "Oh I'll buy one, you buy other". And me mum gives me a true opinion. If I'm going to buy something to wear for myself me mum'll say, "Oh that isn't you", you know what I mean. Or, "I like that on you", whereas Paul would just say "Yes, it's alright".
- IR             So I mean overall do you think you enjoy shopping. I mean you were saying Rebecca?
- Rebecca      Yes. I love it. It's my job.
- IR             Yes. That's interesting. That you view it like a job.
- Rebecca      Yes I do, yes. It is a job.
- IR             An enjoyable one.

- Rebecca I mean I might just, you know my friend has just done her bathroom out pink, and I'd go and look for something for it. You know, something for her for her bathroom. A personal present rather than just anything. I like listening to people, what they want.
- IR Um. That's nice.
- Sheila My hall and landings grey and pink, is that any good?
- Rebecca My friend's just come out of hospital and before she went in, she just knew she was going in, and she didn't have a nice nighty you know, so I thought 'I'll get her a nighty for Christmas present'. So she said "I right needed that, thank you".
- IR And that gives you a lot of pleasure
- Rebecca Yes. I like doing it.
- IR Picking up on ideas.
- Rebecca Bits that I listen to, yes. The kids haven't done very well this week. I've been listening like mad they haven't said anything.
- IR Do you enjoy shopping Maureen?
- Maureen Oh yes. Every day that I'm not working I'm in town. I started Christmas shopping about 12 weeks ago I think.
- IR That's interesting. Have the rest of you started Christmas shopping.
- Rosemary No.
- IR Yes.
- Maureen Just a few bits really.
- Megan Christmas cards.
- IR What about you Pamela. Do you enjoy it would you say?
- Pamela When I've got the money yes, but when I'm short on budget, no. I hate having to go in and see something what I really like and then have to go for the cheaper thing because I can't afford it, but if I've got plenty of money on me, which isn't very often, but if I've got it yes I like it.
- Maureen I impulse buy though. I sort of go in for maybe a packet of sausage rolls, then all of a sudden I think, you know, something like and I get myself a pair of shoes and I'll come out with sausage rolls.
- IR Does that give you more pleasure to do something like that?
- Maureen Yes, otherwise I don't think I'd get owt really. A lot of it's just impulse. 'Oh yes, I'll get that.'
- IR Rather than planning it you mean?
- Maureen Yes, I don't plan that I'm going to buy a coat or anything.



- Rebecca You never find anything that way, do you?
- Maureen No.
- Rebecca You go in with the money and you never see what you want. You don't go in for it and you go for something like sausage rolls or anything, you can find something easily.
- IR That's interesting. What do the rest of you think. Do you plan sort of a shopping trip if you're going for clothes or do you..?
- Sheila I was going to say, I plan a weekly shop food wise.
- IR Yes. For personal things.
- Sheila I mean yesterday, I went to *Tradex* yesterday, really to have a look round for. I wanted to see if they had any toys in for, to see what they had toy wise and I came back with a pair of trousers and a shirt and tie for Gavin, a dress and a pair of 'jamas for Shelley. What else did I buy, oh all sorts. Socks, loads of pairs of pants for me, all sorts. I spent £28. and I only went to look you know, and I thought, 'Oh'. It's a bad habit.
- IR What about you Megan. Do you impulse buy do you think?
- Megan I don't know. I suppose I do really. I mean I don't ever plan to go out to buy myself anything. In fact it's very rare actually that I get myself anything 'cause all my money I spend on the baby and I really really enjoy doing it. And I really enjoy doing it, I mean it gives me so much pleasure in buying stuff for her that I don't even think about myself. And my mother keeps saying, "You know it's about time you got yourself something to wear. You desperately need something". I just don't care. As long as I've got... As long as she looks nice, as long as I can keep buying stuff for her I don't particularly care. But I mean, I suppose if I every look for something for myself it's, yes I suppose it is impulse really. I don't plan to go out.
- IR A lot of you seem to say you get a lot of pleasure buying for children or other people. Would you say so Maureen too?
- Maureen Well I find all my money in the summer holidays goes on the kids. I won't buy anything for myself at the beginning of the summer holidays. You know when they break up everything on them, and now they're back at school I've started buying a bit for myself, and I won't buy them anything now, you know, something...
- IR It is a treat.
- Rebecca Yes, it's a treat for me, yes. When they go back to school.
- Maureen Summer school holidays, I buy everything for the kids. You know, to wear while we're on holiday and that. I mean I go in my old rags and yet they'll have all new things on.
- IR Yes, I know what you mean, yes. Holiday clothes for years and years..... Um, is there anything you dislike at all about shopping, I mean we've talked a lot about... Yes what do you dislike?
- Pamela Other people.



- IR In what sort of way, other people?
- Pamela Well when I go shopping in *Sainsbury's*, I hate it when it's packed. If you've got, I mean if you're just walking round with a basket and that, I mean you can do the shopping part not too bad it's when you come to the tills. You're just there ages and I hate it.
- Sheila And don't you find when you're going in town, when I go in town with a pushchair, I don't know if anybody else finds it, but they watch you walk towards store in places like *Littlewood's* and just as you get to the door with the pushchair they let go of it, don't they.
- Megan Yes they do.
- Sheila Pushchair and shopping bag and you try to get double jointed to push door open and everybody stands there and watches. Occasionally you will get somebody. I think a lot of shops in town have got very poor access for new mums with pushchairs 'cause doors are so heavy.
- Megan And the lifts as well you know. The one in *Littlewood's* is diabolical. It's got one of those double door things that you have to yank your arms to open, and it takes about half an hour to get. I mean *Marks and Spencer's* lift, you can only get one pram in *Marks and Spencer's* lift.
- Rebecca Well it's security isn't it so you can't run out with anything. Yes it's difficult to get out.
- Megan Well they ought to have more than one lift. You know, really because the thing is they've got the shops, the shops are really for women, and who've got, I mean women or women with children or whatever and they always put the children's clothes on the first floor, and so the only way you can get to it by a lift so why do they only give us these little lifts the size of this table.
- Sheila You can't take a pushchair on the elevator or owt like that so you're stuck and in shoe... It's exactly the same in shoe shops. If you go in a shoe shop you can guarantee that the kid's shoes are upstairs or downstairs.
- Rebecca They've done it for men now because men don't buy often and they come and buy what they like and go out.
- Sheila I think, I really do think it's really really poorly catered for in town for pushchairs.
- Megan Say that again what you just said there?
- Rebecca About the men's shopping?
- Megan Yes.
- Rebecca They don't often go in very often for sort of shoes and things like that.
- Sheila So they need to see them straight away.
- Rebecca So they can walk in, see what they want and buy them and come out. They won't go upstairs or down.
- Megan You know it's funny you should say that because I went into *Cleancard's* just to get my baby some shoes and we were saying that we had the...and



they had the ladies shoes on the first floor. And we said, "It's ridiculous now, why don't you have the children's shoes on the first floor?". He says "Because ladies always buy on impulse, because they just come in, see the shoes and take them straight out. They don't want to go upstairs looking for them or downstairs", that's why they do it for ladies.

Rebecca Oh they do it for men.

Megan They do it for the ladies.

Sheila Well I once went in *Freeman, Hardy and Willis* and I said to them, "The shoes". Not *Freeman, Hardy and Willis* which one is it? It's one of those on Briggate, and it's all steps and their shoes were downstairs for the kids and I said to them, "What a stupid idea, fancy having...". Oh that's what it was *Peter Lord's*, their's are downstairs. And I said "Fancy having shoes downstairs when you've got no lift it's all"

Megan I think *Cleancard's* the only ones with lifts.

Sheila ...and she said "The reason we do that, put children's shoes on either the upper or lower floor is so that when you're concentrating on kids shoes and they're on the ground floor they've more chance of running directly out of the shop into the road than they have if you've got them upstairs or downstairs". That was her reaction.

IR So problems are obviously to do with children, a lot of them. What about those of you with older children?

Rebecca I think it's only the shoe shops not the clothes shops, the shoe shops.

IR What about the slightly older children. Are there any other specific things that you dislike about...

Maureen Not enough public toilets, I don't think. I mean I'm terrible once I get off the bus I've got to go to the loo.

Rebecca *Littlewoods*, that's where we go to the loo.

Maureen I don't really know where they are but there's not enough of them wherever they are.

Megan Everybody's got to queue for miles at *Littlewood's* toilet.

Rebecca It's the only one I sort of go to.

Megan Yes.

Rebecca You see *Lewis's* is down or up, it's not handy.

Sheila Leeds market, it's all either upstairs on the veranda bit or downstairs.

Rebecca There's not many. There's hardly any toilets. You've got the *Wimpy* but it's not an easy trip that.

Maureen Have you been to *British Home Stores* toilets. You've got to walk about three miles. You think you've come out of the wrong building.

- Sheila I went in *British Home Stores* a while ago and they've got a downstairs, I don't know if you've ever been in, but in the restaurant bit at the bottom they have a special bit partition off for the kids. It's got all toys and so on and yet they've got a lift which goes everywhere except down to the restaurant.
- Maureen Yes it does.
- Sheila They cater for the kids in the restaurant but don't cater for the pushchair down the steps. I mean they've defeated all the object. I wouldn't dream of going in there for the simple reason they don't have a lift that goes all the way to the bottom.
- IR So despite some of these problems you still manage to, most of you enjoy shopping most of the time. What sort of mood do you have to be in to go clothes shop?
- Sheila I'm usually in a depressed mood, and I think 'I'm going to go and I'm going to spend all my bill money and I'm going to make myself dead happy', and I go in and I spend everything.
- Maureen I sometimes do that with the housekeeping.
- Sheila If you know you should be spending it on something else. Like I'll save all my telephone money up, you know to pay my telephone bill, and I mean I have got a £52. telephone bill at home, and I spent £28. of it yesterday at *Tradex*. But it's just, you know.
- IR It's that sort of feeling. What about you Maureen, what sort of mood do you?
- Maureen Well if I'm in that sort, if I feel really bad and I feel a bit odd and I go to town and I've got me weeks shopping money for *Tesco* in my purse, and if something comes over me all of a sudden I'll just spend the whole lot and I'll go home and ring my husband up of course, as soon as I get in to warn him, and I know he's going to say it's ok it doesn't matter but I always warn him as soon as I get home, before he comes home.
- IR But when you say something comes over you, what sort of feeling is that, if something comes over you and...
- Maureen Well I might buy something little and then that something little leads to something else, like I might buy a skirt and I think 'well I've got to have a top to go with it', and I think 'bloody hell I might as well get the shoes and the bag'. And I sort of..
- IR And do you enjoy it while that's happening?
- Maureen Oh yes. I don't care if I come back with nothing.
- Sheila It's a great feeling.
- Rebecca Like someone's giving you a injection.
- Sheila It's later when you get home and you think 'I've got to pay this and I've to pay this' and it doesn't stretch that far but once it's done it's done.



- IR           What about, what about you Rosemary. Do you have any of these sorts of feelings?
- Rosemary   No, as I say if I've got the money I go but...
- IR           You don't have to be in a particular mood?
- Rosemary   No. As long as I've got some money I'll go shopping for clothes.
- IR           What about you Megan.
- Megan       If I'm buying clothes for myself I've got to be in a feel thin mood. If I've woke up in the morning and I'm feeling really bad about myself there's no way, I mean I might go shopping and I just wouldn't look nice in anything so I wouldn't buy anything, but I've got to sort of like...Well I've just got to feel that way, I've got to feel good about myself before I go out and buy anything or I don't get anything. You know it drives everybody, if I go with my mother it'd drive her potty. "Oh I don't look nice in this, do I look fat in this?", you know. And she can tell me a million times that I look nice in it and I still feel fat and I won't buy it.
- IR           What about you Pamela, is there a special mood that you?
- Pamela      No, not really. If I've got the money I'll go, if I haven't I aren't going to cry about it.
- IR           It's interesting. Which purchases do you think give you most pleasure. I mean we've mentioned clothes quite a bit. Are there any other purchases at all that give you a lot of pleasure?
- Sheila      If I'm buying something for the house. That gives me pleasure.
- IR           For the house.
- Sheila      If I'm buying something. I mean I've just bought a carpet for my hall, stairs and landing and it was a lot of money, and at first I thought 'Oh gosh I've spent all that money on a carpet', you know. But I think to myself 'Oh bet it looks', you see they're coming to do it this weekend. I thought 'Oh once it's down it will look really nice'. It'll please me. I won't say at the time when I've parted with all the money you know, but it's not down yet. I suppose once it's down I'll feel different about it.
- Rebecca     Yes, I like when you've done a room out and you see something that like would go with it, it might not be what you can afford but it'll please you. Every time you see it you think, 'It does look nice I'm glad I bought it now', but at the time you think, 'No, I can't afford it'. But you buy it anyway.
- IR           So that would give you the same sort of pleasure?
- Rebecca     Yes, it's nice.
- Maureen     That's why I wouldn't have one of those cards. If I have a clothes card I'd have been murdered now. I'd have had my husband in debt five times over. Or I won't run a catalogue.
- Megan       No I don't have anything on those.
- Maureen     If I did that then I would be a maniac for ordering and ordering.

- IR           What about the rest of you, I mean are there any other sorts of things, a house or what about perfume or books or jewellery?
- Rebecca    Yes, anything. I will buy anything honestly I will. If perfumes on offer well I'll buy the lot. She really likes me down there. There's an umbrella with it this month, I'll have to get that. I've had all sorts free with it you know, I'll have to buy more.
- IR           What about chocolate or...?
- Rebecca    No.
- Megan      I like flowers.
- IR           You like flowers?
- Megan      I like flowers and I liked dried flowers as well.
- Sheila     I've got quite a few.
- Megan      I quite like dried flowers they always look so nice. I like having a looking around at...
- IR           Does that give you a lot of pleasure?
- Megan      Yes it does actually. I like to buy little things for the house.
- Sheila     Little nicknacks
- Megan      Little bits that make the house look nice.
- IR           I mean if you do shop for the house I mean, would you shop with your husband at all for things?
- Sheila     It depends what it is really. I mean when we went for us carpet we went together, only because if I'd have ordered the one I wanted you could have guaranteed he would have said, "Oh I don't like that, what made you pick that?". So rather than cause any arguments what we usually do is we go together and then if we don't like it we can't argue then because we both picked it you see. I'd go with him for things like that but generally if I'm buying owt big for't house I won't even tell him until I've got it. And then I'd say, "Oh by the way I've ordered a video today". He'd go "A what!".
- IR           So what about the rest of you, would you go with your husband's at all?
- Megan      I usually go and decide what I like, and then I tell David and then he'll come and look what I like.
- Sheila     I'll tell him. When we bought us video I said to him, "Oh I've seen a nice video". We were planning on getting one but I said "I've seen a nice video bla bla bla what do you think?". And he'll say "I don't know. What ever you want". It's 'cause he's easy going you know and then I'll... And when he comes home next night I'll say, "That video I told you about well I've ordered it", you know and he'll go "You what, what video?". I'll say, "Well I did mention it".



- IR So most of you would like to do the choosing bit yourselves?
- Maureen I don't mind. I'm not bothered. My husband bought some curtains a couple of weeks ago for the dining room. He always picks nice things. I'm not bothered. As long as I can buy all the little things or a little vase the same colour he can buy all the major things. I don't mind.
- IR Do you enjoy shopping for others. You mentioned your children. What about other people, presents for other people?
- Maureen Oh yes, love it.
- Pamela Yes.
- Sheila I hate it.
- Megan Actually I hate it.
- IR You do hate it?
- Megan There's nothing worse than somebody's birthday.
- Sheila I know.
- Megan I mean we've got a big family and probably we have to buy three presents a month. Birthday presents and the wedding anniversary presents. I mean it's just a blooming nightmare. You know I keep suggesting that we don't buy each other presents any more, that we just get cards or something like that but I hate it.
- IR But why is it?
- Megan Well 'cause you never know what to get them.
- Sheila You look round and round and round.
- Megan Every day you're getting like pants and socks and things like that.
- Sheila 'Cause you never know what people need do you.
- Megan There's so many of us you don't know what to get. You don't want to spend, I mean you don't want to spend an awful lot of money either.
- Sheila I find it at Christmas as well.
- IR What do you think Rosemary. Do you like buying for others or..?
- Rosemary No, not really no.
- IR I mean anyone particularly that you could buy for or...?
- Rosemary I just don't like buying.
- IR You just don't like, yes that's interesting. What about you Pamela?
- Pamela It doesn't really bother me. If I've got same again, it annoys me if I go in town and I'll see a certain, like me mam's got a maniac for everything at the moment, clothes, shoes, jewellery, because like now she's got no kids.

She spoils herself a bit now. Sometimes I've seen stuff what I'd like to get her but then same again I have to end up getting something else because it's cheaper. If I have the money, I might get....

IR Yes, you could enjoy it then.

Pamela If I had the money I'd love to be able to buy other people presents but....

Megan It's not the buying of the people presents that I don't enjoy. It's knowing what to get them that I don't enjoy.

Maureen It's alright. I know exactly what I'd like to buy most of my family but it's just having the money.

Sheila Like Pamela's said, I mean I know for a fact things that people would like, you know what I mean, but it's affording them. We all like a gold charm bracelet with thirty-six charms on but couldn't afford one so.

Rebecca It's hard with people if they're rich. Well not so much rich but.....

Sheila Better off than you.

Pamela My sister, she's better off than me and she's only got one little kid. Now buying her anything, unless I can pay a fortune, then I'm stumped what to get her. Because she's got every doll going that you can think of. Clothes, she always goes to top places for clothes. She's such a funny, she's a big girl for her age so probably it wouldn't fit her if I bought her it anyway or she wouldn't like it. I hate having to buy her, even, I mean I don't hate her but I hate having to buy her stuff.

IR 'Cause it's difficult to imagine...?

Pamela Yes because she's got practically everything. I mean she's not a selfish kid if I bought something she'd probably already got it, she wouldn't be funny about it and neither would me sister but I do find it hard buying her stuff. She's got practically everything what's going with her only being an only one.

IR I can imagine that there can be difficulties with people like that.

Pamela Whereas my other sister's got three. Now they're dead easy to please, you know what I mean. You can buy them owt and they're happy whatever you buy them.

IR Just sort of thinking more about clothes shopping in particular which seems to be the main thing that most of you do enjoy, presuming that you've got the money for it. Would you, before you go out shopping or sort of while you're thinking about what you might buy, would you be looking at magazines or adverts at all?

Rosemary No.

Rebecca No. They don't look like me on them things.

IR So you don't really buy those sorts of fashion magazines.

Rebecca No, they don't relate to me them at all. I might see a colour scheme I quite like but that's all, it's not the clothes.



- IR Right, so you might see a colour or....
- Rebecca That's quite a nice colour, that's all. That's not the outfit or the size of something. They're nothing like we are.
- Maureen That's why I'm not keen on catalogue buying because in the catalogue....
- Pamela It's not so much for kiddies but for us. They've got a perfect figure. I mean, couldn't we all look lovely like that if we'd got a figure but when you put what another size they've got on, it's only a size 12 in the catalogue, you get home, mind you size 12 say a size 10 but somehow they've got all the shapes and that to go with it. We might only weigh the same, as much as them, or wear the same clothes on that what they are but they've got every part of their body in the right places.
- Sheila I've found a couple of times I've, like *Mothercare* or yes, and *Ladybird* that *Woolworths* make. Now occasionally, I mean I'll have a *Mothercare* book at home or *Ladybird* have got a leaflet out at the moment with all the winter fashions in and I think, 'Oh I like that', you know for Shelley and I'll go and I think 'I'll get her one of them', and when I get there they haven't got one. There's no more because you think 'Oh I'll have one of them' you know and you're there for about an hour looking through everything and.....
- Pamela I'm not that keen on *Mothercare* stuff.
- Sheila ...And you'll say, "You see this that you've got in here, have you got any?". They go, "Oh no, out of stock". You know it's right away and I think 'Well', or they haven't got them in yet. That's the most original one, "Oh they're not in yet".
- IR Do any of you buy women's magazines at all, fashion magazines?
- Sheila I don't buy fashion, I buy magazines.
- Megan I buy magazines.
- Rebecca It's more for my daughter, that size, 'cause she can fit in those things. I couldn't. They're just articles.
- IR Yes. How old is your daughter?
- Rebecca She's fourteen.
- IR Oh yes. So she's getting into that peak age when they're very keen. What about you....?
- Maureen I just buy any magazine that's got any free patterns in, 'cause I'm into home dressmaking at the moment. But I'm a lot into colour now because I went to a colour analysis a few months back and I got this little book with my own colours in so....
- IR Do you find that good?
- Maureen Yes. I went to buy some material and I might have looked an idiot but I got my little book out to make sure I, this material had the right colours in for me. After I'd paid me money out for this little catalogue of colours I was going to make sure I was getting the right colour.

- IR So you would look at magazines perhaps for colours in terms of, fashion colours that were...?
- Maureen Fashion colours that would maybe in for winter you know but I tend to stick to the same anyway.
- IR And any of the rest of you know...? You mentioned window shopping I think..?
- Rebecca I won't do that.
- IR You wouldn't do that?
- Rebecca No, never do that.
- IR Why not Rebecca?
- Rebecca Oh if I can't buy it I've had it. Oh no.
- IR You mean if the shop was actually closed it wouldn't be any good.
- Rebecca Oh no.
- IR But supposing the shop was open itself and you....
- Rebecca No I would still have to be in.
- IR You would still have to be in.
- Rebecca I don't look in the windows, never.
- Rebecca Because there again they're on a model and they've pinned the things at the back and they all look a size 6 don't they, and they're all thin and lovely. Nothing like you'd look like, no way.
- Pamela I like window shopping.
- IR You like window shopping.
- Pamela Yes.
- Sheila I like looking in the windows yes.
- IR I mean does it matter to you if the shop is open or not?
- Pamela No.
- IR Just a look?
- Pamela No, I like window shopping. I mean I won't just go into town just to window shop but if I was going into town for something anyway, while I was walking around, if I was on my own, I would look.
- IR Why do you think you like it?
- Pamela I don't know, I just do.



- Rebecca It gives you some ideas and all sometimes. Doesn't it, you think 'them two look nice together'. You know colours you wouldn't imagine yourself in or two colours contrasting and you think 'oh I'd have never have thought of putting that with that'.
- IR The way they put an item together you mean?
- Sheila That's right. Yes. You know, two completely different colours put together which I would never thought myself. Gives you ideas.
- IR What about you Megan. Do you window shop at all or?
- Megan Do you know I don't really think much about shopping.
- IR No, it's difficult isn't it....?
- Megan I don't really think about it at all. I sometimes go into town just to, I suppose to have a look, but I usually try and go mid week as well just to have a look round. It doesn't bother me, window shopping. I mean I go into town, have a look round. If I see something I buy it and if I don't it doesn't matter. I'm not upset about it or anything like that. I don't really ever go to town with the intentions of buying anything. I just go to town and if I see something I like then I buy it, but it doesn't bother me just window shopping.
- Pamela I hate going in if you're look for a particular thing, I don't know, say if you're going to a wedding. I mean like when we went to my sister's wedding. She wanted me to wear a certain colour on and I had to buy something to go with it and could I hummers find the handbag that colour. I hate doing shopping like that when you've got to go for a particular thing, and a particular colour you know what I mean.
- IR Something very specific. Yes.
- Pamela You see stuff you'd rather have otherwise and you have to go and get that. No I don't like doing it that way, 'cause you just walk round in circles and circles and still never find it.
- IR Would you feel like that Rebecca?
- Rebecca Oh I'd have a ball.
- IR You wouldn't mind it?
- Rebecca I'd find it before I came home, definitely. I'd walk miles finding it.
- Maureen I feel depressed if I go to town and I come back with nothing at all. I've got to buy something even if it's a mascara. If I come back with nothing I'm totally depressed for the rest of the day.
- Rebecca Yes, I have to buy something, definitely.
- IR That's interesting. So you go out knowing that you're going to buy....?
- Rebecca Oh yes. I'd get up that morning knowing I'm going to town to buy things. And I'll get it.

- Maureen We're not really bothered what it is. If times getting late I'll pick up anything.
- IR Oh it's fascinating.
- Rebecca I mean a pair of tights. You always need tights don't you so that's something.
- IR Do you. Just a slightly different subject then. Do you consider yourselves fashionable?
- Megan No.
- Sheila No.
- Megan Yes. I'm fashionable for my daughter but not fashionable for me.
- IR That's interesting. You care about fashion. Your daughter's, how young is she?
- Megan Yes I do. She's one.
- IR One, yes, and you care about it for her?
- Megan Yes. She's got all the up to date things and you know. The dresses with leggings. And she struts about in them and I love it. I get such great pleasure out of it and I suppose that if I was six foot tall with a nice slim figure I'd be fashion conscious about myself as well, but you just get things that suit you don't you.
- Sheila When you're at home with kids, you need things that are more practical. No point buying a pair of stilettos, go to school with a pushchair, you can't walk in them.
- Megan You want to look nice but you want something practical as well.
- Sheila And I like to look different. I mean, I have things that I just loll about in through the day but if I am going out on a night I make an effort to, and I think it makes people. I mean I know girls that I know through the day and when they go out they look totally different. You wouldn't think they were the same person so, I like that idea. I mean I never get made up through the day ever.
- IR So would you feel that you would be fashionable say in the evenings then.
- Sheila I don't think I'm fashionable but I think I'm, I'd say I dress smartly on an evening. I'm not fashionable, some of the clothes, you know what I mean, all these latest baggy trousers. But I'd buy a nice smart skirt and nice blouse.
- Megan I mean I dress quite differently when I go out on an evening. I suppose everybody does really.
- Sheila But I think that makes, contrast of character really. When you're at home all day.
- Megan It's nice as well you know 'cause you feel as though, you feel good in yourself.



- Sheila I feel totally different when I go out.
- Megan I mean when I go I'm not a mother with a little baby.
- Sheila Yes.
- Megan That's right. You're yourself, you can do exactly what you want. It's your time to do exactly what you want to do.
- Sheila It's a complete change of roles on a night.
- Megan That's right, and you get your freedom, you know.
- Sheila You can go out and be what you want instead of .....
- Megan That's right and being a responsible person.
- Sheila You can do what you like and I think it's a total contrast.
- IR What about you Rosemary, do you see yourself as fashionable or?
- Rosemary No.
- IR No. I mean do you have children?
- Rosemary Yes.
- IR Yes. I mean do you think them as fashionable or do you try and buy fashions for them or?
- Rosemary I can't say I buy fashions, I just buy something that's sensible really 'cause things that are fashionable are too expensive. As long as they look clean and tidy that's mainly what I think, you know.
- IR That's what concerns you with them.
- Rosemary And myself really as long as I'm clean and tidy, but like they say when you go out on a night you get more dressed up and that.
- IR What about you Pamela?
- Pamela Well I'm like. When I go out I try to look sophisticated rather than wearing, like you say, these big baggy trousers and owt what's in the fashion at the time, I'm more just as an ordinary, not old fashioned lass or person, but smart.
- IR What about you Maureen, would you see yourself as fashionable?
- Maureen Oh no. No, but I've got three daughters. One of them's sixteen, one of them's eleven and they are very fashion conscious and I make suits for them that are very fashionable. Well my sixteen year old, she's got to wear fashion clothes, even though I think they look a dog some of them, you know. To her they look absolutely marvellous so.
- Megan They don't even care do they sometimes.
- Maureen I don't care really about them for myself.

- Megan As long as they've got the right label on.
- Maureen Oh yes, if it's from...My eldest girl won't even walk in *Marks and Spencers* with me. She wouldn't be caught dead in there. *Top Shop* or *Chelsea Girl*, it's alright.
- IR That's interesting.
- Rebecca Mine won't get the bus outside any of those.
- Maureen If any of my friends see me here, you know.
- Rebecca Yes that's the thing. When we're getting parked up in town she says "Can we park somewhere else?. Don't park here. They'll think we're going in here." It's terrible. My little boy won't have anything from the Market.
- IR So how old are your children. Fourteen the girl?
- Rebecca And eight the boy.
- IR And eight the boy.
- Rebecca But if he gets it from the market he won't wear it. I have to tell him I got it from somewhere else. But he just won't have it.
- IR What about you Rebecca. Do you see yourself as fashionable?
- Rebecca No.
- IR No, you don't.
- Rebecca No, comfortable. But on an evening, all I buy is for evening. Then when I've worn it a few times then it comes to day wear, it drops down. I don't buy anything for the day normally, tracksuits and things yes, but not generally. I wouldn't go out and buy that for the day. It just comes down. It becomes a day thing gradually.
- Megan I buy stuff for the day and stuff for the night, because the stuff that I wear at night I probably couldn't, well probably wouldn't feel as though I could wear it, during the day. And I don't like to ruin my stuff. I like my stuff to last me a long time. You know last a long time and I like it just for the evening.
- Rebecca I never go anywhere to wear it. That's the thing, it never gets worn out.
- Sheila I think that's why I buy more casual clothes 'cause you don't all wear fashion every day.
- Megan That's right they go out of date so quickly.
- Pamela The kind of clothes I wear are just a straight skirt. The fact, you know, if I only go out a few times I could keep it maybe 'till next year. It won't have gone out. Whereas if I'd have bought a mini skirt or something by next year it might have gone out of fashion, it's not going to last me.
- Rebecca I buy general clothes that go every where.



- IR Do you think there was a time when you considered you were fashionable or do you...?
- Pamela Yes.
- Rebecca No, I've never.
- IR You haven't?
- Rebecca No I haven't.
- Megan ...baby.
- IR Before you had the baby. So how old were you then Megan?
- Megan I'm trying to think how old I am now, twenty four.
- IR So early twenties.
- Megan I'm twenty-five now. Twenty-four I was but I think middle age spread hit me early then after I had the baby. I'm still trying to lose it, but then I was yes.
- Pamela At school I was.
- IR At school you were Pamela?
- Pamela Yes. 'Cause I had my first one when I was eighteen so up until falling on pregnant, yes I was modern.
- Maureen Till 1972 or summat.
- Sheila The stuff I wear now..
- Rebecca I wouldn't have dared have weared it.
- IR You didn't feel you were particularly. But almost all the rest of you were saying..
- Megan The thing is I think I'd like to look like, I mean I'd love to wear outrageous stuff but I feel as though you have to have the right figure for it. That's the way they show it don't they.
- Sheila You've to have the right character as well.
- Megan Yes, but I mean I would love to go round in these really tight leggings or you know the cropped tee-shirts up to here or whatever. It makes you, I don't know..
- Maureen Yes, but don't you find you do on holiday anyway. I mean the things I wear on holiday I wouldn't be caught dead in..
- Megan Exactly.
- Maureen I mean, I'm wearing shorts or whatever well.
- IR That's fascinating. Now why do you think you're prepared to wear them on holiday?

- Maureen Nobody knows you.
- Megan Because nobody knows you, and when you get your picture taken you go, "Can you just take my left arm?".
- Maureen You're more outrageous and daring.
- IR You mean you can be almost a different person.
- Maureen I think the atmospheres different.
- Megan The climates different.
- Maureen I'm only talking about north Wales I'm not talking about Spain.
- Rebecca This year I wore shorts in Yarmouth.
- IR I've just got to turn over the tape. I'll be back in a second.
- IR I just heard somebody saying you're worried about getting away. Don't worry. You'll be away well before three. I know school and things are a problem.
- IR Just coming back to clothes and things. Thinking about the clothes you now have in your wardrobe at home would you, if you could, would you buy them all again or would you buy different clothes?
- Pamela Similar.
- Sheila I'd shove them in the bin.
- Rosemary Yes.
- Maureen I'd buy again.
- IR Yes.
- Pamela Most of them are my sisters.
- Rebecca Yes, some of them. What I call the classic numbers. Just nice silk pleated skirt, you can wear any time, anywhere. You've got an outfit you know and a jacket, things like that. But I buy most of my clothes mix and match with everything. One will go with the other thing so when I buy one blouse I know it will go with two or three different things. So you've got more than you actually have.
- IR And you like that?
- Rebecca Yes. That's how I work.
- Maureen Yes I do. They last years once I get something. And I don't think they look old on me years later because it's a sort of classic look isn't it.
- IR Do you like most of your clothes Maureen, that you've got?
- Maureen Yes. I mean I haven't got a lot but what I've got I like them. I'm like this lady. I buy something for evening and then maybe after a few months I'll



start wearing it through the day. It depends, if it's something smart but not over powering you know. Not see-through blouses.

Rebecca Any out of town shopping it would do for that then.

IR What about you Pamela, you're saying some of them are your sister's clothes?

Pamela Most of them are.

IR Would you, I mean, presuming you had bought them would you have chosen them or?

Pamela Most of them I suppose at sometime. I mean if I could throw all me clothes away now and buy I'd rather do that. Throw them away and buy some new ones. There would be an odd few that I would keep but not much.

IR That's interesting.

Pamela Not much at all. Or I'd look at them and I'd think 'what the hell did I buy that for'.

IR What about you Rosemary, are you happy with what you've bought?

Rosemary Yes. My clothes yes.

IR That's interesting see as you obviously are confident of the sort of person you wanted to, want to be. Yes. What about you Sheila?

Sheila I like most of them. Most of mine are jeans and jumpers and that sort of thing.

IR Casual look?

Sheila Yes. Everyday things.

IR So you'd want them again?

Sheila Oh yes, I'd buy them over and over again. I always buy jeans.

Pamela Oh I love my jeans.

IR What about you Megan?

Megan Yes I'm quite happy with my clothes. I before the baby I got quite slim and everything because I'd been going to weight-watchers and I've gone out and bought myself loads of clothes and I mean all the tight skirts, the short ones and everything. Not short I mean just above the knee, the daring ones and then when I had the baby that was it. So I've got quite a lot of clothes now I'm actually into but I can't fasten the button up, so I have to wear longer things.

Pamela One thing I liked about my clothes. I'd didn't actually go on a diet after I'd had the young 'un. I just knew once I could get my jeans back on I were alright. And I've got them on now, well I've been, about a month after having him/her I could get them on but I couldn't feel comfy in them, they used to hurt when I sat down. Now I know I can get them on and I can get

my hand down as well I know I've lost most of it. All it needs now is toning up.

IR So what sort of style do you see yourselves having?

Pamela None.

IR No surely not. I mean do you or don't you think of yourselves having a particular style?

Pamela Not through the day time. As I say on a night time when I go out I'd rather, if I had a choice of buying something.., if someone was stood there in a modern outfit and then someone was stood there in a smart look or sophisticated look I would go for ..

Rosemary All my things are in two halves. I've not got one whole outfit you know, a dress. I don't possess a dress.

IR Now that's interesting.

Rosemary No.

IR So you can like swop them around.

Rosemary That's all. It's like a jigsaw. I haven't got a dress.

Maureen And I prefer dresses.

Rosemary I know. I can't find one that I like. I'd buy it if I found it but I can't so I just buy bits of everything.

IR There's a challenge for you Rebecca. A shopping challenge.

Rebecca No I've got dresses, but I just couldn't put them on any time.

IR No. But what about the rest of you. Do you think you have a style. Would you describe the way you dress as a certain?

Pamela No.

Sheila A mess.

IR Oh right.

Pamela Most of the time I'm just a jeans person.

Sheila Me an' all. I never see my legs.

Pamela It's only because I've come here I've got a skirt on. Excelled myself today.

IR Do you think you're influenced by fashion at all?

Pamela No.

IR I mean would you know what's fashionable now?

Pamela I don't know to tell you the truth.



- Maureen I think I will because of what my daughter's started wearing and that.
- IR I mean what would you say is fashionable at the moment?
- Maureen I think these woollen tops that look like they've been washed and they're all baggy at the bottom. They like the long culotte trousers, I think they're still about.
- Megan I tried one of those tops on, I didn't know it was fashionable.
- Maureen Like them crocheted tops that your granny might knit. Them made into cardigans.
- Pamela I don't like the sound of them.
- Rebecca The baggier the better.
- Pamela The old fashions'll come back in fashion again in time...
- Megan I don't know what's in fashion.
- Pamela I don't.
- IR Right, well I think we've exhausted that subject. Just going back to the actual process of shopping for clothes. You're going to buy some clothes. Do you ever sort of imagine yourself wearing the item before you buy it?
- Maureen Not until I've tried it on and looked in the mirror.
- IR So you wait until you see yourself in it?
- Maureen Yes.
- Megan They look so different.
- Pamela I mean my sister's one for that. She'll say, funny cut. She's got a right, or has at the time I think, 'God that colour'. It sounds horrible, but then when she puts them both together she always looks nice but yet you see the skirt and the top off and I wouldn't look twice at them. But then when she puts them on, together, it looks nice. To me, unless I see it on myself, I just don't know. I can't just look at the item and say "Oh yes", unless it is just something like jeans or something. But all the unusual, an outfit I've got to see it on myself to know whether I'll like it or mainly with the colours more than anything, or the length. I mean my sister's, not so much now but when I was younger, my sister's. I mean I was modern when I was younger, or I felt as if I was, but there was a lot of stuff you know when the rah rah skirts were in fashion, my sister's used to play airless with me when I was younger. "Why can't you wear them on, you've got the legs for it, you could wear them on." No, I pulled the line there. I wouldn't wear, even though some days I felt as if I wanted to. If I'd have had the nice sun tan. I mean the shape of me legs wasn't bad it was just the colour of them. If I could have gone somewhere and got a nice sun tan. But I've forgotten, I don't even know how I got on to that.
- IR No, we were just talking about imagining yourself wearing something which you..., and you were saying "No, you'd have to put it on to see" and then you talked about the rah rah skirt which I mean, in a sense, you imagined

yourself in it but you were obviously thinking it would look better if they were brown legs.

- Pamela I'd tried them on when I was younger and used to like myself in them but then when my friends used to wear them on they'd got a right nice colour skin and everything, mine always look like a bottle of milk my legs. You know, to me somehow if you've got a rah rah skirt on you don't wear tights on with something like that. You know what I mean. I mean even the really short ones, to me, if I could wear them you don't really wear tights or stockings on with them really. Or I don't think you do.
- Sheila I've got a rah rah dress at home that I've had since I were about 18 and it's got a bodice thing on and I look at it and I think 'did I ever wear that?' I can't believe that I ever wore it you know. I wouldn't dare put it on now, I wouldn't dare.
- Pamela You'll be trying it on tonight.
- IR Well what about you Rebecca. I mean if you were going to buy something do you sort of think of what you might look like before you...?
- Rebecca Some of the time I think I'll have to have that. That's for me. It's me. It's written on. You can do that at home actually. "Yes that's me." My friends do it as well. "It is you." And I say, "Yes that's me". And I'd buy that instantly, but some things I have to try on.
- IR How can you tell when it's you or not?
- Rebecca I don't know. I don't know, it's just an instinct.
- Megan I can do that for my mother actually. If I go shopping with my mother I go, "Oh this will suit you".
- Rebecca "This is you."
- Megan Or I like this or whatever.
- Rebecca It just happens.
- Megan You know, I can tell for my mother.
- Rebecca It just happens and you don't know why.
- IR Interesting. What about you Maureen. Do you have this sort of, I mean can you imagine yourself in something?
- Maureen Not really because I don't know what I'm going to get until I've seen what there is and...
- IR Mind you, the dressmaking I imagine you must, I mean you haven't got the item there have you really, you got the picture?
- Maureen That's right, yes. I mean right now I'm making a skirt and I've just made a suit for my middle daughter. That's really fashionable but I couldn't imagine that on until it was finished though.
- IR Really.



- Maureen Yes because the material wasn't the same as what the pattern was. So it came out different.
- IR Yes. Yes.
- Megan What happens if you don't like it? I mean I'd hate to have to go through all that hard work thinking that I'm making something lovely and try it on and it looks awful on. It must be awful.
- IR She loved it.
- Megan But there must be a chance of that happening.
- Rebecca You've bought a different material.
- Megan Well I mean you go into shops don't you and you look at clothes and you think 'Well I like that', you try it on. It looks horrible on.
- Maureen I've been in about six shops today looking at materials, you know skirt materials, it's got to be right otherwise, I don't just pick any material and run a skirt up.
- Megan No, but what I was saying was you go into a shop, see something, think 'this really looks lovely', try it on and it doesn't look nice. So you're making something up thinking that it looks lovely and I'm just wondering if you ever get to the thing where you try it on and it doesn't look nice after you've gone through all the hard work.
- Maureen No. No. I mean I looked in a shop window today in Lewis's and I thought 'Um that dress could be me maybe on an evening if I've had a few drinks, and I could make that bloody dress', you know.
- Megan Have a few drinks and then put the dress on.
- Megan I think you get to know what you can wear and what you daren't wear and colours and patterns.
- Maureen Yes but on holiday, I mean I wear suede jackets with tassels on and all sorts but I wouldn't dare go to Chapel Allerton in it. I don't know, when I'm on holiday I'm a different person completely you know. I wear really short shorts on holiday and cropped tops and I don't really care but...
- Rebecca Oh I don't go that far.
- IR I'd like you all if you can now to think about something that you've bought recently that's given you a lot of pleasure. Not necessarily clothes, I mean obviously we've talked about clothes, not necessarily clothes. Can you think of something you've bought recently that gave you a lot of pleasure from the buying of it.
- Megan A car.
- IR A car, right. Now how did you actually go about choosing the car?
- Megan Well, actually I went out with my husband on this one occasion and we looked round at a few and different sorts.
- IR Did you have any ideas before you went?

- Megan No not really. No. All I wanted was four doors and a boot. A big boot. And as long as it had these four doors and a big boot I didn't care. I mean I'd had a two door car with a tiny little boot I can never get anything in it, with a pram and everything I could never get anything in it, so that was my criteria. So we went out looking at all different places and then we went for a test drive and that was the one, and it's lovely and that gave me, and it arrived on my birthday.
- Sheila And what did you buy then, come on?
- Megan An Escort Eclipse. Which is in for it's first service.
- IR So you went on a test drive did you?
- Megan We went on a test drive.
- IR And did you then have to choose colours or?
- Megan Well with it, it was a limited edition and it just came in two colours and I quite liked the Bahama Blue but my husband liked the Flambeau Red. So since he wasn't too particular for an Escort. I like them 'cause they're so roomy so I said you can have the, we'll have the Flambeau Red then since we're having the Escort. And that's how we chose it so it was, it's lovely.
- IR And could you imagine yourself in it?
- Megan Well I could do. I mean it was really.... Electric windows.
- Sheila You want to shout at somebody through the windows.
- Megan And you can press the other one down as well. And it came with the electric windows and the sun roof and the lovely radio and above wind backwards and everything. And I felt really cosy in it for once in my life.
- Sheila And a nice hunk pulls up at the side of it and the baby starts crying in the back of it.
- Megan Shove her under the seat. That's what I really...
- IR And you're obviously still pleased thinking about it?
- Megan I am, I'm still pleased thinking about it because I absolutely love it and it was like the first major purchase I've had in, I've had.
- IR Oh that's lovely. What about any of the others of you can you think of anything recently. Not necessarily as spectacular as that but something, it could even be a small item that's given you a lot of pleasure.
- Megan If you saved all the money you've spent on clothes you'd be able to get one.
- Rebecca I've just sold five vehicles. I don't want to know about cars. I've sold my fleet of vans so I'm not into cars this week.
- IR Anything particular, anything else that you've bought recently that's given you a lot of pleasure.



- Megan The kind of thing that I've bought even more recently is this jumper which I'm even more pleased about. I think I'm more pleased about than the car.
- IR Oh that's interesting. Right, so how did you choose that then?
- Megan Well I went to Tradex. This is the second thing I've bought this year. And I went to Tradex and I thought 'oh this is really different for me', because all the time I've been wearing things that go down to my knees. You know jumpers that go down to my knees and I thought 'Oh this is really different', and I really liked it. And I tried to, well I did try to imagine myself in it but I couldn't so I tried it on because I mean it was really different for me, it wasn't plain and it wasn't black. And I went in and I tried it on and I thought 'Well you know I really like this, it's got colour in it', and I thought it looked a bit fashionable. Because I really wanted something that was fashionable, I mean it's alright wearing casual clothes all the time but it's nice on occasions to get yourself something....
- Sheila You need that don't you to drive that Eclipse.
- Megan That's right I do. You're right.
- Sheila You like to buy a new car and cardigan.
- Megan I have to sit on cushions though 'cause I'm too small and I can't get my arm out of the window, and I was really pleased and I thought it looked really trendy, well I thought it looked different any way. Yes I was pleased with it.
- IR What happened when you brought it home. Were you by yourself?
- Megan I was with my mother actually, and I brought it home and I showed my husband it and he liked it as well. He thought it was quite nice.
- IR 'Cause it's always very difficult isn't it to know when shopping trips end, I mean is it when you've actually bought the item?
- Megan No, it's when you wear it.
- IR It's when you wear it, you reckon?
- Rebecca Oh definitely.
- Megan There's plenty of times I've come home with stuff and taken it back the next day. Plenty of times.
- IR Has that happened to any of the others of you, you've bought something and then you have to bring it back?
- Rebecca Yes, I have.
- IR And then you've taken it back.
- Rebecca Luckily I go into town a lot so it's not a problem but I can imagine for some people it is, that can't get.
- IR Do you feel very disappointed?.
- Rebecca Oh totally, wrecked, yes. Couldn't cook or anything.

- IR So upset?
- Rebecca Yes. Thought, 'that's stopping in now that's it'. I wasn't going back to work.
- IR Why do you think, I mean can you think of a particular item where that happened?
- Rebecca No, you just get, like I say a jumper and you think 'Oh no that's not me, I look like a man', you know, it's big and bulky but it looked nice, modern but not for me.
- IR Why do you think it looks different when you're out in the shop than when you get it home?
- Maureen The mirrors.
- Rebecca I wouldn't have tried it on just bought it.
- IR Oh I see so it could be that you hadn't actually tried it on.
- Rebecca It's probably one of them things when you haven't bought anything and you have to run in get something quick and take it home. But I know I'm going back so it's not a problem. I try them on at my leisure usually and take it back.
- Maureen I don't usually take owt back because I usually spent that long looking at this one particular jumper that I'm going to buy, maybe an hour. I'll look at it for half an hour, go to another shop, still come back to the same jumper. Oh I'm going to buy it.
- IR That's interesting.
- Rebecca I usually come back to the one I've seen at first.
- Maureen I love that jumper and even when my friends say, "That's you", they say "That is you", but somebody else they might....
- Rebecca Well that's what I mean, I try and do a little bit different and get it home and, no it's not me, I won't wear that ever it will just go in the wardrobe and waste.
- IR It's interesting that you talk about jumpers, I mean do any of you find that you buy a lot of one particular item of clothing. What?
- Rebecca Skirts.
- Pamela Underwear.
- Rebecca Usually the same style, long floppy skirts.
- IR Skirts. A lot of skirts. And you have a lot of those?
- Rebecca I've got every colour under the sun.
- IR Yes. That's interesting.



Pamela Mine's underwear.

Maureen Black.

Pamela Navy.

IR Your's is underwear.

Rosemary Mine's shoes I think.

IR Do you have a lot of knickers?

Pamela Yes.

Rebecca Oh buy nighties, bras.

Maureen Nice silky ....

Rebecca Caftanny nighties, all big and silky, and I love it.

IR That's interesting. What about you Sheila. Would you say there's anything that you particularly....?

Rebecca ... and shoes, I love shoes.

IR Shoes?

Sheila Shoes. I'll only buy when I need a pair.

Megan Handbags, I've hundreds.

Sheila I'd only buy when I needed a pair. I mean I've got about six pairs of shoes at home and, going out shoes with heels on and I've got this pair of shoes, flat shoes, these are the only pair of flat shoes I possess and I wont buy any more until they're worn out. I never ever buy more than one pair of shoes for through the day.

Megan Handbags. I went through a terrible stage of buying handbags. Yes I'm coming out of it now but I've got cupboards full.

IR Why do you think one does this. Why do we buy an awful lot of one particular item. I mean why would you, were you buying a lot of handbags?

Megan A lot of them kept falling apart and I'd bought quite a few cheap handbags. Well I mean I've always bought cheap handbags, and they kept falling apart so you know, I still kept them in my wardrobe 'cause they might only have a little buckle missing or something like that, so they just built up. Anyway I went out for my birthday and bought myself a handbag and it cost me a blooming fortune but it still stayed in good nick. You know I think what I spent on it I've actually, I really think that I've saved on it because I've not had to buy any more handbags.

IR Why do you think you like buying underwear Pamela, you were mentioning?

Pamela I don't know.

Sheila Don't tell her Pamela!

Pamela Not bras. I hate buying bras.

IR It's often a particular item when people do so.

Pamela Knickers, I don't know.

IR What about you mentioning shoes you were saying, as well.

Rosemary I've got loads of shoes. I'm always buying shoes.

Sheila What size are you?

Rosemary Boxes and boxes of shoes. And I have to have a handbag to match them as well.

IR So when you go out shopping will that be an impulse buy or..?

Rosemary If I see some I like yes I've got to buy them if I've got the money for them and if I haven't I get the money from somewhere. If I use it out of something else I get the money so I can buy the shoes.

IR Even though you know you don't need them as such?

Rosemary No I don't need them. I've got that many.

Sheila But you've got to have them haven't you?

Rosemary I love shoes.

IR Something comes over you, you know, when you're out shopping and you almost go into that sort of state where you've got to have them.

Maureen Well I told my husband one day, when I got back, I mean I'd spent all the, I think I'd spent about £90. I mean I didn't go for anything in particular but I got one thing, got another, got something else, got something for the house. I thought, 'Bloody hell I've blown all my shopping money here', you know and I rang him up and told him you know and then I said to him on the phone I said 'It's a good job I haven't got one of them *Marks and Spencers* cards', because there'd be no end. I'd be like you know, I be in really deep shit I would Kate, I'd be in real deep trouble because I'd be non stop.

Pamela I'm not allowed one.

Rebecca I've never wanted one actually.

Maureen Well I haven't really because I know I'd get into trouble.

Rebecca That's the point, when you've got money you can never find anything you want. You have to buy impulsely don't you else you never get anything. If you've got the cash you never find the item, if you've no cash you usually see the item. If you've no cash but you've got the housekeeping and that's it, you've to buy it then.

IR Do you sometimes think that you shop to reward yourself.



- Rebecca Oh yes. My treat.
- Pamela Oh yes, it's only wages really isn't it.
- Rebecca And I'm there when they're ill and I treat myself.
- IR You treat yourself, yes.
- Megan I only get stuff when I need it.
- Sheila I only get stuff for myself when I need it but if I'm fed up about something I'll go and buy a load of stuff for kids.
- Megan No I'm the same.
- Sheila You know, I think....
- Rebecca I'll buy it for everybody.
- IR It's the satisfaction of buying?
- Sheila If I'm fed up myself I wouldn't personally go out and buy myself something to cheer myself up but I'd go out and I'd spend £30. or £40 on the kids, just like that you know. And it doesn't matter where it's come from.
- Maureen Keep them equal.
- Rosemary Even if I had money to go and buy myself something and couldn't find it I'd spend it on the kids. I'd go without but they'd get something.
- Sheila But it would still relieve that depression wouldn't it because you'd done something, you know.
- Maureen I find if my hair's a mess I don't, you know, I mean it grows really long and it's really horrible and I won't even go in town until I get it cut, and then I'll go in town, I'll come out and I'll have to buy something. I'll buy everything then, I feel marvellous.
- IR Because you're feeling good because you know you look good. That's something like you were saying Megan, isn't it?
- Rebecca Yes, your hair's got to be right. I couldn't go shopping like this. I'd have had to get under the hair this morning. And you see if I bought anything it wouldn't look right but if I did my hair and put makeup on...
- Maureen Oh yes and you've got to have the right shoes on.
- Rebecca and then oh yes that looks nice, yes. Got to be ready for shopping, I'm not ready today.
- IR Just briefly before we finish. Some of you mentioned early on that you wouldn't really go clothes shopping particularly with your husbands, do you think that men shop differently, do you think they know how to shop?
- Pamela He thinks he does. He's in, he's out. An hour. That's getting on the bus, coming home. That's when he's on the bus.
- Sheila And mine's totally different.

- Megan Like to look around. They go to a certain shop or a certain two or three shops and then that's it.
- Sheila My husband is totally different to me. I'll go in and admittedly on a lot of occasions I see something and I'll think, 'I'll have a look round first before I get and then decide'. Now Paul, oh god, he'll go in and he'll say 'I like them, what do you think to that, that's nice', put it on, 'Oh I'm not sure', and he will go in every shop in town for a shirt. You know. Like a women would, you know, and he's not real with it. I mean I've known me go with him places and gone home because I've had enough of him you know.
- Rosemary But it's alright for them to go look in but...
- Sheila But if he's stood with me and I'm picking something it's, "Oh God, how much longer are you going to be, what exactly are you buying here!".
- Megan I don't think I'm very patient if I go into town with somebody when they're looking for something and I'm not. I don't enjoy it.
- Sheila I don't like going with somebody else whose buying something if I'm not buying something.
- Megan No that's right.
- Sheila I had a friend who said "I've got a £100. I'm going for a dress". Well I'd to totally .....
- Megan My sister, when my sister goes shopping, if I ever go shopping with her, she always goes into the sports shops. Always into a jeans shop and I don't like anything like that. I just hate going to town with her, you know, it really spoils it for me.
- IR Do you think, coming back to men, do you think men shop in a different way from women or not?
- Megan Yes. In and out.
- IR Very quick.
- Megan Most of them. I don't think they care about money either. You know, they see something they like, buy it and that's it. Whereas if I saw something I liked I might think well...
- Pamela You might be able to find it cheaper somewhere else.
- Megan That's right and have a look round, but they have no idea about money.
- Sheila Paul never bothers about money.
- IR I mean do you think because of that you get more pleasure from a bargain say or not necessarily?
- Pamela I like to look round because I think there's nothing more annoying if you're buying something and then you see it somewhere else for £2 or £3 cheaper.



- Megan That's what annoys me about *Marks and Spencers* because *Marks and Spencers* stuff is at *Readmans*, and especially the babies clothes and it'll cost me £18 at *Marks and Spencers* and it'll cost me £7 in *Readmans* for the same thing. I begrudge going to *Marks and Spencers* now. In fact I very very rarely go in because I...
- Sheila I went in *Readmans* about a fortnight ago and I bought Shelley like, it's like a little white arran jumper and it's got, I don't know if you've seen them in *Mark's [and Spencers]*, it's got like three little pink roses embroidered on the front, and they had the trousers to go with it. They're like a linen, pink trouser, and for the suit in *Mark's* was £26. and I bought both for £8. in *Readmans* 'cause me friend bought it from *Mark's* and she went "How much!" and went mad. Yes, she said "I've a good mind to take them it back", and it's exactly the same.
- Megan Well it is *Marks and Spencers* yes.
- Sheila They're supposed to be seconds but I've had loads of things and never ever had anything wrong.
- Megan Sorry, I've never had anything wrong neither.
- Pamela They're not passed perfect or something are they.
- Maureen Well *British Home Stores* did that this summer. I bought my little daughter a suit. It was £23. for the top and the trousers and I think it was four weeks later, I don't think they were back at school, and they were half price.
- Sheila Yes. I've done that with curtains, bought..
- Rebecca I do like to try and get a bargain like that, I feel good.
- Maureen And I thought 'Well I know it's in fashion.'
- Megan I like getting a bargain.
- Sheila I always used to when they, not so much with Gavin now 'cause he's too old, but with Shelley and Gavin when he was littler, I'd go in town towards you know when they're getting the summer ranges in and I'd buy them both a coat for the following year. A year older, I would honest because I, you can get them for £10. what they charge about £30. for.
- Megan That's right. That's exactly what I did for Charlotte this year.
- Sheila That parka Gavin's got from *[British] Home Stores*, when they were first in *[British] Home Stores* they were £25. and I bought him that a year before he went to school and it cost me £9.99, and he's had that coat two, we're in the second lot now, he's had that coat two years.
- Rebecca That's a bargain. Not only that. When it comes down to wearing it you don't have to go to town you can get it out of the wardrobe.
- Sheila That's right.
- Rebecca Save the hassle as well.
- Megan That's the only time I've ever bought..

- Sheila Children's clothes because I don't know if they're going to grow into it and out of them before they actually get chance to wear them it you know what I mean. But coats, I mean you can always get away a coat slightly longer in the leg, longer in the arms, so if you buy them a good year older or more than they actually are..
- Maureen With boys you're alright but girls, with girls..
- Rebecca 'Cause you buy those like parkas that pull in at the waist so that they don't look big on them.
- Sheila Well I bought Michelle's coat, with double cuffs on, she's three and half now, she starts school next September and I've got her school coat now from *Marks and Spencers* which was £15.
- Maureen Does she like it?
- Sheila She likes it but it's really really long on her. It's like what I call a raincoat. They're beige. They've got a right bright lining inside and I don't know if you've seen them. It's down here on her and arms are down here but by September it'll be just right.
- Maureen But they're so fussy girls aren't they?
- Sheila She'll wear it believe you me.
- Pamela And like it or not.
- Sheila She will wear it.
- IR I'll wind up the session here because I'm aware that you've got to be away for three. I've got a few bits and pieces that I want to give you and you have to sign for before you go so we'll sort that out now, but can I thank you all very very much for the help you've been. It may not seem sort of you've been of help but to me that is really an awful lot of help in terms of talking about shopping and one of the things that we are doing is perhaps doing some further research work. And it might be that we might like further help from you so as I go round would you like to let me know if you would mind if we contacted you again to do any further research. Have a think about it and meanwhile I'll give out something that will help you go do some more shopping.



# APPENDIX ONE

## SHOPPING TRANSCRIPT: TAPE E

Status ABC  
Sex Women  
Age Range 35-44

IR Just to introduce myself. I'm called Kate Spencer and I don't know quite what you were told when you were recruited for this discussion group but the subject we are talking about today is shopping. Very generally it's not a piece of research like you sometimes hear about that manufacturers conduct, you know, for Persil or whatever. It's in fact for university. I work as a freelance researcher for the University of York and we're doing some very general research work into shopping patterns. So it's slight different sorts of research that we're doing. I should say before we start I'll be using a tape recorder, I hope you don't mind but it does just mean that I can, obviously not have to take notes and I can concentrate on chatting to you while the research is going on. There is in fact also another tape recorder behind this mirror and also a video camera would you believe, it all sound very sort of jet setting but in fact it's literally only because afterwards when I'm looking through what you've said I can't always work out whose said what and it's not used in any other way we just literally have to put names to faces and things. It's true absolutely. Specifically because it's academic work you know it's what you say that we are interested in. Have any of you been to a group discussion before at all.

IR You've been to one right? It would help me probably if I was just to go round quickly and ask you names now so that I know sort of whose saying what.

Emma Cooke, Elenor, Sharon, Virginia, Karen, Tina, Lucy.

IR Right and I'm Kate. So the subject we're talking about is shopping very broadly. If I can sort of start off asking, I mean how often do you shop?

Lucy Every day.

Karen Every day.

Virginia Nearly every day.

Emma Nearly every day.

IR So, yes, very common. I mean, and when do you shop, certain time in the day?

Emma Well during the week before I go into work is a convenient time.

IR Yes, yes.

Elenor For me Thursday mornings. I only go the once a week.

IR So that would be, yes, your main day?

Sharon Afternoons.

IR Afternoons, now that's interesting. Why do you choose the afternoons?

Sharon I don't work on an afternoon.

IR Practical reasons.

Virginia Mostly Friday.

IR Right, and why do you think you wait for Friday?

Virginia Because it's in between working.

IR So it's sort of like the end of one sort of type of work and yes.

Karen Well I shop on a Thursday the main shop but usually after school most days, usually call in for something.

IR Right so that's literally because you're in the car anyway?

Karen That's just, no because I walk.

IR You walk?

Karen So that's mostly then.

IR Yes, yes.

Another person enters the room.

IR Hello. Can I just ask you your name?

Angela Norton.

IR Sorry.

Angela Norton.

IR Norton, gosh that's an unusual name isn't it?

Angela My christian name, Angela.

IR Oh Angela. Oh I'm sorry I thought that was your first name.

Angela Oh no.

IR That's lovely thanks Angela, and I'm Kate. Just very quickly, we're doing some research work on shopping and attitudes to shopping. It's for the University of York and we are recording it, I hope you don't mind but your words for posterity. So just talking generally about when people shop so..?

Tina Yes, my main shop is a Wednesday afternoon and then occasionally other days if I go into town.

IR Yes, that would be a different sort of shopping the?

Tina Yes. But you household shop you mean?



- IR Well is that what you're talking about?
- Tina Yes, Wednesday afternoon. Occasionally an odd morning.
- IR Right. What about you Lucy?
- Lucy Well my main shopping's a Thursday or a Friday morning. It depends and then just for fresh bread and that during the week. It's early morning then when I've dropped the little one off to school.
- IR Right.
- Lucy And then if I go to town that could be Tuesday, for clothes shopping then.
- IR And how often would you shop Angela?
- Angela Every day.
- IR Every day. And when abouts in the day do you shop or doesn't it matter?
- Angela Morning.
- IR In the morning, and is there any reason for that?
- Angela Mainly on a Thursday I do the big shopping and then usually bread and small bits and pieces that run out.
- IR And where do you go all of you. I mean do you go to different places or would you always go to the same place?
- Emma Yes. Main shopping Friday, I go to a different place during the week when I'm at work.
- IR Yes. Where would you go on Friday?
- Emma Friday it varies. Sometimes the supermarket, sometimes just to *Seacroft Centre*, but then during the week I shop near.
- IR Local shops are they or..?
- Emma Yes. Local to work.
- IR Right. What about you Elenor?
- Elenor Thursdays always at *Tesco's*. I always go to *Tesco's*.
- IR Yes. Why do you go to *Tesco*?
- Elenor It's the only place that I feel that I can get everything that I want and don't have to go out during the week. You know I get enough bread to put in the freezer so it lasts me for the complete week.
- IR Yes. 'Cause you're doing a weekly shopping, I imagine that's important?

Elenor I went to *Grandways* once and after going round I went and put everything I'd got back on the shelf.

Tina I quite agree.

Elenor It was an absolutely disgusting place.

Virginia Was it the *Grandways* down here?

Elenor Yes, yes.

Virginia Was it?

IR Why did you not like it?

Elenor I thought everything was thrown together and I thought it was dirty.

Tina Yes.

Virginia It's not as nice as *Tesco* is it?

Karen I quite agree.

Elenor It's too squashed, and everything's thrown on the shelves. It's a horrible place.

IR So it made you feel that you didn't want to shop there?

Elenor I found I was feeling more angry as I went round, you know, because I couldn't find anything, whereas *Tesco's* is all so easily laid out.

Virginia The new one you mean don't you? At Roundhay Road?

Elenor Yes.

Virginia The girls on the tills, no hassle with that. When you get to *Grandway's* there's no prices on the goods.

Lucy There's only two assistants on, it can be busy with only two check-outs.

Elenor You've got to cash your cheques before. Instead of paying by cheque you've got to cash your cheque or get your cheque verified. Stamped and everything.

IR So it all makes it very difficult. What about you Sharon?

Sharon I go to *Tesco's*, but locally not the big one.

IR Right.

Sharon But I don't do a big main shop because I'm on my own, so I do what I need at the time. You know, I don't have a big weekly shop so sometimes it's quite a few things and other times it only the odd thing.

IR Do you enjoy it?

Sharon Not particularly no, no.



- Tina I don't enjoy shopping, I hate it.
- Sharon No, I love clothes shopping which I do on a Tuesday.
- IR Ah, we'll come to that later.
- Sharon No.
- IR Not the food. What about you Angela, where would you shop?
- Angela I usually shop at *Grandways* or *Gateways* because we haven't got a car. It's nearest.
- IR It's closest, yes.
- Angela If I had a car I don't think, you know I think we'd go to *Asda* or somewhere like that.
- IR Or somewhere further, yes.
- Virginia Actually I go locally to *Grandways* although I'm like on my own but if I were, you know, shopping for a big family I'd certainly go to Roundhay Road *Tesco's* myself. And I agree with what you say about *Grandways* but I still go back and do it, but I agree with what you're saying, because sometimes I've gone back running into the shop to bring something that's not price and I agree with all what you say that it's you know. I don't do a big enough shop to go to *Tesco* but I would go to *Tesco* definitely if I did a big shop 'cause it's cleaner and it's easier and everything.
- IR Sorry, Karen.
- Karen Well I go to *G.T. Smiths*, which is at Meanwood.
- IR I've heard of it, I haven't been in there.
- Karen I don't particularly like it but it's convenient. My husband works late so obviously I don't drive, so I have to wait for him to take me. The outlying supermarkets are busy and traffic, so we go there but I wouldn't say I'm enamoured with it really.
- IR No, no.
- Karen And I shop in Chapel Allerton quite a lot, locally, during the week. So you know, that's it.
- Tina I go to *Tesco's* Wednesday and do as much as I can so I have very little to do until the next Wednesday and I like that.
- Karen You drive which...
- Tina I find Wednesday afternoon's quiet.
- Elenor I don't drive. I walk in and then I come back by taxi.
- Tina Do you really?
- Karen You're so determined to go there that you'd..?

- Elenor Yes. If you'd a chance of shopping...or walking to *Tesco's* you'd walk to *Tesco's*.
- Tina You can do it all. I find I can do it nearly all on Wednesday afternoon.
- Karen Well I think that.
- Emma Yes I do.
- Elenor For the week.
- Emma I always have to shop in between.
- Elenor Twelve litres of milk and...
- Karen Oh you do everything and you really go to town with it.
- Elenor Yes.
- Karen Really.
- IR And you can pick up Taxi's easily can you from there? So it's all quite convenient.
- Elenor What's more it's worth it.
- Karen 'Course it is.
- Elenor They charge you £1.50 to get home. It's worth it for me.
- IR What about you Lucy?
- Lucy Well I shop at *Grandways* and I agree with what you were saying. I mean manys the week and I go in and there's four or five things that I just cannot get in there and then I've got to go into *Gateways* and that, but I have been to *Tesco's* once on my own and I liked it but I've just learnt to drive and I don't like parking. Unless it's empty, really empty.
- Elenor But that'll come though won't it?
- Lucy Yes. Then I'll go there every week 'cause it's normally/it'll be just as easy to go there and I like it. I like the selection and it's clean and everything.
- IR Do any of you go to *Sainsbury's* at all?
- Elenor I do some times.
- Sharon Occasionally I've been in *Sainsbury's*. I like *Sainsbury's*.
- Tina I do.
- Virginia I can't find my way around there although there although I really like *Tesco's*, it's a good shop. It's clean and everything.
- Karen It's always busy at *Sainsbury's*.



- Sharon The *Safeway's* in Oakwood is a nice shop.
- IR Oh yes.
- Sharon That is lovely. The small *Safeway's*.
- Lucy Yes.
- Sharon That's nice, yes.
- IR So do you, I mean when you talk about shopping, all of you I think straight-a-way talked about food shopping or household shopping. Do you like that sort of shopping?
- Virginia Oh I do.
- Sharon No.
- Angela No.
- Emma No.
- IR No you don't. Why not?
- Emma It's alright for the basic things but coming to sort of getting together for meals, what to do for a change.
- IR So it's that really. It's the idea that's hard, that you find difficult?
- Emma I think that after a lot of years you're just getting a bit...the pleasure's going out of it I think.
- IR Yes. And you two are nodding, Elenor?
- Emma Oh yes. It's a necessity. You've got to do it.
- Elenor You've got to do it.
- Emma You stare at the fridge and you think. Just something jump out, you know.
- Tina I've often made a list. We'll have this, this and this and got there and 'don't really fancy it now'. You know, and I'll probably bring back something totally different. I must admit if it's sort of spread out and displayed nice it can change your mind.
- IR Yes. You were saying you enjoy it Elenor? Why, what sort of pleasure do you think you get?
- Elenor I don't know. Probably if I'm in a bad mood I have a walk round *Tesco's* it makes me feel very good...
- Karen I go shopping like that.
- Elenor ...putting it away and my freezers absolutely stacked and my cupboards are stacked.
- IR Why do you think you enjoy it?

- Elenor I don't really know. I'm queer I suppose.
- IR A lot of people do.
- Elenor I do.
- Sharon Clothes shopping I like.
- Elenor I don't like clothes shopping. I hate it.
- IR Well we'll come on to that because it's yes a nice interesting area. What do you enjoy about shopping do you think. Going into the store, what's, is it before you go shopping?
- Elenor I don't know. I've got two children and a vegetarian husband and it's nice trying to get things that are different for them. I go to *Weight Watchers* so my stuff that I buy for me is pretty limited so we're all, it's like buying three different sets of foods for one house.
- IR So it's sort of a challenge. Yes.
- Elenor Like sometimes, you know, I think I'd love somebody else to take it over for a week, but given the chance I wouldn't let them.
- IR No.
- Elenor 'Cause I do enjoy it.
- IR A few of the rest of you I could hear on this side were saying that you enjoyed it as well.
- Virginia I do. I enjoy spending money though. I enjoy all shopping. I enjoy spending money.
- IR Yes. And what is it do you think about spending that..?
- Virginia I just enjoy looking at things. I enjoy spending money and I enjoy filling your cupboards at home and although I live on my own it still gives me pleasure buying food and everything.
- Emma Oh I love to see a full cupboard.
- Elenor I do.
- Karen Yes.
- Tina I like to see a cupboard but within days they've been through everything, you know. It's disheartening.
- Karen I think that what it is. Just sort of, for a few hours..
- Tina ...it's lovely. There's fruit in the bowl and crisps and everything, and then they've cleared it out.
- IR Are there certain types of things, sorry, to come back to you Virginia, you like to buy, more?



- Virginia Well food, I'm a basic eater for food. I'm not one that buys fancy things. I think I just like going round shops.
- Lucy Shopaholic.
- Virginia Yes, I am.
- IR Does anyone else, does anyone else feel that, they like going round shops?
- Lucy Well I like to go yes.
- Tina Yes.
- Karen ... when I walk out and things like that.
- Lucy If I could afford to shop in *Marks and Spencers'* foodhall.
- Tina Yes, I would.
- Karen I know I would, it's lovely.
- Lucy You see that's a treat if we...
- Sharon You can do it if there's only one of you. Yes.
- Lucy But with four it's expensive isn't it?
- Karen Yes.
- Sharon ...which I do two or three days a week probably eat from *Marks and Spencers*.
- Lucy Well when you're on your own you can do.
- Sharon Yes.
- IR What's so good about *Marks and Spencers*?
- Lucy Oh everything. It's clean, it's presented nice, well everything.
- Karen That's it.
- Sharon It looks good.
- Lucy No waste.
- Virginia I think when they're going to build a foodhall at *Marks and Spencers* up the road here and I think that will, locally, that will pull you a bit instead of going into town.
- IR Yes, yes 'cause you've got to go right into the centre haven't you?
- Virginia I think once that's built I think it will...
- Angela It's carrying food shopping that gets to me.
- Emma Yes.

- Angela            Getting it home.
- Elenor            *Marks and Spencers* do a beautiful range for a vegetarian.
- IR                Do they?
- Elenor            Where I will do most of our shopping at *Tesco's* I would get quite a lot of my husbands' things from there because they do a lot of individual things rather than me messing around. You know baking stuff for him, or cooking.
- IR                So finding the right thing?
- Elenor            Yes. There's no problem. There's loads of things for vegetarians.
- IR                Now we've talked sort of briefly about food shopping. A number of you when I said you know, "do you like it?", mentioned perhaps other types of shopping as well and Sharon you've been saying clothes shopping.
- Sharon           I love that. I could do it all the time.
- IR                Why do you like clothes shopping so much do you think?
- Sharon           I don't know. I just like clothes. I don't know, I just love it. I do. I'm an impulse buyer.
- IR                So do you plan a shopping trip. Would you go on a certain day or..?
- Sharon           Oh no. Tuesdays my day off so I do tend to go on a Tuesday.
- IR                Right.
- Sharon           But no I don't plan anything I just go.
- IR                And whereabouts would you go?
- Sharon           Leeds or Harrogate usually.
- IR                Into the centre?
- Sharon           Yes.
- IR                Yes. And would it be a whole day?
- Sharon           No. It could be if I went to one of these *Metrocentres* which I would love. You know the...
- Karen            ...*Meadowhall*.
- Sharon           *Meadowhall*. That is heaven to me.
- IR                And what about the rest of you, I mean, what are the sort of aspects of shopping do you like. I mean, do you like clothes shopping or..?
- Karen            Oh I like clothes shopping.
- Virginia          Yes.



- Tina I go and look.
- Virginia ...clothes shopping what I need and, I don't think I'm really an impulse buyer.
- IR So would you plan a sort of trip that you were going. Would you know Virginia what you were going to buy?
- Virginia Well I mostly go to Leeds. I go to Harrogate occasionally. I don't go to the centres at all. I'm a *Schofields* buyer you know, I go to the same shops in town as well I'm afraid for clothes.
- IR And Angela you were mentioning you liked clothes shopping I think?
- Angela *C & A* and *Littlewoods* is mine because they're reasonable I think for children.
- IR Yes. When you say clothes shopping would you also think of enjoying clothes shopping for children?
- Angela No, I don't think I enjoy it that greatly.
- IR More for yourself?
- Angela It's usually when they need stuff you know.
- Tina Do you enjoy it without them?
- Angela Yes.
- Tina Without the kids it's lovely. Shopping for the kids.
- IR So you prefer it by yourself?
- Tina Yes.
- IR Yes.
- Tina I like to look round.
- Lucy Well I've got, well she's nearly twelve and we always end up falling out together.
- Tina That's right.
- IR So would you go by yourself to get her things or..?
- Lucy Well I don't pick them any more now for her I just wait for the school holidays and take her then. *Marks and Spencers* are not fashionable enough now for twelve year olds, and we've got to go to *Tammy Girl* and *C & A* because twelve year olds don't wear smock dresses and that you see. But the little one she's nearly eight. *Marks and Spencers* is fine for her. They're quite with it you see, but a few of the twelve year olds are going to write to *Marks and Spencers* and tell them that you know they've not the fashion for twelve year olds.
- IR Yes.

- Lucy            So we always end up falling out so it's easier just to wait for the school holiday, take her in, and think 'right you pick what you want', 'cause if I bring anything home it's never right.
- IR              What-about the rest of you. Are there any of the rest of you have children?
- Emma          Yes.
- IR              Yes, and would she..?
- Elenor        I must agree about *Marks and Spencers*. My daughter's eleven next month and it's very much the same for her.
- Lucy           From eleven it goes off.
- Elenor        Well they seem to go for modern type things.
- Lucy           And the petite range, they're too big in the waist for them although they're the length and everything, you see so there's something amiss with *Marks [and Spencer]*.
- Elenor        She fancy the cropped tops and camisole tops and them things, in silk no less.
- IR              Wow.
- Elenor        Ten year old. Find them thrown on the bedroom floor you know.
- Lucy           You see *Tammy Girl's* got the fashion but the quality is no good. Whereas you get the quality in *Marks and Spencers*.
- Tina           *Marks and Spencers*.
- Lucy           But it's not fashionable.
- Karen          Do you go in *Top Shop*?
- Lucy           Yes well it's part of *Snob*.
- Karen          I said don't you go in *Top Shop*?
- Lucy           They don't have a children's do they.
- Karen          Oh no, not as young as that, no.
- IR              Coming back to sort of shopping that you enjoy yourselves, that's pleasurable for you. Do you have to be in a certain mood, I mean whether it's food shopping or clothes shopping whatever. Do you have to be in a certain mood before you go do you think?
- Lucy           For clothes yes.
- Tina           Yes, I think so.
- IR              What sort of mood?



- Lucy Well I can go in town and if I'm not in the right frame of mind I can come back with nothing and then I'm mad with myself. Yes. For going and wasting a morning and coming back with nothing. I think you've got to be geared up and know what you're looking for.
- Virginia I think sometimes you're feeling you're wasting your time. You've been in town an hour you think, 'well I'm just wasting, I'm not in the mood today'.
- IR What sort of mood do you think you need to be in Virginia, what?
- Virginia Well a nice mood.
- IR A happy mood?
- Virginia Yes, a happy mood.
- Karen Patience.
- IR Sorry?
- Karen Have patience, haven't you.
- Lucy Not be watching the clock.
- Tina Yes time.
- Lucy And depending on the assistants in the shop as well yes. They can put you off can't they.
- IR That's interesting.
- Lucy And how you look on the day as well can sometimes can put you off.
- IR That's interesting.
- Virginia Yes. Sometimes you can try things on and nothing suits you and then other days and I think if you get that feel about yourself you might as well come home because nothing will suit you then. Do you feel like that?
- Sharon Yes.
- IR That is interesting. I remember you saying that you felt very angry Elenor when you were in *Grandways* and that obviously was sort of, I don't know if it was the time wasted or..?
- Elenor I think it was really.
- IR It wasn't obviously the right mood to be shopping?
- Elenor I wasn't just go and put the stuff back that I'd got in the trolley and was going to leave it.
- IR Just leave it.
- Elenor I was going to say well it's a pigsty anyway.

IR That's right.

Karen Did you fill your trolley? You didn't fill it?

Elenor No. There wasn't enough on the shelves.

Karen There wasn't enough to fill it.

Elenor I hate clothes shopping, you see I would much prefer to look through a catalogue than go into town.

IR So that would give you more pleasure would it?

Elenor I don't really find any pleasure in clothes shopping at all.

IR Right.

Elenor Even when I went for my wedding outfit a couple of years ago you know, I didn't enjoy going for that.

IR Why do you think?

Elenor I don't know.

IR This is interesting for us to know what you don't like.

Karen Do you not like trying on?

Elenor I don't like trying on.

Karen No, I don't like trying on. I like *Marks and Spencers* 'cause you can bring them home you see.

Tina Yes. Go about three times.

Sharon I sometimes think if I'm a bit down, oh I go treat myself to something and it sort of boosts me up.

Tina Oh yes, yes.

Virginia Spending money you see.

IR So if even if you're not feeling happy, you know you're in a shopping mood?

Sharon It does me good. I'm happy if I come home with something I like.

Tina I feel lovely.

Lucy I agree with that.

Tina I do.

IR What about you Angela?

Angela I don't like shopping when it's busy.

IR No.



Angela Saturdays, weekends.

Elenor No I don't like Saturday shopping at all.

IR What about your mood. I mean do you have to...?

Angela Yes, if I'm feeling down definitely.

IR You'd enjoy going shopping then? It would give you...?

Angela Yes definitely.

IR And is it, I mean if you are either down or feeling in a good mood or whatever is it the thought of going shopping that will put you in a good mood or do you actually have to be out there shopping to feel elated?

Angela I look forward to it.

IR You look forward to it yes. It's anticipation?

Virginia I'm going into town tomorrow and I'm looking forward to it now.

IR That's interesting.

Virginia I'm hoping it's a nice day and...

IR Yes, that's interesting. And with you Angela is there anything, do you anticipate it or would it..?

Angela No.

IR No.

Angela If there's something needed or I need something then I go you know. Sometimes I'll go up to town if I just get a bit fed up you know, just to get out.

IR Yes, yes.

Virginia Into town.

Angela Just for a walk round.

Virginia And if you go early in the morning that's nice. If you get into town about ten or half past nine it's really nice. Before the lunch rush hour.

IR Yes.

IR Just thinking of other, I mean we've talked a bit about food, a bit about household shopping, are there any other purchases say apart from food or fashion that would give you pleasure?

Sharon I like looking round furniture shops.

Tina I do.

Karen Yes.

Sharon I love it. I could spend hours.

Emma Gardening.

IR Gardening, furniture.

Virginia China.

Tina If you go to *Clover* and have a look round there. Just nice to stroll round.

Lucy Yes it is.

Tina There's all sorts.

IR Yes. Now why some of these other areas do you think. What do they give you pleasure, I mean why..?

Emma Why gardening.

IR Why gardening?

Emma I can totally lose myself in a garden centre.

IR Do you enjoy gardening Emma, is that a hobby?

Emma Yes, I don't profess to be a good gardener. I suppose it's all pretty basic really but I just love it. Looking at the different plants and just being amongst them. Just if it's just for half an hour I feel totally different when I've been and had a look round.

IR Yes. And would you plan that or would it be something you've just suddenly decided to do?

Emma It might just be the day before that's all, we'll probably decide to go but you know that's all. But yes, yes I get quite a kick out of it. Yes I like that.

IR And is it just the looking that gives you the kick?

Emma Oh I should probably purchase something. I cannot resist that.

Karen A plant or something.

IR So you get pleasure at the purchase or pleasure looking?

Emma Oh yes. Both. And I like to go to different ones.

IR So it's not like the food shopping where you like to know the lay out or something. You like variety?

Emma Variety, yes.

IR Well that's interesting.

Emma I think that's the main thing.



- IR           What about you Elenor, were you saying anything?
- Elenor       I would say plants, I don't particularly like furniture shops or china or anything like.
- IR           Or other household goods.
- Elenor       Nice plants. I have a plant fetish. I've got 19, my daughter told me on Sunday, in the front room.
- Tina         In one room.
- IR           Goodness that's lovely isn't it.
- Elenor       I do love plants very much.
- IR           Yes. And how often would you buy a plant or..?
- Elenor       I bought three last week, and two the week before, that's five in a fortnight.
- IR           And where would you buy them from?
- Elenor       Um in the market really. I got most of them. I got a few from *Marks and Spencers* but mainly in the market 'cause there's a few different stalls with different things on.
- IR           Why do you think you like buying them. Why do you think you have so many?
- Elenor       I think I get a lot of pleasure out of plants. I love polishing them and everything, I really do.
- IR           Is it the colour of them or..?
- Elenor       No 'cause I only buy green ones. More often than not, green leaves. I'm not a lover of flowering plants. I have two that flower and that's all. No my pride and joy is my cheese plant but it's not very well at the moment. It's letting me down a bit. I were looking at this one actually.
- Emma        I've been sat watching that.
- IR           It's interesting actually, you mention you bought so many. Some people do have certain items that they like buying a lot of. I don't know if any of the rest of you have..?
- Virginia     I like flowers.
- IR           Flowers, Virginia, yes.
- Virginia     I can't go, ever go in Leeds market without...
- Karen        Coming out with some.
- Virginia     ...I can't do it. I think if I had to choose between a loaf of bread and a bunch of flowers I'd have the flowers.
- IR           Yes. Why do you think that?

Virginia Because I think they make your house look nice and they make you feel better.

IR And is it the colour of them that you'd go for or the perfume?

Virginia Not particularly the perfume no, I like daffodils,

IR Interesting. Sharon is there anything else that you like that, you were saying..?

Sharon I like most shopping.

IR Most shopping?

Sharon Apart from food shopping. I mean I obviously shop for food but it's a necessity where as the other I do enjoy and I can look round anywhere really. Garden Centres, anything.

Karen Yes I can.

Virginia Yes.

Sharon And I mean I can ring a friend up and say, "Oh I'm fed up do you fancy going off?", and we'll go round probably a few of them.

Virginia Just look round.

Sharon Just spend an hour, have a coffee, and it's lovely. I love it.

Karen Yes, I like that.

IR Would you prefer to go with a friend shopping?

Sharon Yes I would.

Elenor Yes.

Sharon I can go on my own but I do prefer it yes, and then stop somewhere for lunch.

Virginia It's a day out.

Tina If I'm going for something I prefer to be on my own really.

IR Yes.

Tina Something definite. 'Cause if I'm with somebody I don't get to look at all that I want to look at.

IR No. People are often quite different in these sorts of things aren't they, when you prefer to be with someone or not.

Elenor I prefer to be in the house on my own.

Emma Anti-social.

Virginia Turn that camera off me.



- IR The lovely thing is that everyone's so different aren't they?
- Tina Yes they are aren't they. Some are odd, some are normal, some are...
- Karen I like to be in the house on my own.
- Tina It doesn't bother me.
- Elenor When you've got children it's so nice and peaceful.
- Lucy I enjoy it.
- IR The contrast. What things did you say Angela that you found really enjoyable shopping?
- Angela Just mainly clothes shopping.
- IR Mainly clothes, for yourself?
- Angela Yes.
- IR Yes.
- Angela If I was buying clothes for myself, I don't find buying for the kids very enjoyable.
- IR No. Would you be with someone when you're shopping for your own things?
- Angela No. No. If I'm buying for the kids then I've got them but it's not very enjoyable.
- Tina It's a nightmare isn't.
- IR Virginia you were mentioning flowers but I think you also said house, did you say furniture, no china?
- Virginia Yes well I like house...it's just like going back to you liking all shopping. I can walk round *Clover* for ages and I just like looking at everything. Everything for your house and for yourself.
- Karen Furniture and all that.
- Virginia Especially if you're doing something with your house and then I like to just go looking all the time. 'Cause I'm doing a room at the moment and it's on my mind all the time thinking, 'could do that tomorrow', until it's done and then I'll go off it a bit then. I mean I won't go off what I've done and then I'll stop looking there for a while.
- IR No. So do you sort of think of things you're looking for?
- Virginia I know exactly what I'm looking for.
- IR Right.
- Virginia Unfortunately sometimes.

IR Yes.

Virginia When people say they've an open mind I don't know what they mean when they say they've an open mind 'cause I've never an open mind.

IR No.

Virginia I know exactly what I want and that's as bad as I suppose.

Karen It's probably worse than having an open mind.

Virginia Yes.

Sharon But I love junk shops as well. They're my favourite of all to look in. Antiques shops, I can't afford the things in the antique shops but I love it. I can spend hours, hours and hours looking round antique shops. And when my husband was alive we used to go out for days...

Virginia To do that.

Sharon ...just looking round antique shops yes.

Virginia Like would you go right up to Skipton and places like that where it's all nice?

Sharon Middleham and all over the place and I used to love it.

IR Do you find that you've bought a lot of things then or was it just..?

Sharon Junk, not worth a light but I loved it.

IR No, no.

Karen You've got pleasure out of it.

Sharon Yes.

IR That's interesting.

Sharon And that was before, everyone seems to have jumped on the bandwagon now, but that was when you could get things for coppers.

IR Did it give you, was it the pleasure that having a bargain do you think?

Sharon Yes, a lot of it, yes.

IR Or was it finding something you liked or..?

Sharon As well as, yes a little bit of both really. Bought a lot of stuff that I didn't really want.

Emma That's were the impulse bit comes in.

IR Yes, yes. Then you come back and you realise...

Karen Where shall I put it?



- Sharon Especially with ornaments. I say "what have I bought that for, I've enough?"
- IR What about you Karen. You said furniture I think?
- Karen Yes I like to look round furniture shops and like junk shops.
- IR What sort of furniture shops would you go to?
- Karen Any. I like *Clover*, that's *Jentique*, you can look at everything which is and they've got a good...
- Sharon But there are very few furniture shops now.
- Karen ...range.
- Sharon They're not like they used to be.
- Karen I like going to *Macro*, places like that, that have everything. Clothes you know. They don't have furniture really but yes. Places where you can spend a long time you know meandering about.
- IR Browse.
- Karen I don't particularly like towns, having to go in a shop and come out and you know. I don't sort of like that.
- Elenor You don't get a chance to look before the assistants are coming on you anywhere do you?
- Karen No, no, and you're hot and...but I like big. I've never been to *Meadowhall* but I'd like to go there.
- Sharon I've not been to *Meadowhall*. I've been to the other one, the *Metrocentre*.
- Karen Which is that one in...
- Sharon That's the one in Gateshead.
- Karen Oh Gateshead yes. I've been to *Ridings*. Have you been to that one at Wakefield? That's all under cover and...yes. So yes, just general really you know furniture and house, I like looking for household things. I like to look for curtains and things like that.
- Virginia Yes. Kitchen shops are nice.
- Karen Rather than clothes.
- Virginia I like kitchen shops. I do.
- Karen Better than clothes really.
- IR And are you looking for a kitchen at the moment.
- Karen No.

- Sharon Utensils things like, different colours. I can remember years ago when we didn't have *Habitat* in Leeds I used to go to York and my first shop used to be *Habitat*. I used to fly in *Habitat*, even if I came out with a spoon or a fork I'd been in *Habitat*. Or a dishcloth or oven gloves. And I won't go to *Habitat* in Leeds now. Never go near it.
- Virginia No I don't, not very often.
- Sharon It used to be so popular didn't it, *Habitat*.
- Tina At that time it was so modern.
- Virginia Everything was new wasn't it in *Habitat* in the beginning.
- Elenor A bit further out now.
- Sharon I don't know, I never go in it.
- Karen It's on Briggate.
- Elenor I know, but it's not the sort of shop it used to be is it?
- Karen Well you pass it and then when you look up you think 'oh', you don't sort of know it's there. It's not well...
- IR Do any of you get any pleasure from buying perfume?
- Elenor Oh yes.
- Tina Yes.
- IR You do, that's interesting.
- Lucy I love going round spraying...
- Tina Oh I do. I spray ... in town.
- Virginia It's expensive though isn't it perfume. You don't seem to treat yourself as much with it now because it's gone up to £30, £20 odd and £30. So you can't treat yourself as much like you used to be able to with that.
- IR Yes that's true, some of them are very expensive aren't they. But you enjoy that?
- Lucy Oh I love that yes.
- IR And would you always buy or is it just the process of..?
- Lucy No I just like to look and you know have a squirt of something new like I did yesterday and it was lovely. Then I have a look round at prices.
- Virginia And walk away.
- Lucy Dream and order it for my birthday present.
- IR I mean people tend sometimes to think that shoppings all to do with buying but it doesn't have to be does it?



Virginia No.

Lucy No 'cause I do like a nice one you know rather than a few I could afford to buy all the time.

IR What about music, do any of you shop for records or..?

Elenor Yes I like records and perfume.

Karen I don't particularly shop for records.

Tina I like, Christmas for the kids that's all.

Lucy Yes I do.

Virginia If I hear a tape that I really like I'll go for it but I never look.

IR Well what about jewellery that..?

Virginia Oh I like that.

Tina I like jewellery but then again I don't...

Virginia I pass on that one.

Karen I like to look at it but there again it's not a thing.., I never look in a jewellery shop.

Lucy I don't like to go into a jewellers because I feel when you in to the counter you feel pressured then to buy something and I don't like to be in that situation.

IR There are different jewellery chains now aren't there, I mean not necessarily the sort of pucker jewellers. Where you can get sort of costume...

Virginia I think now costume jewellery has come back. That makes you look more than when you were all just into gold and that.

IR That's right.

Karen Nobody's got a fetish for that sort of thing.

Tina No.

IR No, well we'll pass on that. Do any of you enjoy shopping for other people. I mean you mentioned your food shopping for your husband and children. Do any of the rest of you enjoy shopping for others at all?

Virginia Yes. Everybody else.

Karen Clothes shopping.

Lucy Oh you do don't you?

Tina I love to shop for everybody and always put myself last which most women do. But you get more pleasure out of buying for my husband and the kids.

- IR Sorry just one at a time otherwise I won't be able to pick it up. Sorry Emma you were saying you get pleasure from giving gifts.
- Emma Um but if somebody said "well would you go to town and get this, this", no I'm not sure that my taste would be the same, but I quite enjoy for presents yes.
- IR Why do you think that, why do you think you enjoy it for the presents?
- Emma Oh I think I just, I don't know I just like giving other people pleasure so therefore that's my reason.
- IR Yes, do you ask them what they want or would you..?
- Emma I'd probably do a little bit of fishing. I wouldn't ask them sort of straight out 'cause that spoils the surprise. And were a family that likes surprises so...
- IR So you'd actually put a lot of your own thinking into it.
- Emma Into it yes.
- IR Anyone else like buying for others in that way.
- Karen Yes.
- Tina I like surprises and I like to get surprises.
- Virginia Yes.
- Sharon I do but buying for other people if I know their taste I don't mind but I hate it when you think 'oh God what can I buy them', 'cause you do tend to buy your tastes.
- Virginia Yes I know.
- Sharon Often people don't have your taste, it's quite hard sometimes.
- IR That's interesting. Yes I know other people I've spoken to they say it's nice if you can imagine what someone might want, when you can't that's when it becomes difficult isn't it?
- Sharon Like mother-in-laws and things like that.
- IR What about joint purchases. I mean I suppose it would be bigger items probably something like a car or have you ever found that pleasurable buying a very big purchase that you might be having to do with someone else. I mean not necessarily obviously?
- Tina No really.
- Karen No.
- Sharon No I don't like spending money on cars.
- Elenor No I don't.



- Sharon It's a necessity.
- Virginia Yes I think that.
- Sharon Just something that has to happen.
- IR It's not sort of pleasure league?
- Sharon No.
- Karen As you say they're a necessity.
- Sharon It's to get me from A to B and as long as it goes that's alright.
- IR That's interesting. If we can concentrate on clothes, I know not for all you that's an area but if we can just pursue that one a little bit further. I think the majority do enjoy that in some way or another. Would you look at magazines or adverts at all before..? You're nodding there.
- Sharon I like to look through magazines.
- Karen Yes.
- Tina Catalogues.
- Virginia I like catalogues.
- Sharon Magazines any kind. I like to look at fashion.
- Tina I don't do catalogue shopping. I don't know, I can't, I like to see. I know you've to send off for it, it's to come then you see and if you don't like it, it goes back. That side of it I don't like but I like to look through a catalogue.
- Karen And get ideas.
- Tina Yes.
- Karen Get ideas.
- Tina Colours. Coming in fashion.
- Karen What is in fashion.
- IR And in magazines you'd get the same sort..?
- Karen Yes, get the ideas.
- Lucy The colours, the styles, price.
- IR So almost of you would at some level yes, look. Do any of you watch any of the, there are a few programmes on television now I think on fashion.
- Karen Oh the *Clothes Show*.
- Tina *Clothes Show*.

Virginia I like that yes.

Emma I always watch that.

Virginia Do you?

Emma But he never seems to do the run of the mill clothes it's always way out.

Virginia Yes.

Emma I just don't imagine anyone wearing the fashions.

Tina But when they do make-up and hairstyles and the revamps I like to see anything like that.

IR Yes. They do have a feature don't they where they sometimes take people off the street and...

Virginia Yes.

Tina Now that is...

IR ...put them in more way out clothes, don't they?

Sharon 'Cause I'd love that, wouldn't you. I love someone to take me and revamp me. I'd love it, I really would.

Karen Oh yes.

IR What do the rest of you, would any, does anyone here think that would be dreadful to have themselves revamped?

Lucy Oh no.

Tina No.

Karen No.

IR You'd all quite enjoy it?

Virginia Yes.

Sharon So if you're ever revamping people...?

Virginia You need somebody to tell you where you are going wrong.

Sharon And just letting you experiment with different...you think 'oh I'd love to wear that but I couldn't'.

Karen You don't always know though do you?

Sharon No that's what I mean. If someone said it, put it together so you can do that.

Karen You can do that. Yes. There again it's money as well.

Emma Yes, this is it.



Sharon Finance.

Emma If you can afford to just on impulse buy that because well it's fashionable...

Karen The colours in and all that.

Emma ...I'm not too sure it will suit me or not but that's in so I've got to buy it, but if someone told you that you could do it you could sort of probably and then think, 'well I'll try that'.

Karen Yes.

IR Do you think of yourselves as having a certain style in fashion. I mean would you describe the way..?

Karen Always stayed the same sort of thing.

Sharon Sedate.

IR No, no sorry. You'd say sedate?

Virginia No very....

Sharon Yes, I'm not adventurous enough for me. I sort of...

Karen You know what suits you so you stick to it.

Sharon That's right. I daren't experiment.

IR So Virginia you were saying?

Virginia I think you're inclined to stick with yourself.

IR You know what sorts..?

Virginia I think so which is probably not good.

IR I mean would you describe the way you dress as sort of, I don't know, classic or ...?

Elenor Basic.

Karen Basic. Oh don't say basic.

Lucy I think it depends...

Karen I like to be comfortable.

Elenor Yes I do.

IR Comfort.

Lucy What sort of day it is. I mean if you get up and it's like it is today you don't feel like putting a skirt on do you?

Elenor Do you, no.

IR Well that's interesting.

Sharon I don't wear a lot of skirts. Do you?

Lucy Like the other day it was... When it's a spring day you want to wear something, you know..

IR Um, and bright.

Lucy Whereas today it's dismal and you don't

Sharon You're going out and getting wet.

Karen Well me personally I think...but going back to...I think most women tend to stick to as you say the...

Emma What they feel best suits.

Tina Yes.

Virginia I think when you get style.

Karen Yes I think you do. When you look in your wardrobe you can see it anyway can't you?

IR I mean if you had the chance. Supposing someone was to give you the chance to be able to throw out the majority of clothes in your wardrobe would you want it?

Karen Oh yes.

Sharon Yes I would.

Virginia Yes I think so.

IR You would.

Emma Providing the money for me to go and...

Angela Renew it all.

Emma Really try something different, oh yes.

IR What about you Elenor?

Elenor I don't really know.

Virginia Do you not like clothes?

Elenor Something wrong, do it all again.

Virginia Do you not like clothes or do you just not like shopping for them? 'Cause you look as if you'd like clothes doesn't she?

Elenor It's maybe a bit of both. If I'm walking through somewhere and I see something, I would rather get it than think, 'well maybe in three weeks I'd need a skirt or something', and then have to go looking for one. 'Cause nine times out of ten I would come back from town with nothing



because I just hate it. And yet I will bring Gary and the children something back. You know, I love shopping for my husband's clothes. He never buys a thing for himself, not even shoes.

Lucy I never buy my husband any clothes.

Tina Buy all my husbands clothes.

IR That's interesting. What about you Angela would you throw out your clothes?

Angela Yes, definitely.

IR That's interesting, yes.

Angela 'Cause I can never afford to shop, you know, the way I'd like to shop for myself so you just buy a cheap jumper, cheap everything. So if I had a lot of money you know that would be....

IR You said you would Sharon?

Sharon Oh I'd throw the lot out if I could afford to. Oh yes.

IR It's a nice, an interesting concept really because some people actually feel that they would, if they did that, they would buy similar things again.

Elenor I probably would.

Tina I think I would. The same colours.

Sharon I tend to stick to the same colours. I'm drawn to certain colours.

IR What sort of colours?

Karen I'm black.

Virginia Dull colours.

Sharon I used to wear a lot of black but just lately I can't wear it.

Tina Oh I like all colours.

Karen I'm better in dark colours.

IR What about you Virginia, what about..?

Virginia Well I'm inclined to go towards black and camel and beiges and that, but I'm just going through a phase when I've made up my mind that I'm going to go for brighter things.

IR That's interesting.

Karen But do you feel as good.

Virginia In fact I've even bought a red jumper and I'm flogging it to death.

Emma You haven't got it on today.

Karen No she hasn't.

Virginia I know. I put it on underneath a white one.

IR You suddenly decided that you wanted...?

Virginia I feel I want to do it yes.

IR Be more colourful.

Virginia I just like natural colours like that. I do like those more subtle colours yes.

IR Why do you think you decided to...

Virginia Probably because...well I probably think I'm getting a bit older and I feel I want to brighten myself up. I think when you're young and you wear black you can get away with black...

Karen And I don't think I'll every feel like that because black is...

Virginia ...and I like black.

Karen Or you've gone off it you just want to....

IR So do you consider yourselves fashionable?

Sharon No.

Angela No.

Karen Not really.

Virginia I could go more, not now I wouldn't say, I wouldn't like to answer that really. No I wouldn't like to say yes or no about that.

IR What about you Lucy, you're keeping quiet?

Lucy Well it depends what I'm wearing. Like today I'm just in an ordinary woolly skirt and jumper but other times I do wear more fashionable things.

Tina Well you do sometimes more than others don't you?

Lucy I mean if I'm going to work I wear the right things like that but it depends.

IR What about you Tina?

Tina Well I don't like black at all. I'm uncomfortable in black.

Karen It's the difference isn't it?

IR Sorry?

Virginia I like fashionable clothes.

IR Yes.



- Virginia I think sometimes your way of life as well can alter how you are at the time. You dress to suit your way of life.
- IR Yes, yes. I think that can well be the case. I mean do you find yourself, there's some of those of you who immediately said "no, no I don't think I'm fashionable". I mean do you think you're influenced by fashion. I mean do you know what the fashions are for example?
- Sharon Not really.
- Virginia Not really no.
- Emma I have to...a few magazines and 'well that's in or' you know.
- Tina That colours in.
- Karen It's more the colours.
- IR Yes a lot of you talked about colour when...that's interesting.
- IR Do you window shop at all. Talking about shopping and sort of buying. Do you ever go out knowing that you're not going to buy and just literally just enjoy looking round the windows of shops?
- Lucy Yes.
- Tina Yes.
- IR That's interesting. Why do you think you get pleasure from that. Why do you think you get pleasure from that. What is it in that Angela that..?
- Angela Probably again it just gets me away from the house for a few hours then I go and have a cup of coffee.
- IR Um, and what do you think while you're looking at the windows?
- Karen I wish...
- Angela I wish I could buy some of them, yes.
- IR Do you think anything else?
- Angela The colours.
- IR The colours you look at?
- Tina I like to see the colours yes. Just colours and I wish and I hope that before so long I can have that.
- IR Do you imagine yourself...
- Tina What are you laughing at?
- Karen Wish and a hope.
- IR Do you imagine yourself wearing any of the clothes if you see them?

Tina You think that would look nice.

Virginia Yes.

Karen Yes, things like that.

IR You do start putting a look together.

Tina Yes you do.

IR In your mind. That's interesting.

Tina Also you're looking for something that will go with something that you've already got.

Lucy This is it. It's got to sort of fit in.

IR Supposing you were window shopping. You weren't intending necessarily to shop but the shop itself wasn't open. Would that be just as enjoyable if in fact you saw something and then you couldn't buy it?

Sharon No.

Karen No.

IR No.

Emma I don't think that would bother me.

IR It wouldn't bother me. It would bother some of you though quite a bit?

Karen Yes, I like to look round open shops not closed shops.

Tina Yes, I do.

IR So you have the opportunity.

Sharon You can always go back, you know where you've seen it. I don't like to go in town on a Saturday.

Tina I like to...

Karen We do that, now we do that yes sometimes.

Emma That wouldn't appeal to me.

Karen Nobody about and you can have a look. 'Oh I didn't see them, didn't know.' Oh yes I quite like to do that and you can go back then, 'cause if everybody's busy and you don't see all these things do you?

IR No. It's really.., what I was trying to get on to was really the process of shopping for clothes. I mean do you, when you've seen something, sort of imagine yourself in it before you've bought it at all?

Tina Yes.

Virginia Yes.



IR Yes.

Tina You don't look like that at all.

Sharon You don't.

Elenor It's so disappointing.

Karen Yes you do.

Sharon But there's certain things that you think, 'oh that's just me', don't you?

Tina Yes.

Karen Style. That's style.

IR So you do have a view of yourself, and whether it's within your range of..?

Lucy I find being small, being 4'10" or 11" like me the models, everything that's on models is size ten or that and they don't cater for small people. They just don't seem...

Elenor To have small models do they?

Karen ...no they don't.

Lucy Well they don't, do they?

Tina No.

Karen I'm not being funny. But they don't, they're all so willowy. Yes they are.

Lucy Yes.

Karen They don't seem to get it in proportion for smaller people.

Elenor I haven't seen one like my shape, even *Evans* outside don't have them.

Emma The slightly larger model?

Elenor No. No, they're always willowy things.

Lucy Yes they are. That always annoys me.

Karen About size 12.

Tina Outsize shop in the *Schofield Centre*...

Elenor Oh I've seen that.

Tina ...yes, quite a high class one which should do well I should imagine 'cause there's only *Evans* I think isn't there?

Emma Yes.

IR Yes, that's interesting. Yes I mean that's a very different sector isn't.

- Tina Like the Petite. Petite and outsize.
- Karen Somebody specialised haven't they.
- Virginia Is there a petite shop in Leeds. 'Cause I was saying..?
- Karen Well there is.
- Sharon *Marks [and Spencer]* do a petite range now, they have a section.
- Lucy Ah but they're too young for my age. They're put, 18 to 25's.
- Elenor Isn't there one in the...
- Virginia There's one in the...
- Elenor I thought there was one in the *St. John's Centre*.
- Lucy There is, there is. But then again if people for a mac, a raincoat, they're down to your ankles, although they're supposed to be petite they're still long. They don't seem to get it just...
- Elenor Just right.
- Lucy ...yes.
- IR Just sort of changing the subject a little bit. I'd like you to think of some item you've bought recently, doesn't necessarily have to be clothes. It could be anything that gave you a lot of pleasure buying it. Can all of us think of something that you've bought recently that gave you a lot of pleasure.
- Karen Virginia's red jumper.
- Tina Straight away, red jumper.
- IR Well while we are all thinking let's just sort of go through the process of the red jumper if you don't mind Virginia.
- Virginia I'm only kidding.
- IR Did it give you a lot of pleasure, yes right, well let's take the red jumper.
- Virginia Well I'm only kidding, that's trivia really. It's probably trivial that.
- Karen It's probably a different colour to what you normally try.
- IR But did you think that you would go out to buy a bright jumper?
- Virginia No.
- IR No, so how did you come to buy it? What was the process that you went through?
- Virginia Well I just saw it in the sale in town and I walked away, walked back, walked away and walked back and bought it.
- IR Yes.



- Karen But you were uncertain at first?
- Virginia Yes.
- IR Which shop was that?
- Virginia *Rackhams* in town.
- IR *Rackhams*, and did you touch it or..?
- Virginia Yes I would of because I can't wear all wools. I can't wear Shetland wool or anything that's a bit rough and I wondered if it, but it, and I took it home and I thought I might have to take it back in case it was rough but it was okay.
- IR Why do you think you were hesitant about buying this?
- Virginia The texture of the wool.
- IR Right, not the colour or the style. When did you get most pleasure do you think from that purchase?
- Virginia Ah I think just wearing it. I feel as if I've gone on too long about that now. I feel a bit silly now.
- IR Not at all. It's the sort of thing we're interested in.
- Virginia It's a joke, I'll flog it to death.
- IR Sorry if I can just stop. What about you Lucy have you had anything recently?
- Lucy Well I've bought clothes but the most thing that's given me pleasure this last fortnight's having my hair in a new style.
- IR Yes, now that's interesting, which is effectively a purchase isn't it?
- Lucy And that has really made me feel, I felt 80 last week and I now feel 35.
- IR That's fascinating.
- Lucy It's worked wonders for me has this new hair style. It really has yes.
- IR And did you decide that you were going to have a certain style?
- Lucy No for a fortnight I've been debating and the style that I had was a bit, you know and I was fed up with it and the hairdresser that I went to every time he was no pointing me in the right direction, so on Saturday at work I thought, 'right, on Monday I'm going to go and get this sorted out', and I went to a completely new hairdresser and told her exactly how I felt and everything and she done exactly what I'd been thinking about. You know, highlights and that and it's really made me feel better. Yes it has. I felt right.
- Sharon Yes but I think a hair style.
- Karen Your hair can dominate you.

- Lucy And you can wear anything but if your hair isn't right you don't feel right do you?
- IR I think that's an interesting...
- Lucy And that for me has been, no matter what I would have bought, that having my hair done...
- Sharon Money well spent.
- Lucy ...yes, definitely.
- IR So you didn't actually go to her and tell her in great detail what you want?
- Lucy No she just said, "do you want it trimming?", and I said "no I want a re-style", and it was going a little bit grey at the front and she said, "do you want some highlights?", so I just said "I don't want them grey and I don't want them yellow", so she sort of said "right I think I know what you mean", and that was it.
- Elenor It's very nice.
- Lucy So I mean I'm not saying that to bring...but that has given me more pleasure than going in town and spending £30 on say a skirt and that this last week, 'cause last week I felt awful.
- Karen If you had bought £30 skirt you wouldn't have felt better would you?
- Lucy No.
- IR That's very interesting. What about the rest of you, has anyone else got an item or something like that that they can think of?
- Elenor I got some new net curtains last week for the complete house and yes they give me a lot of pleasure.
- IR Um, were you planning to get them. I mean or did you suddenly see..?
- Elenor I was debating whether to or not. But the other ones I had I put them in Glow-white and that stuffs absolutely chronic, it doesn't work at all, and these new ones look absolutely lovely.
- IR Did you have to look in a lot of shops Elenor?
- Elenor No, there was only two that I was prepared to look at 'cause I don't like it. I just don't like it at all.
- IR No, no. So you got pleasure out of it even though you didn't like the process of the buying?
- Elenor I didn't get pleasure when I got them home because I had to take up 20 yards by hand. I started Saturday night 8 o'clock and I were still at it 2 in the morning. I started again Sunday morning. I was determined they were going up Sunday morning.
- Karen Oh. How many windows did you do?



Elenor      Four. This was one curtain that was 10 yards, had to be taken up at the top and again, both edges.

Karen      By hand.

IR          So when did you feel really pleased?

Elenor      When they were up.

IR          Yes, when they up.

Karen      They looked nice.

Elenor      I had to do the windows in and out, and washed all the paintwork outside and I put the curtains up.

Karen      Oh I bet that was nice.

Virginia    Yes, you feel you've achieved something.

Elenor      I could have screamed...as well, it took me so long.

Karen      Please don't rain?

IR          I mean it's almost a make-over of a different, I mean like that sort of thing isn't it that you're saying? Yes, with the house. Anyone else had a lot of pleasure from a recent purchase?

Emma      Oh I can't say.

IR          Sharon, have you?

Sharon      No.

IR          I know some people can immediately think of something and others it's harder.

Sharon      My pleasure at the moment is these leggings. You know these leggings that you can buy, I live in them. Literally, as soon as I get home my clothes are off and I get in them. I love them. They're so comfy. And that's my pleasure. A pair of leggings. I've a few pair now, about five.

IR          Do you think it's becoming like the plants. You're getting...?

Sharon      Oh yes. Obsessed with these.

IR          What is it about them. Is it in fact the comfort?

Sharon      Comfort, yes and you can clean and do all sorts. And I like lazing about. I don't like sitting in clothes at home.

Virginia    No I don't.

Karen      I don't.

Virginia    That's right. Get changed.

- Sharon I like to get changed and put something comfy on, which used to be Emma's but these are so much more comfy.
- IR What about the style, sorry.
- Virginia Do you mean...sorry.
- IR Go on Virginia.
- Virginia Do you mean tight fitting ones?
- Sharon Yes.
- IR I mean, would you go out in them?
- Sharon Yes I do go out in them, yes. Shopping.
- IR Yes, yes and how do you feel. I mean does it sort of, because in a sense you were saying your style is very normal and yet you're now saying, "I bought something different".
- Sharon Yes but I don't think leggings are too much out are they. I mean everybody wears leggings don't they?
- IR Right.
- Karen Well I don't 'cause I don't think I, no.
- Tina Are they tight fitting?
- Sharon It's amazing how much slimmer you do look in leggings.
- Karen I've never tried any on to be honest but it's just a 'no' for me is that. There again if somebody said "try them on"...
- Elenor I started going to aerobics and I thought I'd look an absolute whale in them.
- Karen But they do make you look slimmer.
- Elenor Yes. You see.
- Sharon Push some boots on. Boots like your's, you're fine.
- IR When does sort of shopping end. I mean you were saying you got the pleasure when you put the curtains up. I mean is it when you bring the item home or when you've purchased it or when you worn it a few times or..?
- Sharon Well you sometimes plan don't you. You think 'oh I'll wear that on Saturday'.
- Karen Oh yes.
- Sharon You never look as nice do you as you planned it.
- Elenor I never wear anything that I buy until I've had it in my wardrobe about three weeks.



IR That's interesting.

Karen Really.

Elenor I don't ever feel that anything belongs to me unless I've kept in the wardrobe for weeks.

Tina No, I don't wear it straight away.

Karen Don't you?

Tina No I don't. I can buy things say in January, the first things that come out and I probably won't wear them until I go away in July.

Sharon Well I bought some tee-shirts yesterday actually that I won't wear till summer...

Lucy I would feel I was wasting my money then because...

Sharon ...but I got them because I thought by the time summer comes they've all gone haven't they?

Karen That's right. Sizes, colours yes.

Elenor I can't buy something and wear it straight away. Like these people who go out Saturday just to buy something for Saturday night.

Karen Saturday night yes.

Elenor I could never do that really.

Virginia Oh people do that a lot don't they?

IR Who do you think you dress for? Do you dress for yourselves?

Sharon For other women mostly as well isn't it.

Karen For yourself.

Virginia For yourself.

Sharon Really bothered aren't they.

Karen I think for myself, I feel it. If you don't try and you think 'oh I feel', but then...definite.

IR Does anyone dress at all for other people, I mean other women you were saying. Are there..?

Sharon I don't think men are particularly that bothered, are they?

Karen How you dress?

Sharon Yes.

Karen I think to a point yes, I think if you don't look right they're a bit.., to you. They don't when you look right.

Elenor I like it when the children say you look nice mum.

Karen Yes. And you know 'cause they tell the truth don't they let's face it?

Elenor When I started going to this keep-fit and I got leotard and leggings and I thought you know...

Karen They'll tell me yes.

Elenor ...I could maybe wear them they said, "oh mummy you look lovely".

Karen It's worth it then.

IR Yes.

Elenor Yes, it is.

Karen Oh they'll tell you the truth. "You're not going out like that are you?"

Elenor "You're not going out like that?"

IR Just sort of mentioning sort of men briefly, I mean do you think that men shop in a different way from women?

Sharon Yes.

Elenor Yes.

Sharon Men go straight away to the one shop, buy what they want and that's it. That's if they shop at all.

Tina Mine wouldn't.

Karen They don't have any idea of prices have they?

Tina No.

Sharon No.

Karen Not the average men. Young men that are into fashion, the average middle age husband, it's necessity. Yes.

IR Does anyone disagree and think they are similar and like browsing?

Angela I don't think many men like shopping.

Tina No.

Lucy They get what they need to get and then get home.

IR That's interesting. Well I've noticed one or two of you looking at your watches and I realise that.

Karen Sorry.

IR No no, I've virtually come to the end. I was just having a quick zip round the questions. There is one thing I'd like to ask all of you before



we sort of close and thank you all for coming and give out the money. There is a possibility we'd like to do further research work but on an individual basis where if possible we could have a chat to you in more detail 'cause obviously in a group discussion we are talking to everyone very briefly. So if as I come round and ask you to sign for your money you could have a think about whether you'd mind helping further then if you wouldn't mind I'll just take your address and phone number and we can follow up with you. But if you don't want to I'll quite understand, so don't think there's any pressure on you if you'd like to leave it here. But thank you very much.



## APPENDIX TWO

### MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF THE 'FEMALE' CONSUMER

Media representations of the 'consumer' tend to position women in this role. This can be seen in the character of Audrey Roberts in the soap opera *Coronation Street* constantly trying her husband Alf's patience with her shopping trips.

We can see the same kind of representational process of situating women in the consumer role in the comic street *Doonesbury* by Garry Trudeau, which appears in the *Guardian*. And the *Fred* cartoon by Rupert Fawcett.

#### Doonesbury

by Garry Trudeau





Fred

by Rupert Fawcett



PENELOPE HAD FOUND  
HER VOCATION

Note that in both cases the relationship is posed in terms of male versus female behaviour.

In the interviews with the men it was interesting that they cited a television commercial to express the experience they had of shopping with their partners. The advertisement was one used to promote McDonald's in which a man is seen out shopping with his wife. The woman keeps trying on

dress after dress, and asking for her partner's opinion. The man responds by simply nodding or saying 'Yes I like it' because he wants to get to McDonald's and eat a BigMac. One of the respondents in this way suggested that the advertisement "typifies it all...you go with her and you just say 'yes' so you can get out as quick as you can" (Richard, 3:7). Or as another man elaborated on this theme: "I've been in his position a hundred time, 'Do you like it, I like it.'" (Peter, 2:30). The interesting aspect of the men's reading of the advertisement is that they do not recount the final images of the text in which the man arrives at McDonald's and is unable to make his mind up, whether he wants a BigMac or a cheeseburger.



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