INDIVIDUAL MOTIVES AND COMMERCIAL RETAILING IN GREEN CONSUMERISM

SALLY ELIZABETH EDEN

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that the appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the set of motivations and constraints involved in the purchasing of products perceived to be environmentally friendly, a phenomenon termed green consumerism, and in related forms of public environmentalism, including household-based recycling and membership of organised environmental groups. Both the public and members of organised environmental groups are of interest as potential green consumers, as well as retailers acting as providers of products and information relevant to green consumerism.

The emphasis is upon the development of an integrated qualitative framework for studying environmental motivation and behaviour, and the understanding of the interplay of motivations and constraints at the individual level. Individual motivations are studied with respect to perceived responsibility for the environment and the rationalisation of this on the basis of the perceived cumulative impact of public environmentalism *en masse*. Constraints upon the translation of this responsibility into behaviour include economic priorities, cultural contexts and quality of life concerns and may be external (socially imposed) or internal to the individual. The latter case represents the refusal to sacrifice and the agency therefore present in the choice of proenvironmental behaviour. Retailers motivations are also studied with respect to perceived environmental responsibility, but the economic context of business gives economic constraints higher priority and more power to constrain environmental responsibility than moral judgements alone.

Retailers, the media and environmental groups also function as information providers to seek public support. The uncertainty of much environmental information and the layperson's perceived lack of evaluative ability work to constrain the usability of environmental information and to permit distrust of experts and elites perceived to be in control of information dissemination, within a wider trust of systems of information provision. The immediacy of information links clearly to action, whereas wider issues and impacts further into the future are more weakly connected to proenvironmental behaviour. Generally, the proenvironmental action taken on the basis of these motivations and constraints is perceived as individualistic

rather than collective.

All these themes indicate that green consumerism, like other public proenvironmental behaviours, depends upon information, responsibility and the belief in impact. However, contextual constraints of cultural norms, economic situations and internal priorities mediate in the adoption of such behaviours. Upcoming changes in law and markets may influence these factors, making the future of this very recent phenomenon as dynamic as its past.

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CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH AIMS.

1.1. Introduction.

Although the environmental movement as a whole has a long history, public interest in environmental issues first became widespread in the 1960s and 1970s. This period saw the expansion and diversification of environmental pressure groups in the UK and other countries. The manifestation of environmental concern in the form of green consumerism is more recent, however, becoming widespread in the late 1980s. Green consumerism involves the purchasing of products on the basis of their perceived environmental impact and has links with environmental references in advertising and labelling, media coverage of environmental topics and increasing environmental legislation.

Because of its recent emergence, the shape of green consumerism and related activities has not yet stabilised. The language and terminology used to describe products, the information we have about the environmental effects of products, the technology of their production and disposal are all subject to rapid change. Conflicts have yet to be resolved between the advocates of green consumerism, and its associated green market, and its environmentalist critics. These arise principally out of the fundamental differences in the ideologies of environmentalism and business and their consequent views of green consumerism. The establishment of environmental legislation dealing with products and their advertising is also dynamic, but still some steps behind the rapid development of green products in the market.

The issues surrounding green consumerism are therefore still in flux and there is much scope for research into the implications of green consumerism for the public, the market, legislating bodies, the media and the environmental movement. This research therefore sets out to address some of the complex issues raised by the recent emergence of green consumerism in the UK by studying specific elements of the phenomenon as outlined below.

1.2. Aims.

This research seeks to understand the motivations and constraints involved in the public purchasing of products perceived to be environmentally friendly, a

phenomenon termed green consumerism. Encompassed by this general aim are four main emphases for study in this research:

i. the motivations of individuals and retailers towards proenvironmental action, with reference to the role of perceived responsibility and impact in initiating behaviour.
ii. the constraints on both groups which inhibit the translation of motives into corresponding behaviours.
iii. the context for proenvironmental action: the social scope of action with others and the geographical and temporal scope of reference and impact.
iv. the interaction of consumers and retailers in green consumerism.

A frequent motif in environmental literature and publicity is that of the individual's ability to act responsibly towards the environment. This idea of agency, the ability to act according to will within certain constraints, will be pursued to show the individualistic nature of proenvironmental behaviour.

1.3. The Context of Green Consumerism.

Adams *et al* provide a useful definition of green consumerism as:

> "the exercise of consumer choice which expresses a preference for less environmentally harmful goods and services". (Adams *et al* 1991 p3)

This emphasises the importance of *choice* in the decision to purchase goods, owing to the individualistic character of the green consumer act. It is performed alone, not collectively, with decentralised decision-making on the basis of identified self-interest (Smith 1990 p30). Green consumerism is hence a type of "public environmentalism" (Buttel and Larson 1980) in that individuals are sympathetic to environmental causes and espouse some environmental behaviours, but not in any collective form. This public environmentalism may also be expressed via membership, not necessarily activist in nature, of organised environmental groups, via household recycling of domestic waste and via participation in organised activities, e.g. signing petitions for environmental reform, practical conservation

projects. All these forms of behaviour interact as individuals may espouse several types at different times and with different commitment.

Green consumerism is, at base, an economic act, but one which has significant social contexts and ramifications (Vogel 1975 quoted in Smith 1990 p182). It is impossible to separate individual motivations towards green consumerism and such related proenvironmental behaviours from the behavioural context. Several aspects of context are identified: the information contributing to the choice of behaviour; the actions of others as related or distinct; the perceived severity of environmental problems; the perceived scale of action related to the problems; the structural factors in consumer-retailer relations; government intervention. All these factors can operate in the individual situation to enable or constrain proenvironmental behaviours.

Key agents in this context are environmental groups, business organisations and government. The "organised environmentalism" (Buttel and Larson 1980) of environmental pressure groups is closely connected to public environmentalism as it depends upon the latter for support and legitimation (Lowe and Goyder 1983). Environmental groups also produce and disseminate much environmental information to their own members, the public and the media in order to gain support and to influence decision makers in society. Such information and ideas thus filter down (Lowe and Goyder 1983; deHaven-Smith 1988), affecting the development of public environmentalism. Organised environmentalism is therefore also a focus of study both in terms of its development and characteristics (see 2.2. and 2.3.) and in terms of the individuals involved in it, who are interviewed alongside the public in the main body of this work. A key contextual factor for green consumerism is whether different environmental groups promote or discredit it as a form of proenvironmental behaviour.

Business affects the context of green consumerism, like environmental groups, through the provision and quality of information and also through the choice of products and images offered to consumers (see 2.4.). The contradictions between business and environmental groups on ends and means are significant because they generate conflict over acceptable proenvironmental behaviour (see 2.5.). Government legislation increasingly affects the regulation of promotional information provision and the environmental performance of business and industrial production (see 2.6.).

1.4. Related Research Themes.

A key area for academic work has been the correlation of proenvironmental attitudes and behaviours with respect to social norms and cultural attitudes and the classification of individuals on attitudinal or behavioural bases to monitor the level of public environmentalism in modern society.

Correlative studies (see Van Liere and Dunlap 1978 and 3.2.) have used aggregated quantitative data from questionnaires to seek statistical correlations between behaviour and other variables and to test hypotheses about environmentalist tendencies, e.g. that women are more environmentally concerned than men (e.g. Borden and Francis 1978; Fortmann and Kusel 1990; Steel *et al* 1990). The methodologies used developed from univariate (one-to-one correspondence between attitude and behaviour, for instance) through bivariate and into more complex multivariate studies of influences upon environmental behaviour. However, frequently the studies merely measure the coexistence of variables, e.g. education and proenvironmental orientation, rather than further the understanding of the motivations involved; they therefore lack a strong theoretical base.

The numerous quantitative studies so far published (e.g. Fendrich 1967; Tognacci *et al* 1972; Maloney and Ward 1973; Heberlein and Black 1976; Weigel 1977; Borden and Francis 1978; Tucker 1978; Cutter 1981; Manzo and Weinstein 1987; Samdah and Robertson 1989; Fortmann and Kusel 1990; Steel *et al* 1990) have proved to be inconclusive, frequently contradictory and poorly founded in theory (Lowe and Rudig 1986; Van Liere and Dunlap 1978). The philosophical and methodological problems inherent in such studies mean that they are inappropriate to the in-depth investigation of environmental motivations. Classification models (see 3.3.) often have better theoretical foundations than correlative studies, e.g. the twofold classification of shared values (Inglehart 1977, 1981; Cotgrove 1982; Cotgrove and Duff 1981; Dunlap and Van Liere 1978). Such description is useful in examining common features of groups sharing such ideas, and trying to show that either set is expanding or contracting within society, but tends to regress to correlative bases.

Other research themes related to a study of green consumerism and public environmentalism are those dealing with agency and moral responsibility as factors

motivating the adoption of proenvironmental behaviours (e.g. Fishkin 1982; Schwartz 1968, 1970; Kemp 1988; Giddens 1987, 1984). Constraints upon this adoption are also important and relate to the limits on agency and efficacy, the operation of trust (Luhmann 1979) the quality of information provision underlying informed choice (Adams *et al* 1991; Smith 1990) and the behavioural options provided by business and government institutions (Galbraith 1972; see 3.7.). Such research helps to illuminate the social context of green consumerism and other forms of public environmentalism.

1.5. Themes in This Research.

The Leeds area provides the geographical scope for this study, which begins with a quantitative survey of members of the public and environmental pressure groups (see 4.2. and 4.3.). This is used to determine a useful sample for the qualitative stage of the research and also to outline some behavioural clusters for exploration in that stage, with particular reference to the differences between public and environmental group data.

Unlike statistical aggregation and analysis of proenvironmental behaviour, qualitative work allows investigation of the perception of behavioural *choice*, based on agency, responsibility and the informational context of the individual, and the internal connections at such a level of magnification are retained. Also retained is the action context in terms of the social connection to the actions of others and to the geographical and temporal scope of perceived problems and action.

Qualitative approaches are therefore epistemologically, and also methodologically, more appropriate to an understanding of proenvironmental motivations. This research emphasises the qualitative approach in data collection and conceptualisation by interviewing a behaviourally stratified sample of members of the public and of environmental groups to investigate the relevant motivations and contextual constraints (see 5.3. and 5.4.). Also interviewed are grocery retailers at the local and national level and organic farmers, to investigate their motivations and constraints and their interaction with consumers in the growth of green consumerism.

Later chapters discussing this qualitative work emphasise the motivations of different behavioural groups (see Chapters 6 and 7), with reference to responsibility

and perceived impact and the constraints interfering with the fulfilment of motivations as behaviour, including cultural constraints, cost sacrifices and information provision and quality (see Chapter 8). The scope for action is also discussed with reference to social and geographic immediacy as enabling and constraining proenvironmental behaviour (see Chapter 9).

These discussions establish a picture of the growth and role of green consumerism as a form of public environmentalism in the UK as an individual act performed in a strong social and informational context.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONTEXT FOR GREEN CONSUMERISM: THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT, BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT.

2.1. The Importance of Context for Green Consumerism.

As discussed in the previous chapter, green consumerism is the purchasing of products perceived as environmentally friendly and depends upon individual choice (Adams *et al* 1991). Green purchasing is performed singly, not collectively, with decentralised decision-making, and is a type of "public environmentalism" (Buttel and Larson 1980). As such, it does not exist in isolation but is closely connected with its social, economic and political context and with other forms of public environmentalism, such as passive membership of environmental groups. This context is particularly important because of the relative youth of this consumer trend, necessitating reference to the conditions of its first emergence in the late 1980s.

This chapter introduces the key external influences upon consumers: "organised environmentalism" (Buttel and Larson 1980) in the form of voluntary groups, business and government, in a legislative capacity. In each case, the ideas, practices and attitude to green consumerism will be reviewed. (Further details can be found in Eden 1990b, 1990c.)

2.2. Voluntary Environmental Organisations.

Mitchell (1980a) has defined environmentalism as:

> "the set of ideas which emphasizes the interrelationship between humans and the ecosystem and the various threats human activity poses to its continued viability." (Mitchell 1980a p217)

These ideas are officially adopted by environmental groups, where a loose hierarchy of committed individuals seeks to achieve aims defined upon a belief in such ideas. In general, their aims centre upon environmental improvement and the prevention of environmental damage. Some groups are issue-specific (CLEAR - the campaign for lead free air); some have a more general environmental focus, publicising varied campaigns from rainforest protection to recycling viability projects (Friends of the Earth); some groups are more politicised, taking part in elections or political activities (the Green Party). Coalitions, permanent or shifting, may be

formed of several groups around one particular, often site-specific environmental threat to amalgamate their strengths, expertise and support bases.

Environmental groups are the active agents of proenvironmental lobbying, research and publicity and act collectively as a source of ideas and information for public environmentalism (Buttel and Larson 1980). The groups seek to raise environmental awareness, to nurture public support and to lobby government and business in order to change social processes and curb environmental damage.

The ideas and actions they promote filter down to their own memberships and other sections of the public, thereby affecting the growth of public environmentalism outside the organised movement. The movement, serves as a longer-established context for the younger phenomenon and also therefore as a source of strength and direction, in that campaigns direct consumer attention to specific issues, e.g. deforestation has been connected to tropical hardwood DIY products by Friends of the Earth.

In turn, environmental groups depend upon public ideological and financial support, although they may accept donations from commercial or governmental concerns as the World Wide Fund for Nature do (Lowe *et al* 1986). This demonstration of support legitimises groups' actions and ensures their survival in the face of commercial or political opposition (Lowe and Goyder 1983).

Environmental groups and the public also connect through participation in political action. Green political success depends upon a voting public sharing the environmental ideas of the organised groups and would have implications for the future of environmentalism as a whole. More political, and therefore legislative, power would allow the environmental movement to promote its activities more strongly and to enforce commercial change through the law. Green consumers and other environmentalist sympathisers are perceived by some commentators to form a constituency (a voting support base) for the campaigners, and the political leaders thereby elected could direct the growth of green consumerism (but see 2.3.3.).

2.2.1. The History and Development of Environmentalism.

Environmental ideas began to emerge in the late nineteenth century with the aim of restricting human use of those areas felt to be under threat: the main aim was

therefore environmental preservation (McEvoy 1972). Early environmental groups set up to forward this aim in the UK include The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (1889), The National Trust (1895) and The Royal Society for Nature Conservation (1912) (Cotgrove 1982; McEvoy 1972).

From the early peaks of interest before the Second World War (Pepper 1984; Lowe and Goyder 1983; McEvoy 1972), environmental issues became prominent again after it, when more emphasis began to be placed upon problems of the urban environment as well as the natural (McEvoy 1972). The old style of preservationism was joined by a new conservationism, which did not urge for non-use of environmental amenities and resources via authoritarian restrictions and limitations, but for their careful use and management through conservation practices. Environmentalism was still a minority interest in this period.

Public interest in environmental issues became widespread in the 1960s and 1970s when the environment succeeded in reaching both the general public and political agendas at the national and international level (Pepper 1984), so that O'Riordan comments:

> "Contemporary environmentalism was born in the 1960s." (O'Riordan 1976 p51)

The emergence of the environment as a political issue was confirmed around 1968-1970 by the numbers of pressure groups and government initiatives, some examples of which are given in Table 2.1.. Morrison and his colleagues writing in 1972 spoke of a participation orientation amid "media-led euphoria" over the environment and other related issues such as women's rights, Black Power and the students' movements. Buttel (1986) has since characterised the period 1968-1972 in the USA as one of "mass mobilisation" and many writers have referred to the atmosphere of change and the presence of a 'counter culture' (Roszak 1978; Capra 1982; Morrison 1986). Social movements were radicalised under the influence of these unconventional ideologies and sought methods other than traditional political action to achieve their aims, stressing the support and involvement of the public (e.g. Amnesty International). The emphasis was placed upon collective action and macroprotest (Fortmann 1988) and individuals began to organise their resources and expertise in order to promote the new values which were emerging.

Table 2.1.: 1960s and 1970s Environmental Groups and Initiatives.

Date	Environmental Group
1969	Friends of the Earth (USA)
1970	Department of the Environment (UK)
1970	Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (UK)
1970	Earth Day, 22 April (USA)
1972	United Nations First Conference on the Environment (Stockholm)
1973	People (later the Ecology Party, then the Green Party (UK)

source: Cotgrove 1982; Rudig and Lowe 1986.

Capra (1982) characterised this social climate as the beginning of the turning point for Western society in its search for individual freedom and expression, and Cotgrove described it thus:

> "It is significant that the new environmentalism emerged at a point of crisis in recent history. The mid 1960s onwards saw a convulsive wave run through all advanced industrial societies, challenging the complacent optimism of the affluent society." (Cotgrove 1982 p22)

2.2.2. The Predicted Decline of the Environmentalism.

Following the widespread emergence of environmental activities in the 1960s and 1970s, the energy crisis and recession beginning in 1973 were thought by several writers to herald a decline in public environmentalism (e.g. Morrison *et al* 1972; Van Liere and Dunlap 1978; Buttel 1986).

Morrison *et al* (1972) and Buttel (1986) believed that enthusiastic public participation in the environmental movement would be dampened when its core concepts, such as the stabilisation of economic growth and population, were recognised by the public. This would cause a disenchantment with the goals of environmentalism and reorient public support to the economic goals of the "growthists" (Buttel 1986), e.g. managers of corporate businesses and politicians who are committed to unlimited economic growth, so that:

> "after nearly ten years of sustained global recession, we are now all

'growthists'." (Buttel 1986 p227)

Buttel and Larson's further asserted that the environmental decade of the 1970s "failed to materialize" (Buttel and Larson 1980 p327) because of the failure of organised environmental groups to address the real issues of resource scarcity and survival.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, there was certainly a considerable splintering of mainstream groups, with the formation of issue-specific lobbies, and a conversion from more radical commitment and methods (Sandbrook 1986) to strategies based more on consultation with non-environmentalist opponents. However, Buttel's comment seems overstated in retrospect. The deep ecology approach (DeVall 1980), centred upon the concept of zero growth, to which the non-environmentalist pro-growth lobby is inherently opposed, is not now widely evident in high-profile environmental organisations except the Green Party. However, a new thrust developed in the vanguard of environmentalism, through an emphasis upon the possibilities for sustainable growth rather than growth with no qualifications. Environmentalism was not succumbing to economic priorities as easily as some had thought it would. This was evident by the turn of the decade to Mitchell:

> "Throughout the 1970s support for environmental protection, reflected by impressive majorities in national polls, consistently confounded those who regarded environmentalism as a temporary fad." (Mitchell 1984 p52)

Despite some predictions of declining public support for environmental issues, the environment continued to be a strong issue in the 1980s (Owens 1986). 77% of the British public, for example, agreed (in 1985) that industry should be prevented from causing environmental damage even if this causes costs to rise (Young 1985). A 1989 MORI poll (quoted by Elkington 1989) suggested that 42% of the public had already chosen products because of environmental performance. Hence, Morrison wrote that:

> "there is now important evidence that environmental consciousness has 'trickled down', i.e. that support for environmental reforms has now diffused well below the stratification position occupied by the core environmentalists, and that there is neither a clear, nor strong, nor

> consistent pattern of support for this prediction [that the public would be against environmental reforms]." (Morrison 1986 p189)

Mitchell (1984) called the assumption that environmentalism would be relegated to a backseat, and that other policy issues would begin to dominate, the "salience trap" in the interpretation of polls and other data (see Lake 1983 and a recent survey in The Guardian 1992 June 2 p4). Although the relative priority (salience) of environmental issues fell *below* that of other issues, its strength, or overall support, remained fairly steady. As Lake puts it:

> "A policy may no longer be at the top of the nation's agenda but may retain a wide margin of support for its implementation. Environmental policy clearly illustrates this phenomenon." (Lake 1983 p218)

Downs (1972) was more prosaic about the ability of the public to continue supporting the environmental movement. His conceptualisation of the issue-attention cycle of the public postulated that, after a period of time in the headlines, most issues were bound to take a backseat to newer issues. However, special features of environmentalism made that cluster of issues likely to remain in the public's attention longer than other issues (Downs 1972; Lake 1983; O'Riordan 1976; Mitchell 1984). The special features most commonly include the way environmental damage impacts on a broad range of social groups (O'Riordan 1976) thereby conceptualising the environment as a 'public good' (Mitchell 1984), not as a particular class or group interest. Lowe comments:

> "environmental rhetoric has achieved the status of a near hegemonic discourse from which few public figures would openly dissent." (Lowe 1990 p169)

Other features which permit environmental issues to retain a high profile are: information and education, especially high media visibility (Mitchell 1984; O'Riordan 1976); high standards of living reducing public acceptance of low environmental quality (O'Riordan 1976); public mistrust of government and a growing desire to act themselves (O'Riordan 1976); value shifts towards a new ecological paradigm (Dunlap and Van Liere 1978; Dunlap 1980; DeVall 1980; Mitchell 1984); the fact that ten years of environmental reform had not solved the problems (Mitchell 1984).

The movement seems now to be consolidated in public support, especially due to its credibility as a research and information service (and see 8.3.1.) and with age softening its image as a subversive, revolutionary fringe. The mainstream of the movement seems to be following the second of the two paths offered by Mitchell some years ago:

> "Environmentalism seems destined... either to a process of slow disintegration as the hard facts of scarcity create conflict within the movement and disillusion those of the general public who are sympathetic with its aims or, as presently seems more likely, to a continued role as a reformist movement which harbours a vision of an 'appropriate' society but which presses for reforms that are neither too deep nor too left to alienate either its middle class constituency or its potential allies among the less affluent sectors of society." (Mitchell 1980b p358)

This latter course would clearly favour the promotion of green consumerism as a moderate form of lifestyle.

2.3. Current Characteristics of the Environmental Movement.

Although the 1970s stirrings of radicalism have largely dissolved within the mainstream of the movement, it has gained credibility for 'blowing the whistle' on the activities of big business and government and has occupied an increasingly significant position in the public eye.

This significance both causes and is caused by rising memberships, accompanied by increasing subscriptions, showing that public environmentalism of this form is now widespread. The 13 largest environmental bodies in the UK had nearly five million supporters and a combined income of over £160 million in 1989, and membership was increasing at over 20% p.a. over this peak period - Greenpeace were recruiting between 3,000 and 4,000 members per week (Nelson 1989 p10). Since this period, especially since 1991, membership expansion has decelerated, and may be now declining for groups such as Greenpeace.

Overall it is estimated that more than 10% of adults in the UK belong to at least one environmental group (Lowe 1990), although this additive total may be too high in the light of surveys showing that 60% of environmental and conservation groups' members belong to more than one group (Lowe and Goyder 1983; Bull 1990).

2.3.1. Elitism within Environmentalism.

One characteristic of the present environmental movement is that it is criticised as being elitist. The activists at the core of environmental organisations have been described as the 'elite' of the movement (O'Riordan 1976; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Morrison 1980; Lowe and Goyder 1983; Morrison and Dunlap 1986), in that they are more educated, affluent and committed to the environment than those on the periphery. They also implement ideas through proenvironmental action and in this respect are a minority in the movement: some 58% of groups surveyed in 1982 said that less than 10% of their members were "actively involved" (Lowe and Goyder 1983 p40).

Research into the core members of environmental organisations (e.g. Weigel and Weigel 1978; Tucker 1978; Mitchell 1980b; Manzo and Weinstein 1987) indicates that they are generally more educated and of a higher economic status than individuals at the periphery of the movement. However, the periphery is both less well researched and less well understood. It involves both the non-active members of environmental organisations and those of the general public who are not members but sympathise with the aims of the groups to some extent, e.g. green consumers. This sector has been termed the 'attentive public' (Lowe and Goyder 1983; Miller 1980), being non-active but sympathetic, and has been described by the activists as a "passive or instrumental resource" (Lowe and Goyder 1983 p40). There is also a 'non-attentive public' (Miller 1980) which does not sympathise with the groups but this is clearly in the minority at present.

Morrison and Dunlap (1986) evaluated three forms of elitism in environmental groups: *compositional*, where the activists in environmentalism are of high economic status; *ideological*, where the intent of the elite is to distribute the benefits of environmental reform to environmentalists and the costs to non-environmentalists; *impact*, where the effect but not the intent is the distribution of benefits to environmentalists and the costs to non-environmentalists. Morrison and Dunlap (1986) found that compositional and ideological elitism were weakly represented in the movement and impact elitism - the most important form in terms of equality - was even more weakly represented. Lowe (1990) concludes that compositional elitism is found but not ideological elitism as all classes suffer or benefit equally

from environmental reforms. Also, compositional elitism relates less to environmental concern and more to the type of people involved in any form of activism (Lowe and Goyder 1983).

Ideological elitism is not in the movement's interests because environmental activists seek to build up a *broad* public support base for their groups (Buttel and Flinn 1978) in order to push forward their arguments and give them strength in lobbying for change. This is especially true if the group is a political one dependent upon votes to survive. There is moreover a common ground of shared values in the concerns of the elite and the concerns of the non-elite: the environment is seen as a public right and good, not restricted to any one group:

> "The very fact that environmental concern has developed as a mass movement means that elite opinions must resonate with pre-existing values to produce such general appreciation." (Lowe and Goyder 1983 p32)

Also, often the worst environmental conditions are suffered by the poorer, less politically effective, less mobile groups (Lowe and Goyder 1983; Buttel and Flinn 1978). The very structure of many environmental organisations rejects strong hierarchical patterns and an active elite in favour of democratic decision-making.

However, the environmental activists are commonly those who, through education and social position, have information about the environment, know how to publicise their concerns and have the education and political capability to act for change. Correlative studies (see 3.2.), including this research (see 4.3.3.), note the higher levels of education and social grade amongst environmental activists. So compositional elitism is likely but the important issue is whether this contaminates the movement's goals. As Morrison and Dunlap conclude:

> "It is time to disaggregate the notion of environmental elitism, or perhaps even dispense with it. At the very least we should stop searching for an easy, general answer to the questions of whether environmentalism is elitist and whether environmental protection and social justice are incompatible. There is no inherent reason why environmental protection and social justice must constitute conflicting social goals." (Morrison and Dunlap 1986 p588)

2.3.2. The Different Environmental Groupings.

The environmental movement has not been stable in its recent history. Ideological differences emerged in the 1970s, due to the changing economy. Cotgrove suggests that this led to a shift in the emphasis of organised environmentalism:

> "from a consensual to a conflictual movement, from a concern with reform within a framework of consensual values to a radical challenge to societal values." (Cotgrove 1982 p10)

Concepts of both reform and radical challenge still exist within the movement at group and individual level. Reform is addressed by conventional environmentalists, also termed traditional (Cotgrove 1982) or reformist (Wicks 1992; Porritt 1984; Devall 1980) who work in connection with institutionalised agencies, government and commercial corporations to offer expertise, scientific research or advice, with their belief in a pluralistic society promising them impact in this way (Sandbrook 1986). Lowe and Goyder (1983) suggest that such a consultative role institutionalises groups and allows government to "contain" their actions. They are technocentrist (O'Riordan 1976, 1989), as are government and industry, with a managerial approach and a utilitarian view of the environment (Morrison 1986). They have only an "ameliorative" concern for the environment (Buttel and Johnson 1977) in the sense of partial reform of superficial processes, leading their actions, according to critics such as Puxty (1986) and Owen, to represent:

> "a passive acceptance of the existing social and political context of corporate reporting... an exercise in immanent legitimation". (Owen 1992 p5)

The category of reformist groups covers a wide range of ideologies and methods but some key concepts include large-scale use of renewable energy, appropriate technology (after Schumacher 1973) and, more recently, sustainable development after the Bruntland Commission's Report (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).

Radical environmental activists (Porritt and Winner 1988; Porritt 1984; Cotgrove 1982) tend to work outside the establishment and seek a fundamental change in social values simultaneous with a recognition of the overwhelming

importance of environmental protection. They are associated with the deep ecology movement (DeVall 1980) and concepts such as zero population growth, anarchic methods of community organisation and communal lifestyles based on voluntary simplicity (Robertson 1978). They can be controversial: physical obstruction of whaling ships and bulldozers in Antarctica has gained Greenpeace publicity; Earth First! have been accused of sabotage of commercial forestry operations (The Guardian 1990 August 17 p21).

Radicals may view green products as a weak compromise rather than a preliminary stage for change (e.g. Rose 1990; Irvine 1989a, 1989b), and thus as far less valuable than do reformist environmentalists.

There are fewer radical groups than conventionals in the 1990s and fewer than in the 1960s and 1970s. Despite Cotgrove's (1982) belief in a radical politicisation of both groups and the public following changes in the 1970s, by 1990 there had been a distinct deemphasis of political change and ideology in green groups (Dobson 1990).

From the above discussion, it is clear that the labels used for environmental groups are somewhat simplistic - some groups adopt, or profess, both methods. The terms reformists and radicals seem most useful in that they refer directly to the level of social change aimed for by groups and the corresponding lobbying methods they employ. These terms are adopted in this thesis as descriptive devices, not as absolute categories of behaviour; they merely mark points along a continuum of method and ideology - the views and methods of individual activists, non-activists and groups may lie anywhere along such a continuum.

The stance of environmental organisations to green consumerism is likewise not uniform. Most environmentalist groups can see the hazards as well as the potential benefits inherent in green consumerism and publicise their viewpoints in both jubilant and cautious voice.

> "Green consumerism puts pressure on government to act. It becomes harder for them to hide behind excuses that there is no demand for change." (Irvine 1989a p7)

They applaud the potential decrease in environmental damage resulting from the adoption of greener products. The reformist groups in particular appear keen to

emphasise the rapidity of this adoption and the speed with which industry, traditionally adept at dragging its feet in the face of government environmental legislation, has responded to this demand. Their own membership lists have been increased, bringing a boost in funds, and the increased awareness of the public must surely build a securer base of support for proenvironmental groups and policies. The possible conversion of the green consumers to green voters is also noted by environmentalists, although the support for political environmental groups has varied since their emergence in the 1970s. Perhaps the best news to be gleaned from green consumerism for the environmental movement is that:

> "it has introduced a huge audience to the idea that consumers are to some extent responsible for the consequences of their buying decisions". (The Ethical Consumer 1989 No.4 p13)

This awareness allows the consumers to send signals to industry and government about the environmental action they should be taking but there is also recognition of the problems this involves (see 2.5.).

One of the basic problems most environmentalists have in dealing with green consumerism is that it fails to address the question of how much people consume because of its emphasis upon what sorts of products they consume. It therefore does not reduce consumption, which is environmentally damaging (Dobson 1990 p141). Sandy Irvine, a strong critic of green consumerism as an isolated force, stresses the need for green consumers not only to assess the products they buy, but their perceived need to buy them at all. He criticises the modern Western lifestyle with reference to its ethos of consumerism as a continual need for more:

> "In a nutshell, consumerism equates more possessions with greater happiness. You are what you own, and the more you own, the happier you will be." (Irvine 1989a p15)

Porritt and Winner implicitly agree in their definition of green consumers:

> "Green consumers are people who *like to spend* their money on products they see as healthy and ecologically benign." (Porritt and Winner 1988 p190, emphasis added)

Purchasing is the basic stimulus behind most commerce and trade in modern society, and the purchasing of more by its customers is the mechanism by which

business survives. It may indeed be in the interests of industry to encourage the deflection of attention from unnecessarily high levels of material and energy consumption to arguments about which products - all of which must have some sort of environmental impact - reduce or increase environmental damage. Some environmentalists have characterised such a deflection as a seizure of initiative by industrialists, allowing the latter greater influence in directing the environmental debate:

> "Right now the environmental movement has not only lost the initiative, it has allowed the debate over environmental action to be re-framed by government and industry." (Rose 1990 p1)

It is also symptomatic of the consumerist ideology that when a product requires modification, the emphasis is on technological change as "sticking plaster environmentalism" (Irvine 1989a p23). This involves technological substitution of one product or process for another or the use of post-hoc economic measures such as taxing or fining polluting companies. The kind of change the environmental movement is looking for goes far beyond such substitutions to the cause of the problems, advocating a permanent change in society that will prevent problems rather than applying inadequate solutions in the hope that Nature will sort things out.

2.3.3. Environmental Politicisation and the Green Vote.

Increasing public political involvement and radicalisation of society in the 1960s heralded the evolution of the political arm of the environmental movement as public support for environmental reforms became widespread (see 2.2.1.). Again in the 1980s, environmental issues were increasingly addressed by the mainstream parties in the UK in their literature, although not necessarily in their actions (Owens 1986).

Since environmental issues first entered the political agenda, there has been a debate about the existence of an environmental constituency (Mitchell 1980b; Morrison 1980; Lake 1983), i.e. a stable proportion of the electorate which would vote according to environmental policies. This is important as:

> "green consumers... may not be the most durable or pervasive force for corporate change. The green votes will be more influential in the

long run." (The Economist 1990 September 8 supplement p3)

The evidence for a widespread green vote so far is poor (Lake 1983), and Buttel and Larson noted that:

> "since the benefits secured by environmentalists are distributed so broadly, environmentalism has no natural constituency among enduring social categories." (Buttel and Larson 1980 p326)

The lack of a natural constituency, despite widespread group support and green consumerist sympathy, seems clear as the environmental movement saw little electoral success in the 1970s in Europe, with the UK's green party (then People) achieving only 1% of the vote in 1979. Gradually, through the 1980s, green voting became more widespread, particularly in those countries whose political system incorporated proportional representation. There were environmental representatives in the parliaments of Belgium, Finland, Switzerland, Luxembourg and West Germany by 1986 (Porritt and Winner 1988, Rudig and Lowe 1986), and environmental M.P.s were successful in the Euroelections of 1984.

In June of 1989, the quinquennial elections to the European parliament took place. 15% of the votes in the UK went to what The Economist described as "Britain's muddled little Green Party" (The Economist 1989 July 22 p14) making them "the most successful Green Party in Europe" (The Guardian 1990 September 28 p34). A candidate stood in every one of the 78 constituencies in Great Britain. In 8% of these, the Green candidate came second to the Conservative, and in 87% third after the two largest parties (Johnston 1989a). It was the first time the political arm of the environmentalist movement proved itself to any degree in the UK, and compared favourably with the Green vote of 1% in the UK General Election of 1979. In local elections in 1989, the Greens took 8% of the votes overall (Greenline No.98 1992) and their membership doubled after the European election period to 20,000 in autumn 1990 (The Guardian 1990 September 28 p34).

Compositional elitism (see 2.3.1.) seems evident in the regional breakdown of the votes in the Euroelection. Greens obtained 20.2% in the South East compared to 11.6% in the North East and Yorkshire (Johnston 1989a). It is too simplistic to assume that such a division of Green support is dependent merely upon middle class values: the influence of nationalist parties in Wales and Scotland, plus the 'protest'

votes of the period towards the Centre and the Greens, complicate any analysis based on such an assumption.

Since that 1989 election, the Green vote seems to have disintegrated, with the Green Party losing all its 253 deposits in the 1992 General Election with only 1.3% of the vote (Greenline No.97 1992) and its vote also falling in the 1992 local elections, leading the main parties to presume that the environment is no longer a priority on the political agenda.

The policies of the Greens are often in direct opposition to the basic structures underlying the modern Western economy, and the governments with which it is associated: the dependence upon economic criteria, a renunciation of long-term benefits and a concentration of power in small sectors of the population. There is a difference, however, according to the *type* of election, with people demonstrating different preferences in European or local elections to national elections, but little work has yet been reported on this.

Even were the green vote to establish any real power for the Green Party in national government, there seems to be an unyielding establishment ranged against any change they might propose. The structures upon which government is based may prove resistant to novel perspectives like those held by the Greens. For the present, and for the foreseeable future, it is possible to identify:

> "the most basic challenge to green policy: the fact that the structure of Whitehall currently gives great power to the producers of filth, rather than to the protectors of the environment." (The Economist 1989 July 22 p14-15)

2.4. Business and the Green Market.

Although the environmental movement has a long history (see 2.2.1.), green consumerism has only emerged in the late 1980s as a clear trend. Despite a general interest in Europe for some years, it emerged significantly in autumn 1988 in the UK, when Mrs Thatcher made her first green speech. The media were covering the issues of ozone and tropical rainforest depletion with zeal at this time and, within four weeks of its publication, The Green Consumer Guide (Elkington and Hailes 1988) became a bestseller (The Economist 1990 September 8 supplement; Irvine 1989a).

The growth of green consumerism is dependent upon manufacturers seizing the demand opportunity and supplying environmentally friendly goods and this obviously depends upon perceived demand, the type of consumers and other market factors such as legislation and advertising control.

Market research polls and other surveys give varying estimates of the number of green consumers in the UK, depending upon how 'greenness' is defined. A 1989 MORI poll defined a green shopper to be one who had chosen one product over another on the basis of its environmental performance at least once and estimated that this covered 42% of the public, giving a green market of 18 million adults (quoted in Friends of the Earth 1989, Elkington 1989 and The Times 1989 June 30 p5). A 1991 Mintel survey estimated that 40% of adults actively seek green products (quoted in Int. J. Retail & Distribution Management 1992 pv) and AGB puts the market penetration of products with 'green appeal' at 20% of UK households (quoted by Burnside 1990). Diagnostics Market Research (ibid.) puts the size of the "Green Consumer Base" (those sympathetic to green consumerism but not yet buying green products) at 45% to 60% of the adult population and includes within this group a proportion of 30% more tightly defined as "Green Thinkers", who actively "seek out" environmentally friendly products rather than just occasionally preferring them.

Because of both the dynamism of the situation and the range and weakness of such definitions, it is unhelpful to take such estimates as absolute. It is equally difficult to assess the value of the present market for environmentally friendly products, for a variety of reasons. One of the most fundamental is the problem of defining what is 'environmentally friendly' without ambiguity or compromise. (This is besides the terminological problems of that label, in that no processes are actually friendly in a positive way, i.e. good to the environment rather than merely less bad.)

A realistic assessment would have to value two markets: the market for products that are substantially different or modified in the light of environmental concerns, and the market for products where little or no change has been made but the marketing makes use of environmental labels. The pressure group Friends of the Earth has used the terms "well intentioned" and "opportunistic" marketing to distinguish these two uses of green labelling.

The language and terminology used to describe products, the information we

have about the environmental effects of products, the technology of their production and disposal are all subject to rapid change. Such change means that it is difficult to define the 'greenness' of a product or a company on a stable basis and they must be continually under review in the light of technological advance and research into environmental damage. This requires the investment of time and money in an independent 'watchdog' body with scientific research and government backing. At present, this function resides primarily with pressure groups, e.g. Friends of the Earth, Women's Environmental Network.

There are few types of goods bearing environmentally-related labels for which there is information on their green market share. Unleaded petrol is clearly marketed with environmental references and had a 33% market share in the UK in 1990 (Department of the Environment 1990 p146) compared to 60% in West Germany (Fiori 1989). However, unleaded petrol has a price advantage over leaded due to government intervention, which introduces an economic incentive alongside any environmental considerations. About 90% of sprays retailed to the public in 1990 will be 'ozone friendly' and the various phosphate-free washing powders achieved about 2% market penetration in 1989 in the UK compared to 90% in West Germany (ibid.).

A key green sector is the organic produce market: this was worth around £1 million in the supermarkets in the UK in 1985 (Hill 1986) and is expanding - overall European sales have increased tenfold over the last five years (Marketing Week 1990 September 21) and the UK market in 1990 was estimated to be worth around £100 million (British Organic Farmers *et al* 1991) representing 1% to 2% of the respective sectors (Lampkin 1990; Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte 1990). Premiums on organic produce (claimed to be the obstacle to development) vary widely: up to 35% on on-farm sales (Hill 1986) and 50% or even 100% premiums in large supermarkets but may be much lower in smaller stores.

The marketing of goods by reference to the environment is now becoming pervasive in many different sectors: batteries; cars; detergents; cosmetics using sprays; paper; plastic and other forms of packaging. The multiple superstores such as Sainsbury, Safeway and Tesco have expanded their stocking of green products and some have developed greener own-brand products, e.g. Sainsbury's GreenCare

detergents, Safeway's Ecological range. Non-physical products being marketed under a green label include companies (see 2.4.1.) and investment packages. A Stewardship Fund for environmentally friendly investment was offered as early as 1984 in the UK (Miller 1992; Porritt and Winner 1988) and 18 such unit trusts had been set up by 1990 (Miller 1992). The trust chooses which companies to invest in according to ten criteria of positive environmental awareness and action, rather than merely not investing in companies with publicised poor environmental records.

Even where no physical changes have been made to established products, some companies are using marketing tactics in referring to the environment. Fairy Liquid dishwashing detergent claims to have been green for over 50 years, according to its bottle design. Tampax packaging claims that their (bleached wood pulp) tampons have always been environmentally sound because they biodegrade after disposal. This sort of "defensive advertising" (Irvine 1989a) reveals not only bandwagon jumping, but inertia and complacency as well.

Individual products marketed under a green label often come from companies which produce other goods not labelled as environmentally friendly. This suggests that, in many cases, there is niche marketing with green marketing or products used as further weapons against the commercial competition, rather than heralding a real change of emphasis for the company.

In a 1989 survey of City analysts, 80% of the respondents said that the marketing in their industrial sector had been affected by environmentalist ideas (Hilton 1989). As marketing is traditionally more responsive to public consciousness and changing ideas than other industrial departments, environmental reorientation may begin in marketing departments and be able to initiate change through feedback to other departments in the company (Elkington 1989), so that:

> "There is little doubt... that the marketing departments are in the front line of this shift in corporate thinking." (Hilton 1989 p15)

2.4.1. Greening Business.

It is becoming increasingly important to companies that not only should their product be seen to be green but that the company as a whole should develop a green image (Higham 1990b). A recent survey of businessmen indicated that 40% of

respondents believed that a green image was beneficial and even "made commercial sense" (Hilton 1989). The expansion of such green imagery has implications for green consumerism as the company becomes a commodity to be advertised in this way. The increasing use of environmental information and references will continue to affect the choice of and information about the products available to the green consumer. In this way, green business and green consumerism have a certain reciprocity, making an investigation of green business and the green market necessary for a full understanding of green consumerism.

A recent survey reported that around 40% of companies claim to have environmental policies or objectives in place, 37% had undergone a complete or partial environmental audit and 29% had reported their environmental policies or performance in their Annual Report (Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte quoted in Carey 1992; Harte and Owen 1991; Buck 1992) showing an increase in disclosure since the early 1980s. However, the information disclosed in annual reports and other publications is rarely standardised and usually relates only to individual sites or instances of 'good' environmental behaviour. Owen (1992 p20) describes this form of disclosure as "specific narrative" as, although it is potentially auditable, at present it relates only to singular incidents not to company-wide operations.

Such disclosure may be prompted by previous bad environmental publicity suffered by the company (The Economist 1990 September 8 supplement) which causes green consumers to prefer products from competing companies. For example, Union Carbide, who owned the plant involved in the Bhopal chemical accident in 1987, have had an environmental policy as part of their corporate requirement since that time. Adverse environmental publicity can be a blow to a company's public credibility and, even where the information is unfounded or risk is very small, the company may be forced to spend considerable sums on advertising and other procedures to regain public acceptance. So, no company wants to be seen as un-green for fear of losing a competitive edge in the market, but some are equally wary of being caught in another kind of trap through encouraging scrutiny (Simms 1992) as:

> "the argument that 'going Green' positively invites an uncomfortable degree of scrutiny and potentially hostile attention from rivals,

> consumer groups and the Green lobby is one which some large companies deploy to justify foot-dragging." (Higham 1990b p17)

Many companies have attempted to avoid such traps by seeking out consultancies specialising in environmental audits and advice, which are often run by people with experience in environmental groups. Such consultancies are expanding, with the largest environmental consultancy in the UK employing about 100 specialists and having a turnover of £7 million in 1989 (The Guardian 1990 January 12 p25). The potential market for the greening of industry has been put at £3.2 billion in the next three years (ibid). The environmental consultants describe themselves as "the pragmatists of the environment" (ibid.) and depend upon technical argument rather than the confrontational approach of pressure groups in order to encourage gradual change within companies. This has inevitably earned them criticisms from environmental groups.

Green corporate images also invite criticism about the greenness of the product ranges involved. For example, some of the biggest suppliers of fossil fuels in the form of petrol for domestic vehicles, who advertise unleaded petrol with strong environmental references, can simultaneously have large stakes in world fertiliser production, and may be involved in the manufacture of pesticides, such as aldrin, which, though now banned, was manufactured in the UK into the late 1980s (Murrell in Irvine 1989b). Porritt and Winner criticise thus:

> "green capitalism can give exploitative, destructive industrial capitalism a veneer of ecological respectability. That makes it a potent propaganda tool for industrialists anxious to resist deeper change." (Porritt and Winner 1988b p150)

A corporation's activities may thus be less green than its environmentally conscious and caring advertising suggests, because it is attempting to attract green consumers without making the substantial changes that such environmental advertising implies. The criticism this arouses can rebound onto the idea of green consumerism, damaging its credibility. The greening of businesses and advertising can therefore affect the future of green consumerism negatively, as well as positively in expanding the green market.

A key concept for industry in describing their proenvironmental change has

been that of sustainable development, after its use by the Bruntland Commission (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), linked as it is with the "soft" environmental option (Buttel 1986). It has now been widely adopted by business as it appears to allow growth, providing there is a recognition of environmental damage and the needs of future generations. However, the overuse of the term without genuine change in operations has rendered it somewhat meaningless at this time. It inherently implies that environmentally friendly lifestyles require no sacrifice and promotes green consumerism as an easy option, in order to expand the green market to include those who are interested in environmental issues but not strongly committed to making personal proenvironmental changes. As noted previously, the reciprocal relationship between such green business and green consumerism means that the promotion of green products and companies by the use of such terms can affect the development and spread of green consumerism, just as the strength of green consumerism affects the activity of business on the environmental front.

2.5. Conflicts and Complications in the Green Market.

There are a number of conflicts stemming from the different viewpoints held by advocates of the green market and environmentalist commentators: conflicts of goals, of time frames, of solutions and of prices. There is a serious conflict in the green market which arises out of the different methods and goals of environmentalism and business since:

> "Consumerism, of the kind represented by advertising and marketing, is largely incompatible with environmentalism." (Higham 1990b p17)

Commercial companies depend upon the continuing growth of the market and therefore a continuous increase in sales of products (Johnston 1989b). They recognise no limitations on 'public goods' (Pearce *et al* 1989), as environmentalists do, and the concept of limited growth (and especially a society based upon a no-growth economy) is an anathema, or at least alien, to the strategies of modern industry.

There is therefore a clear distinction between the objectives of

environmentalist groups and those of industry. This is expressed by a City stockbroker:

> "We don't find the want less, consume less and waste less approach of the Green Party particularly helpful because that obviously implies an economic recession, producing less manufactured goods and changing fundamentally the structure of society and manufacturing industry." (The Guardian 1990 January 12 p25)

In contrast, environmentalist commentators reverse this argument because they do not find the produce more, consume more argument of business valid. Green consumerism is criticised in this context as it deemphasises reducing consumption in favour of changing consumption, and that only slightly. Thus, environmentalist writers have described green consumerism *per se* as operating in the capitalist, Thatcherite mode instead of changing this system (Dobson 1990 p141; Gardner and Sheppard 1989 p224; Irvine 1989a).

Different time frames also reveal conflict in that:

> "One of the key difficulties which industrialists face in talking to environmentalists is that they operate on very different time-scales. Most businesses consider a two year time horizon a luxury, focusing instead on quarter-by-quarter results." (Elkington with Burke 1987 p65)

The environmentalists, meanwhile, are considering the long term future of species and the environment over periods from the next 20 years to the next two centuries, or further, ahead. To reconcile the two perspectives would require either a real sense of environmental crisis or fundamental changes in the character of the free market as it operates today, e.g. through the establishment of environmental legislation to force change from outside the market.

Business frequently solves problems through technical modification rather than a change of principles or structure, for example the chemical substitution of HCFC for CFC in aerosol sprays to attract green consumers to an 'ozone friendly' product. This technical fix has been exposed as an insufficient, ineffective way to change attitudes and behaviour (Heberlein 1974) but is usually the one adopted by industry, e.g.:

> "the whole race for the Green car is another example of marketers

> going for the cosmetic fix rather than facing up to the enormity of the problem." (Smith and Sambrook 1990 p30)

So the deep changes advocated by environmentalism, in terms of reducing consumption and putting environments before profits, are mostly alien to the practices of industry. Whilst marketing sections adopt green marketing strategies, they ignore the real issues of environmentalism and the true ideal of green marketing - "the marketing of 'less is more'" (ibid p31). Hence:

> "at some point, the irreconcilable philosophical divisions between environmentalism and conventional customer economics are bound to surface." (Higham 1990b p17)

In the meantime, the differences in means and ends between commercial and environmental concerns are being papered over with green marketing. This is aided by bureaucracies able to master conflict, which appear to be working for both sides of the argument but are implicitly working for the overall aim of maintaining the system itself (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991).

Conflict arises over the higher premiums on a lot of green products which are perceived by environmentalists to cause inequality in several ways. Firstly, the green consumer appears to be subsidising those choosing the cheaper, more environmentally damaging versions (Irvine 1989b). This is because the 'real' costs of production, use and disposal, e.g. also pollution clean-up after production, are not incorporated into products but are regarded as externalities (Pearce *et al* 1989; Friends of the Earth 1989).

This is compounded in a class inequality, where only the affluent consumers can afford to buy green because a lot of environmentally less damaging products are more expensive (Dobson 1990; Irvine 1989a). Another unfair aspect of green consumerism is that retailers are willing to put product prices up to levels much above ordinary versions of products, not because of increased production costs but because the demand will tolerate such prices:

> "retailers are aiming at the committed green consumer, using market-skimming practices of higher pricing." (Simms 1992 p39)

In the case of organic produce, the supply is insufficient to meet consumer demand, and so, according to the normal economic rule, prices will rise to levels at

which the goods can still be sold but at higher profits, especially in the larger retailing establishments (Irvine 1989a p11).

2.5.1. Conflicts over Information.

As well as conflicts stemming from the different viewpoints of business and environmentalism, environmentalists distrust businesses' claims and information about their environmentally friendly products. Simms (1992 p41) has described this as a backlash from consumers, environmental groups (such as Friends of the Earth) and the media in response to industry's opportunistic marketing.

This is most evident in the environmentalists' denunciation of green advertising e.g. the Green Con Awards publicised by Friends of the Earth since 1989 for advertising which misinformed the public about products or used inappropriate claims or descriptions. British Nuclear Fuels came 'first' in 1989, because of advertisements which promoted nuclear energy as the cleaner alternative to fossil fuels due to its reduced emissions to the atmosphere. These were strongly condemned by Friends of the Earth for "factual inaccuracy, significant omission and for playing on the public's fears and ignorance about the Greenhouse Effect" (Earth Matters 1989 No.6 p20).

The problem lies in the attractiveness of environmental claims for businesses attempting to promote products (Irvine 1989a) to green consumers. The themes are easily used and provide "an opportunity for aggressive sales campaigns" (The Ethical Consumer 1989 No.4 p12). It is very illuminating to see how environmental issues have been treated in the marketing sector. Take for example this extract from *What's New in Marketing:*

> "Some ideas which might generate thought among marketing executives are outlined below...
>
> Packaging for almost any product *which can claim it is made up at least in part* of recycled materials based on a save materials, save waste pollution label.
>
> Paper products - from wallpapers to toilet rolls - produced on the same, recycled principle *(they do not have to be 100% recycled to give a green image).*" (Fletcher 1989 p25, emphasis added)

The problem is a lack of standards. The recent upsurge in the use of terms like environmentally friendly, ozone friendly, green, organic, phosphate-free, CFC

free, non-aerosol, unleaded and so on, has been without any legislative control and relies on self-regulation. This marketing free-for-all led to ambiguity and confusion as environmental claims were made on shaky or spurious evidence or involved downright deception. Many of the marketing logos promoting the environmentally friendliness of products resemble approved trademarks, and half the people shown such advertising ploys by the Consumers Association in 1990 believed them to be officially approved and meeting an independent set of standards (Earth Matters 1990 No.8 p8-9). This confusion needs to be eliminated or at least counteracted as it both misleads and disillusions green consumers genuinely looking for less environmentally damaging goods. In a 1990 poll, 49% of the public agreed that "I do not believe labels that say products are environmentally friendly" and 28% disagreed. 67% agreed that "saying a product is environmentally friendly is a way of getting you to pay more for that product" and only 17% disagreed (The Guardian 1990 September 14 p33).

In 1989, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), the industry's own body, upheld complaints against Lever Brothers, a major producer of domestic detergents, and ICI, a major chemicals manufacturer. A report produced by the Authority in that year optimistically remarked:

> "Some advertisers seem to be paying more attention to making sure their wares are perceived as sitting on the right side of the green fence than to checking the factual accuracy of their claims ... advertisers have a special duty to ensure accuracy in an area where even the scientists are not absolutely sure of their facts." (ASA quoted in Earth Matters 1989 No.6 p20)

The ASA guidelines now forbid the use of absolute terms like 'green', 'clean' and 'environmentally friendly' in advertisements (ENDS 1990 No.188 September p25) and, in 1990, the ITV Association published the first comprehensive guidelines for environmental claims in TV and radio advertisements (Higham 1990a) - however, compliance is still only voluntary for both codes (Holder 1991). In 1989, the Department of Trade and Industry announced its intention to amend the Trades Description Act, which applies to advertising content and style, in order to stamp out misleading environmental claims and to put the onus upon the manufacturers to prove such claims, instead of on Trading Standards Officers to disprove them (Earth

Matters 1990 No.8 p8-9). One of the schemes which may help to overcome these concerns and consolidate the credibility of green products is that of eco-labelling (see 2.6.) which would award green labels after checking and standardising environmental references.

As well as conflicts over the marketing information, environmentalists see a problem in the lack of information. Secrecy is beloved of both government and industry and it is difficult to obtain useful data on the environmental effects and practices relating to products. Good information must be a prerequisite of the informed choice (Bryceson 1990) that underlies definitions of green consumerism (Adams *et al* 1991).

It is also important to many people in the environmental movement and related groups that the assessment of a product includes issues such as the exploitation of Third World resources and peoples, multinationals' monopolisation of industrial sectors, political affiliations and organisational structures maintained by the companies - e.g. centralised production processes, private sector provision of welfare services (The Ethical Consumer 1989 No.4; Irvine 1989a). Green consumerism and environmental references on products rarely address such issues and are thus selective in emphasis.

2.6. Government and Environmental Legislation.

The Government plays a role in shaping green consumerism in two ways. Firstly, the Government tends to promote an individual responsibility for proenvironmental action through its direct advertising material (see 6.2.1. and Figure 6.1.) and through the orientation of its publications. For example, the following comes from the 1990 White Paper which, particularly in its summary, expresses clearly the Government's emphasis on consumer (and voter) sovereignty (see 3.7.) in environmental responsibility, rather than on governmental or business environmental responsibility:

> "The responsibility for our environment is shared. It is not a duty for Government alone. It is an obligation on us all... an instinctive characteristic of good citizenship." (Department of the Environment 1990 p16)

Secondly and more importantly, government can encourage or discourage proenvironmental activities through legislative moves, e.g. regulating industrial production, pollution and advertising, or through financial incentives and disincentives, e.g. making unleaded petrol relatively less expensive to encourage its uptake by the public.

Environmental legislation is an extremely complex area and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with it in any depth. In order to set the context for the development of green consumerism, it is useful to look at the legislation and statements which have had impacts on green business and green consumerism because:

> "The willingness of the consumer to pay more for goods dressed up as green is probably a temporary phenomenon. What's not temporary is the forthcoming legislation and EC directives on pollution control, and the greenhouse effect is a real phenomenon." (The Guardian 1990 January 12 p25)

In the international arena, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, initially signed in 1987, has been important in pushing ozone friendly products to the media forefront. However, it still represents a technical solution via chemical substitution of the controlled compounds (CFCs and now halons and methyl chloroform) which has proved relatively easy for industrial producers to implement. It does indicate the increasing globalisation of environmental issues and the consolidation of international legislation on such issues.

The Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 has been less important in advancing international policy, particularly due to the recalcitrance of the USA and other Western nations to submit to international agreements.

EC moves are likely to provide the next legislative change relating to green consumerism through eco-labelling. West Germany's Blue Angel mark has been used to identify products that pass certain environmental criteria since its introduction in 1978 and now covers over 3000 products, all of which are independently inspected before their use of the logo is approved. The need for an eco-label in the UK was accepted by the UK Government in January 1990 and the EC is now developing a community-wide eco-labelling system. A Regulation, which came into force on 13

April 1992, now requires Member States to designate "competent bodies" to look at eco-labelling criteria, product groups, individual applications and conclude contracts if applications are successful. Particular countries are considering the qualifying criteria for particular types of goods (Environmental Labelling 1991 No.2), with the UK looking at washing machines, dishwashers, hairsprays, soil improvers and light bulbs (Department of the Environment News Release, 5 March 1992). This scheme is based on voluntary product inclusion, a feature denigrated by environmentalists, such as Friends of the Earth, because it will allow the non-green products to be sold unmarked rather than being sold with an unfavourable label. The assessment of products will be on a cradle-to-grave audit (also known as life-cycle analysis (LCA) or eco-profiling). Such an audit would include: the use of materials and energy in the manufacture of the product itself; the product's packaging; the marketing and distribution networks; the way in which the product is used, especially if it consumes materials or energy in use, e.g. an electrical appliance; what happens after it has been used, i.e. waste disposal. Although criteria should operate uniformly across the Community, individual states will be responsible for awarding the labels. The scheme should be in operation by the end of 1992 (ibid.).

The eco-labelling debate highlights issues of compromise due to the different standards administered by individual member states on how products qualify for a green label. There are also arguments as to whether any comprehensive eco-labelling scheme would cause a stagnation in the development and adoption of new, less environmentally damaging processes. Such arguments are based on the premise that the high costs of environmental protection would force smaller companies to continue operating older, less efficient and more polluting equipment rather than buy in the new, expensive technology. Also, the more dynamic industries would be at an advantage as they would adopt greener technology more rapidly during expansion and modification prompted by economic considerations. This is compounded by industrial concern that eco-labelling and other related legislation "are potentially a highly effective form of protectionism" (The Economist 1990 September 8 supplement p22) and would allow those companies, and countries, who already produce less environmentally damaging products to guard their market share and therefore favour certain sectors (Buttel *et al* 1990).

Other EC countries have more stringent environmental legislation than the UK, which may eventually adopt some elements of it. Germany has recently legislated so that business is responsible for packaging on its products, to the extent that retailers and manufacturers must deal with all packaging returned by consumers, often incurring large transport and disposal costs (The Guardian 1992 June 26 p29). This would have a serious impact on green business and consumerism is taken up in the UK.

In terms of UK legislation, the recent Environmental Protection Bill (1990) emphasised Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) through the consolidation and strengthening of the role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution (HMIP) and was described as "moderately encouraging" at first (Porritt 1989). The Bill also made local authorities responsible for monitoring and regulating waste disposal and pollution from domestic sources and obliged them to aim to recycle 25% of household waste by 2000 AD. This should encourage widespread provision of public recycling sites and boost the entire recycling industry, with possible reverberations on prices and availability of recycled products to the green consumer. However, the recent increase in the quantity of paper recycled has led to a glut in the market and subsequent problems because the demand for the recycled material, in the form of green products, has not kept pace with the amount being recycled (information supplied by Harrogate Borough Council 1991).

The 1990 White Paper, This Common Inheritance: Britain's Environmental Strategy (Department of the Environment 1990), disappointed many environmental commentators and has had little direct impact on green consumerism or other individual actions. The most common accusation was that it merely restated what had already been done by the government or other governments and bodies and proposed little reform or new action. ENDS characterised it as "a document short on targets, deadlines, firm commitments and new initiatives" (ENDS No.188 1990 p11). Bryceson criticised more strongly:

> "The intention of this White Paper is quite clearly not to encourage green awareness but simply to placate it... [The White Paper makes] a failed attempt to placate green opinion whilst not in any way affecting the financial interests of any significant section of the electorate." (Bryceson 1990 p1)

There was little in the White Paper that dealt with the suggestions made in the so-called Pearce Report, published for the Department of the Environment in 1989 (Pearce *et al* 1989), despite the amount of interest and debate the report generated. The Pearce Report was a document designed and communicated by economists and advocated the adoption of market based initiatives to control environmental damage, rather than legislative regulation of production. Such a strategy was based on three points: first, the establishment of standards of acceptable pollution; second, the application of charges on pollution, known as 'green taxes'; third, the supply of tradeable 'permits to pollute' to certain levels. This set of ideas, based upon the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP), was first set out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Council in 1974 and, if incorporated into UK policy, would have had a strong impact on environmental change in business and therefore upon green consumerism.

The UK Government has intervened more directly in the green consumer market by reducing the duty on unleaded petrol in the 1989 Budget, making it 10 pence cheaper on average than leaded petrol (CLEAR (Campaign for Lead Free Air magazine) 1989 No.14 p2). Thus the Government added a financial incentive to the environmental health considerations in favour of unleaded petrol. (Atmospheric and other forms of lead have been correlated with poor health and brain development, especially in children: for more details, see Eden (1990a); CLEAR (Campaign for Lead Free Air magazine 1989 No.14) and other material from this group). Similar financial measures have been drafted by the EC in the form of taxes on carbon-rich fuels to encourage efficiency, conservation and reduced consumption rather than global warming through CO_2 output. However, it appears that the EC declined to begin collecting this tax until other developed countries have drafted similar proposals (The Guardian 1992 May 15 p25), again due to worries about losing competitive advantage and the repercussions of such large scale financial moves.

2.7. Concluding Remarks.

This chapter has outlined developments and issues in areas related to green consumerism in the UK, especially: voluntary environmental organisations and their ideologies and expansion; green products and the use of environmental references by

business; conflicts in and criticisms of the green market; environmental legislation.

In the UK, green consumerism has been taken up later than in Germany and other European countries and therefore is slightly different in form. Germany's use of the Blue Angel label for green products has helped to identify and legitimate the green market there for over a decade. Stronger environmental legislation in European countries and the USA, which also has more effective enforcement of legislation through its Environmental Protection Agency, means businesses abroad may be more sensitive to environmental issues than businesses in the UK.

The UK has a well-established tradition of environmental pressure groups, both reformist and radical, but these seem to be less politicised than in Germany, for example, where proportional representation has aided Green representation in parliament. The Green Party has done poorly in the UK since 1990 and, like the German *Die Grunen*, is now suffering bad publicity due to internal conflicts (e.g. The Guardian 1992 September 11 p1).

Green consumerism in the UK is therefore developing in a context which is different from other, particularly European, countries where products and companies are more regulated and where groups and the public are more politicised. This illustrates the importance of context for the development and permanence of green consumerism as performed by individuals in their social and political contexts.

As well as the social and political context of green consumerism, it is necessary to look at the academic context. Studies of this form of public environmentalism, and more general issues raised by proenvironmental behaviours of all kinds, are examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.

3.1. Introduction.

This chapter reviews the theoretical context of this investigation of green consumerism with reference to works in sociology, psychology, geography, economics and political science, thereby illustrating the multidisciplinary nature of research in this area.

Theoretical frameworks reliant upon quantitative measurement and statistical correlation are explored first and then classificatory frameworks defined according to the values shared by groups. The identification of the incongruence between measured or classified values and behaviour leads into a discussion of notions of agency and efficacy of the individual and the ensuing responsibility perceived. The interaction between consumers and business is explored with respect to consumer sovereignty arguments. The informational context of the choices of green consumers is assessed with respect to informational quality and availability. Finally, theories of the action resulting from these contexts are outlined with respect to the chosen behaviour and its implications.

3.2. Measuring Attitudes, Values and Behaviour.

The quantitative measurement and correlation of environmental values and attitudes to proenvironmental behaviour was widespread in academic studies in the 1960s and 1970s, most significantly in psychology. Although attitudes can be distinguished from values through their shallowness in the mental schema, both are encompassed within the concept of environmental concern which is central to research into environmental attitudes (e.g. Tucker 1978; Van Liere and Dunlap 1978; Van Liere and Dunlap 1981; Manzo and Weinstein 1987; Samdah and Robertson 1989). Such values are passed onto individuals through immediate experience (deHaven-Smith 1988) and socialisation (Inglehart 1977, 1981; see 3.3.), or through secondhand information (Rokeach 1968) such as that produced and disseminated by elites (deHaven-Smith 1988). Environmental concern can be composed of affective (emotional), cognitive (knowledge-related, see Maloney and Ward 1973; Maloney et al 1975; Schahn and Holzer 1990) and conative (behaviour-related) components (Van

Liere and Dunlap 1981; Rokeach 1968; Fishbein 1965). Cutter (1981) uses a similar threefold conceptualisation, this time at the community rather than the individual level: centrality (affective) - the amount of worry about environmental problems relative to that about non environmental problems; evaluative (cognitive) - the severity of the problem; effective - the emotion raised by the issues.

Some authors have commented that the concern measured by quantitative questionnaires is no more than the behavioural expression of an attitude and is not an influence upon behaviour (Fendrich 1967). Concern may also express the social norms felt to be operating, in that the respondent replies in the way they perceive to be socially acceptable. Buttel and Johnson (1977) believe that the measures used to represent concern are in fact dependent variables and act as

> "indicators of an underlying unidimensional belief system: either people are concerned about environmental problems or they are not." (Buttel and Johnson 1977 p44)

This suggests that concern can be viewed as merely an expression of deeper attitudes rather than an attitude or state in itself and therefore has poor theoretical or practical relevance to behaviour. Such comments reveal the inappropriateness of a methodology which emphasises empirical measurement of attitudes and not the development of their connection to behaviour.

Manzo and Weinstein (1987) have looked at personal risk as a correlate of environmental concern in terms of the exposure to local environmental threats. Christenson (1988) draws a useful distinction between individual risk and social risk. He says that the first is voluntary and involves:

> "a conscious decision to act or not act based on an assessment of the probability of success or failure and the consequences of anticipated outcomes". (Christenson 1988 p6)

The second, social risk, is involuntary and involves differential exposure of sectors of society to environmental conditions. Groups then seek to translate individual risk into social risk, broadening its relevance to policy debates and therefore strengthening the enforcement of environmental protection to remove the differential effects (ibid.).

Concern may involve issue-specificity so that resulting behaviour will only

be connected to concern about a specific issue and not about wider environmental issues (Oskamp *et al* 1991). Composite evaluations of concern across many issues may therefore mask the real nature of the relationship between concern and behaviour on any one issue (Maloney and Ward 1973) especially where concern is narrowly focused upon specific objects or situations in immediate experience (deHaven-Smith 1988). Some correlative studies, such as Weigel (1977), choose either issue-specific or composite measures of concern to fit the type of behavioural measures chosen, to allow the strongest correspondence between the two.

Behaviour is used in correlative studies as the outcome of mental evaluation and therefore as a commitment (Fendrich 1967; Maloney and Ward 1973; Manzo and Weinstein 1987) to personal values with which it is presumed to be statistically connected.

3.2.1. Correlative Models.

Initial correlative work on attitudes/values and proenvironmental behaviour was based upon the presumption of a one-to-one correspondence between the two concepts (Liska 1974). Work like that of Weigel and Newman (1976) used measurements of specific attitudes in an attempt to predict specific behaviours. Many workers tried to devise, and then perfect, Likert-type scales to assess environmental attitudes, aiming continually for good correspondence between the quantified scores on these scales and the behaviours being investigated (e.g. Maloney and Ward 1973; Maloney et al 1975; Borden and Francis 1978; McKechnie 1977; Weinstein 1972; De Young 1986; Oskamp *et al* 1991).

This approach was criticised for several reasons. Firstly, it was argued that all that was being measured were "verbal attitudes" (Fishbein 1967) that were merely expressions of deeper feelings and should be more properly regarded as opinions. Secondly, bivariate correlation was seen to be mediated by other forces or correlates and was thus not direct but oblique (Buttel and Johnson 1977). Thirdly, there were many different scales, dealing with different items, yet purporting to measure the same concepts of environmental concern, attitudes and behaviour (e.g. Maloney and Ward 1973; McKechnie 1977; Schahn and Holzer 1990). The lack of standardised techniques made comparison between results difficult and drew attention away from

the real issue of theoretical development of the influences on behaviour by over-emphasising the methodological arguments of questionnaire design and analysis.

Liska (1974) encouraged the shift away from bivariate models because the "fallacy of expected correspondence" (DeFleur and Westie 1963, quoted by Schwartz 1968) between attitudes and behaviour meant that a one-to-one correspondence was theoretically and empirically inadequate and required the identification of "intervening variables" which mediate between behaviour and attitudes or values (Blumer 1956; Fendrich 1967; Weigel 1971; Liska 1974; Manzo and Weinstein 1987). As Heberlein put it:

> "Simple bivariate relations which account for only modest proportions of the total variance may not reasonably be adequate to interpret complex systems full of simultaneous causation and feedback loops." (Heberlein 1972 p86)

To move away from the assumption of one-to-one correspondence and towards the studying of intervening variables, studies looked at the relationships between behaviour and a variety of different sociopolitical and demographic variables, such as age, sex, educational background, occupation, income, political partisanship, political ideology and personality traits (e.g. Fendrich 1967; Liska 1974; Arbuthnot 1977; Cutter 1981; Weigel 1979; Tucker 1978; Neuman 1986).

There are two main problems with past and continuing multivariate studies of environmental behaviour and its influences. The first is that such studies rely on a correlative model of behavioural influences (for example, Tognacci et al 1972; Manzo and Weinstein 1987; Oskamp *et al* 1991) and therefore a numerical conceptualisation with theory as an *ad hoc* addition. Lowe and Rudig (1986) have termed such numerical foundations "low level hypotheses" and a review of four such *ad hoc* theories of the correlation between environmental concern and urban or rural residence found none of the four to be adequate (Lowe and Pinhey 1982).

The second problem is inconsistency. Van Liere and Dunlap (1978) emphasised the contradictory results produced by different workers, e.g. the ambiguous correlation between income and proenvironmental behaviour. The number of different techniques and lack of standardised measurement also made comparison difficult and ambiguities were often ascribed to technique rather than theory,

emphasising technical rather than methodological or epistemological inaccuracy (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1990; O'Riordan and Rayner 1991). Also, the way in which the variables interacted was often excluded from the interpretative analysis, or it was assumed that the variables were both independent and non-interactive.

Overall, correlative models of proenvironmental behaviour appear unable to explain more than about 15% of its variance (Van Liere and Dunlap 1978) and their usefulness has been exaggerated. Sandbach criticised them strongly thus:

> "At best, public opinion survey data reveal only very general attitudes based on hypothetical questions with no direct political, social or economic consequences, and more often than not these attitudes are based upon very sketchy exposure to the issues". (Sandbach 1980 p10)

3.3. Classifying Environmental Values.

Those recognising the problems with correlative models turned to the exploration of values underlying proenvironmental behaviour, despite Cotgrove and Duff describing values as "conceptually elusive" (Cotgrove and Duff 1981 p98). Dillman and Christenson (1972) characterised a value as a conception of the desirable, Neuman (1986) as a qualitative aspect of a preference or a goal and Schwartz (1968) as a behavioural norm. Values therefore relate to perceptions of 'right' behaviour or attitudes according to social definitions, but can be difficult to identify consistently in individuals.

Inglehart's widely-cited work (1977; 1981) on values was prompted by value shifts associated with social movements in the 1970s. He developed a twofold division of values shared by groups. *Materialist* (or acquisitive) values favour the economic goals of capitalism and authoritarian regulation of society; *post-materialist* (or post-bourgeoisie) values prioritise personal freedom and protection of the environment through collective means, rather than individual self-interest or imposed authoritarian controls. Dunlap and Van Liere (1978, 1984; Dunlap 1980) describe a 'dominant social paradigm' in similar terms to Inglehart's materialist view and a 'New Ecological Paradigm' similar to a post-materialist view and associated with concepts such as 'Spaceship Earth'.

To test the theory that those holding post-materialist values (or adhering to the New Ecological Paradigm) would be more involved in proenvironmental behaviour, multivariate models were used to classify individuals and then to discover how well this predicted their environmental behaviour and ideologies (e.g. Cotgrove and Duff 1981; Cotgrove 1982).

The source of such values was more complicated and Inglehart put forward two hypotheses: scarcity and socialisation. The scarcity or deprivation hypothesis employed Maslow's hierarchy of needs, where the first priority for a person is the fulfilment of basic, lower order needs such as shelter and food, and, once these needs are satisfied, higher order needs such as environmental quality and self-esteem become more important (Maslow 1954). This hypothesis therefore depends upon the changing external circumstances: the economic context of the present recession may mean lower order needs are less easily fulfilled and individuals cannot consider higher needs. The socialisation hypothesis suggests that individuals are educated and receive values during childhood and adolescence which they continue to hold internally despite changing external circumstances. This points to cohort effects, where values shared by those born into the same generation may be relatively stable. The seeming discrepancy between socialisation, which produces stable values, and scarcity, where the external situation can change values, has been commented on (Cotgrove and Duff 1981). However, Inglehart recognised this and qualified his hypotheses thus:

> "there is no one-to-one relationship between economic level and the prevalence of Post-Materialist values, for these values reflect one's subjective sense of security, not one's economic level per se." (Inglehart 1981 p881, emphasis in original)

Hence he proposed that we interpret the scarcity hypothesis in the light of the socialisation hypothesis, as socialised values are the yardstick whereby individuals judge relative scarcity, rather than expecting one or the other or both to be true for any one person.

Samdah and Robertson (1989) regarded a shift away from correlative models towards the identification of such shared values, to be beneficial for research. Although such a classification is useful, the explanatory theory is still unclear and

incomplete, especially relating to global environmental issues and the consequences of the purchasing of green products - a relatively new phenomenon.

The obvious and most effective use of these classes is in monitoring value change over larger groups over time. The implications for the environmental movement and its political success are clear: the higher the population places post-materialist values in their hierarchy of priorities, the greater and broader may the support base for environmental groups be. This may indicate the strength of mainstream support for environmentalist ideas and actions rather than explain where these originate, for, as Eckersley notes:

> "it is in the nature of socio-political inquiry of the broad, macro-level... that it can only show why certain groups are *more likely* to be open to certain kinds of ideas and to engage in certain kinds of political behaviour than others... To answer the question as to why *particular* individuals take the step of embracing an ecocentric world-view would require an exploration of the realm of *personal* consciousness and experience". (Eckersley 1989 p223, emphasis in original)

3.4. Ideology-Behaviour Incongruence.

Correlative studies identify a discrepancy in individuals between their expressions of environmental feeling and their behaviours. This is paralleled by an incongruence between public and private values, or what Schwartz (1968) calls personal and social norms, and this may help to explain the inconsistency often reported across the postulated link:

> "the goals which individuals seek to maximise for society may not correspond precisely to the hierarchy of values which operates in their personal lives." (Cotgrove and Duff 1981 p101)

The inconsistency (Desbarats 1983) is due to values operating in different situational contexts being measured by researchers in the same context, that is, the public goals that an individual may feel are good for society (e.g. reduced population growth) may not be the same as those they feel to be good for themselves and their families (e.g. they may wish to have several children), resulting in a measured discrepancy between values and behaviour. It is necessary from the outset not to

expect a simple congruence between the two sets of values as:

> "it would be naive to expect individuals who endorse the New Ecological Paradigm to consistently engage in behaviours congruent with this world view." (Dunlap and Van Liere 1978 p17)

It is important therefore to do more than merely measure or classify people's ideas and behaviours. It is necessary to look at the context of actions and constraints restricting the fulfilment of environmental attitudes through behaviour. The range of theoretical bases relating to green consumerism and this thesis has proved very wide and it is necessary to discuss some key theoretical debates and propositions about individual action, responsibility and the structures influencing the behavioural context.

3.5. Efficacy, Agency and Motivations.

In the psychological literature on perceived efficacy, distinctions have been made between internalised and externalised individuals (Trigg *et al* 1976; Manzo and Weinstein 1987). The former believe that their actions can influence other individuals and structures and hence they perceive an internal locus of control and some degree of personal efficacy; the latter believe themselves and others to be controlled by fate, chance or structures upon which they have no influence and hence they perceive control to be externally located.

Work has attempted to show that active members of environmental (and other) groups are internalised, and that passive members are externalised (Manzo and Weinstein 1987). However, it may also be the case that externalised members resort to methods of attack, rather than methods used by traditional activists, needing to act more strongly to overcome their perceived weak efficacy against their opponents or the system.

An ever-rolling argument in social science related to efficacy is of the relative importance of agency and structure, that is of individual free-will, subjectivity, the ability to act and make choices, versus the control of society by large scale institutions and social, economic and political structures (e.g. Giddens 1987; Buttimer 1990). In this thesis, agency is very important due to the qualitative emphasis upon the individual agent, but agency cannot be isolated from its structural context. In this

sense, Giddens (1984) is correct to emphasise the duality of agency and structure in his structuration theory, in the sense that structures both enable and constrain agency and therefore choice is necessarily contextual (also Thrift 1983). This also avoids what Aitken (1991 p181) calls "psychologism", where too much emphasis is placed on the individual motivations without reference to situational factors, and also the submergence of individual choice within macrosociological constructs and an overemphasis on grand theory.

The concept of agency is worth exploring further. Agency is constrained by individual and structural conditions, such as information access and quality (Chapter 8), cost and cultural options (Chapters 6 and 7) in that such factors restrict options of action and choice and reduce the sphere of agency. Giddens (1976 p74) distinguishes between simple action and agency by ascribing agency some element of moral responsibility. This gives action a context of moral justification and therefore brings acts into moral consideration within social norms wider than individual consideration. (Ideas of responsibility are taken further in 3.6..)

Agency also connects to intentionality and reflexivity (Giddens 1987) in the sense that choices are made on evaluative and informational criteria, not instinctively, and their outcomes are likewise evaluated:

> "To be a human being is to be a purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon these reasons (including lying about them)." (Giddens 1984 p3)

This means that the impact of actions is important, as discussed in reference to the reinforcement of responsibility (see 3.6., 6.2. and 6.3.), as for individuals:

> "Their consciousness of the likely effect of their behaviour affects behaviour itself". (Redclift 1992 p39)

Reflexivity also means that individuals can assess and discuss the reasons for most of their actions, because there is some intentionality behind them (Giddens 1987). Not all actions can be discussed and Giddens usefully classifies three forms of motive: unconscious motives, which are not apparent to the individual; discursive, which can be articulated and discussed by an individual; practical, which means that the individual knows how to act and what is right but they cannot easily articulate

their reasons - this is "taken-for-granted" knowledge (Thrift 1983 p45) and underlies much social interaction where all players implicitly know the 'rules'. Neisser describes such forms of knowledge as:

> "not based on a systematic knowledge of the laws governing nature or society, but, though obtained pragmatically, possess a high degree of certainty". (Neisser 1965 p24, quoted in Thrift 1985 p373)

Practical consciousness has significance for qualitative work in that it represents "forms of knowledge not immediately available to discourse" (Giddens 1987 p63) which can often be 'black-boxed' even under in-depth data collection. Where individuals are requested to discuss motives rooted in practical consciousness, they may rationalise *post hoc* and fail to uncover the motives that they find it difficult to articulate (Thrift 1983).

Once the duality of agency and structure (Giddens 1984) has been accepted, it is possible to assess the development of motivation within contexts. Giddens (1984) conceptualises a flow of activity mutually reinforcing a flow of motivations, where each depend upon one another and the situation due to the reflexivity of agency:

> "Reflexivity hence should be understood not merely as 'self-consciousness' but as the monitored character of the ongoing flow of human life." (Giddens 1984 p3)

Hence the meaning is given to life through continual action not through passive knowledge. This forms the basis for practical consciousness but also suggests that behavioural controls may influence and reinforce values and perceptions rather than merely be influenced by them (O'Riordan 1976; Heberlein 1974). As external situations change, individuals can change their values gradually through reflexive monitoring in order to suit the new behavioural context. Inconsistencies are still to be expected (O'Riordan 1976) as the strength of the behavioural restrictions must cross a threshold before producing value change. Additionally, the greater the similarity between the values induced by the behaviour change and the original values, the more permanent and established the behaviour-induced change will be.

Heberlein (1974) has put forward this idea for practical use as a "structural fix" to replace existing technical or cognitive solutions to environmental problems.

Physical changes that restrict behaviour would be accompanied by information on why the changes were necessary. The two technical and cognitive elements of the procedure would combine to change behaviours and establish the required environmental values in the subjects of the programme. The predominance of non-green products provides little opportunity for assessing such possibilities for green consumerism, but repeated proenvironmental actions and the process of becoming active in groups may reinforce perceptions (see 6.2.).

The connection of agency and efficacy to motivation is emphasised in the literature, but the concept of motivation is rarely elaborated. Maslow (1954; see 3.3.) developed a hierarchy of needs which operate to prioritise behaviours and therefore motivate action, but this has been taken up mainly in classificatory work (Inglehart 1977, 1981) rather than looking at the flow and flux of such a hierarchy in various contexts.

Galbraith (1972) discusses motivation specifically with respect to social actions and the long term goals of the individual. He describes four classes of motivation: *compulsion* due to some external force (which is not voluntary, unlike green consumerism); *pecuniary compensation* due to external factors; *identification* with the goals of other actors, which prompts the adoption of their behaviour and collective action (after Simon 1965 quoted in Galbraith 1972); *adaptation*, where the individual has different goals to a group but joins the group with the intention of changing its goals accordingly (ibid.). This schema emphasises actions in groups, which is not the main focus of green consumerism, but also points to the importance of both context, with external forces affecting behaviour, and the relative roles of the individual and society. There is also the implication of perceived agency in the last category, where the individual believes they have some power to change the group's goals.

Neither Maslow's nor Galbraith's motivation theories seem especially appropriate to a study of green consumerism. They do, however, both point to the importance of individual perception in motivation and the balancing of outside constraints against internal desires. Such contextual constraints and the perceptions of the individual as factors initiating proenvironmental behaviour, such as green consumerism, are recognised and followed up in this study.

3.6. The Ascription of Environmental Responsibility.

Responsibility connects to agency (Giddens 1976) and represents moral obligation, blame and decision-making, particularly at individual levels but also at structural levels (Schwartz 1968; Heberlein 1972; Hopper and Nielsen 1991). Tucker (1978) described environmental responsibility as "another manifestation of impersonal or indirect socially responsible behaviour" (Tucker 1978 p392).

Schwartz (1968) called the placement of responsibility a "moral decision" with three characteristics: the decision has consequences for the welfare of others; that these consequences are evaluated; the agent is willing and chooses to take on the responsibility, i.e. there is some element of agency as intentionality. Schwartz's work (1968, 1970) on responsibility postulated that the translation of norms into behaviour is mediated by the ascription of responsibility to the self and awareness of the consequences of actions. These two variables cause "pseudo-inconsistency" (Campbell 1963) in the disruption of the expected correspondence between attitude and behaviour (DeFleur and Westie 1963, quoted by Schwartz 1968).

Schwartz's additive model proposed that:

> "awareness that one's potential acts have consequences for the welfare of others, and ascription of responsibility for these acts and their consequences to the self are necessary conditions for the activation of social norms and their influence upon behaviour in action situations." (Schwartz 1968 p240)

Although these two factors (awareness of consequences and ascription of responsibility) are necessary for behaviour matching moral norms to occur, they do not of themselves cause that behaviour. This is in accordance with the idea of contributory variables in multivariate models (see 3.2.1.), countering the simplistic hypothesis that there is a one-to-one correspondence between attitudinal variables and behaviour. This model has also been used by Heberlein (1972) and Hopper and Nielsen (1991) in looking at the responsibility associated with littering and recycling behaviour, albeit inconclusively.

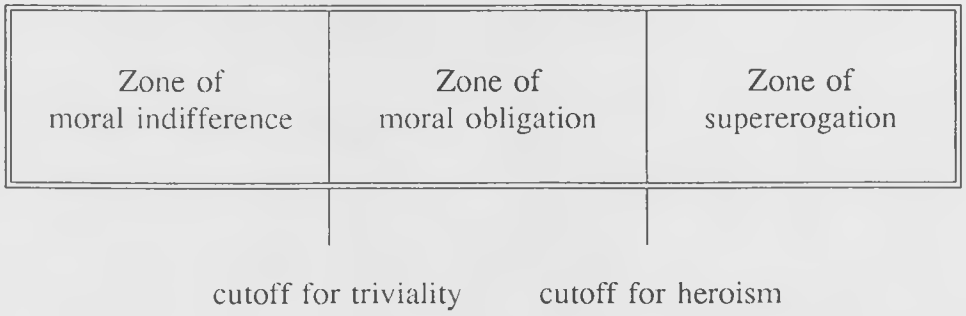
Schwartz suggests that self-ascription occurs according to the existence of other responsible agents and the perceived choice of action, i.e. the social context of action and agency. Thus it is necessary to look at the ascription of responsibility by both individual consumers and retailers, relative to each other as responsible agents

and to their social context.

3.6.1. Individual Environmental Responsibility.

Fishkin (1982) has looked at the moral obligation component of responsibility at the individual level and this is worth examining. He categorised acts into three zones as in Figure 3.1. below.

Figure 3.1. Fishkin's Three Zones of Acts.



Source: after Fishkin 1982.

Acts which are too trivial to merit a moral decision, e.g. choosing the colour of your wallpaper, lie in the zone of moral indifference. Where the status or consequences of an act mean that it is less trivial, it can pass the cutoff for triviality and enter the zone of moral obligation, e.g. choosing whether to give to charity. This is the common zone for individual acts such as green consumerism, membership of environmental groups and other routine but morally significant decisions.

Such acts are morally obligatory under social norms (Schwartz 1968) because they have significant impacts on others and require some sacrifice on the part of the agent, but this sacrifice is only minor. Where the sacrifice becomes substantial, e.g. giving your whole salary to charity, the act passes the cutoff for heroism and enters the zone of supererogation. This means that it is beyond the socially determined requirements of individual sacrifice and becomes heroic rather than obligatory.

This zoning allowed Fishkin to identify two concepts relevant to this thesis. The first is minimal altruism, where acts are performed because they are seen as morally obligation but not heroic, in that they require only minor sacrifice. This idea

of a minor sacrifice of money, performance or time in green consumerism and other proenvironmental acts is explored in the qualitative data in Chapter 6 and also in Hopper and Nielsen (1991). The practical cutoff for heroism defines the limit of moral obligation for a particular culture in terms of the cost, time and other constraints rendering sacrifice heroic rather than obligatory. A problem with Fishkin's schema is that individuals will have different perceptions of the cutoffs for triviality and heroism. The rough distinction of the zones is common to those sharing a particular culture as the moral obligation, as with Schwartz's moral norms, is socially defined, but this can be shifted to a greater or lesser degree depending upon individual beliefs and context. For example, external conditions such as an economic recession or unemployment may curtail the ability to sacrifice, lowering the cutoff for heroism to make more acts heroic, and therefore beyond moral obligations, than in favourable economic conditions.

The second relevant concept Fishkin raises is collective responsibility. An act by an individual must make a "reasonable expectable difference" (ibid. p84) to the outcome, compared to the outcome without that act, in order to make that act morally obligatory. Hence the perceived individual contribution (difference) to impact can reinforce moral requirements. Section 6.3. looks at the importance of cumulative impact in enforcing environmental responsibility and also the difficulty for each individual in identifying the impact of their own act. Where this contribution cannot be demonstrated, under Fishkin's schema the moral obligation and responsibility to perform that act would be weakened. This suggests a utilitarian ethos (Fishkin 1982 p100; Barry 1983), where morality is determined by consideration of its consequences, i.e. how well it functions rather than innate perceptions of right and wrong.

3.6.2. Business Environmental Responsibility.

As well as considering the morals and responsibility as perceived by individuals, this thesis looks at retailer perceptions. Business responsibilities were first identified in the social sphere, e.g. treatment of employees and community, but are now increasingly discussed with reference to the environment.

There are both advocates and denouncers of business responsibility. The

denouncers are led by Friedman (1988) who described social responsibility as a "fundamentally subversive doctrine" for business. He claimed responsibility was inappropriate for business because it was collectivist, unlike business; because only people can have responsibilities and not organisations such as businesses; because the only social responsibility of business was to make money and be responsible to its shareholders (ibid.). This clearly subscribes to the view that the *raison d'etre* of business is to make profit and everything else is subordinate, a view held in part by the retailers in this study (7.2.). Gorz also suggests that the adoption of economic rationality in capitalism's development bred this view in business:

> "It was no longer a question of good or evil but only of correct calculation. 'Economic science', insofar as it guided decision making and behaviour, relieved people of responsibility for their acts. They became 'servants of capital' in which economic rationality was embodied. *They no longer had to accept responsibility for their own decisions.*" (Gorz 1988 p122, emphasis in original.)

Other commentators have also criticised business responsibility, not because it should not exist but because it is not being sufficiently acted on. Galbraith (1972) suggested that business's main aim is *not* profit but includes autonomy, growth, technical virtuosity *and* profit but this is not necessarily an argument for business responsibility. Simon *et al* (1972 quoted in Smith 1990) suggested that profit has to be fulfilled before responsibility can be considered (in a similar prioritisation to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, see 3.3.) but that profit is not the only factor in business decisions.

Those advocating business responsibility commonly rationalise it in terms of the powerful position of business in influencing society. This turns (big) businesses into social rather than purely economic institutions (Sethi 1981; Epstein 1981), which therefore should be morally responsible. Responsibility is also seen as necessary and desirable (rather than morally correct) so that business can bridge the "'legitimacy' gap" (Sethi 1981) between its operations and social expectations of it and thereby justify its existence and activities (Buck 1992; Smith 1990; Epstein 1981).

Simon *et al* (1972, quoted in Smith 1990 p57-59) identify four categories of responsible actions: self-regulation; championing charitable causes; affirmative action to support others' activities but not to initiate any; internal change in increasing

disclosure of information and accountability. These actions are necessitated more by the needs of business for legitimation than by internal business morality. More useful concepts are levels of business responsibility which relate to *both* legitimation and moral expectations. Sethi (1981) identified three forms of business responsibility:

i. a social obligation on business to obey market forces of economics and legislation (a proscriptive responsibility);
ii. a social responsibility to operate congruently with the norms and expectations of society (a prescriptive responsibility) yet to be one step ahead of these;
iii. social responsiveness to "promote positive change" (ibid. p80) (a proactive responsibility).

Section 7.7. considers these stances with respect to the retailers in this study as reactive, anticipatory and proactive.

Smith (1990 p59) compromised the advocates of profit and of responsibility by proposing four extents of business responsibility: profit is maximised and behaviour is irresponsible; profit is maximised and behaviour meets some moral minimum (also suggested by Adams (1992) and similar to Fishkin's (1982) minimal altruism, see 3.5.2.); profit is necessary and behaviour follows other companies championing of causes; profit is necessary and causes are championed. This is a useful classification but it is necessary to use it only with the recognition that a company will not hold to one stance permanently as different issues may make profit and responsibility priorities fluctuate.

The argument of consumer sovereignty implicitly removes responsibility from business and puts it into the hands of consumers or capitalistic mechanisms such as the market as an aggregation of consumers (Gorz 1988). This argument also has supporters and critics and needs to be assessed.

3.7. Consumer Sovereignty versus the Revised Sequence.

The consumer sovereignty argument is implicit in Simms (1992), Heelas and Szerzynski (1991) and advocates of green consumerism as a force for change such as Adams et al (1992), Burke (1990) and, most famously, Elkington and Hailes (1988). It rests on the assumption of a one-way flow of instruction from the consumer to retailers, manufacturers and government bodies. Thus, the consumer is sovereign in the sense that the sum of consumer purchases serves as a "social edict" (Galbraith 1972 p166) to be acted upon without question or choice by their suppliers. Galbraith (1972) termed this assumption the accepted sequence with its belief that:

> "the individual is the ultimate source of power in the economic system." (Galbraith 1972 p218)

However, there are problems with the assumption of such consumer power in that it is limited by an individual's situation. Where information or choice is constrained, sovereignty cannot be fulfilled (Adams et al 1991; Heelas and Szerzynski 1991; Smith 1990 p295; Singer 1983). As business and other institutions play a large part in providing both information and choice, their actions curtail consumer sovereignty (Singer 1983) and therefore there is a two-way flow of instruction. Galbraith (1972) called the flow of instruction from business to consumer "demand management" and described a revised sequence to assumed consumer sovereignty where business and other institutions promote social beliefs and individual goals which favour themselves, e.g. through promoting the continued consumption of manufactured goods.

This reversal of consumer sovereignty is called producer sovereignty by Smith (1990 p34) and is taken further in Gorz's critique of the development of capitalism when it became apparent that:

> "*consumption would have to be in the service of production.* Production would no longer have the function of satisfying existing needs in the most efficient way possible; on the contrary, it was needs, which would increasingly have the function of enabling production to keep growing." (Gorz 1988 p114, emphasis in original)

The difficulties of teasing out consumer and business roles in a two-way flow of instruction are illustrated by Adams (1992), who invokes both consumer

sovereignty and business demand management in the same sentence:

> "The constant factor... is individual demand. This demand, though in part created by them, is the tune to which our major companies dance." (Adams 1992 p107)

Some commentators in the field of ethical and green purchasing seem to embrace consumer sovereignty but with partial recognition of the role of demand management by business.

A further criticism is that consumer sovereignty is used by capitalist institutions and actors to legitimate their actions (Harte *et al* 1990; Smith 1990), because it relocates the source of power from business to the consumer, therefore conceptualising business as purely reactive and amoral (Gorz 1988 p112). Any changes are portrayed as originating in demand and not the business and therefore the power of business is underplayed. Advertising and marketing implicitly or explicitly use consumer sovereignty to justify actions which can be criticised on moral grounds (Smith 1990).

Another consideration is whether consumer sovereignty, even where it acknowledges the importance of demand management, can effect business change more rapidly than other factors such as legislation. Simms (1992) suggests that market mechanisms effect environmental changes more slowly than government intervention, whereas Adams *et al* (1991) suggest the reverse:

> "the everyday shopper can, through their own choices, force change at a rapid pace, well ahead of any of the proposed legislation on eco-labelling." (Adams *et al* 1992 p4)

3.8. Information and Trust.

Because consumer sovereignty is constrained by the available information, it is necessary to look at the factors curtailing the quality of and access to information in relation to environmental issues and green products.

The relevance of informational constraints is particularly important due to the globalisation of environmental problems beyond the local context in the 1980s (Giddens 1990 p124; Lowe and Morrison 1984). The balance is shifting in that environmental issues are moving further from people's direct experience, and

therefore they become more reliant on the information provided by others, especially by elites (deHaven-Smith 1988).

This provision is evaluated in terms of the trust accorded to providers and the validity of the information they provide. Again, because of the distance between the problems and the individual and the consequent lack of full information, there is a network of provision involving experts and systems of information production and dissemination.

3.8.1. Uncertainty in Information.

A key concern in the trustworthiness of information provided by others is the certainty or otherwise of the material. Scientific information in particular has been used extensively to justify proenvironmental action or inaction (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991). This is due to the perceived rationality and certainty of scientific findings and the consequent unbiased authority and expertise they can convey; hence they are used by environmental groups as a legitimation of their arguments and aims (Yearley 1991). The production and distribution of scientific information has been explored to reveal the uncertainties underlying both its authority and its application in wider society (Wynne 1992), e.g. to policy-making and green product marketing.

O'Riordan and Rayner (1991 p101; also Funtowicz and Ravetz 1990) identify three main sources of uncertainty - technical, methodological and epistemological - which relate to three conditions for decision-making - risk, uncertainty and indeterminacy. Technical uncertainty originates in measurement inaccuracy and relates to the statistical probabilities of risk and possible "technofix" solutions (Heberlein 1972) as such problems are well-defined with clear boundaries (Wynne 1992). Methodological uncertainty originates in the approaches and tools applied to the problem, extending the area of consideration from the results to the basis of examination, e.g. in critiques of the scientific method (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991; Funtowicz and Ravetz 1990). Here the boundaries of the problem may still be known but the probabilities of individual events are less clear (Wynne 1992). Epistemological uncertainty originates in the conception of the problem and its boundaries and points to the indeterminacy of those boundaries and the difficulty of separating the area of study (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991; Funtowicz and Ravetz

1990; Wynne 1992).

Wynne (1992) also uses ignorance as a specific form of uncertainty where the limits to knowledge are not recognised. Policy and other decisions taken on such limited knowledge create consequences which magnify this ignorance. The fact that such ignorance is not acknowledged in policy debates, and that scientific authority is rarely questioned either, means that uncertainty (particularly indeterminacy (Wynne 1992)) is being controlled and underplayed by the providers of information in the interests of legitimation.

An important aspect of this legitimation is the role of experts and expertise. Experts are usually expert in technical matters, rather than moral ones (Barnes 1985), because of the technocentric nature of society and the resulting emphasis upon the professional and scientific elites as holders of authority (O'Riordan 1976). The individual non-expert is unable to evaluate the experts' opinions and thus authority is concentrated in a minority of specialists upon which the public rely (Luhman 1979). Experts are used by these elites to legitimate their decisions (Barnes 1985) but this role is complicated by the uncertainties inherent in the information they are expected to provide. Public disagreement among experts exposes these uncertainties and undermines the authority of science and the information providers. Funtowicz and Ravetz (1990) suggest that such expertise is now being transmitted to groups outside elite control, such as environmental organisations who commission and report their own research and term these

> "extended peer communities.... where self-taught activists, aware of the presence of [less specialised] facts, and motivated by their concern for family and livelihood, become *more* skilled in the forensic side of the relevant science than the institutional experts whose own training in the area was modest... The extended peer community thus functions as a first step towards a democratization of science... a diffusion of knowledge and power". (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1990 p21)

The role of such experts and elites is important in regulating access and quality of information passed down to the public (deHaven-Smith 1988) and therefore affects choice, agency, responsibility and green consumer behaviour.

3.8.2. Trust and Doubt.

Trust is created through both experience of the past and expectation of the future (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991) and therefore relates the temporal context of the individual to both present and future uncertainty (Luhman 1979). Trust emerges under uncertainty due to some lack of information (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991; Giddens 1990) as its function is to increase the "tolerance of uncertainty" and reduce the number of decisions that must be made by an individual to a bearable, actionable level (Luhman 1979, p15).

This is not to say that trust is always connected to situations where there are action options between which an individual must decide. Giddens suggests that trust is usually:

> "a tacit acceptance of circumstances in which other alternatives are largely foreclosed." (Giddens 1990 p90)

Hence trust may be generated by agency, with the need to reduce uncertainty to enable action decisions, but where agency is denied by structural controls on information and action, trust is employed to relieve anxiety about such controls.

Trust is given to the existence and operation of symbols or systems - for example money and its exchange, scientific institutions - rather than to people (Giddens 1990; Fessenden-Raden et al 1987). This trust is then "anchored" by face-to-face contact with representatives of systems who act as "access points" (Giddens 1990 p86).

Both the systems and the representatives are reflexively monitored (Giddens 1990) by individuals within the flow of action and motivation (see 3.5.) in order to validate the trust given. So trust and risk are necessarily fluctuating in form and strength as systems and their representatives change in the individual's perception. This leads to a dynamic balance between trust and risk (Giddens 1990) or trust and doubt (Luhman 1979; Campbell 1978) as given to specific individuals and issues. However, this balance of trust in systems is not monitored discursively: it is latent and not open to debate, thereby causing problems where trust obscures deficiencies in the production of information (Luhman 1979), e.g. where the scientific method obscures uncertainty (see 3.8.1.). Thus systems maintain diffuse trust through an individual's practical acceptance of their operations alongside distrust of particular

events.

3.9. Action Options.

The discussion in this chapter relates to factors enabling or constraining proenvironmental behaviour. These factors result in a behavioural outcome or commitment (Maloney and Ward 1973; Manzo and Weinstein 1987; Fendrich 1967) which represents a choice among the various actions open to the individual.

The prime characteristic of green consumerism is that it is an economic action and there are also economic aspects of passive membership of environmental groups in terms of subscriptions and fund-raising. Other types of acts are informational and social, such as raising awareness and visiting schools. Some types are political, directly through voting and indirectly through signing petitions and writing letters. Different types of action have different characteristics and situational contexts.

Hirschman (1970) developed a simple but neat classification of actions taken by individuals belonging to some organisation, e.g. a political party, or buying from some business, when the performance or goods of that organisation begins to deteriorate. The three options are: exit - stop buying or belonging, i.e. desertion of the organisation (Boudon 1982); voice - articulate objections, protest; loyalty - continue in hope of change.

Exit is depersonalised and indirect because it operates through the market, not in a face-to-face context. It is also economic and therefore only part of an aggrieved audience should exit as, in order to allow business change, the market must continue to exist (Hirschman 1970). This is the usual interpretation of green consumerism and other ethical purchase behaviour (e.g. Smith 1990), where a mass of depersonalised purchases moves from one business to another on the basis of its environmental or social performance. The result is an economic signal to industry for change, which clearly relies upon the consumer sovereignty argument outlined in 3.7.. Boycotts, negative relations of green consumerism, are temporary forms of exit with the implicit promise of reentry when performance improves (Hirschman 1970).

Voice is a more personal form of action, more direct in its articulation of complaints and more difficult to define, encompassing as it does violent extremes of protest as well as civil letter-writing. It also is more committed to forcing change

in the group or business than exit, thus:

> "To resort to voice, rather than exit, is for the customer or member to make an attempt at changing the practices, policies and outputs of the firm from which one buys or of the organisation to which one belongs... rather than to escape from an objectionable state of affairs". (Hirschman 1970 p30)

Perhaps more importantly in a study of green consumerism is Hirschman's assertion that the possibility of exit will atrophy the ability to use voice. If environmental protests are reduced to economic exit and reentry, the ability, channels and disposition of the public to use protest and other forms of political action when environmental problems increase will weaken. This seems to point to a general preference for exit over voice, which Hirschman also suggests when he describes voice as subordinate to exit and only adopted where exit is not economically possible, e.g. in a monopoly situation.

3.10. Concluding Remarks.

The choice of proenvironmental behaviour, whether voice or exit in form, depends upon the behavioural influences discussed above, in that it represents a commitment based upon assessment of the individual's position. This commitment has been measured quantitatively by numerous studies, as outlined in the first sections of this chapter. However, it must depend upon the individual's perception of their position and role, which is an ongoing process barely revealed by correlative and classificatory models.

The discussions of agency, efficacy, responsibility and trust all underline the importance of interconnected perceptions of individual power and behavioural options relative to other agents. It is therefore necessary to investigate the operation of these concepts and the perception of individuals as key motivating elements in the commitment to proenvironmental behaviour such as green consumerism. This necessity forms the basis of the qualitative design and discussions in the remaining chapters, based upon the quantitative work described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS.

4.1. Introduction.

In order to investigate proenvironmental motivations in the light of the aims of this study (see 1.2.), two stages of data collection were required - one developed upon quantitative and the other upon qualitative principles. The core of the research is founded upon qualitative interviews, but first it was necessary to collect behavioural, demographic and socioeconomic data in Leeds, in order to establish a sample and to distinguish behavioural groups for exploration within the qualitative stage. This chapter outlines the methodology for the quantitative stage and reports on its results.

4.1.1. The Leeds Context.

The sampling strategies for this thesis (see 5.3.) are all based upon the Leeds or the Yorkshire area: the public sample (and the retailers, see 5.3.2.) derive from the Leeds telephone books, the environmental groups were identified from lists held by the main Leeds library. All the quantitative respondents were located in the Leeds area and most of the later qualitative interviews (except those with national managers of multiple retailers, see 5.3.2.) were held in Leeds. All this means that the Leeds context is central to the sampling and therefore must be recognised first in the analysis because such contextuality is both important and explicit in qualitative work and has a bearing on the interpretation of the quantitative survey in turn. There are certain characteristics of the Leeds area which need to be outlined to make this context explicit for the data discussion in this and the next five chapters.

Perhaps the first thing of relevance is that the Leeds area contains a large acreage of urban parkland and more rural countryside, for example Ilkley Moor on the northern edge, Temple Newsam park to the East and the central and northern parks in Headingley, Adel and Roundhay (see Figure 4.1.) Indeed, its City Council describes Leeds as "the greenest city in the UK" (Leeds City Council 1991 foreword), on the basis that 65% of the District is designated as green belt (ibid. p6 and p37), and has made this a point in its publicity.

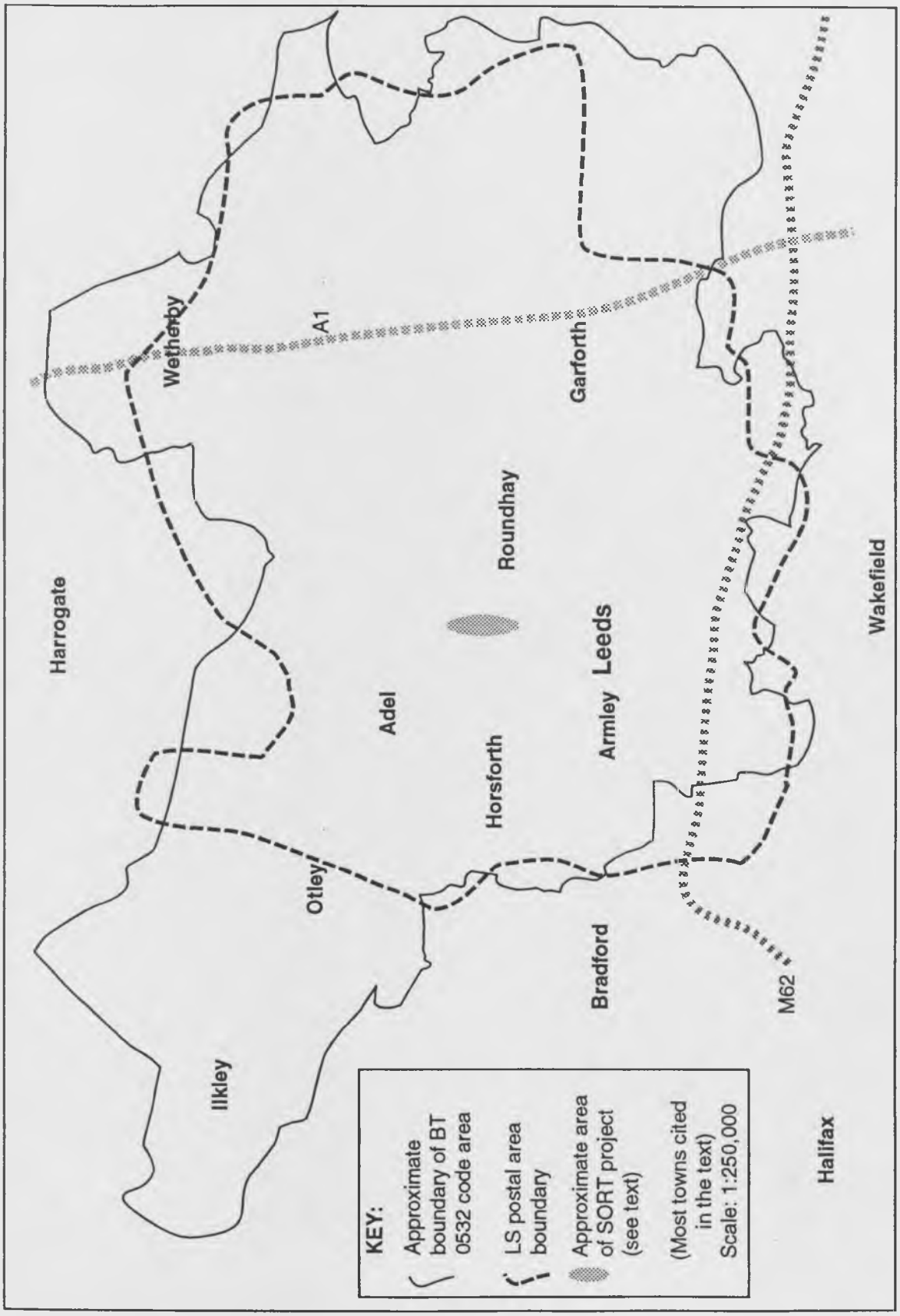


Figure 4.1. The Area of Study: Leeds and its Environs.

More specifically in environmental terms, there are a number of environmental issues which, although found in other areas, are particularly prominent in Leeds. The first is the concern over asbestos contamination in parts of Armley, West Leeds which emerged in 1988 (The Guardian 1992 August 9 p8). A local factory, which closed over thirty years ago after 70 years of producing asbestos products, is blamed for the discovery of asbestos in attics and other cavities in local homes and for deaths from a form of cancer known as mesothelioma, which is associated with the long term exposure to blue asbestos. This case and its serious implications for health and property values in the area have been widely reported in the local media, both press and television, and this coverage is paralleled in the data where the issue arises spontaneously several times in the qualitative interviews. It is clearly a locally specific issue making health and environmental concerns immediate.

Similar environmentally immediate concerns specific to the Leeds area relate to pollution of the River Aire, which several local groups campaign against specifically and which is a focus for the umbrella group EYE on the Aire, prompted by the European Year of the Environment in 1988. The Leeds area has a number of local environmental groups working on these and similar issues, including local Green Parties putting forward candidates in local elections, and Harrogate in North Yorkshire has had a Green councillor for several years.

Leeds City Council itself has developed and published the Leeds Green Strategy (Leeds City Council 1991) which sets forth the council's environmental plans and specific targets for the immediate future. The strategy aims to provide:

> "a framework for an integrated approach to developing lasting solutions to the environmental problems facing the city." (Leeds City Council 1991 p1)

The council is particularly active in its recycling initiatives. Leeds is well provided with public drop-off recycling sites compared to neighbouring councils (see Table 4.1.) and the West Yorkshire area claims the highest number of glass recycling sites of any county outside London (information supplied by Harrogate Borough Council 1991).

Table 4.1. Recycling in Leeds and Surrounding Council Areas.

Council	Public drop-off sites for glass	kg of glass recycled per cap. (1990)	tonnes of glass recycled by Dec. 1990	Public drop-off sites for paper	Public drop-off sites for other
Leeds	51	3.01	18,577	110	49
Harrogate	15	4.55	2,718	6	n.d.
Selby	5	1.23	579	0	1
Bradford	41	2.90	7,494	9	78
Calderdale (Halifax)	14	2.90	3,495	6	n.d.
Wakefield	33	1.69	3,353	5	n.d
Kirklees (Huddersfield)	56	2.36	4,072	12	9

source: information supplied by Harrogate Borough Council (1991).

In addition, Save Waste and Prosper Ltd (SWAP) has a key consultancy role in providing recycling advice and expertise to authorities and businesses like ASDA. SWAP was originally established by the City Council with help from Voluntary Action-Leeds and West Yorkshire Waste Management, and now the City Council and West Yorkshire Waste Management support it financially, with any profit going to charity. One initiative jointly designed by SWAP and the Council is the Separate Out Recyclables Today (SORT) project. SORT began in 1990 with a specialised waste collection system for 4,000 households in the Chapel Allerton and Gledhow areas, socially mixed neighbourhoods "on the fringe of the inner-city" (SORT Bulletin No.1 1991 Information Sheet 1). It depends upon individuals sorting their rubbish into two specially divided dustbins and thereby separating out organic waste for composting and dry recyclables, such as metals and paper, from non-recyclable materials. The project has achieved 95% participation on the dry recyclables and 70% on the organic waste component (ibid.), making Leeds the only local authority composting separated domestic organic waste (Leeds City Council 1991). This scheme is by no means unique to the Leeds area as various forms of domestic

recycling schemes also operate in Sheffield, Cardiff and Dundee (Earth Matters 1990 No.8, 1991 No.11). The SORT scheme and its associated publicity does show the importance of recycling in the Leeds area, which consequently might be expected to raise awareness of domestic recycling amongst local communities in the survey.

The specific spatial context of the survey and interviews in Leeds was matched by the temporal context. The local asbestos issue was receiving a lot of media attention at the time of public and environmentalist interviews in 1991. Wider issues receiving a high media profile included the Gulf War, particularly the spillage (deliberate or accidental) of oil into the Gulf and the resulting pollution. The five-year anniversary of Chernobyl in mid-1991 prompted some high profile documentaries about the environmental and health effects of the accident. These two issues therefore had greater prominence in the interviews than they would have been accorded at a period of less intense media coverage.

4.2. Survey Design and Administration.

Two groups of individuals were contacted during the quantitative analysis. The first group comprises members of the public living in the Leeds area, hereafter termed the public sample. For this group, data were collected through telephone interviews due to cost, experience and the nature of the information required. This survey was based in the Leeds 0532 code area (see Figure 4.1.) and covered a variety of different locations which could all be reached for personal interviewing at the next stage. The sample was drawn randomly from the Leeds telephone book.

The second group, hereafter termed the environmentalist sample, comprises members of local (Yorkshire-based) environmental groups. The group representatives or secretaries were contacted and, where they agreed to participate, self-completion questionnaires were included in newsletter mailings to individual members, and in one case distributed face-to-face at a local meeting. The questionnaires were returned by individual members using a prepaid envelope. It was not possible to conduct interviews over the telephone for this group, because of the confidentiality of membership.

Although this group is termed the environmentalist sample for analysis, it spans a broad range of aims, ideologies and campaigning methods. The four groups

which agreed to participate in the survey were: the Council for the Protection of Rural England; the local Green Party in Leeds North West; the local Greenpeace group; various local wildlife and conservation groups via the newsletter distributed by Eye on the Aire, under the auspices of the Leeds Civic Trust. All these groups were contacted at the local level, rather than via the national membership list, in order to maintain the regional scope of the work, and also to try to contact people who were more active in their local groups and not merely dues-paying passive members, as may be more likely at the national level (Lowe and Goyder 1983).

Table 4.2. shows the outcome of the contact procedure for the two samples

Table 4.2. Contact Procedure Analysis.

Public Sample	%	**Number**
Total Calls	100%	755
Interviews	**32%**	**240**
Refusals	15%	114
Callbacks	10%	73
No answer	40%	303
Other	3%	25
	(Collected: May 1990 to June 1990)	

Environmentalist Sample	%	**Number**
Groups contacted	100%	8
Groups agreeing	50%	4
Questionnaires distributed	100%	154
Questionnaires completed	**51%**	**79**
	(Collected: June to October 1990)	

319 completed questionnaires were received *in toto* and the telephone response rate was typical of general telephone surveys. The postal response was higher than for general postal surveys but perhaps rather low when considering that

all those receiving a questionnaire had joined an environmentally-related group and thus might be expected to have an interest in environmental issues.

The environmental orientation of the survey was declared at the beginning of each interview and questionnaire. There is therefore a strong probability that the sample is biased towards those already interested in environmental issues, with those uninterested in environmental issues (and thereby probably green consumerism) refusing to participate. Although it is possible to speculate, the level of bias this may have introduced is difficult to estimate. In addition, telephone surveys will always be slightly biased towards the higher income groups, as the minority not on the telephone, usually on the lowest incomes, cannot be incorporated into the sample.

The chosen method of data collection was a closed questionnaire with the following question groupings (questionnaire in Appendix A):

1. Participation in five forms of proenvironmental behaviour (membership of environmental groups; recycling household waste; conservation activities; political activities; buying products perceived as environmentally friendly).
2. Purchasing of four main types of products on the basis of their environmental impact (recycled paper products; biodegradable detergents; organic produce; environmentally friendly cosmetics and toiletries).
3. Importance of the environment.
4. Purchasing on ethical considerations.
5. Demographics and socioeconomic indicators.
6. Further qualitative interview details, e.g. address, environmental group.

This type of information can be collected easily and clearly through a quantitative structure, and is also replicable over many interviews due to the simplicity of the questions and the way of recording responses. Such simplicity is not a problem for interpretation providing that, firstly, the analyst recognises the limitations of the technique, e.g. the problems of defining some types of behaviour to elicit responses over a common scale, and, secondly, the qualitative stage develops

the complexity of the issues as appropriate in the study of contextual motivations.

4.3. Quantitative Data Analysis.

The data collected through the questionnaires from both groups was collated and analysed in a database (using PARADOX). Because of the emphasis upon the development of themes in a qualitative stage, the analysis of the quantitative data was not stretched to correlation models or the testing of hypotheses.

The quantitative survey is not being used to formulate or test hypothesis and thus it is not essential that the public portion is representative of the population of Leeds. Table 4.3. below gives the figures on several demographic and socioeconomic variables, as reported by the 1981 census for Leeds and by the public sample in the quantitative survey. Classificatory differences between the census and this work complicate direct comparisons - e.g. the census fails to classify 26% according to social grade and 20% according to working status. On demographic criteria, the age ranges approximate the census figures except for a 5% deficit in the public sample in the lowest age group (15 to 24 years) due to common problems obtaining such respondents on the telephone. Marital status is defined according to legal status by the census, whereas this work is more interested in the household structure, but the overall groupings are of the same order of magnitude. Fewer households contain children in the public sample, a feature relating to the age difference already noted.

The main difference between the census and the public sample lies in the ratio of males to females, with 48:52 from the census and 29:71 for the survey. As has been stated, it is not the purpose of the survey to extrapolate these results to the wider population of Leeds, nor to build theory upon them. It is therefore necessary to acknowledge the probable female bias in the aggregated responses, but it is beyond the scope and aims of the survey to compensate for this by statistical means. The importance of sex in proenvironmental behaviour is explicitly discussed below so that the importance of this bias is revealed.

Table 4.3. 1981 Census Proportions for Leeds Wards Compared to Survey Data.

Sex	Census	Survey
Male	48%	29%
Female	52%	71%

Children[1]	Census	Survey
None	64%	69%
1 or 2	29%	28%
3 plus	7%	2%

Age	Census	Survey
under 24	20%	15%
25-34	18%	18%
35-44	15%	14%
45-54	14%	13%
55-64	14%	17%
65 plus	19%	21%

Social Grade	Census	Survey
A	4%	5%
B	18%	15%
C1	9%	30%
C2	27%	25%
D	12%	11%
E	4%	13%
Other	26%	-

Working Status	Census	Survey
Working	55%	45%
Seeking etc.	12%	28%
Retired	12%	28%
Other	20%	-

Marital Status	Census	Survey
Single	37%	20%
Married	63%	60%
Other	-	20%

4.3.1. Discussion of Behavioural Data.

As noted, the emphasis in the quantitative analysis is not upon theory building or testing, but on the building of a sample and identification of themes in and differences between the two samples. Hence, the general patterns of behaviour are discussed, as the behavioural groupings will be identified and used to develop a purposeful sampling strategy for the qualitative stage, and some comments are made on the data in the light of other correlative studies.

[1] **Only children aged 18 or less and living at home were included.**

The percentage responses of the two samples, public and environmentalist, to the five main behavioural questions in the questionnaire are given in Table 4.4. below.

Table 4.4. Behavioural Data Expressing Public Environmentalism.

Reported Behaviour	Public Sample	Environmentalist Sample
Member of group	6%	94%
Ever recycle	68%	95%
Ever do conservation projects	4%	37%
Ever take political or protest action	4%	53%
Ever buy environmentally friendly goods	82%	99%

The proportion of the public sample reporting membership in any type of environmental organisation is small (6%) and close to estimates of the total membership of national environmental groups at around 10% or around 3 million adults (Lowe 1990; Lowe and Goyder 1983). Not all the environmentalist sample report that they are members of groups, despite being contacted through membership mailing lists or at meetings of the local groups. Some individuals do not regard their groups as environmental (e.g. one Green Party respondent), pointing out the difficulties in defining even this relatively straightforward behavioural criterion.

The majority of respondents reported that they recycle their household waste (68% public, 95% environmentalists). This proportion is higher than might be expected - estimates put the percentage total household waste recycled at present at less than 5% (information supplied by Harrogate Borough Council 1991; The Guardian 1992 June 26 p29). This level also contrasts with data produced as a test prior to the implementation of the Leeds City Council's recycling project (known as SORT, see 4.1.1.) when 51% of the households in the target area were classified as recyclers on the basis that they recycled more than one type of material. Even during the SORT project, with specialised kerbside collection of recyclable material, household recycling only reached 70% for organic waste and 95% for dry recyclables

(The Guardian 1992 June 26 p29, SORT Bulletin No.1 1991 p5), not much higher than the sample in this study. This may be because of two factors: this measure does not incorporate the frequency at which such recycling takes place - it may be an isolated occurrence; the sample may be biased towards those who are environmentally conscious and therefore more likely to recycle. The response gives some general indication of the awareness of and commitment to the possibilities of recycling in the local area, not an absolute measure of activity.

The proportion of respondents reporting that they have ever been involved in conservation projects is predictably low (4% public, 37% environmentalist). This type of active, often fairly exertive, commitment to the environment is something which requires more planning and group effort, unlike the more individual choices made by membership, recycling, voting and buying, and therefore takes place in a more collective social context. It is included here because it offers an extension of the range of behaviours beyond the routine and preferential for comparative purposes.

Again, the numbers were predictably low for public involvement in political proenvironmental activities, standing at 4% for the public sample, but higher at 53% for the environmentalist sample. This does not specifically measure the voting behaviours of either sample and the aim is not to study possible political constituencies within the respondents for environmental parties (see 3.3.). It is interesting that environmentalists, who are involved with local environmental networks and therefore probably local environmental campaigning work, recognise the element of political action in their pro-environmental behaviour. In speaking to several public respondents, it was sometimes clear that the individual was reluctant to say that an action, e.g. organising a petition about a local council decision, was a political activity. The term seemed to have a more restricted meaning for some members of the public and thus was relegated to describing more emphatic political acts, e.g. large scale demonstrations and marches.

The majority of those reporting that they have bought goods labelled environmentally friendly was predictably high in the environmentalist sample (at 99%) as many groups sell, or encourage their members to buy, such goods through their own catalogues or publicity (e.g. Friends of the Earth). 82% of the public sample also reported buying such goods, which does seem fairly high in the light of

market research estimates that 42% of British adults are "green shoppers", using a similar criterion (MORI survey quoted by Elkington 1989 and The Times 1989 June 30 p5). Again, this may reveal sample bias towards the environmentally conscious (see 4.2.).

In addition, the proportion does not allow for the frequency of purchase, and must therefore include those who try the 'new' products and next time revert to their old brands, and also those who may buy occasionally depending upon criteria other than environmental impact, e.g. price, product performance. The figure does seem to indicate the potential for many people to express pro-environmental behaviours, but the repetition and commitment to this may change according to constraints (see Chapter 6).

4.3.2. Behavioural Index.

In order to make some simple comparisons between different groups, the five behavioural questions were used to create a composite scale on which each respondent could be scored. The respondents were allocated marks thus: 3 points for political activities; likewise 3 for conservation activities, 2 points for membership of an environmental organisation; likewise 2 for recycling household waste; 1 for buying products according to environmental criteria. This behavioural index therefore has a minimum value of 0 and a maximum value of 11 and is given for the two samples in Table 4.5..

The priority of the behavioural questions is based upon the amount of effort and change of routine required to perform the type of behaviour. For example, to choose organic vegetables rather than conventionally grown ones in a shop offering both requires less change of routine than to go out with a group and spend some hours refencing property, or even compared to gathering old newspapers and taking them to a collection point. Of course, the priority is a rough one and involves no prior testing or basis in literature. It is, however, useful in this context to distinguish the strength of the behavioural commitment for qualitative investigation: it is more sensitive than the percentage response to behavioural questions alone because it represents intensity of a range of behaviours, not singular measures. In its simplicity, this ranking method allows comments to be made about the different groups under

study and it is in this sense, as a guide to relative levels of activity rather than an absolute measure of behaviour in the samples, that it will be employed here. It is also worth noting that the scale is based upon the addition of discrete measures and thus may appear discontinuous.

Table 4.5. Behavioural Index Scores for the Two Samples.

Behavioural Index Score	Public Sample	Environmentalist Sample
(min) 0	9%	-
1	21%	-
2	7%	-
3	52%	5%
4	2%	-
5	5%	20%
6	3%	6%
7	-	1%
8	1%	52%
9	-	-
10	-	-
(max) 11	-	15%
Average	**2.5**	**7.5**

The public sample scores are skewed to the lower end of the index, because only a minority are involved in much pro-environmental behaviour (as might be expected). The mode of 3 most commonly involves someone either reporting recycling *or* membership of environmental groups *and* green consumerist behaviour. The average value of 2.5 also clearly shows the emphasis upon fewer, and more routine, pro-environmental behaviours. The environmentalist sample has a mode score of 8, with an average of 7.5, clearly indicating a wider range of behaviours, with individuals more likely to practise more than one type of behaviour (a score of 8 means that at least three types were reported).

The index can also be easily used in group comparisons on demographic and other criteria. For example, Figure 4.2. shows the behavioural index scores against three basic sociodemographic indicators - sex, age and social grade - for the public sample only (due to the very small base sizes that would ensue if the environmentalist sample were also considered separately). These three indicators are commonly used in other studies which attempt to correlate them with proenvironmental concern and behaviour (e.g. Tognacci *et al* 1972; Tucker 1978; Borden and Francis 1978; Samdah and Robertson 1989).

Females show higher scores, with 59% scoring 3, compared to 34% of males, and only 30% scoring less than 3, compared to 55% of males. Age ranges also cluster around fewer behaviour types with age, e.g. the 35-55 groups show less variance, and the 15-24 and the 25-34 groups have two strong peaks at scores of 1 and 3. There is no pronounced general trend: the percentage scoring greater than the mode is uneven across the groups, for example.

Social grade[2] presents more problems in discussion due to the classification procedure - by occupation of head of household - and the small base sizes involved. All grades show a single mode at 3 but the strength of this varies unevenly from 33% in the D group to 64% in the A group. Some gradual shift may be indicated by the proportion in each group having scores greater than 3: 18% for A and 18% for B, 10% for C1, 12% for C2, 8% for D and 3% for E. However, from other perspectives the changes through the grades are less marked - the traditional boundary from blue to white collar workers from C2 to C1 for example.

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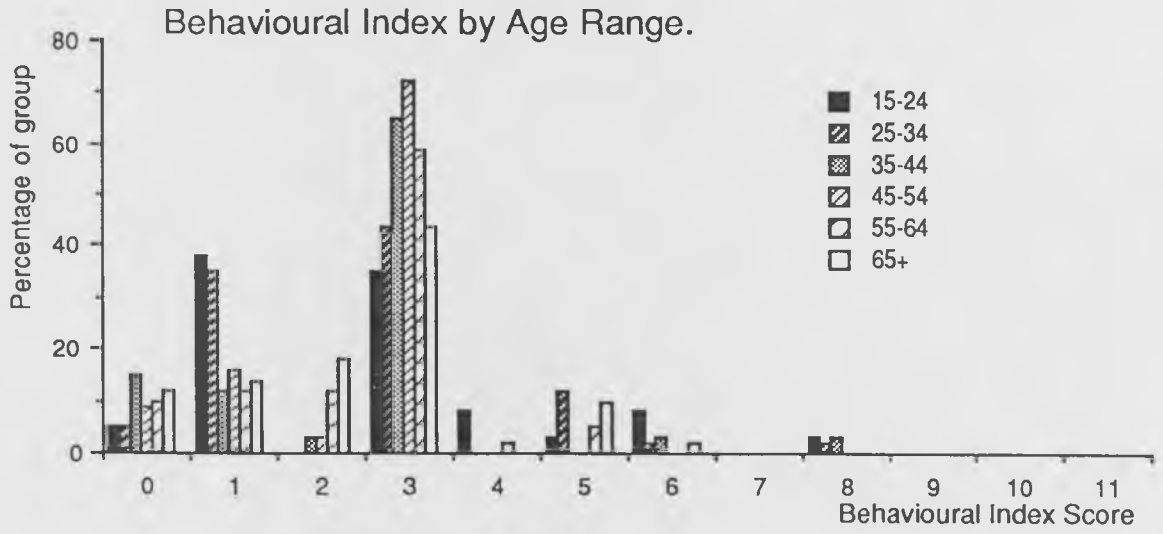
[2] As a rough guide, the social grades used are: A - top of profession, board management etc.; B - senior management, professionally qualified; C1 - non-manual, general clerical and junior management; C2 - skilled manual, self-employed e.g. shopkeepers; D - semi- and unskilled manual; E - dependent solely on state help. The graphs use combined categories of AB and DE for ease of representation.



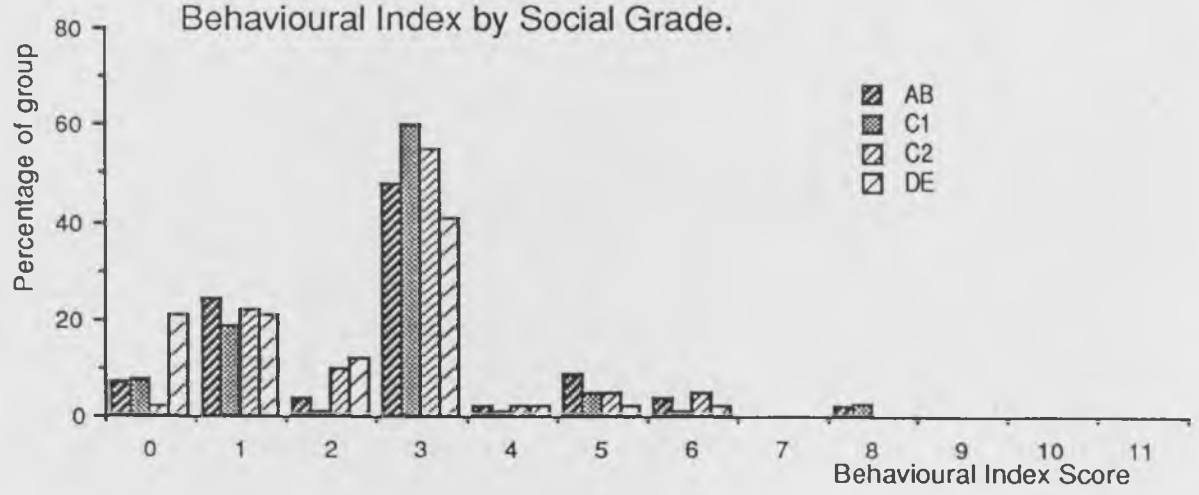


Figure 4.2. Behavioural Index by Three Basic Indicators.

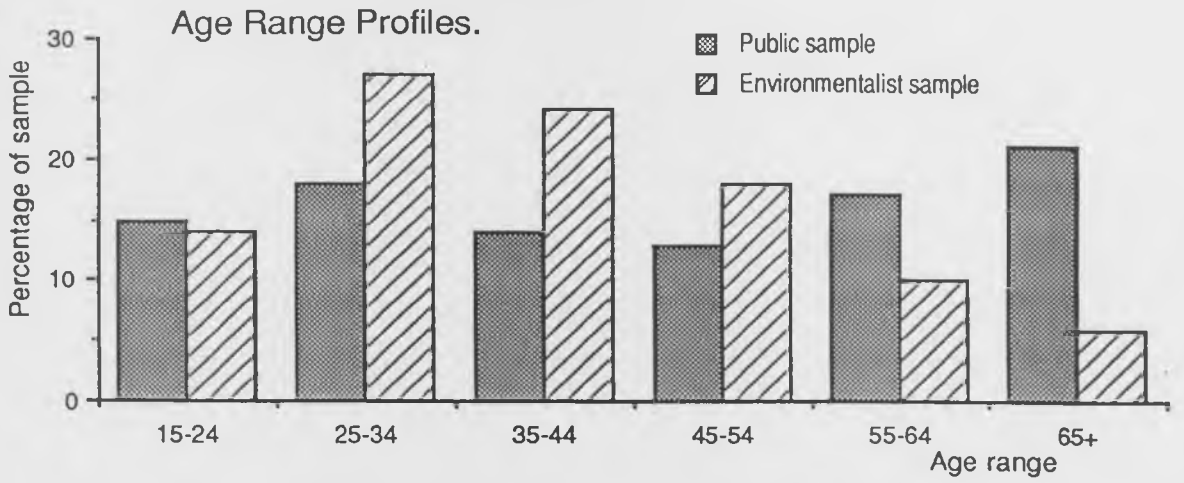
4.3.3. Discussion of Demographic and Socioeconomic Indicators.

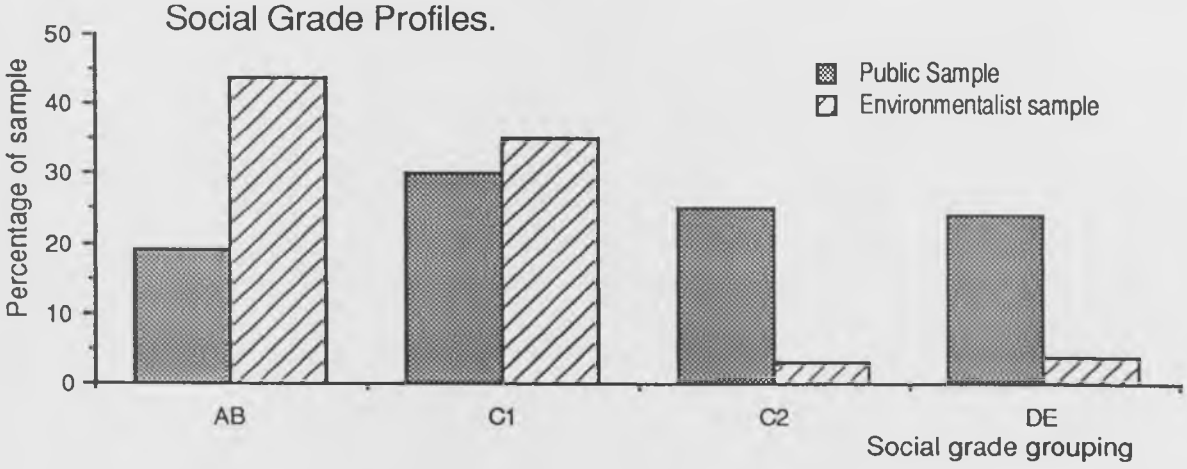
Figure 4.3. and Table 4.6. below give the responses on several demographic and socioeconomic criteria for the two samples in the quantitative survey, allowing the profile of the environmentalist sample to be contrasted with that of the public. Comparing the demographics, in the environmentalist sample the 25 to 44 age group predominates with 51% of respondents falling into this age range, compared to 32% in the public sample. A younger emphasis overall was also noted by Samdah and Robertson (1989), Steel *et al* (1990) and Bull (1990). The environmentalist sample also includes more fulltime workers (55% against 28%) and fewer retired people (10% against 28%); both of these proportions are connected to the age contrasts already noted in the samples. Also, fewer of the environmentalists have children in their household.

Several workers have sought for, or found, albeit inconclusively (Van Liere and Dunlap 1978; Schahn and Holzer 1990), a tendency for women to be more proenvironmental (e.g. Young 1985; Borden and Francis 1978; Fortmann and Kusel 1990; Steel *et al* 1990), but their studies usually employed measures of (expressed) concern rather than of actual behaviour. It is possible to hypothesise that the male orientation in this study, with 56% of the environmentalists being male compared to 48% for census figures (see 4.3.), reveals more about male opportunities for activity in the movement than about proenvironmental stance.

Social grade, or class, is a key socioeconomic indicator related to environmental behaviour in many studies (e.g. Tucker 1978; Mitchell 1980; Cotgrove 1982; Morrison and Dunlap 1986; Morrison 1986) and a middle class bias in group members and pro-environmental behaviour is often demonstrated. Here, 41% of the environmentalist sample is classed as B compared to 15% of the public sample and, altogether, grades B and C1 comprise 76% of the environmentalist sample and only 45% of the public sample.

Education is often hypothesised to be positively correlated with environmental concern and behaviour (Bull 1990; Fortmann and Kusel 1990; Samdah and Robertson 1989; Morrison 1986; Cotgrove 1982; Cotgrove and Duff 1981; Mitchell 1980b; Van Liere and Dunlap 1978; Buttel and Flinn 1978). The data support this as the environmentalist sample has generally much later terminal education ages: 54% were





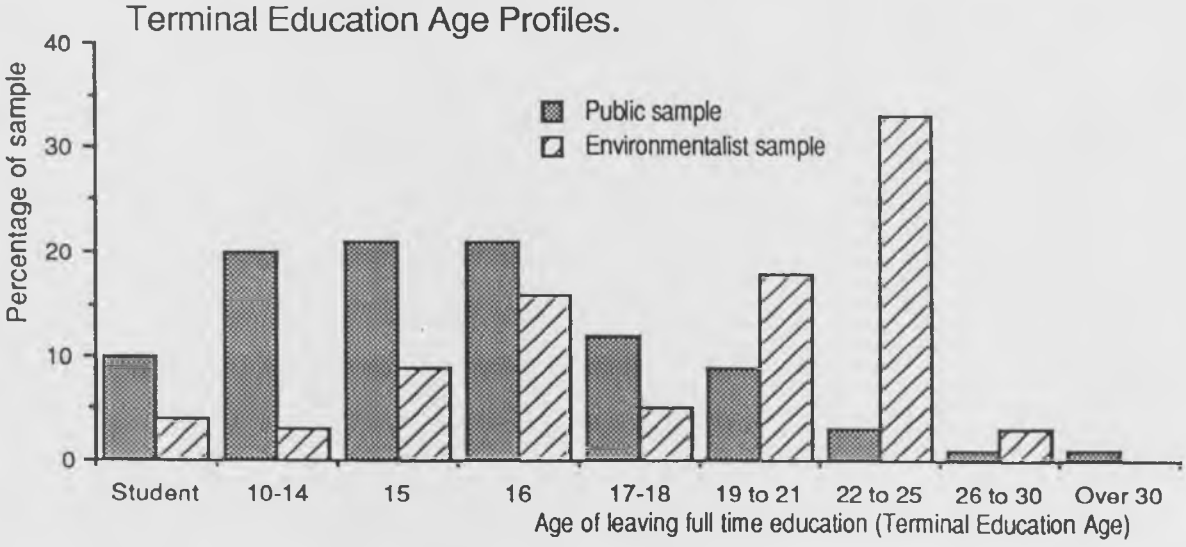


Figure 4.3. Profiles of the Two Samples by Three Key Indicators.

Table 4.6. Profiles of the Two Samples by Other Demographic Indicators.

Indicator	Public Sample	Environmentalist Sample
Male	29%	56%
Female	71%	44%
Employed full time	28%	54%
Employed part time	17%	18%
Not in employment/student/sick	28%	18%
Retired	28%	18%
Single	20%	18%
Living with a partner	4%	18%
Married	60%	56%
Separated/widowed/divorced	15%	9%
No children under 18	69%	72%
1 or 2 children under 18	28%	22%
3 or more children under 18	3%	5%
Youngest child under 1	3%	-
Youngest child 1 to 3	6%	3%
Youngest child 4 to 7	5%	6%
Youngest child 8 to 12	8%	11%
Youngest child 13 to 15	5%	3%
Youngest child 16 to 17	4%	4%

in fulltime education over the age of 18 compared to 15% of the public and only 16% left fulltime education before the age of 16 compared to half the public sample. These proportions should be viewed alongside the age ranges, as the younger age groups predominant in the environmentalist sample were socialised in a period when free, longer term education was more available to all. They compare well to the 70% of Friends of the Earth (UK) members who had tertiary education, compared to 8% of the public, reported by Porritt and Winner (1988).

4.3.4. Discussion of Other Questionnaire Elements.

Figure 4.4. shows the responses for the buying frequencies of the four types of products in the questionnaire: recycled paper products; biodegradable detergents; organic produce; environmentally friendly cosmetics and toiletries. In all cases, the percentage of the environmentalist sample reporting "Always" or "Most of the time" was equal to or greater than that for the public sample. This is not unexpected and also clearly relates to the 99% of the environmentalist who said that they had bought products that were environmentally friendly compared to 82% of the public. Even so, the higher frequency of environmentalist buying of recycled paper products and biodegradable detergents is pronounced. Environmentally friendly toiletries and cosmetics are the most frequently bought of the four types of item for both groups and organic produce the least for both, with half the public and even 13% of the environmentalist sample never buying this type.

These unsophisticated scores do not necessarily point to the overall proportion buying such products consistently, nor the market for such products in Leeds as a whole. They do show that purchasing commitment (in repeating the behaviour) varies according to the different samples and according to the product type quite markedly, even over this limited range. Why this is so, and what product criteria influence this difference, is a theme for the qualitative investigation.

Figure 4.5. shows the responses to questions about where the four types of product are bought. It is clear from these that supermarkets are the main source of the products, except for organic produce which is also frequently bought from smaller shops, including market stalls. An investigation of how such patterns affect the availability of product choice must now progress qualitatively, as these data give only an indication and not a basis for useful interpretation, due to their simplicity and lack of depth. The two main types of retailers identified quantitatively are interviewed in the qualitative stage of the study in order to look at their interaction with consumers and also at their own environmental ethics and contextual constraints.

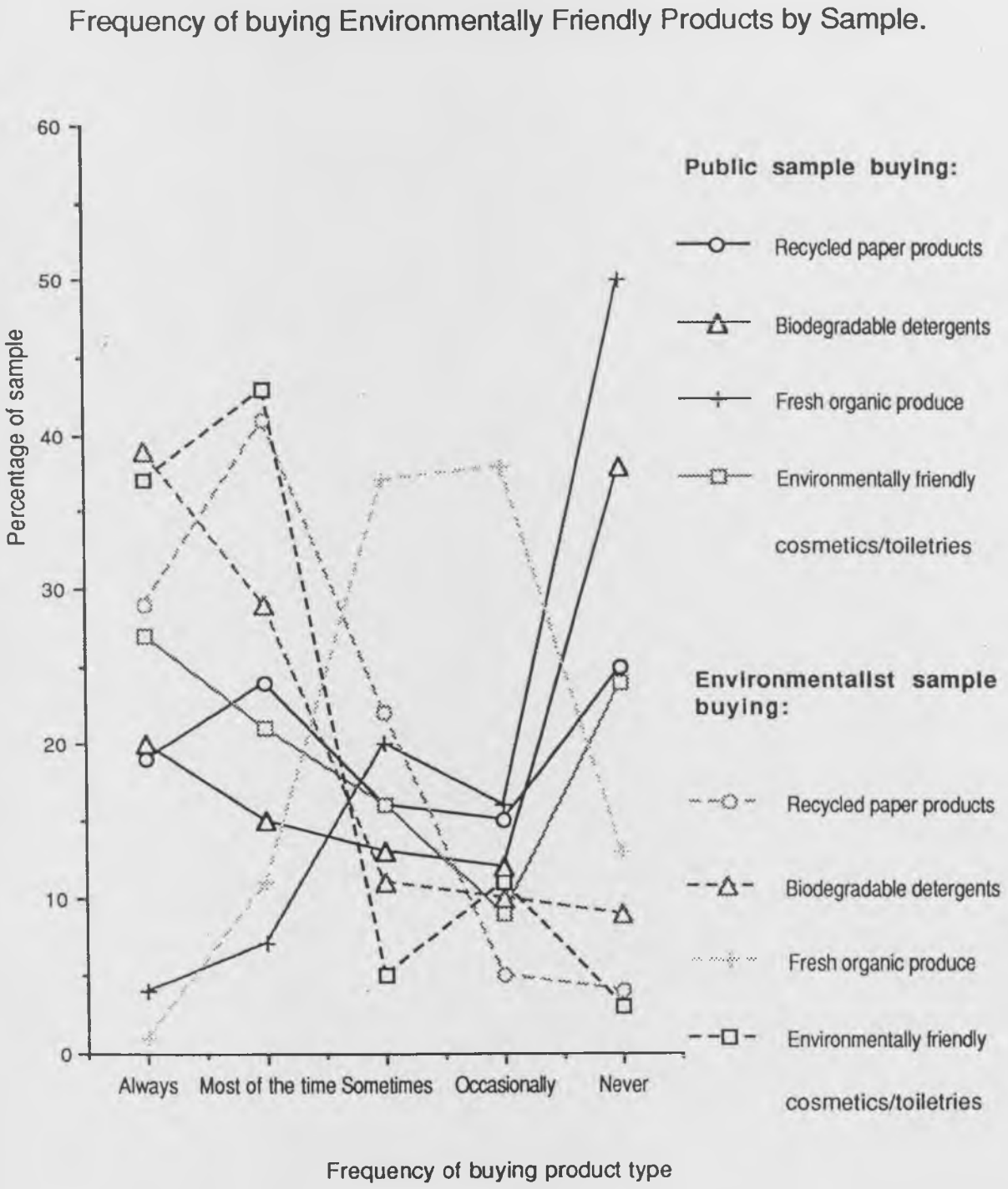


Figure 4.4. Frequency of Buying Environmentally Friendly Products.

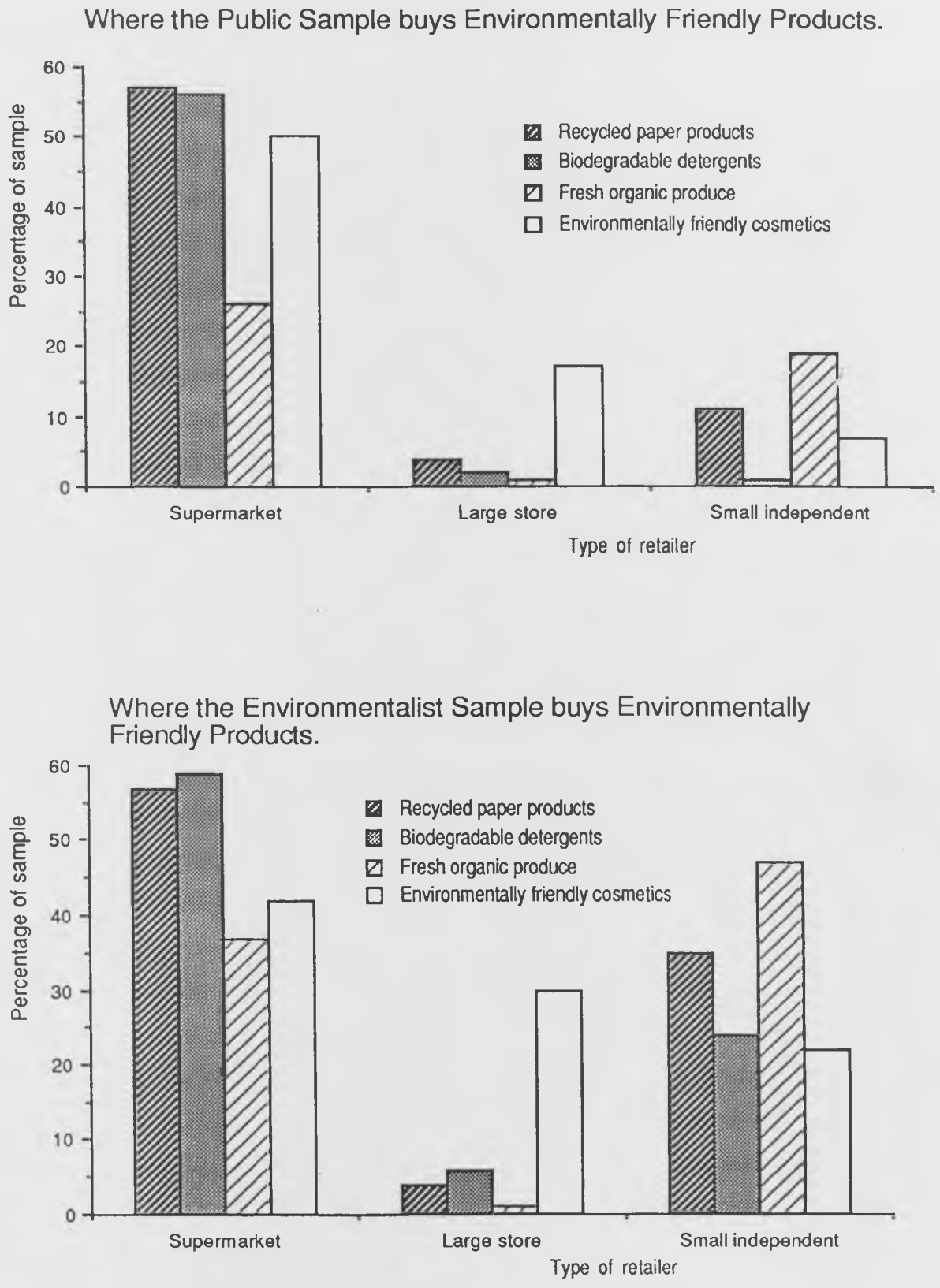


Figure 4.5. Type of Retailers Used by the Two Samples.

The proportion rating the environment as "Very important" was high (80%) for the environmentalist sample, as might be expected, and all this sample said the environment was "Very important" or "Quite important". 93% of the public sample also stated that the environment was "Very important" or "Quite important" to them personally, but only 48% went so far as to say it was "Very important". Such professed concern in large proportions of each sample supports the identification of the environment as a "motherhood issue" (O'Riordan 1976; Downs 1972) in that it is against societal norms to be anti-environment. Hence, a positive pro-environmental response was perceived by the respondent to be expected and was therefore supplied. The contradictions between such simple measures and behaviour are later explored qualitatively (see 6.4.).

Also, due to the small range in views in either sample, it is difficult to pick out differences on other criteria and relate these to ratings of environmental importance. The blanket response of positive environmental value means that this unidimensional response has less worth for the analysis. It does point out that it is no longer sufficient for researchers to deal with such simple expressions of environmental feeling and expect to earn worthwhile data.

When asked whether they ever refuse to buy products because of ethical considerations (e.g. the product's origin), 66% of the public sample and 90% of the environmentalists said they did. These responses are therefore slightly lower than those for positive preferences for environmentally friendly products (82% and 99%) reflecting the influence of the question's polarity: the negative language of 'refusing to buy' elicits a lower response than that of choosing to buy.

39% of the public and 44% of the environmentalist sample claimed to be solely responsible for the household shopping. Only 14% and 8% respectively said they played no active part in shopping and 45% and 48% respectively said they often shared such tasks. This means that most of the respondents in both samples considered that they participated in the choice of the products covered in the questionnaire, and thus could respond on the basis of their household's purchasing patterns.

Overall, at completion of the quantitative survey, 33% (79) of the public sample and 61% (48) of the environmentalist sample agreed to a further qualitative

interview in principle, giving a total sample size of 127.

4.4. Assessing Quantitative and Qualitative Data.

The discussion so far has dealt with the main themes emerging from the quantitative survey and laid the foundations for the qualitative stage of this research. It would have been possible to perform more analysis on the quantitative data, e.g. cross-tabulating shopping habits with frequency of choice to illustrate the importance of household roles in green consumerism. However, the main focus of this research is on the adoption of a qualitative approach to investigate motivations and constraints at the individual rather than the aggregated level, making more quantitative analysis inappropriate. To facilitate design of the qualitative data collection, the quantitative survey served primarily to collate behavioural, demographic and socioeconomic data as a sample for the qualitative interviews and to point out behavioural groups, and some research themes, for qualitative exploration.

There is a strong case for adopting such a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach to studying proenvironmental motivations and behaviour. Many workers (e.g. Samdah and Robertson 1989; Lowe and Rudig 1986; Van Liere and Dunlap 1978; Bittner 1973) have criticised the results produced by correlative studies as inconclusive, contradictory, poorly founded in theory and hence of little contribution to the field (see 3.2. and 3.2.1.). Two main features of quantitative approaches are problematic: their methodological and epistemological bases are inappropriate and they are too detached from their subject and its context.

Methodological and epistemological problems arise in the use of quantified, unidimensional criteria to measure motivations which may not be satisfactorily quantifiable nor suitable for aggregation. Quantitative questionnaires can constrain responses to fit preconceived categories (Quinn Patton 1987) which may not be applicable to the personal experience of each respondent (Eyles 1988), further complicating quantification. Indeed, quantitative instruments, such as a closed-format questionnaire, may "force artificially the expression of attitudes into a preconceived and common mould" (Campbell 1950 quoted in Merton *et al* 1956).

Quantification is essentially inappropriate because these constrained data are aggregated and used to study very individual processes. Desbarats (1983) terms this

a "conceptual inconsistency... [which] obscures whatever relationship might exist between individual subjectivity and individual behaviour" (Desbarats 1983 p344). This confuses correlation with causality where connections in aggregated data are presumed to exist at the individual level. Such "empirical correspondence" (Van Maanen 1983 p259) represents not causality but, more strictly, coincidence and cannot thus become the basis for good theory or methodology (Glaser and Strauss 1967 p192).

Some of the above points about correlation and causality are also made in quantitative studies to qualify statistical results. However, the resultant mismatch of aggregated data and individualised theory is commonly regarded by quantitative research (e.g. Merton in Glaser and Strauss 1967; Weigel 1977; Samdah and Robertson 1989; Liska 1974; Van Liere and Dunlap 1978; Wicker 1971) as the fault of the data than of the methodology or theoretical basis. This is entirely due to the premise that good data can be gathered quantitatively and that problems emerging so far originate in technical uncertainty and not methodological or epistemological uncertainties (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991; Funtowicz and Ravetz 1990; Bryman 1988). Glaser and Strauss affirm that this mismatch will only be resolved when theory is based on good data directly and hence:

> "*The simple fact that one cannot find the data for testing a speculative theory should be enough to disqualify its further use*, for this surely indicates that it just does not fit the real world!" (Glaser and Strauss 1967 p262, emphasis in original)

Quantitative approaches tend to emphasise "the rhetoric of verification" (Glaser and Strauss 1967 p17) rather than theory building and therefore replicability and standardisation in results and procedures. This is seen in studies of environmental attitudes, for example in Manzo and Weinstein (1987); Weigel (1973); Weigel and Newman (1976); Maloney and Ward (1973). In the environmental field, and especially for recent developments such as green consumerism, emphasis on theory verification is inappropriate due to the lack of existing good theory. As Simms notes:

> "The whole area of green issues is still new, underdeveloped, and changing rapidly. It therefore requires theory building rather than verification or extension." (Simms 1992 p33)

The detachment of quantitative studies from their contexts (Desbarats 1983; Blumer 1956) can be detrimental in studies of environmental attitudes because they often measure the "inconsistency" (Liska 1974; Van Liere and Dunlap 1981) between attitudes and behaviours but do not explore the context to reveal the bases of this inconsistency. The emphasis is rather upon objectivity rather than context, which Van Maanen (1983) suggests is due to the ritualisation of statistical procedures so that method begins to guide theory instead of subject matter guiding both. However, detachment does not guarantee objectivity, only abstraction from both the individual's social reality, something which qualitative approaches set out expressly to counter (Jones 1985; Quinn Patton 1987).

4.5. Concluding Remarks.

This chapter has reported on the quantitative methodology and its results. Profiles of the public and environmentalist samples proved different on several indicators, including sex, education duration, social grade and behavioural criteria. The limits of such a quantitative survey to research proenvironmental motivations and constraints in individual contexts were noted. The need is to embrace the contextuality and individuality of qualitative approaches and a research design to do so is described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY.

5.1. Introduction.

As seen in sections 3.2. and 3.3., previous investigations based upon the quantification of highly individual and emotional proenvironmental motivations have so far failed to produce meaningful conclusions about proenvironmental behaviour and its influences (Van Liere and Dunlap 1978). This is due to the disadvantages in using quantitative survey information, especially in isolation, as statistical analysis of aggregate data may distort or even preclude information and connections between data at the individual level because this information is not readily quantifiable.

In the next stage and main focus of this research, qualitative techniques are used to explore motivations in a more flexible way than through the use of quantitative questionnaires. Quantitative data will also be used whilst recognising its limitations. The qualitative data will be gathered through semi-structured and unstructured interviews which give more freedom to the interviewer, and thereby to the investigative process, by allowing interactive information collection. There are, however, problems with the analysis of such individual accounts as compilation and aggregation post hoc may disrupt the individual record and lose its internal coherence. Also, qualitative data are not as readily interpreted through summary as statistical results. Whilst Chapter 4 reported on the quantitative portion of this research, this chapter elaborates upon the above qualitative themes, outlining the general characteristics of qualitative research compared to quantitative methods, and also the qualitative research design adopted here.

5.2. Philosophical and Methodological Foundations of Qualitative Approaches.

> "The point... is not to be anti-numbers. The point is to be pro-meaningfulness." (Quinn Patton 1987 p166)

The use of qualitative approaches in the investigation of phenomena in the social sciences, particularly in geography, is less frequent than that of quantitative techniques. This is due to the very different characteristics and emphases of each type of approach, which render them more appropriate to different kinds of study. It is not, then, a case of either approach being more valuable than the other, but of

the need to use whichever is appropriate to the investigation proposed.

Geography has used qualitative approaches less frequently than other social sciences, especially anthropology and branches of sociology which have a long history of qualitative, participative and interpretative studies. Hence, much of the discussion in this chapter draws on work in other academic disciplines besides geography, to examine and illustrate the character of qualitative work.

5.2.1. Characteristics of Qualitative Approaches.

Five main characteristics of qualitative approaches are worth discussing: the reconstruction of meaning; proximity to data; theory generation rather than verification; the conceptualisation of choice and related constraints in action; the acknowledgement of subjectivity.

Firstly, any qualitative approach must necessarily place value on the quality of personal experience, and one key element of this is uncovering and understanding the highly subjective meaning of a phenomenon or situation from the perspective of the individual (Eyles 1988; McCracken 1988 p20; Van Maanen 1983). Eyles has called this "reality reconstruction" (Eyles 1988 p2), in that the academic worker is seeking to understand, in an organised way, how someone perceives their situation from inside that situation and not merely to construct from the outside what the observer perceives that situation to be. Giddens describes this as reconstituting the individual's frames of meanings within a conceptual scheme (Giddens 1976 p80).

This 'viewing from inside' (also Quinn Patton 1987 p137; Bryman 1988) is one of the difficult things about qualitative research in that it necessitates uncovering the structure in social reality, rather than the sometimes easier matter of imposing structure upon that reality to suit the academic project. Indeed, qualitative research tends to recognise *a priori* that structure and meaning must exist in society and that the search is to reveal this hermeneutically and Eyles (1988) has suggested the term "interpretative" in geography to describe this kind of qualitative work. Equally importantly, such order is subtle and easily masked by the "nuance, setting, interdependencies, complexities, idiosyncrasies, and context" (Quinn Patton 1987 p17) present in everyday experience of the social world.

Secondly, a close relationship to the data is maintained throughout collection

and analysis, especially to the idiographic nature of the data. The strongly personalised character of qualitative interviews, group discussions and documentation is one of the strengths of the approach and one which must be preserved throughout analysis, to facilitate interpretation at the individual level.

The main way of retaining such proximity is through the "specific descriptions from theoretically-informed positions" (Eyles 1988 p3) of an individual's perceptions of portions of reality. One descriptive way to stay specific is to use "indigenous typologies" (Quinn Patton 1987 p150) where the terms used by the subjects are incorporated into the academic interpretation. This retains the agent's own language and descriptions (Borman *et al* 1986), which stresses the importance of concepts through the explicit naming of them, making qualitative work is heavily dependent upon close and continual reference to the "raw data" of interviewees (Quinn Patton 1987 p137). The way in which the words are collected may also help to maintain data proximity. The use of open-ended, neutrally-worded questions allows respondents to choose their own words (Hite 1987 p775; Quinn Patton 1987 p115). In fact, by avoiding the imposition of a frame of reference created by the researcher, as in closed, quantitatively-oriented questions, this non-directional technique can force the respondents to initiate the use of appropriate words.

This element of qualitative approaches has been taken further by some workers by the adoption of phenomenological perspectives. These were developed, after Husserl, around the conception that the individual constitutes the fundamental unit of social research and should be studied in their own terms and meanings. These meanings are seen as developed and defined though routine and social interaction so that the only meaningful data for study are the individual's experiences of the social world and their reflexive understanding of it, using their own terms (Donovan 1988). Such phenomenological perspectives include notions of agency, but, because they accord all experience the same status, they ignore the power of certain individuals or groups to make their social constructs and meanings more prominent than those of others.

Thirdly, a common aim of qualitative theory building is an exploratory one (Quinn Patton 1987 p30; Bryman 1984), where the qualitative work is done to distinguish themes for a later, quantitative stage. Glaser and Strauss (1967 Chapter

2) discuss this tendency, recognising that the first stage is essentially one of theory generation, whereas the second is one of verification. This is because few cases are needed to suggest a theory, but, because of the canons of validity and reliability of sample, it takes many more cases to verify the existence and the generality of the relationship suggested by the theory.

In the opinion of Glaser and Strauss (1967), this way of generating theory avoids two traps: that of distorting good data to fit a theory which has come from logical deductions outside the data deemed relevant; or that of "exampling" - selecting data in order to fit a theory developed beforehand. Their discussion explicitly criticises a problem many qualitative workers recognise and which they attempt to overcome by starting with good data and then looking for the theory or pattern within it, disregarding *a priori* hypotheses and using an inductive approach to theory generation. This relies heavily upon the data proximity mentioned above so that:

> "The theory emerges from the data; it is not imposed on the data." (Quinn Patton 1987 p158)

Fourthly, human choice is important in qualitative work in that the individual is construed to have some free will in choosing between the perceived options present in their framework of reality (Desbarats 1983; Van Maanen 1983) due to the intentionality of agency (Giddens 1987). Hence, the fallacy of expected correspondence (DeFleur and Westie 1963 quoted in Schwartz 1968) between one motive and one behaviour is recognised (Van Maanen 1983) and the Pavlovian model of an instinctive step between attitude and behaviour is rejected (Ball 1972; Jones 1985). Instead, there are many ways in which behaviour and motivations are linked. This shows some overlap with Giddens' delineation of a flow of activity (behaviours), accompanied by and interacting with a processural flow of related motivations, rather than one direct motivation for each behaviour (Giddens 1984 p46).

Qualitative work does, however, recognise constraints on the realisation of free-will decisions as behaviour. A constraint has been described broadly as "any pressure or obstacle that produces attitude-discrepant notions" (Desbarats 1983 p350) and may be of social, economic or physical nature. The effectiveness of such

constraints in curtailing behaviour will not be constant, as different individuals at different times in the decision-making process have different susceptibility to their operation (ibid.). This distinction between the influence of the individual on their situation through free-will and the situation's influence on the individual through constraints and the validity of both is pointed out by Giddens thus:

> "On the one hand, those who belong to objectivist traditions... have surely been correct in arguing that 'society' or 'social institutions' have structural properties stretching 'beyond' the activities of individual members of society. Those who veer to the subjectivist side... have quite rightly seen us as beings capable of understanding the conditions of our own action, as acting intentionally and having reasons for what we do." (Giddens 1987 p59)

Thus qualitative approaches can investigate both, through an emphasis on individual contextualised action enabled by a recognition of the duality of agency and structure (Giddens 1987, 1984; Thrift 1983). The data yielded by such qualitative investigations can be distinguished from quantitatively produced data firstly by their richness, both in depth and detail of individual cases (Quinn Patton 1987 p30), and by their diversity of themes and situations. Secondly, the data are produced in a dynamic context, where the research design is sensitive to changes in its subject matter and in the development of the study (Quinn Patton 1987 p17; Borman *et al* 1986; Bryman 1984; Diesing 1972), and the researcher can adjust the orientation of the data collection and recording in consequence. Hence:

> "The problem under investigation properly dictates the methods of investigation". (Trow, quoted in Eyles 1988 p5-6)

Further, qualitatively produced data can be difficult to analyse, due to the complexity of the original data set and the desire to maintain proximity to this. Unlike quantitative data, individual data can be hard to summarise (Glaser and Strauss 1967 p223), as there are fewer widely-accepted standardised procedures than for statistical analysis. Interpretation and analysis therefore requires more time and care.

Fifthly, one of the cornerstones of qualitative work is its recognition of the subjectivity of research, due to the personal contact of the researcher with those being interviewed in retaining proximity to data. Jones states bluntly that: "There is

no such thing as presuppositionless research" (Jones 1985 p47) and others echo this comment, for example:

> "Empirical research is thus seen as a theoretical process which yields an image of the world which is determined by the instruments of research." (Todd 1981 p212)

and:

> "there is no such thing as a 'detached', 'neutral' or 'objective' place to stand when we know something. We are always speaking from a 'prejudiced' (in the sense of pre-judgment) and 'interested' and 'evaluative' posture." (Bowles quoted in Hite 1987 p771)

Therefore any piece of research involves making choices: about the sampling design, the relative importance of findings and, of course, the decision and definition of what is worthy of researching in the first place. These choices must impose structure on the research and therefore upon its conclusions (Jones 1985) and thus absolute objectivity is impossible (Quinn Patton 1987 p166).

The recognition of subjectivity makes the researchers viable subjects for scrutiny, as the prejudices they hold about their subject will affect the outcome (Van Maanen 1983) over and above the decisions they make about their research. Quinn Patton (1987 p166) suggests that, because objectivity is impossible, the most we can hope for is neutrality of the researcher. Glaser and Strauss (1967 p251) prefer to claim the sensitive insights of the observer to be valid data elements, together with those data from the subjects being studied.

So, it is not the case that the greater distancing of quantitative studies nor the closeness of qualitative studies is best, but that both depend upon the problem being studied. The advantage of the qualitative perspective is that potential for subjectivity is recognised and therefore made explicit, whereas in quantitative studies the emphasis upon objectivity may cloud any realisation of inherent subjectivity stemming from the choice of research methods. Hence:

> "closeness does not make bias and loss of perspective inevitable; distance is no guarantee of objectivity." (Quinn Patton 1987 p17)

5.3. Qualitative Sampling.

The purpose of any sampling design is to obtain a useful and balanced theoretically relevant group of cases as a basis for data collection. There are two main types of design: random and theoretical or purposeful (Todd 1981; Quinn Patton 1987). Random sampling is the most commonly used type in quantitative studies, where each individual in the population to be sampled is regarded as having an equal probability of random selection and an equivalent social role, ensuring equivalent contribution to the investigation (Todd 1981). The most usual reason for choosing this type is to avoid bias and increase data credibility (Quinn Patton 1987). Hence, the sample, if properly selected by these criteria, resembles the population it is taken from, having demographic and other variables in similar proportions. This allows the measurement of a trend, frequency or distributional spread of a variable under study through the sample, and, by extrapolation, the estimation of the spread of this variable through the sampled population as a whole. Glaser and Strauss (1967) use this to indicate the consequent emphasis of this type of approach on theory verification, via large number samples, and replicable conditions of measurement, rather than theory generation (see 4.4.).

The second type of sampling design is predominant in qualitative studies. It is theoretically based, with emerging theory pointing to the next sampling steps (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987 p38) and usually employs fewer cases than random sampling. The design is not preset but flexible and capable of adjustment as the study progresses. Quinn Patton (1987) terms such a strategy "purposeful" as it is undertaken with the express intention of furthering the theoretical development of the study through the selection of appropriate, information-rich cases. He cites ten subtypes of purposeful sampling where the type of case selected depends on the theoretical criteria and the state of research at that time. For example, samples may concentrate on cases which are: critical, extreme, deviant, typical, politically important, or confirmatory or disconfirmatory of the theory (Quinn Patton 1987).

Another issue when designing sampling is of that of the methods of data collection, which bring up such considerations as speed, convenience, sensitivity and duration of data collection. There are possibilities for triangulation in sampling designs, where several types of data collection are employed together in order to

strengthen information emergent from each type (Browner and Canter 1985; Marshall and Rossman 1989). Triangulation is possible in data methods (e.g. interviews, diaries) in investigators (e.g. of different backgrounds, ages, sexes), in theories and perspectives on the topic in question and in sources and respondents (e.g. teachers and pupils, activists and non-activists). Quinn Patton claims that "purity of method is less important than dedication to relevant and useful information" (Quinn Patton 1987 p61), but also recognises that triangulation yields different patterns in data, which could be incongruous because they capture different issues.

The quantitative survey in this research (Chapter 4) adopted random sampling but for the qualitative stage a more purposeful design was developed, where a dynamic sampling strategy could adjust to the emerging data.

5.3.1. Public and Environmentalist Sample Design.

The preliminary candidates for this stage of the research were selected from the completed quantitative survey to represent different demographic groups, especially in age, sex and terminal education age which have been related to proenvironmental attitudes in other studies (see 3.2.1. and 4.3.3.). The two different samples in the quantitative survey showed very different profiles along the artificially constructed behavioural index, with the mode for the environmentalist sample at 8 (ranging from 3 to 11) and for the public sample at 3 (ranging from 0 to 8). This pattern is followed up in the design of the qualitative sample in that the range and main focus of behavioural intensity is maintained in the selection of individual cases, albeit loosely (see Appendix B). Half the preliminary qualitative sample were drawn from the public survey and half from the environmentalist sample to keep a balanced range of views in the early part of this stage.

Although the first set of candidates was chosen merely to cover different demographic and behavioural groups, the data that emerged from those interviews indicated the need to concentrate more upon those involved in household decisions. The household shopper question in the survey (see Appendix A) distinguished individuals who stated that they were not involved in decisions about buying environmentally friendly products, the topic in question, and they could be excluded from further sampling.

All candidates sampled for the qualitative stage had said in the earlier survey that they were willing to be interviewed further (127 total). They were sent a letter reminding them of the previous survey and outlining the main topics of interest for the qualitative interview. They were later telephoned to establish their willingness to be interviewed and a convenient time for the interview at their home. In all, 12 people from the public and 16 from the environmentalist sample were interviewed in their homes between February and July 1991 (see Figure 5.1. for their locations in Leeds). The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two and a half hours.

5.3.2 Retailers Sample Design.

The specified aims of this thesis included the investigation of retailers in terms of their motivations and constraints and the relationship between their perspective and that of the individuals as consumers. The quantitative survey indicated that two groups of retailers most commonly supplied green products to individuals: supermarkets and small independent shops (see 4.3.4.). Under purposeful sampling, the survey data could be used in this way to design the sample for the second qualitative portion of the research.

The importance of supermarkets in grocery retailing, which includes retailing environmentally friendly products, is underlined by the fact that the top eight superstore chains sell over 80% of all the food bought in Britain (The Guardian 1992 August 10). The combined multiples sell around 40% to 50% of all healthfoods (Adams *et al* 1990 p103) and around 60% of all organic produce sold in the UK (British Organic Farmers *et al* 1991).

Letters were sent to all the national supermarket grocery chains (hereafter multiple retailers) represented in Leeds and three agreed to participate: the director or national manager responsible for environmental issues from each was interviewed face-to-face. The combined market share of these three multiples is more than 20% of grocery trade in the UK (1989) and their combined retail sales exceeded £11,000 million (The Telegraph 1992 January 15; Corporate Intelligence on Retailing 1991). So, although numerically small, this sample represents the environmental decision-making of a large and powerful portion of the grocery multiple retailing sector. The three also cover a range of market orientations, with one discount retailer, one high-

quality retailer and one middle-range retailer currently aiming to move upmarket.

As this is specifically a Leeds study, it was necessary to include the local variations on national policy and opinion through interviewing managers responsible for local stores in the three national chains. Telephone or face-to-face interviews were therefore conducted with all local store managers of the three multiples previously interviewed, bringing the total of retailers interviewed to 12 (see Figure 5.2. for their locations). Material published by the chains interviewed and other chains was collected and analysed to strengthen the scope of the retailing section by triangulation of data sources (see 5.3.). This latter covered the period 1989 to 1992, when green consumerism became widespread and environmental references began to appear in publications such as annual reports.

There are estimated to be over 1000 healthfood or wholefood shops in the UK which tend to sell various green products (Lampkin 1990; British Organic Farmers *et al* 1991). For this study, all the healthfood or wholefood stores (hereafter small retailers) in the Leeds Yellow Pages were contacted by letter and in person, and those selling any of the four forms of green products used in the quantitative questionnaire (see Appendix A) were considered eligible. Of these 11, 10 agreed to an interview, which took place with the main (often joint) owners or managers responsible for stocking decisions. Their main wholesaler in Bradford was also interviewed. All retailer interviews were conducted on the premises of the business (see Figure 5.2. for their locations), retaining the context of retailer decisions.

5.3.3. Organic Farmers Sample Design.

As interviews with the retailers progressed, differences emerged between the retailers' perspective of the organic produce sector and their perspective of other green product sectors. This seemed to be related to the differences in production - entirely different systems of agriculture are required to grow organic produce, whereas other product changes require only chemical substitution or other technical changes in the same production process, e.g. in non-CFC aerosol sprays. Organic production also requires between two and five years conversion before it can qualify for the Soil Association organic label, requiring a longer term commitment to such a change.

Compared to the establishment of around 800 supermarket outlets for organic produce in the last few years (British Organic Farmers *et al* 1991), studies have shown that a significant proportion of organic produce is still sold through on-farm sales or deliveries direct to customers. 47% of organic farmers use direct retail methods most frequently (Cudjoe 1989); 10% of all organic sales are made direct to customers and a further 20% are made through some small agent, e.g. a local wholefood shop (British Organic Farmers *et al* 1991). It seemed important to explore this sector further from the direct sales perspective. Contact was therefore made through the Soil Association, and then via snowball sampling, with five organic farmers and one low input-low output farmer, who all sell their organic produce direct to customers. Some also act as wholesalers on a small scale for wholefood shops, including some of those interviewed in this research, but none have connections with supermarkets. These six farmers were interviewed on their farms in order to explore the motivations and constraints on this specific sector. Due to the scarcity of organic farmers in the Leeds area, these six are located in the wider area of Yorkshire, and, although a small sample, do provide some insights into the producing-retailing side of a very specific type of green product.

5.3.4. Overall Sample Design.

A breakdown of the qualitative sample is provided in Table 5.1.. The small base sizes clearly distinguish this qualitative sample, based on purposeful sampling strategies, from large quantitative samples. In a quantitative sense, such a small sample is not representative of the populations from which it is drawn and extrapolation to these is therefore inaccurate. In qualitative work (as noted in 5.2.1.) it is not the representativeness of the data that is important but its richness, diversity and coherence. Extrapolation is not the aim of this part of the study, nor theory generation based on large and replicable data sets. Instead, the methods of qualitative analysis make the small sample useful and productive in its own terms of theory generation and meaningfulness, thereby underlining that, in this case, qualitative work is more appropriate for topics with less established theoretical foundations.

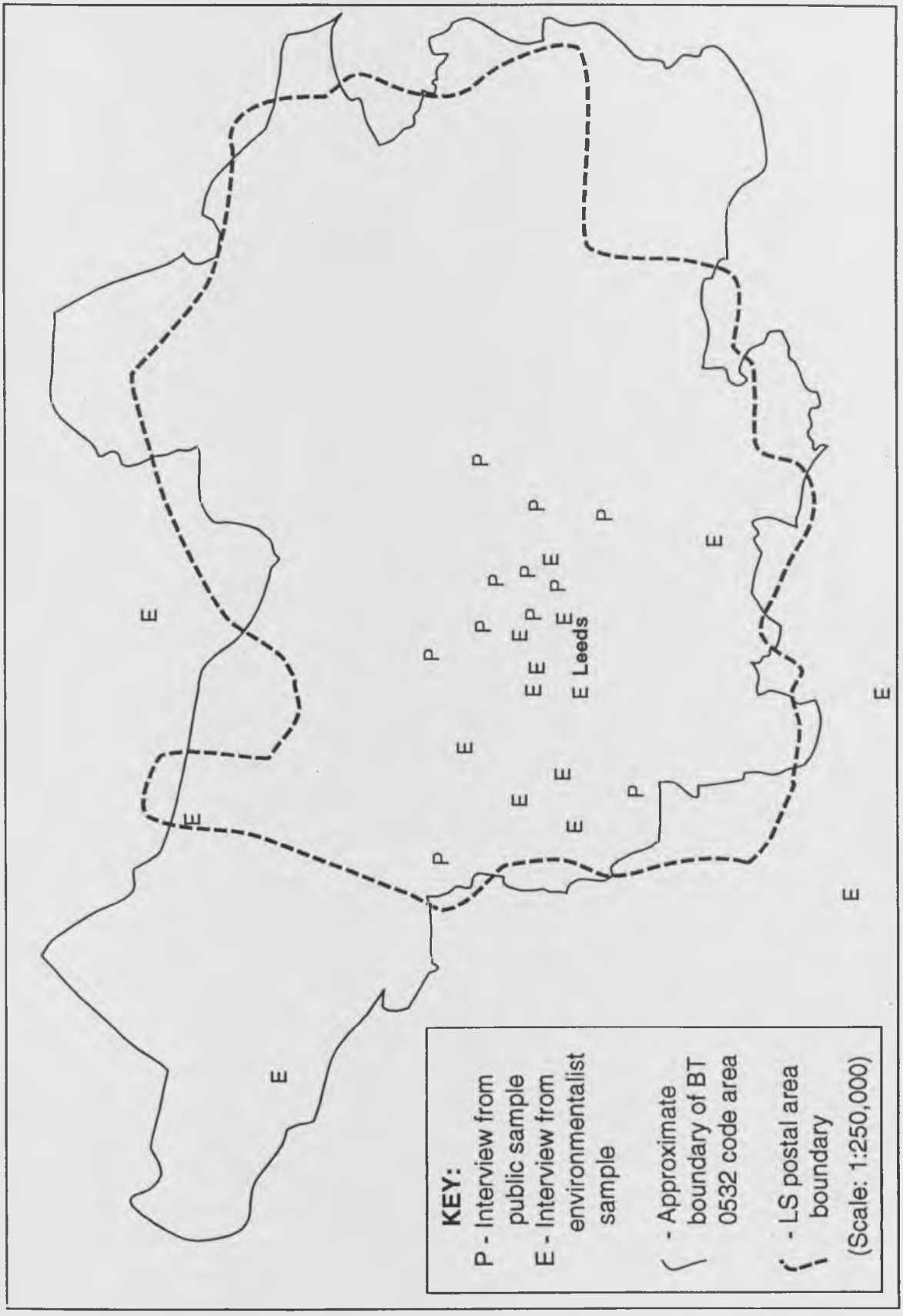


Figure 5.1. Location of Interviews with Individuals in the Leeds Area.

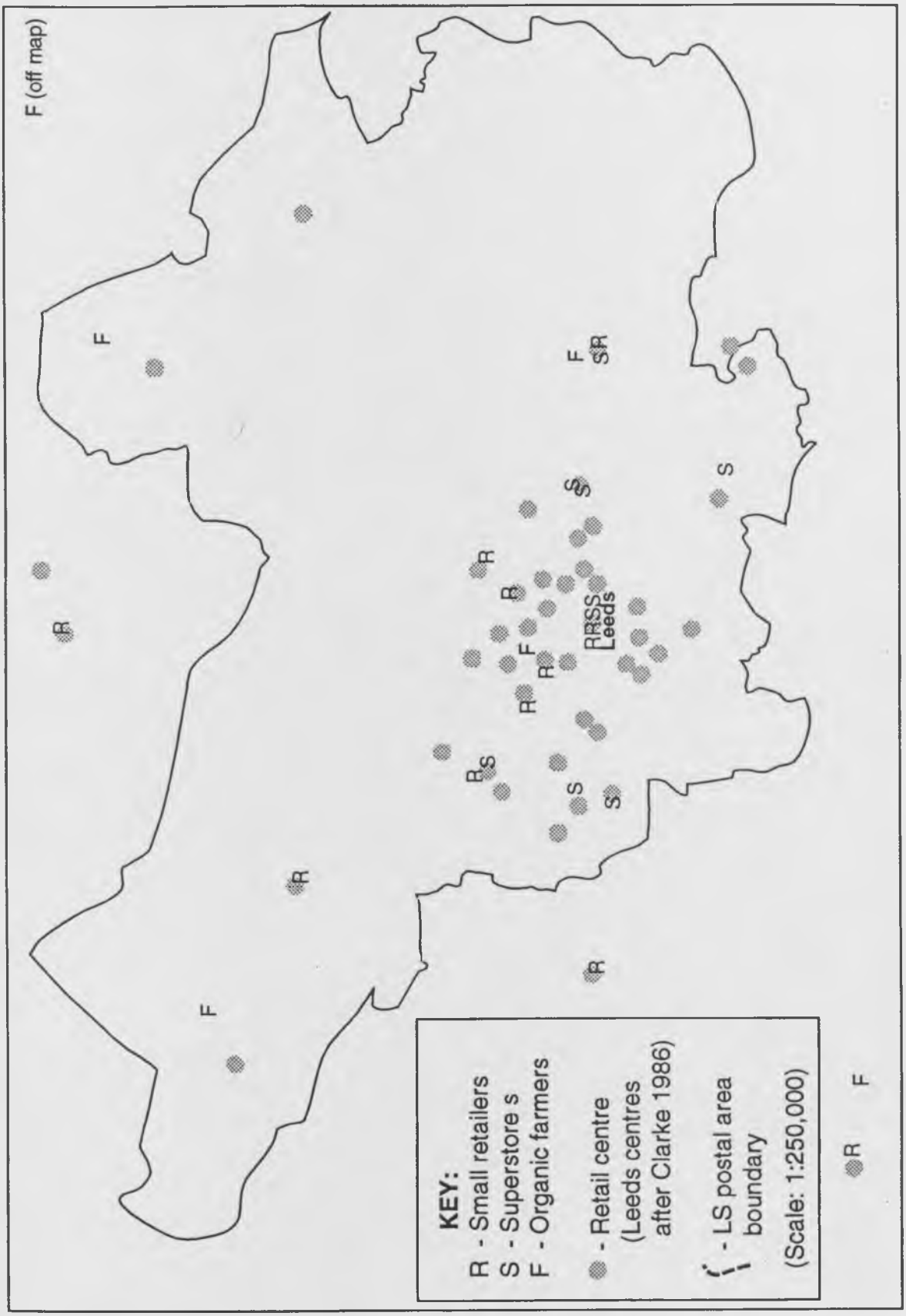


Figure 5.2. Location of Interviews with Retailers and Farmers Relative to Leeds Retail Centres.

Table 5.1. Summary of Qualitative Sample Sizes.

Data source	Interviews per data source
Public sample	12
Environmentalist sample	16
Total consumers	**28**
Multiple retailers (national representatives)	3
Multiple retailers (local representatives)	9
Multiple retailers (publications only)	3
Small retailers	11
Organic farmers	6
Total retailers	**42**

5.4. Depth Interviewing.

The main method of data collection from the sample is via a one-to-one depth interview, which is common to much qualitative study. This section outlines some of its characteristics and associated difficulties.

A one-to-one depth interview is more a conversation than an inquisition (Simons 1981): it is an interaction (Quinn Patton 1987 p127; Denzin 1989 p102), a process with two participants. It reveals complexity, personality, both specificity and range in issues; it provides detail and is emphatically contextual (Brenner 1985; Merton *et al* 1956), and hence is "a source of meaning and elaboration." (Quinn Patton 1987 p109). The interview allows respondents to choose their own words, to direct their discussion along meaningful routes, to pause over critical issues (see 5.2.1.). Hence each interview is a unique unit, a record of a personal process bearing the imprints of two people:

> "In qualitative research, the notion of some kind of impersonal machine-like investigator is recognised as a chimera. An interview is a complicated, shifting, social process occurring between two individual human beings, which can never be exactly replicated." (Jones 1985 p48)

The importance of the researcher as co-director of the interview is stressed in much qualitative work, making the researcher a research instrument (McCracken 1988; Jones 1985; Brenner 1985; Simons 1981). The neutrality of the researcher's reactions must be stressed to the interviewee (Quinn Patton 1987 p127) and rapport and open debate built upon this equality. Confrontation, disagreement and moral judgment should be withheld by the interviewer (Brenner 1985; Benney and Hughes 1956) so as not to affect the respondent's relative security and make them seek to give more 'acceptable' responses to legitimate themselves and their actions (Jones 1985). The researcher should also avoid the development of a hierarchy and disavow any expert status due to academic occupation, because this can make respondents wary of presenting their own ideas in the face of perceived greater knowledge.

The interview also operates at several levels. There is what is said:

> "The raw data of interviews are the actual words spoken by interviewees. There is no substitute for these data." (Quinn Patton 1987 p137)

However, it is necessary also to assess non-verbal cues in actions or avoidance of topic through pauses or changes of direction, as these are also expressions of attitudes and feelings. These non-verbal data are also recorded as notes made during the interview and, for both verbal and non-verbal information, the researcher must do more than look superficially at content, but get beyond

> "the social rhetoric... [as] only under very unusual circumstances is talk so completely expository that every word can be taken at face value." (Benney and Hughes 1956 p191).

The context of the interview is important and Merton *et al* (1956) distinguish between respondents discussing topics in an idiosyncratic context, where all is founded on highly personal experiences of society, and in a role context related to status and the norms shared by a group of similar characteristics. The respondent may therefore assume a particular role, e.g. parent, one on a higher income, teacher, retailer, and discuss issues in a way beyond personal experience as a member of that particular social grouping. Such responses can indicate not only ascription to group consensus but identification and acceptance of social norms in the actualisation of behaviour or in attitudes held on the topic in question.

5.4.1. Conducting Qualitative Interviews.

Structured, semi-structured and unstructured qualitative interviews can all be used in gathering qualitative data (Quinn Patton 1987). The first utilises open-ended questions, administered and answered orally or by completing questionnaires. Although the choice and arrangement of the questions is predetermined (e.g. Hite 1987), the respondents are given some freedom of expression as they do not have to fit their responses into preset answer categories.

Semi-structured interviews use a topic guide or check-list (Quinn Patton 1987; Brenner 1985), which lists the relevant topics for the interviewer to bring into the interview, and may suggest relevant questions to introduce these topics. However, question wording is not fixed and can adapt to the circumstances and development of the interview. There is no preset sequence in which to ask the questions, so this too can be varied. This method allows freedom of interaction and flexible progression of the interview, as well as the possibility of uncovering new topics or adjusting the emphasis upon the different topics covered, according to the interviewee's conversation.

Unstructured interviews are completely free conversations around a topic and depend upon the spontaneous generation of questions (Quinn Patton 1987 p109). They therefore rely entirely upon the development of discussion between the participants according to their interests and capabilities.

This research adopted a very flexible semi-structured interviewing technique, using a topic guide only in the early stages. All public and environmentalist interviews conducted for this research were recorded on audio tape in the respondent's home and all retailer interviews on the premises of the business. The words were then transcribed in full, together with details of non-verbal cues noted during the interview. A case study (Quinn Patton 1987) was then prepared for each respondent from the transcription, questionnaire data and interview notes, outlining the basic themes of behaviour and motivations in an organised form yet maintaining detail and interconnections. These case studies comprise the basic qualitative data for analysis.

5.5. Qualitative Compilation and Analysis.

The compilation and interpretation of qualitative data presents different problems from that of quantitative data, due to the former's complexity and depth, the need to maintain valuable interconnections within the information and its emphasis more on theory generation than verification. This section describes ways to study qualitative data without introducing rigid hypotheses, the examination of which may distort the emergence of insights from the data. There are two main types of qualitative analysis, both of which are characteristically inductive and comparative (Diesing 1972): comparative analysis, described by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and analytic induction, described by Walker (1985) and Quinn Patton (1987).

Induction is a process of theoretical development from the particular to the general, from the data to the theory or pattern. It therefore remains faithful to the data (Eyles 1988) and has been termed grounded generalisation (Van Maanen 1983). Walker (1985) describes the progress of analytic induction formally thus: the definition of a phenomenon for study; the formulation of a hypothesis; the study of one case for confirmation of that hypothesis; the consequent agreement of disagreement leading to a reforming of the hypothesis or redefinition of the phenomenon to accommodate the evidence of the data. Walker claims that a very small number of cases can lead to "practical certainty" (Walker 1985 p189) and that repetition of these steps leads to an "integrated, limited, precise, universally applicable theory of causes" for the defined phenomenon but, equally, one case can lead to reformulation or redefinition (ibid.).

This seems a rather optimistic view, and in most cases the virtues of analytic induction are more its attention to data and its avoidance of pre-existing expectations (McCracken 1988), producing what Quinn Patton terms a "goal-free evaluation" (Quinn Patton 1987 p15), but not necessarily certainty in theory. Quinn Patton describes a process whereby the context of a phenomenon is described, then a case study is compiled forming a complete, case-unique holistic reference set. This set is then analysed for patterns and topics in a move from complexity and chaos to classification and manageability of themes (Quinn Patton 1987). These patterns and topics can be continually formed and reformed as they converge and diverge with the progress of research. With so much qualitative detail, it is important to focus on the

purpose of study and therefore on the appropriate features and not the trivial (Quinn Patton 1987 p163).

Comparative analysis, as described by Glaser and Strauss (1967; Strauss 1987), relies on the systematic categorisation of qualitative data, where categories are analytic and cover consequences, conditions, action, processes - any valid or relevant information. Each category is therefore a concept arising from the data and has certain properties or aspects which can be described in indigenous (Quinn Patton 1987) or academic terms. The categories must emerge from the data and should be "uncontaminated" by knowledge of previous studies (Glaser and Strauss 1967 p37). The emphasis is firmly placed upon subsequent theory generation, not verification, and hence upon diversity in the range of emergent categories.

The procedure is as follows: cases (e.g. interviews and notes) are compared against cases and categories formed. These categories are then integrated and cases can be compared directly to them. This continues until the categories are "saturated", that is fully explored, and further additions from new cases no longer contribute to the understanding of the categories, so sampling may cease (Glaser and Strauss 1967). The coding into categories thus records both the frequency of mention by individual cases but, more importantly, the description and exploration of each category through the revelations of qualitative detail.

The list of categories is then reduced by delimiting the theory and exposing the underlying uniformities of the categories. The theory can thus be dynamic and developmental, based in diversity and reorganisation of categories during the study (Strauss 1987), as data collection and analysis are contemporaneous and mutually influential. The theory is also inductive as any theory emerges directly from the attempt to organise and understand the data: it is therefore "grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss 1967 *passim*).

The essence of qualitative analysis lies in revealing order and meaning in data according to underlying themes and relations. In this research, there are components of both analytic induction and comparative analysis. In common with Quinn Patton (1987), a reference set or case study was completed for each individual interviewed, to identify the main themes and patterns in a preliminary analysis. However, Walker's (1985) advocation of theoretical formulation and reformulation, case by

case, and the rapid appearance of applicable theory through this procedure are not systematic and thus not adopted, because of difficulties in developing themes directly from the study of isolated cases.

The leap from data to theory should not be a blind one, and hence an organisational procedure to orient the development of theory is appropriate. This is the technique used by Glaser and Strauss (1967; Strauss 1987) as an intermediate stage between collection and theory building. Their systematic categorisation is practised here, in the evolution of categories with certain properties. The need for contemporaneous data collection and analysis is recognised, as well as the connection with the purposeful sampling design (see 5.3.). However, complete saturation of categories is likely to be difficult to assess beyond the most commonly recurring themes. This seeming strictness of procedure is therefore downplayed in favour of the use of categories to identify key themes or metacategories, which can then be taken back to the data to reveal the interconnections of individual and context. The metacategories are used as a framework to organise the discussion of categories and theoretical connections over the next four chapters of data discussion.

5.6. Concluding Remarks.

This chapter has outlined the characteristics of qualitative work and described their adoption in the sampling, data collection and analysis design for this research. Key emphases are: the individual meaning of situation and action; data proximity via open interviews; use of indigenous typologies and comparative analysis of cases; interpretation oriented towards theory generation rather than verification. The sampling design reflected these in its use of purposeful sampling where the data informed design development and the data quality and integration were emphasised over its representativeness. The data collection and analysis also retained data proximity and coherence through personal interviewing and the categorisation of themes directly from case information. Overall five groups of people were interviewed: members of the public and members of environmentalist groups (as consumers); small and multiple retailers; organic farmers (as both producers and retailers).

The design of the research therefore allows the development of rich grounded

theory on the motivations and constraints felt by all five groups and the interactions, similarities and dissimilarities between them. These are explored in the next four chapters.

CHAPTER 6: INITIATING AND CONSTRAINING INFLUENCES ON INDIVIDUAL PROENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR.

6.1. Introduction.

Proenvironmental changes made voluntarily by individuals include the five forms of behaviour reported in the quantitative survey (Chapter 4): purchasing green products, joining groups, political activities, recycling and conservation; offshoots of these are also included, e.g. donating to groups. Individuals adopting different types of behaviour were sampled in the qualitative stage of depth interviewing to cover a range of proenvironmental behavioural intensities and, hence, motivations. This chapter looks at the influences underlying such behaviours in terms of the assessment of responsibility and the operation of constraints, as revealed by the data gathered from these individuals. Information, trust, expertise and scales of reference also affect the assessment of responsibility and are dealt with in Chapters 8 and 9.

An individual's assessment and ascription of responsibility are not translated into individual behaviour in a simple manner. The "fallacy of expected correspondence" (DeFleur and Westie 1963 quoted in Schwartz 1968) between verbal expression and behaviour was noted in 3.2.1. in the discussion of the inadequate explanation of proenvironmental behaviour offered by correlative studies. Behaviour relates to the evaluation of responsibility but is also subject to a number of economic, social and material constraints, which are perceived to exist both internally and externally and which are dealt with in the latter half of this chapter.

The constraining influence of these perceptions means that the responsibility identified by respondents is often not acted on or is transferred to some other agent rather than the individual. The recognition of this inaction or transferral of responsibility will be a recurrent theme in this chapter.

6.2. Responsibility.

Responsibility involves some morally defined choice (Schwartz 1968) and, as choice, must imply the ascription of agency (Giddens 1984, 1987; Heberlein 1972), where both some control over the outcome and some choice over the action are perceived. Environmental responsibility is related to other social responsibilities in

all these respects (Tucker 1978) but a sense of responsibility may not necessarily be translated into effective proenvironmental action.

In this study, respondents frequently describe actions as things they "ought", "should" and even "must" do. However, the source of rationale for this is poorly articulated. There is "a certain moral sense" (288[1]) but it proves difficult to explain verbally. Such moral obligation appears rooted in practical consciousness (Giddens 1984) or taken-for-granted knowledge (Thrift 1983) which is learned, not systematically but through pragmatic living in the social reality. It is therefore "not immediately available to discourse" (Giddens 1987 p63) and the morality remains implicit and action-related, not outwardly rationalised. Two respondents do use the term "conscience" (125, 290) and one uses "responsibility" spontaneously (244), which clearly have moral overtones, but even here it is difficult to identify the sources of such a feeling in the interview without leading the individual into preset conclusions. This problem of articulating the rationalisation for responsibility is shown by this Greenpeace activist and fund-raiser who has difficulty in developing it:

> "I always saw [recycling] as a duty, something that I *should* do, you know. I didn't quite understand the reason why I should do it, but now I understand the reasons why I should do it... I think I'm happier... I always thought it were right, but I was never quite sure why it was right. But now I've got the desire to do it, and the desire is always the driving force of willpower." (251)

This is also seen in the data from non-activists and non-members, like these women:

> "it's the thing to do, isn't it?... Everybody's got to... I were doing something because I thought I should do it." (11)

> "things like bottles, it's much easier to throw them in the dustbin, but

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[1] The number in parentheses after quotations from the data denotes the questionnaire or interview number of the individual. Numbers under 240 denote the public sample and numbers greater than 240 denote the environmentalist sample. S denotes a representative from a multiple retailer at the national level and L the same from a local level. R denotes the owner of manager at a small retailer and F an organic farmer. A profile of each person and retailer interviewed is supplied in Appendix B for further reference.

> then you think, 'Oh, no, I must take them to be recycled, because I've done it for so long and it's the right thing to do... [But when prompted to explain:] It's not duty. It's a bind sometimes." (13)

The ascription of individual responsibility depends upon the consciously recognised stimulus of information (Chapter 8) and upon the context of moral norms (also Schwartz 1968). The key foci to understanding the operation of responsibility in the context of moral norms are the role of the individual, the role of other responsible agents, the need to force change and the perceived impact of individual actions: these ideas are developed in the rest of this chapter.

Before doing so, several issues have to be explored that are subsumed in the basic concept of responsibility but which affect the self-ascription of environmental responsibility. These issues are perceived efficacy, the ability to affect some issue through action, and perceived choice.

Efficacy depends on the extent of environmental responsibility, which tends to be centred on the immediate environment (see 9.2.). This immediate responsibility also seems to reflect the extent of control over actions in that agency is circumscribed to the maintenance of one's local "patch" (54) over which the individual can exert control, but no further. For example, from a non-activist but occasional green consumer:

> "I'm careful what I buy now in the house. I can't do anything about the outside." (145)

The extent of responsibility obviously relates closely to the perceived severity of environmental problems. Activists tend to view the problem in far more negative terms, with more emotion, which provides a sense of urgency behind actions and an intensified need to act (see 6.3.).

Responsibility relates to a belief in efficacy, that individuals have some impact through action: thus the data tend to emphasise those responsible actions which are possible and effective. There is hence a focus on *actionable* responsibility, not solely moral responsibility without its behavioural context. This is put clearly by a Greenpeace local activist:

> "I don't worry about things as much unless I can do something about it. I worry about things where it matters." (251)

The perceived effectiveness of action can serve to reinforce the perceived responsibility of the individual in that respect. Without impact, individual actions are futile and therefore it is pointless to ascribe responsibility to the self (see 6.3.2.). Particularly for activists, the moral obligation to act responsibly remains despite perceived futility of impact, for example for this Green Party member:

> "You have a personal responsibility, I feel, irrespective of... on the global scale it might be a bit minuscule, or even futile, but you have to do it on moral grounds." (288)

For most individuals, however, it seems that responsibility is more closely linked with impact than with moral obligation. There is an implicit *utilitarian* ethos (Fishkin 1982 p100; Barry 1983) in that responsibility it not initiated because of morality alone but functionally because of its effectiveness in curtailing environmental damage. Therefore the perceived impact is emphasised (see 6.3.), which parallels Schwartz's emphasis on the individual's awareness of the consequences of their actions as contributing to responsibility ascription (Schwartz 1968, 1970; Redclift 1992).

Alongside efficacy comes the issue of choice. Beliefs in the value of personal freedom may conflict with perceived responsibility so that responsibility is overwhelmed and self-interest is prioritised under the operation of choice constraints (see 6.5., 6.6. and 6.7.). There may also be conflicts of environmental responsibilities with other forms of responsibilities, such as those to promote access to the environment or to improve people's living conditions. Here the conflicts are not about self-interest versus the environment but still involve issues of choice and priorities that have to be resolved, e.g for this activist in the Council for the Protection of Rural England there is the conflict:

> "to make [the countryside] still quiet and restful and on the other hand to have everybody enjoy it. It seems to be almost an impossible equation". (244)

6.2.1. The Ascription of Environmental Responsibility.

It is useful to recognise a twofold ascription of environmental responsibility: ascription to the self and ascription to others.

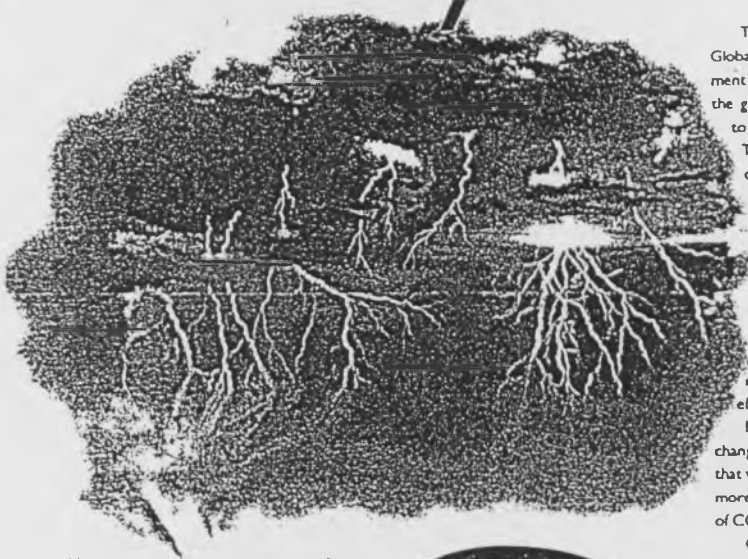
Ascription of responsibility to the individual self is a key element developed by government and commerce in their devotion to consumer sovereignty within capitalism (Smith 1990) and in their emphasis on the consumer as the key source of responsibility. Advertisements articulate ideas about the impact of individual actions and seek to promote feelings of individual responsibility (see Figure 6.1., Figure 6.2. and 7.3.1.). The Government likewise stated in its recent White Paper on the environment that:

> "The responsibility for our environment is shared. It is not a duty for Government alone. It is an obligation on us all... an instinctive characteristic of good citizenship." (Department of the Environment 1990 p16)

In contrast, it is rare to hear such articulation from consumers. They seem to relate far more to the ideas of impact than directly to ideas of responsibility, duty or obligation. As mentioned (see 6.2.), it is difficult for the individual to explain why this notion is important.

Where responsibility is ascribed to the self implicitly, there is often the complementary notion of others in society who are unable to take on such responsibility. Around half the individuals from both samples cite their "privileged" (244, 273, 215, 13) position, especially in terms of income, status and education, relative to a vaguely identified group of 'others'. (This was illustrated also in the quantitative survey where environmentalist sample had more BC1 respondents (with occupations in the managerial and clerical groups) and more tertiary education than the public sample (see 4.3.3.)). Privilege is enabling: it broadens the scope of environmental action and shifts economic priorities in favour of the environment, thus making any financial sacrifice more bearable (see 6.5.). Therefore *relative* social position strengthens the obligation of responsible behaviour by underlining the agency component of responsibility.

Global Warming. How much of the responsibility rests at your door?



None, you may think. In fact, each of us contributes to Global Warming in dozens of small ways.

Every time we flick on a light switch we draw electricity from the grid. Most of that electricity is made by burning fossil fuels - coal, oil or gas. Whenever we turn up the gas under a saucepan, we are burning a fossil fuel.

This results in the release of carbon dioxide (CO_2) into the atmosphere.

Human activity is pouring CO_2 and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere at an unprecedented rate, which is likely to throw the world's climate out of balance.

Why should we worry about Global Warming? If it means longer, hotter summers and shorter winters, isn't it to be welcomed?

Unfortunately, not all of the effects are likely to be pleasant. If left unchecked Global Warming could change existing weather patterns across the world.

Areas now vulnerable to extreme weather conditions will be affected even more. Rising sea levels will pose a serious threat to low-lying areas. The speed with which these changes will take place may mean species will be unable to cope and will die out altogether.

Faced with the possibility of such serious worldwide effects, what can be done to help?

The answer is, a very great deal.

The world's Governments are taking Global Warming very seriously. The UK Government is taking a leading role in negotiating the global agreement on climate change due to be signed during the Earth Summit in 1992. The Government will make sure the necessary action is taken within the UK. And you can do a great deal too. Starting now.

It may seem surprising but about one third of the electricity produced in our power stations is used in our homes.

Businesses, industry and transport all need to be more energy efficient and this is being tackled too. But, it is actually in our homes that each of us can make our greatest contribution to energy efficiency.

By making relatively straightforward changes in the way we use energy, it's estimated that we could cut domestic fuel bills by 20% or more, with a corresponding drop in the amount of CO_2 produced.

Obvious practical action includes things like insulating cavity walls, lagging the loft and pipes, draught-proofing doors and windows and buying modern energy-efficient appliances.

But there are also lots of simpler things like not overfilling the kettle - you only heat the water you actually need.

For more details about how to make your home more energy efficient, please telephone 0345 247 347, for only the cost of a local call.

Or complete the coupon and send it to: Helping the Earth Begins at Home, PO Box 200 Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 9ZZ.

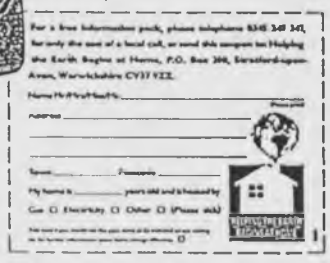


Figure 6.1. Full-page advertisement, *The Guardian* 1991 November 12.
(Reproduced with permission from the Department of the Environment)

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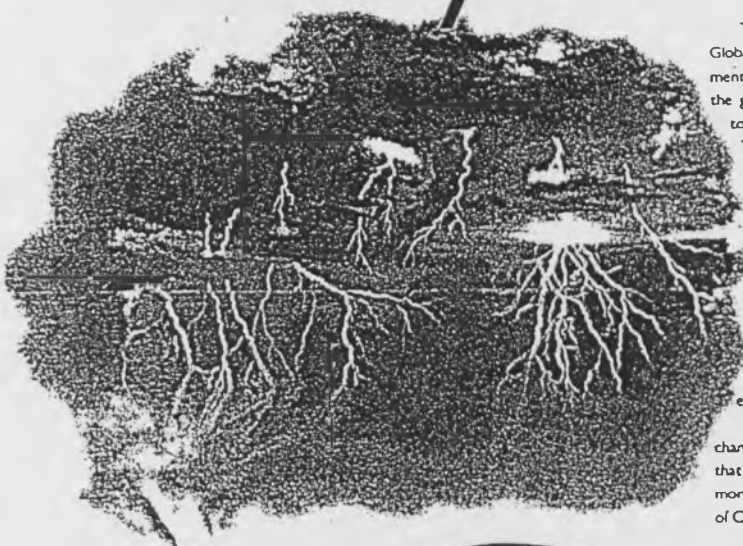

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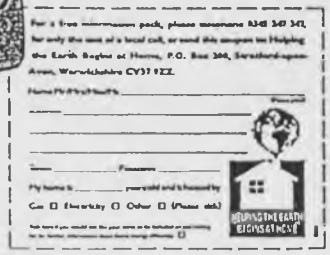

Figure 6.1. Full-page advertisement, *The Guardian* 1991 November 12.
(Reproduced with permission from the Department of the Environment)

Figure 6.2. Full-page advertisement, *The Guardian* 1991 November 18.
(Reproduced with permission from the Department of the Environment)

Individuals may also be privileged in locale, where their immediate environment is green both in terms of parkland and in terms of social groupings involved in environmental activity, again enabling proenvironmental feeling and action. This may be stronger in this Leeds-based study, owing to the perception of Leeds as a "green" city with a lot of countryside and good environmental quality in some (but not all) aspects and areas (see 4.1.1.). Where privilege is not felt, it remains an effort to take up and maintain environmental actions, such as recycling or buying, because constraints remain strong.

In contrast to the relative agency and responsibility of the self, the others in society who are not acting responsibly are perceived to be uncaring, "apathetic" (262), "lazy" (239), individualistic, greedy and materialistic. The following comments are typical:

> "the state of the environment is the fault of people who don't care... They just can't be bothered." (305)

> "I think this country's stuck... they're more interested in their houses and their cars and their things." (274)

> "so many people don't give a damn, or aren't prepared to do anything. I suppose we've become too materialistic as well, all too busy and haven't time." (R4)

One third of the individuals, mostly environmental group members, specifically criticise the rest of society as lazy and self-interested, thereby implying that the self, by acting, is the opposite. Underlying such criticisms is a more perceptive assessment of societal structures in that others are seen as unable to act, rather than refusing to act. Others, unlike the privileged self, may be constrained by time, mobility, income or knowledge. Environmental group members in particular rationalise the lazy attitude of the public as stemming from an underlying ignorance of the reasons and ways in which to act, not realising the scale of the problems, being "complacent" (258) about the state of the environment and its effects on them. There is implicit belief in the assumption that information triggers action (but see 8.5.) and that a lack of information therefore constrains agency and responsibility. A lack of responsible behaviour is therefore perceived by several group members explicitly to be due to the public's relative lack of information, thus:

> "if they realised things... they wouldn't *do* certain things." (262)

> "People don't realise. If people realised, there would be an outcry... if these facts were put in front of people properly." (251)

> "a lot of people are content just to do that [sit back and do nothing]. And I think the time has passed where people can be complacent." (249)

> "some people don't *want* to believe a nasty truth. We all want to hide our heads in the sand from some nasty truths." (244)

For environmental activists, there is often frustration that others are not acting and this lack of other agents seems to promote the ascription of responsibility to the self. This is usually reinforced by a belief in their own efficacy and impact as part of a group action:

> "Somebody's got to do it. if I don't do it, I know there's not many people who will do it... If I didn't go to the group and the other nine people didn't go to the group, they'd shut down... I know that if nothing's done, everything'll get wrecked. So, therefore, something's got to be done." (255)

> "I just got so frustrated that MPs weren't doing anything, nothing were going away... It were... either go completely insane or do something. So I had to do something." (251)

6.2.2. The Ascription of Environmental Responsibility to Others.

The ascription of environmental responsibility to others is prevalent in the public data where the others may be environmental groups or government. Responsibility may also be given to business to change products to resolve consumer responsibilities for consumption, but this is rarely explicit in the data from individual consumers.

Government responsibility for environmental protection is perceived to be anchored in legislation to enforce change and sacrifices which will not be made voluntarily. This would not only make change fairer but also a non-sacrifice, as everyone would be compelled to do the same and the minority would not be giving up unilaterally for the sake of the majority. This would resolve the issue of individual responsibility by making it a legal requirement but is perceived as unlikely

to occur (see 9.4.1.).

Both non-members and active and passive group members ascribe environmental responsibility to environmental activists and groups rather than to themselves. Non-members outside the groups pass responsibility to the activists within them (also Burke 1990), having a tendency to say "Let someone else do it" (239), e.g.:

> "It's somebody's job out there and you would just hope that somebody is getting paid... to do it... I've got a job to do; they've got a job to do. I'm not gonna worry about it because somebody else has got it in hand." (11)

The ascription of responsibility to green activists is also perceived by passive group members, e.g. of the Green Party:

> "there are people like me who are just taking advantage of them, which I always feel is really unfair." (290)

As well as developing it internally, activists are therefore ascribed responsibility from external sources, both positively as above and negatively due to the lack of others acting responsibly and forcing the agency onto the activists. The commitment to activity and the habit of action strengthen the force of both external and internal norms and, once in, responsibility keeps an activist in activity, e.g. for this local Greenpeace activist:

> "you do get to a point where you think, 'I've had enough'. You just need a break... And then something else will come through the door, and you think, 'I can't leave this'. You just can't sit back... you feel that it's your place now, that you can't just sit back and let other people do it... It's now you've got to get up off your backside and actually go out there and give it half a percent more than just sending your subscription off." (249)

6.3. Forms of Impact.

The data show that the perceived impact of individual action has a strong bearing upon the ascription of environmental responsibility. A sense of efficacy can strengthen or weaken responsibility (Schwartz 1968, 1970; Redclift 1992) because individuals continually and reflexively monitor their actions (Giddens 1987 and see

3.5. and 3.6.). There are several kinds of impact involved: physical impacts on the environment; impacts on business and government through consumer 'votes'; impacts on the environmental awareness of others.

The most obvious form of impact is in reducing environmental degradation, e.g. through recycling, the use of fewer products or more benign products, and activism in environmental groups. Such physical impacts are outlined by this Green Party member:

> "I must have done the environment some good... I've worn less of the road down [through bicycling not driving], I've burnt a lot less fossil fuels, I've put a lot less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, I've wasted a lot less heat and my car is relatively younger." (284)

The perceived level of such impact depends to a great degree upon the information held about impact and the trust given to manufacturers, government and other bodies (see Chapter 8). It also depends on the perceived state of the environment, that is, whether any reversal of environmental degradation is possible. Opinions on this, and therefore the need for action, vary. For example, two Green Party members differ on the severity of environmental problems, illustrating the contrasts in the data on this question:

> "I don't think we really do it an awful lot of harm on a local scale... there'll be lots of small problems... Not doom." (284)

> "when it comes down to it, I think we've had it anyway." (273)

Overall, there is a vague perception of present environmental damage but both active and passive members do possess a considerable degree of optimism about the eventual efficacy of the green movement in curbing physical damage; this underlying optimism is also noted by Dobson (1990 p22). For example for these group members:

> "We've got ten years total to sort the environment out... It's like a snowball: it starts rolling and you can't stop it". (251)

> "I think you have to be optimistic, although sometimes I doubt whether... we'll pull through... It's touch and go at best." (288)

> "I can't actually think of reasons for being optimistic, but I do feel fairly optimistic." (274)

However, the data tend to play down physical environmental impacts - these are rated as minimal for an individual. A more positive form of impact is the encouragement of technological and business change through green consumerism, with an implicit belief in consumer sovereignty (e.g. Adams *et al* 1991; Smith 1990; see 3.7.), with references to consumer power or the purchase vote in the data:

"as a consumer, you do have the power to buy or not to buy". (249)

Seven individuals explicitly cite individual impact in sending signals to business in this way. This seems to complement the widespread perception, explicitly stated by half the individuals, that green products have only a minimal physical impact when considered singly. Therefore, two forms of impact emanate from green consumerism, but neither are seen to be particularly effective alone.

Similar signals to change sent through election votes are seen by a few individuals to have an impact on government, and thereby on legislation. This only operates in a vague manner and the signals may be blocked by more powerful lobbies. For its members, the Green Party is seen as a pressure group, both by those within and outside it, changing other parties not through gaining a share of the vote but through posing a threat and giving an example for others to follow. However, the green vote described by others (Johnston 1989a; Porrit and Winner 1988) seems unlikely in the light of the data and the recent poor elections results (and see 9.4.1.).

The most common form of impact perceived in the data is the impact of individual actions on the awareness of others with more than a third of the individuals, mostly group members, citing this as important. This impact is effected through conversation with others, disseminating information more formally, e.g. leaflets, and providing a contact point with the environmental movement. All these methods are important in raising awareness as part of environmental groups' aims to inform the public to earn their support and legitimation (see 8.3.1.). This form of impact can also be *directly* monitored by individuals in a face-to-face context, so that its significance can be assessed, unlike physical and other impacts which may be far more depersonalised and diffuse or can only be assessed by experts (see 8.4.3.). For example, personal impact is emphasised by a local activist and an active Green Party member respectively:

> "I think I have an impact if people know to use me as a resource; they ring me up if they want to know something." (306)

> "If an item is tabled in debate and if it's discussed over the dinner-table and if you weren't doing what you're doing it wouldn't get that far, then you're doing some good." (F3)

Such a role is clearly perceived as an educative one, with the groups perceived to be acting as "catalysts" in the adoption of environmentally and morally 'right' behaviour and can in its more extreme forms be characterised as "evangelism" (288).

For all these impacts, individuals perceive certain extents and strengths. There is a geographical distinction between local impacts, particularly with reference to specific developments, and more widespread impacts due to differences in the perceived efficacy of actions in the immediate context and in the wider one (explored in 9.2.). Physical impacts are likely to be more remote than awareness impacts, partly due to perceived efficacy but also due to the importance of cumulative impact by many people in this case.

6.3.1. Individual Impact.

The commonest form of individual environmental impact discussed in the data arises from lifestyle, group and purchasing behaviour. The individual has some measure of control over these aspects of life and this is the starting point for change because:

> "you can achieve more... more quickly... in your own immediate area and life". (292)

> "I think the most important thing is what you do with your own lifestyle, your own rubbish and your own buying." (274)

However, where such choices are perceived as isolated and individualistic, their impact is weakened to become minimal in force and extent. This applies to both physical impacts and impacts upon the behaviour and awareness of others in public and commerce. Smith (1990) suggests that green consumerism is less effective than more organised and group actions and this perception is found also in the data where over half the individuals perceive the impact of green products

purchasing and recycling to be very low. Such individual actions are perceived to be only "very, very trivial" (273) household activities but they are all that are open to the individual; bigger actions are precluded by their situation:

> "I suppose all we can do is do it in our little ways." (290)

Individual impact can also be limited where actions have spatially restricted, piecemeal effects, e.g. through individual complaints to local bodies. Action may also be issue-specific, as perceived by environmental organisations where a particular planning proposal is attacked. Here the aims are specific and this limits the efficacy purposefully, which can be frustrating for these local environmental group activists:

> "[It's] depressing... because... you're always on the defensive - one site's threatened here, one there". (313)

Here the strategy may only be defensive, which can be construed negatively as not promoting change but resisting particular aspects of it. The impact may only be partial, in having a development reserve some land for conservation but not defeating the entire proposal.

> "it's just a really slow process and you keep plodding on and on and you gain bit by bit. Then sometimes you don't even realise that you've made any gain, but slowly things do change... it's just a gradual process." (313)

> "You chip off a bit here and there". (244)

Such issue-specific impact also means that as one issue is resolved, won or lost, another will be found and the cycle begins again, giving little sense of progress.

> "I've been worrying about it so many years, I'd just like to see that I've actually done something." (273)

> "it's just a case of out of the frying pan and into the fire. It's a case of 'solve one problem and another problem raises its head'." (251)

Issue-specific impacts can be further compounded by being confined to a local area, reducing the sphere of impact and reinforcing the immediate responsibility but not the wider one (see 9.2.2.). For example, a campaign may protect a local area but is not extended when the threat passes out of the activist's area of responsibility, e.g.:

> "it was really worth it [campaign against a golf course proposal], because it *has* saved the area. I think they went further up the Dales after that, and I don't think they were very successful there either." (244)

In this sense, environmental groups frequently see themselves as lessening the environmental degradation by staving off the worst aspects, but not by reorganising the system. This is a source of frustration for some, especially as it necessitates concentration on the local area as the region of control and influence and on local government as the lower level of political power. The organic farmers also perceive this sense of lessening degradation in that each conversion of farmer or gardener is a minor reduction in the cumulative impact of conventional agriculture.

However, the key importance of impact is where it is perceived to be cumulative.

6.3.2. Cumulative Impact.

Individual impact reinforces responsibility through efficacy more effectively and more commonly where it is perceived to be *contributory* to a mass impact in consort with other individuals. Hence, over half the individuals, both members and non-members, identify the need for many to act individually in order to have some physical impact cumulatively (also noted in Smith 1990 p181). This is best expressed in the notion of "doing your bit", where individual responsibility is fulfilled through small actions with large and widespread cumulative impacts. This is shown by members and non-members in the following:

> "If everybody was to swap to a different form of washing-machine powder which didn't bung up sewage works, I'm sure that would help." (310)

> "any action that any individual does is fairly minuscule, but it also catalyses others and is in consort with others and brings about change like that". (288)

> "[One person has little impact] Because one person is one in five billion on the planet... if lots of individuals, the majority, take action, then you can be effective." (258)

> "If it's just one person doing it, it's no good. Everybody's got to do their little bit." (239)

This is echoed by small retailers who often adopt such notions when acting as individual consumers, e.g.:

> "If everybody cut down on the amount they use, if we all did our little bit, then surely it would have a bigger effect." (R4)

This theme has been picked up by multiple retailers in their literature, e.g. a free leaflet from Safeway emphasised cumulative impact thus:

> "On their own, our actions may seem small. But Safeway has 260 million customers a year and if we all take action we can make a difference." (Safeway leaflet 1992)

The Government is also using this theme to promote individual responsibility as a free leaflet distributed through superstores exhorts:

> "You may think one person acting alone can't do much, but if we *all* do something there will be a big impact. *And if we don't* - some of the problems will get *worse*." (Department of the Environment leaflet Wake up to what you can do for the Environment 1991 p2)

So, where cumulative impact is perceived, even minor individual actions and changes are magnified to have large impacts, e.g. from the data:

> "It's only a tiny little thing [using less water], but if everyone did that, you'd need less electricity because you'd need to pump less water and purify less water." (258)

This seems particularly important to environmental activists, where their individual impact is part of a *visible* group, acting in consort:

> "with Greenpeace, you're doing your thing indirectly, but directly for where you are. It's a worldwide campaign, like Antarctica; you're just that little bit helping do it along with everybody else." (249)

This serves as a validation of individual responsibility in rationalising action on a utilitarian basis of impact, not just morality. For example, recycling is "worth doing if enough people do it" (306).

In the data, this validation of responsibility clearly depends upon the recognition that others are acting in consort with the self; information on the wider impact and how the individual can contribute to this is needed to prove cumulative impact (also Redclift 1992). So, proenvironmental action depends upon knowledge,

as seen before, but not only of the consequences of action as outlined by Schwartz (1968, 1970) but also of the actions of others in order to confirm that impact is effective. In this, the data parallel Fishkin's conceptualisation of collective responsibility as dependent on the identification of some "reasonable expectable difference" (Fishkin 1982 p84) that an individual action makes to the overall outcome. The responsibility is reinforced where this contribution is identifiable, e.g. for this Greenpeace passive member:

> "I don't think a single person makes any difference, but that's not the way to look at it, because I know I'm not a single person doing it." (215)

Where information about this cumulative impact and others' actions is not identifiable, moral imperatives rarely rate highly enough alone to prompt proenvironmental behaviour. This is because sacrifice is perceived as futile because of its lack of impact, and so action is not undertaken although it might be perceived as morally 'right'. In this, the data support O'Riordan and Rayner's (1991) assertion that some evidence of benefits arising from cumulative action is necessary to validate sacrifice. This is particularly seen in comments from non-members of groups, where this is no local group efficacy visible so that the cumulative action depends solely on seeing others act likewise, e.g.:

> "if we're just using ozone friendly and everybody else is at it, spraying away with [non-ozone friendly] it's pointless, isn't it? We might as well be the same as them, because we're all going to die together... You're only gonna do it if you think it's doing any good. I'm not sure I'd do it out of principle, if it was just us doing it. I'm not that high-minded, really." (100)

> "I didn't think I were making an impact, because nobody else were doing it... if you're a lone voice in t'wilderness... you've lost your impact straight away." (11)

Perceived impact plays a part in defining the viable scope of action where actions such as product purchasing, recycling and group fund-raising, offer evidence of immediate and global effects. In contrast, proenvironmental voting is seen as less effective because there is little evidence of others acting likewise as the Green vote is very low (see 9.4.1.).

The rationale of acting *en masse* has two components: firstly, big impacts are needed due to the scale of the environmental problem:

> "it's got to such an extent that if anybody doesn't pull their weight, there's no way anything's gonna happen at all." (239)

Secondly, individuals do not want to sacrifice alone. This is especially so for non-members of groups who don't view unilateral change as morally obligatory because it is not backed by consensual behaviour, only by minority support, for example:

> "I think if there were more people in with it I'd be more for it. At the moment... I think why should I bother if nobody else is bothering?" (145)

> "you've got to say... 'Am I prepared to do without electricity? Am I prepared to do without this and am I prepared to do without that?' And I am if everybody else is... If things could be fair, OK, but things wouldn't be." (100)

The second point may be the real key. The need for support, for evidence that others are of like mind and behaviour, the need to know that others undertake and share proenvironmental action is a need for justification and moral obligation through evidence of contribution. So, the potential for impact through the cumulative effect of individual actions is a common *leit-motif*. This sets off a chain of corollary perceptions: such actions are voluntary and involve some form of sacrifice (see 6.4.), therefore only a minority will take them up:

> "there's a lot of people, obviously, taking their bottles back. I suppose in relation to how many bottles people are actually using, it's a drop in the ocean". (100)

This means that the potential is unfulfilled, impact is lost, sacrifice is made purposeless and therefore individuals will refuse to make such a sacrifice and prefer to suffer any perceived consequences of mass non-action along with the rest of society. It is worth noting that this is the short term view. Legislation seems to play a larger part in the long term view where change will be forced on individuals and therefore impact will be much increased (see 6.9.).

An implicit point in much of the above discussion is that the actions referred

to are performed individually. Cumulative impact does not depend on perceptions of collective action, except where explicitly referred to as actions by organised environmental groups. This offers a seeming contradiction: the actions are private and individual but the impact is a mass one, not an individual one. Yet the contradiction operates comfortably in the data, supporting Thrift's comment that our society is both collectivist and individualistic at once (Thrift 1983 p26). Individual agents therefore operate of their free will but within structures and different contexts, again underlining the inherent duality of agency and structure (Giddens 1984, 1987; Thrift 1983; see 3.5.). This allows the whole to escape the tyranny of small (individual) choices (Hirsch 1977) by the incorporation of the awareness of cumulative impact into individual decisions. On this basis, the data seem to support Fitchen's perceptive comment on American culture and its individualism:

> "the whole, the society is perceived as an aggregate of individuals more than as a social unit." (Fitchen 1987, p5)

6.4. The Incongruence between Responsibility and Behaviour.

The forms of proenvironmental behaviour dealt with so far, especially green consumerism, involve some changes in personal lifestyle, whether economic, material or cultural, which are chosen voluntarily, thereby involving agency as discussed. Although self-ascription of responsibility may enable proenvironmental behaviour as noted, the fulfilment of this responsibility in chosen behaviour may be constrained by a number of factors internal and external to the individual. The constraints stem from the perception of proenvironmental behaviour as a negative exchange, connoting sacrifice, and produce a discrepancy or incongruence between proenvironmental attitudes and proenvironmental behaviour which has been noted in other studies (e.g. Schwartz 1968; Liska 1974; Dunlap and Van Liere 1978). This discrepancy is also revealed by the data in this study but proves to be explicitly recognised by individuals in themselves. Such comments as the following are typical, from both members and non-members of groups:

> "I suppose I'm a bit of a hypocrite... I think cars are the most single damaging [thing] environmentally. But we still have a car [laughs]." (313)

> "I don't live the simple life exactly, which I believe I ought to. I don't do what I preach... It's funny living here [in luxury] and saying this, I realise that." (273)
>
> "I'm sure that I'm not doing enough." (292)
>
> "I suppose I am as bad as anyone else." (54)
>
> "it's that leap between believing it and actually doing it that's the difficult thing." (237)
>
> "We're fence-sitters... living a lifestyle to some extent similar to most of the people in this area, so to some extent we're hypocrites... People mention it [environment affecting our health] and they tend not to do anything more about it. I mean, to a certain extent, I'm still doing that as well." (101)

In considering this incongruence, there is a blurred distinction between the *desire* not to sacrifice unilaterally, which is an internal factor, and the cultural *proscription* of sacrifice and denial of alternatives, which is perceived as an external set of constraints. The relative importance of each is to some extent dependent upon the degree of change involved. It is possible that constraints are indeed operating to prevent major, extreme personal change, but more moderate changes in lifestyle are more subject to individual desires not to change.

Fishkin's (1982; see 3.6.1.) concept of minimal altruism is useful in describing the data in this study. Minimal altruism makes those behaviours morally obligatory which involve some minor sacrifice but which have benefits for others. As with impact, information on the consequences of actions is necessary, but the important element is a moral obligation to perform minor sacrifices. In contrast, major sacrifices of lifestyle pass the "cutoff for heroism" (Fishkin 1982 p46) and become too sacrificial to be morally obligatory and become heroic, performed only by unique individuals and not required of the average person. As in Fishkin's conceptualisation, the data show that the definition of minor sacrifice is necessarily different for different people, although they have common cultural characteristics in terms of consensual moral norms (Schwartz 1968, 1970).

The incongruence between attitude and behaviour becomes explicit in discussion where the minor sacrifice is not performed, although it should be morally obligatory to individuals who perceive themselves to be privileged and therefore able

to bear the sacrifice. This recognition of the internal refusal of altruistic behaviour can be voiced with embarrassment, guilt or hypocrisy, e.g.:

> "I suppose that's my fault [that I didn't act on a local issue] because I didn't take sufficient interest." (290)

> "I admit I am a sinner myself because I do drive." (238)

The individual feels 'found out', they have no excuse for not being altruistic because the sacrifice is minor and not heroic (after Fishkin 1982). This is a particularly common theme in the data from environmental group members but also appears in the data from the small retailers and the public. A useful example from individuals of an external constraint on sacrifice is the cultural need for the private car, regarded as "necessary" to the continuation of a satisfactory lifestyle and therefore a major and heroic sacrifice that is not obligatory. Here incongruence is acceptable because the sacrifice is culturally heroic, not minor.

Where altruistic behaviour does match perceived responsibility, ensuing feelings depend upon the perceived level of sacrifice. Small changes produce an asymmetrical effect, where there is little satisfaction or virtue engendered, e.g. in green product purchase for this non-member:

> "I don't feel a rosy glow of self-satisfaction when I pick something up off the supermarket shelf which is environmentally friendly or ozone-free, I mean, it doesn't fill me with any feeling of special virtue at all". (125)

In contrast, where sacrifice may be greater, in terms of the time and effort spent in organising groups, there is "a feeling of satisfaction" (288). This perception of benefits may cause the individual to doubt that their actions were sacrificial and may have been committed in (enlightened) self-interest, e.g.for these local activists:

> "there's selfish reasons why I do it, I don't do it just because of the good... It's my social life... my hobby." (306)

> "it's only self-satisfaction... I'm not really doing that much but at least I'm doing something, to secure my own conscience." (251)

This form of voluntary sacrifice can link in with aims of decreasing personal consumption and the shift away from materialism (Inglehart 1977, 1981; see 3.3.).

In the case of environmentalists, the self is perceived as maintaining this shift, whereas others in society are acting out of greed and exhibiting self-interest, rather than sacrifice. Such an assessment obviously depends upon the individual context, which can enable responsibility fulfilment or constrain it to less intense proenvironmental behaviour, causing the recognition of incongruence as noted previously. There are three main forms of constraint perceived: culture, cost and quality of life. External constraints serve to delimit the change and sacrifice necessary to fulfil the obligation felt by the individual; they therefore define minimal altruism (Fishkin 1982). Internal constraints centre more upon the *choice* not to change than upon strict *limits* to change and may conflict with moral obligations.

6.5. Economic Constraints.

The first form of constraint on proenvironmental behaviour is economic, where income is perceived to restrict the scope of purchasing decisions. This operates externally and internally.

Economic constraints are identified as external to individuals where their income is low, where sacrifice is relatively major and therefore not morally obligatory, paralleling Fishkin's (1982) schema (see 6.4.). So, in this case, proenvironmental purchases are perceived to pass the cutoff for heroism and to be inaccessible to those on lower incomes:

> "you just can't do it - unless you're just so well-off - it's not possible." (249)

Interestingly, cost constraints are explicitly identified as restrictive for the self only by three individuals. In contrast, nine individuals (members and non-members) say that others are more constrained by costs but they themselves are not, e.g.:

> "people on social security are going to be looking at every single penny that they've got. And I don't feel that they're gonna be able to have the conscience - to be able to afford to choose - they're gonna go for the cheapest thing." (239)

The privilege of income therefore strengthens the moral requirement of altruism because it alters the position of economic priorities, widens the scope of economic actions and weakens cost constraints. In all, higher income enables the

fulfilment of responsibility in financial forms of proenvironmental behaviour (donations, membership, green consumerism) because:

> "middle-class people have this nice, comfortable cushion... income... and jobs and things like that. Security. So they have this little bit of time, both mental time, to reflect on these things... I don't think [other people] can afford to be too realistic". (100)

> "If it was more expensive, it wouldn't bother me, if it was something I believed in... If I wanted to buy it and I thought it was the right thing to buy, through personal choice, well, cost wouldn't have anything to do with it." (11)

This clearly reflects the middle-class bias of group membership cited as evidence of elitism in environmentalism (Morrison and Dunlap 1986; Eckersley 1989; Irvine 1989a), and this elitism is noted by one individual in the data explicitly (although it is clearly also implicit in the above discussion of privilege):

> "It's hard to talk about responsible people, isn't it, without being elitist." (125)

Therefore cost constraints are perceived as dependent upon relative not absolute costs. This is compounded by the minority perception that traditional economics wrongly calculates product prices by leaving out externalities, so cost constraints are inaccurately defined.

Economic constraints operate far more concretely in the retailers' case as they depend on and monitor their economic performance with greater clarity than in many household budgets (see 7.2.).

Rather than external economic constraints due to the absolute constraints of income, some cost constraints are perceived to operate due to internal choices about priorities. In this case, the cutoff for heroism (Fishkin 1982) depends on an individual's rather than a culture's proscription of sacrifice. For example, green products are not bought by a few individuals because the *relative* premium is not justified, e.g. for members and non-members:

> "we don't use environment friendly products because I think they're too expensive... I don't believe in paying that much money for anything... It's [organics] not so important to me that I want to spend money on it... [I'm] prioritising my money - I'm just not willing to spend that bit extra on them". (306)

> "if we had a choice of two products and one cost a ridiculous amount more than another one, then we'd probably not buy it". (100)

In addition, the relative premium offended several individuals who had already expressed mistrust of the manufacturer (see 8.4.2.). Again, the differential is not justified and is seen as paying more than is necessary to benefit commerce and not the environment.

For some individuals, however, the differential of high cost is willingly paid where the sacrifice of performance, a negative quality, is perceived as being sufficiently proenvironmental to count as a positive quality, e.g.:

> "I don't mind paying a bit extra [for recycled paper] on the grounds that some trees aren't going to be cut down... It's not that it's better, it's worse, the paper's less good and so on, but it avoids using primary resources." (284)

> "As long as it's doing the right thing, I'm not too worried about cost." (290)

6.5.1. Retailers' Perspective on Consumers' Economic Priorities.

The multiple retailers, and to a lesser extent the small retailers, seem to articulate concepts of consumer sacrifice and priorities, and perceive external and internal constraints due to income, more clearly than consumers. They perceive that consumers prioritise economic above environmental considerations. This is usually seen by retailers as an external constraint on consumer choice in terms of the income of specific groups curtailing their green purchasing due to the common *relative* premium on green goods.

> "if you're wondering why it's not C1C2 mainstream product purchasing, it's because people in those categories are less able to think that widely about the products and their purchases. Because they ain't got the money to pay for it." (S1)

> "it may just be quite simple from their point of view, the family budget: they'd like to be green but they can't afford to be green" (S6)

> "One of the big restrictive things now is the price. People want to help and want to do what they can, but with the way things are these days with the economy, they're finding it very difficult." (R2)

Multiples also identify internal constraints in the unwillingness of customers to sacrifice financially in proenvironmental behaviour (also noted in Simms 1992) in that:

> "there's a deeper question as to whether the consumer is really, really green-oriented because he or she is not prepared to pay what is sometimes a relatively small premium for being green." (S6)

Their market research often shows an expressed willingness to buy that is not evident in sales. Multiples therefore perceive that altruistic sacrifice is only notional for consumers - behaviourial commitment to it is low or non-existent. This usually operates because of premiums on green products and therefore represents refusal to sacrifice beyond a certain threshold and not an inability to do so, e.g.:

> "Everybody's got a feeling that they want to be environmentally friendly but not everybody has this direct feeling when they're faced with a choice of two products, one of which is more expensive than the other." (L9)

> "people are not spending because they're scared of being skint, rather than not having the money. They'll think twice before buying [organics]" (F4)

Like consumers, retailers see higher income as a "privilege" (S6) which enables proenvironmental behaviour and purchasing. Income pushes up price tolerance and increases consumers' willingness to sacrifice depending upon a product's perceived environmental qualities, e.g.:

> "there's a niche of people prepared to pay the price for upholding their principles in consuming organic food. They can afford it." (S1)

> "I think it would go here in this area, 'cause they're not price-sensitive, so they would pay for organic vegetables." (R9)

The essence of sacrifice in proenvironmental behaviour may be interpreted by retailers as positive, where the proenvironmental attribute of a product becomes a positive quality like other product attributes such as naturalness and being of British origin. Again, as consumers perceive a negative to be transformed to a positive, purchasable attribute, retailers see the added value in promoting proenvironmental feelings and therefore offsetting the price premium involved.

Income in this case seems to operate as an exclusive mechanism where income and the ability to pay the premium for green goods is a privilege of a minority and the majority are therefore excluded from this form of behaviour, carrying elitist implications (see 6.5. and 2.3.1.). Obviously, different multiples attract different customer types and therefore perceive different relative incomes and constraints on green purchasing, e.g. for this comment from a discount multiple:

> "[They say] 'The Sainsbury shopper is prepared to pay a premium for this, that and the other'... I don't think the [company] shopper is... there's still a heavy preponderance of very, very money-conscious shoppers in [company]." (S6)

6.6. Cultural Constraints.

As well as financial constraints, other constraints on behaviour relate to the cultural context of the individual, in this case modern Western society in relatively urban areas, and these again are both externally and internally derived.

External cultural constraints are revealed in the data where the present cultural context of the individual dictates that some actions are 'bad' but 'necessary', e.g. driving cars. The individual cannot participate in the culture and survive on a minimum which does not include these elements and, hence, these actions cannot be sacrificed: a lack of choice is perceived. Sacrifice here is socially determined, e.g. for this non-member:

> "I can say I'm doing something for the environment, which I try to do, I try to keep the air clean and what-have-you and to tidy the place, the Earth up. But you're also breaking [your word]... you've got to use aerosols some time in your life, haven't you? And drive a car... you can't help all the way along the line, it's impossible to do it." (239)

This is paralleled by Fishkin's (1982) "cutoff for heroism" where acts are no longer morally obligatory but heroic and only for the minority. Culture defines how far individuals have to go to fulfil their moral obligation. This is seen in the data where acts become "necessary" in terms of cultural perceptions here and therefore obligations to sacrifice are weakened, e.g. for a Green Party member and a non-member:

> "the only control I had [over electricity generation] was not to give you a cup of tea. I don't think it's right to ask individuals to make that choice... there's some things you've got a choice over and other things where you don't have a choice if you want to engage in our culture... I think it's wrong to say to people, 'In order to be environmentally friendly, you've got to withdraw from your culture' and that's unrealistic and unfair." (258)

> "we had no choice, for financial reasons... I personally would like to see fewer cars. I'm not a great believer in cars... But you're so dependent on them that you've no choice." (100)

This notion of cultural definition is very much implicit in a lot of the data on the impossibility of proenvironmental behaviour in the individuals' situation. One non-member does express this explicitly thus:

> "being environmentally friendly is not a basic part of the culture that we live in... we tend to regress to the culture that swamps us from outside - the media and so on, the way people act... It's very difficult to be continuously different from that... You try to fight against it, but often it's very difficult... for green issues to succeed, it's got to become part of the culture that we live in. Rather than being seen as a kind of quirky off-shoot that eccentrics do... We're locked, or I'm certainly locked into a culture that in order for me to exist in this culture, to survive almost, I have to do the same things that everybody else is doing... You're locked into a culture in that it's very difficult to break out of... [so change is only] slowly and by subtle means." (237)

Such cultural constraints on altruism are reflected in the retailers' perspective of their choice of stock. Again, some items are 'bad' but 'necessary' to enable the business to survive in the economic culture of competition. Therefore, small retailers stock fast-selling products they would prefer not to sell on ethical grounds in order to keep in business to sell the products they approve of but which do less well in sales (see 7.5.1.).

What seems to be operating for consumers is a perception of external control: by society, by economics, by *others*. This control permits some choices and restricts others. It defines which proenvironmental acts are morally obligatory and which are beyond the individual and therefore not required (after Fishkin 1982).

The possibility of escaping such control is discussed by a few non-members in terms of moving cultures from the mainstream to be part of the fringe groups

which are perceived as:

> "eccentric in the fact that they're not really living within the culture that we're all living in; they are making themselves very different." (237)

In that culture, more proenvironmental behaviours would be possible, but, because it would not be a 'fair' choice as it involves sacrifice, there is little consideration of moving. It appears that individuals do not see the mainstream culture as capable of transformation, the cultural context is generally perceived to be static.

The problem of being fixed in a culture is echoed where the adoption of proenvironmental behaviour exposes the self to criticism or identification as a member of the fringe, an oddity. This is explicitly undesirable for one non-activist:

> "it's like you're sticking a label on yourself... it's like making a statement... You can't do what you want to do or believe in what you feel without people putting you into a category... they don't see you as a normal person who might just be bothered. They see you as a bit of an extremist." (11)

A key point about all these cultural constraints is that they apply to the specific temporal context of the culture at this point in time. Much extreme proenvironmental behaviour, e.g. reducing car use, is perceived to be a move to older ways and therefore a backward step and a reversion prompted by nostalgia. Such a cultural regression is not practicable nor desirable, mainstream culture requires progress:

> "We couldn't suddenly go back to horses and carts... There are some weirdos who think we can go back to the past. There are those people who think they can live on rice and lentils." (310)

> "we still have to live in the real world, you can't turn the clock back and live without motor cars and things, so we've got to find ways round it." (R3)

Pragmatism comes into play in the data where changes have to be made by looking forward. This is not clearly rationalised but shows in the implicit acceptance of progress as a moral requirement and the cultural impossibility of moving to simpler systems and cultures. (There is a small voice of nostalgia, lauding those

simpler forms, but it is set within the pragmatism which dominates it).

Internal cultural constraints are perceived where choice is less restricted, so that the 'bad' actions are not seen as 'necessary' or culturally determined, but as luxuries which are desired. Here the cutoff for heroism is not only culturally defined but internally dependent on the individual's perceptions and priorities of what constitutes a major sacrifice. This prioritising is perceived by members and non-members thus:

> "my commitment to doing something isn't strong enough... I don't think I do enough. But I haven't been prepared to let go of what I've got... [i.e.] House. Car." (273)

> "You've got used to a certain standard of living, that's the trouble. And then you've got to say... 'Am I prepared to do without electricity? Am I prepared to do without this and am I prepared to do without that?'" (100)

> "you do your own selfish little bits... if I were totally committed, I wouldn't drive. [pause]... I do a lot of driving [in my job]. But I've got to support my own family." (255)

A good example of such internal priorities affecting choice is of a woman who wants to get a dishwasher. Although not an environmental group member, she is environmentally conscious and recognises its environmental impact so that "I would be a hypocrite if I went and got one". She feels "peer pressure" in her privileged position to buy one although there is no strict external constraint making dishwashers necessary (unlike that which operates for cars). She voices the internal criteria for choice implicitly when she concludes:

> "if I was to remove myself and look objectively and think 'Well, you don't really need one'... [I'd think] I'm really hogging it here... But I want one. Yeah, *desperately* [laughs]." (101)

All the above discussion of cultural constraints shows, as Fishkin (1982) does, that individuals perceive that true altruism involves sacrifice. The retention of luxuries is therefore not altruistic but may match Fishkin's minimal altruism - minor sacrifices are made but not major ones and the distinction depends upon internal and external factors.

6.7. Quality of Life Constraints.

The third form of constraint has to do with the perceived quality of life. In an externally defined way, the time and effort available within a lifestyle are limited due to the demands of job, family, bodily maintenance, e.g. there is little time to read and absorb environmentally friendly labels on products while out shopping (145, 215, 125). This leads to exhaustion and frustration for environmental activists, in particular, when the limits are reached, e.g. for local activists and fund-raisers:

> "There's so much that you'd like to see ended that it becomes frustrating... It's not possible to campaign for everything... at the end of the day, you *can't* do everything, you *can't* support everything." (249)

> "you can only fit so much into a life." (288)

Internal quality of life constraints involve both time and material considerations of product performance.

In contrast to the environmental activists, the public and retailers are more likely to acknowledge their use of the "excuse" (290) of time constraints, to indicate that this is internal not external. This is shown primarily by non-members, but also by less active group members, e.g.:

> "Like everybody else, I've got me own life, me own job to lead and it's something that I think about consciously but I wouldn't get concerned about." (11)

> "You tend to put things off... you get bogged down in the here and now... But that's no excuse, I could do it now." (101)

> "I'm terribly busy, I've got an awful lot of things happening in my life and that doesn't reach high on my list... I've got other things I'd rather do." (284)

> "I'm sure there's more I can do, But there are occasions when I knock off and have a pint with my pals." (310)

Small retailers also express such perceptions where they are less active in groups than they would wish:

> "It's firstly a question of time. It might also be a question of inclination, I don't really know, but I can put the excuse down to the fact that I haven't got the time, or are not prepared to make the time."

(R3)

In this case, we are dealing with a perception of *relative* activity and commitment: those who are active want to do more, yet recognise their limits; those who are less active wish to do more, yet recognise they have the choice to do so. This again parallels Fishkin's (1982) cutoff for heroism, where the level at which action is no longer obligatory is elastic, becoming more elusive as more action is performed. There are also the different types of commitment practised, which affect perception: only money or also time and effort may be invested.

The second form of internal quality of life constraint is a material one. Individuals can refuse green products not because of the financial sacrifice (as in 6.5.) but because product performance is lower and therefore they have to make some sacrifice of comfort or convenience. Consumers are not necessarily highly sensitive to a product's price, but its proenvironmental attribute must be additional to its performance and not a partial replacement. Almost half the individuals do not see it as additional but as a negative exchange of convenience or performance for (supposed) environmentally friendliness. The minimal benefits (as seen in 6.3.) of proenvironmental aspects are not sufficient alone to make purchasing morally required because of the internal expectations of products, e.g.:

> "It's just silly to expect people to buy things if they're not. The quality and convenience must be the same [as non-green ones]" (290)

This consumer perception is perceived by the retailers on behalf of their customers, e.g. one small retailer states bluntly:

> "they might be ecologically sound, but if they're not going to clean the place up, it's not going to do any good at all... it's no use having a fairly useless product - my customers are not so deeply into ecological things that they will use something bad simply because it's ecological." (R3)

A few environmental group members and small retailers do realise that such a priority on product performance is internal and not culturally required:

> "I think that's just a personal thing. If something that doesn't damage the environment, or not so much, works just as well as something else, then why not use that?" (215)

> "I'm quite prepared to send him [son] with a grey vest that's clean because I haven't put bleaches in it... It's just that people are going to look at him and say, 'That poor child, he hasn't got a clean shirt on.'... It doesn't bother me, but it bothers other people." (R5)

6.7.1. Retailers' Perspective on Consumers' Quality of Life Priorities.

Both multiple and small retailers perceive that consumers identify a sacrifice of performance and lifestyle in buying green products. This is often more explicit than in data from the consumers: retailers often use the term "sacrifice" themselves in describing their customers' behaviour, whereas consumers do so rarely. This is shown in comments from large and small retailers thus:

> "some people are just not prepared to sacrifice product performance for environmental improvement as much as they would say, perhaps, in market surveys... If you get better-performing products, then people would not be making much of a sacrifice in the interests of environmental improvement." (S1)

> "the [non-propellant spray is] OK, but it doesn't work *as well* as the aerosol and people are not prepared, or people haven't been prepared in massive numbers, to actually sacrifice one for the other, sacrifice the ability to use it properly for being green." (S6)

> "People aren't gonna get rid of their cars, they're not gonna get rid of this or that... because they've got them and they like them. (R5)

In contrast, adverts and publicity from multiples play down the sacrifice of performance rather than note its effect in constraining green consumerism:

> "it is easy to achieve a fresh, clean wash and care for the environment." (ASDA publication advert)

> "changes [in products] so small you won't even notice them". (Tesco Green Choice leaflet, January 1992)

Retailers perceive that quality constraints are internal because different consumers will tolerate different levels of sacrifice. For the majority of their customers, a certain amount is bearable where modification of a product is minor (also Fishkin 1982). Any major change is beyond acceptability and the perceived moral obligation to proenvironmental behaviour:

> "For some people, they're OK on using something which is rough and dark-coloured, 80% newsprint toilet tissue. For others, that's too far, too much of a sacrifice of what they perceive to be quality". (S1)

> "There are one or two people who are really purist about everything. The majority of people, it's just a compromise. 'Yes, I'd like to do this, but it really does take up too much of my time.'" (R5)

This is also viewed as realism, pragmatism about the level of material sophistication in our present society, by some retailers as well as consumers.

> "It's easy for young people to be idealistic OK because they don't really deal with the real world. When they start to deal with the real world, then there is an element of compromise between their ideals and what the world can deliver." (S5)

> "the altruistic student [buys green products], who's determined to be ecological with a capital 'E' rather than... the slightly more mature customers, who know that it's got to do its job." (R3)

There exists, therefore, a performance threshold beyond which the customer is not prepared to sacrifice product quality for its environmental (or other) attributes. This threshold of tolerance is one way of defining the darker green consumers from the lighter green ones in market research (indicating why the concept of 'willingness to pay' for attributes has become so widespread in this field (e.g. Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte 1990)). Again, as with other constraints, this parallels Fishkin's (1982) cutoff for heroism (see 3.6.1. and 6.4.).

6.8. The Extent and Depth of Change.

The previous sections outlined initiating factors and constraints in adopting proenvironmental behaviour. This behaviour has several characteristics: it usually involves only moderate or trivial changes; it may be a transitional step to bigger changes; it represents some balance of responsibility and constraints.

Primarily, for mainstream consumers, proenvironmental behaviour involves only minor changes and sacrifices, not extreme ones. This matches the individual's moderate self-image and position in the mainstream (not fringe) culture:

> "both my wife and I are quite conscious of the effect we're having on the environment, but we don't go overboard with it." (100)

"we do our bit, we try... But we don't go over the top." (239)

They are mainly trivial changes which fit into the routine of daily life, "the small, housewifely things." (215); they may be one-off changes to be soon reversed. Usually, adoption of some proenvironmental behaviour is easy and requires no radical lifestyle change because major sacrifice is precluded. Hence:

> "We don't seem to be having to do without things in order to be ozone friendly. Least, we haven't noticed it." (100)

The moderate nature of these changes is sometimes identified by individuals as a way of "sitting on the fence" and therefore of only weak commitment. In turn, such moderate changes have provoked criticism from several group members in the data and from environmentalist writers (Irvine 1989a and see 2.3.2.). This is voiced by a Green Party member:

> "[people] are effective in as far as they go, but they don't go very far... recycling runs the danger of being a green whitewash in that people think that recycling is the be-all and end-all." (258)

This is tempered by a perception of moderate changes through product modification and household recycling as first steps in a transitional period of minor change. The use of green consumerism specifically as a "transitional strategy" by environmental groups is also noted and criticised as misleading by Dobson (1990 p212). This transition is expressed optimistically by group members in the data as a way of educating individuals into proenvironmental behaviour slowly (see 6.3.) by translating big issues into *actionable* components, a key point for information provision (see 8.5.) and responsibility:

> "It takes other things as well to change the world, changing a few soap powders doesn't - it's a step in the right direction but only a small step." (288)

> "environmental consumerism isn't able to [refuse goods] because the second word - consumerism - implies consuming and not refusing. So environmental consumerism is not the total solution. It's a partial solution... I see environmental consumerism as a transitional stage, where people get eased into being environmentally conscious. As you get conscious of one thing, you think you've done it all, then you're made conscious of the second thing and you do that and then you think you've done it all and so it goes on." (258)

> "I think something where you think, 'I can do that' and it's not a huge effort... a practical job which is not going to need a lot of cogitation as to where and when and so on and they can *do* it." (244)

Similarly, minor business changes have been criticised for being superficial, with the assumption that business is more able to change than individuals (see 7.5.4.).

To a certain extent, proenvironmental change is represented in the data as a compromise decision. A balance is sought so that individuals make minor sacrifices but retain some luxuries. This of course involves choice and possible conflicts over what to sacrifice. Therefore minimal altruism is followed where sacrifices are minor and in the chosen domains, not throughout one's lifestyle, e.g.:

> "I think everybody will allow themselves the odd luxury, even if they're ever so concerned about the environment... If I was really good about it, I suppose I wouldn't have a car." (215)

> "[With unleaded petrol] the benefits of the car are still there and the nasty bit that everybody feels guilty about - polluting the atmosphere - is taken away. So everybody feels nicer about it." (237)

This also operates for retailers when they are acting as individual consumers outside their business, e.g. for this manager at a multiple:

> "I'm fairly typical. I go so far, I'll take *a little bit* of inconvenience, which I get used to, but don't ask me to make fundamental lifestyle changes." (S1)

Priorities over what to keep and what to sacrifice also depend on the situation and these priorities may shift in a crisis. The threshold of immediacy (in time or space) will be breached and necessitate the prioritisation of the immediate family or job, thus changing moral requirements which are necessarily contextual. Thus the present economic recession makes the cutoff for heroism more easily passed as environmental priorities are weakened (and see 9.3.2.). This is seen as perhaps selfish but acceptable.

6.9. Voluntary and Involuntary Change

All the above discussion relates to the *choice* of proenvironmental behaviour in that public environmentalism, including green consumerism, is not legislated or forced but voluntarily adopted. In all types of interview, there is an emphasis upon

the need for freedom to choose whether or not to change, i.e. the possibility of agency and intentionality in proenvironmental behaviour. This is paralleled by the perception that voluntary behaviour is unlikely to lead to substantial change, because of the inertia of society and the operation of cultural constraints. Hence, the individual will tend not to change, owing to cultural and internal factors, unless forced to, e.g.:

> "You can't stop people from using cars. I think it's reasonable to suggest that people have a choice, but they'll never do anything radical." (290)

> "it rests upon the individual making a choice. And some people, unless you make it law, place more value on being able to be free to make a choice than ... being concerned what the actual issue is... more concerned about themselves." (101)

> "What you decide to spend your money on is a very personal thing. It's not always down to right or wrong, it's just down to personal choice... it's probably left down to an individual's personal choice too much." (11)

It remains implicit that the choice is still weighted, despite the apparent freedom, by the issues of economics, culture and the quality of life as discussed. Also, unilateral sacrifice is viewed as unfair, as a minority would be altruistic and therefore lose out to benefit the non-responsible majority.

Taking into account that voluntary change is perceived to be minor and unilateral sacrifice to be unfair, the freedom asserted above is contradicted by several individuals who advocate the enforcement of proenvironmental behaviour, e.g. through legislation. This is perceived to be more effective to change the majority than by relying on voluntary measures because:

> "if people aren't going to do it voluntarily, then I think the only other way is for the government to legislate... I think if there's a legal framework, people are more likely to do the things." (292)

> "there's so much we could do about other things and we just don't seem to be able to do it. We just don't *seem* know where we're going... It needs political will and force." (100)

But this raises new questions. Those who are able to change due to their privileged position are therefore more morally obligated to change (and see 6.2.1.).

But enforced behaviour ignores such disparities of income and forces all groups to comply, thus producing new inequalities than those under voluntary adoption noted above (and in 2.5.). To reduce consumption of other environmentally damaging behaviours through legislation at the individual level is perceived as "too dictatorial... not reasonable or practical" (258). From an ethical point of view, such enforcement would also mean that change was involuntary and no longer a sacrifice representing altruism but a legal requirement. This is rarely the case yet in the UK for individual proenvironmental change except for minor changes, such as CFC substitution.

6.10. Concluding Remarks.

This chapter has outlined the motivations behind proenvironmental behaviours, such as green consumerism, with reference to environmental responsibility, the perceived impact of actions and constraints upon the translation of these into behaviour. The importance of cumulative impact in reinforcing responsibility was noted, as was the incongruence between felt responsibility and actual behaviour, which was explicitly referred to by respondents and has been noted by other workers (e.g. Liska 1974; Schwartz 1968). The constraints producing this incongruence are perceived to have sources both external and internal to the individual. They operate in three main spheres: economic considerations; cultural expectations; personal quality of life or lifestyle considerations. These constraints tend to make voluntary individual change not radical but moderate, as is exemplified by green consumerism.

The next chapter looks at the other side of green consumerism: the retail context of green products and policies and the related motivations and constraints of the retailers involved.

CHAPTER 7. INITIATING AND CONSTRAINING INFLUENCES ON RETAILER CHANGE.

7.1. Introduction.

The individual perspectives identified in the previous chapter contrast with those of the retailers, and especially sharply with those of the multiple retailers. The key differences are: the retailers explicitly recognise their ethics and aims; multiples articulate notions of social and environmental responsibility more clearly; the retailers transfer both impact and responsibility to the consumer through an implicit belief in consumer sovereignty; this allows acceptance of an incongruence between ethics and behaviour for multiples (although small retailers may still be uncomfortable with this). A company also adopts various roles, e.g. proactive or reactive, with respect to initiating change, positions which often show internal contradictions.

The acceptance of incongruence raises the question of how far multiple retailers implicitly see their business as amoral due to its declared *raison d'être* as a response mechanism, and therefore its dependence on the morals of others and the fulfilment of the needs of others as defined by them. This defines the consumer as the ultimate source and validation of change and suggests the multiples take a consumer sovereignty perspective (Smith 1990; and see 3.7.). This is discussed in terms of the proactivity of retailers on the environmental front and how far it contradicts the avowal of corporate ethics.

7.2. Prioritising Profit.

The key difference between individual proenvironmental change and retailer proenvironmental change is the priority the latter places on profit. Profit is the essence of business survival, its *raison d'être*, the baseline at which all change must prove its validity so that:

> "we can't be perfectly green at the same time as being perfectly profitable. We've got to satisfy investors, the City, our employees, customers; everybody wants their share of performance from [us]... you cannot have an ideal... we will never be perfectly friendly." (S1)

> "We are a commercial organisation, we are not an institution. And therefore, we have to, quite deliberately, look at the costs." (L9)

This emphasis is not disguised or denounced by multiple retailers but is clearly stated as a quite natural preoccupation of any successful business enterprise.

> "we don't have any embarrassment about the fact that we're in business to make money... we won't try to couch ourselves in any other term than that." (S1)

The need to make profits places emphasis on the stimulus and satisfaction of customer demand to ensure economic viability. Hence, the drive for green consumerism embodies a belief in consumer sovereignty and therefore a belief that demand, in fulfilling profit priorities, can direct proenvironmental commercial change. Such a profit motivation means that proenvironmental demand can be enabling and promote entrepreneurship and opportunistic (but reactive) behaviour.

More commonly, costs operate as a constraint on activities identified as environmentally positive (see 7.5.1.) as, if proposed modifications show major economic disadvantages, the baseline for referral must always be economic, hence:

> "If we're not profitable, it doesn't matter how green we are, we'd be out of business next week." (S1)

Policy statements often soften this baseline but it is always implicit.

Differences are revealed in the oral data between the multiple and smaller retailers. Put simply, most small retailers seem to *begin* with ethics and then look at economics whereas multiples operate in the opposite way or, at most, look at the two simultaneously. Small retailers feel their ethics more strongly and in some cases do not require the same justification in terms of demand that multiples do. Both the small retailers and the organic farmers interviewed tend not to prioritise competition and profit, rather their operations and retail network reflect their beliefs, e.g. these small retailers comment:

> "no doubt anybody with a business head could walk in here and have it turning over thousands [of pounds], probably. But that isn't what I'm about... I want to make a living out of it and be fairly comfortable, but to me there's more important things, so it's more in what I want to say and what I want to go with than any other angle. That's probably totally wrong and daft but to me that's how it works." (R8)

> "we do shy away from anybody who seems to be coming at us with

> a great offer that's going to make us loads of money on the commercial side. If people are there because it's the right things to be, then we would much rather deal with them. Even if it means that it's slightly more expensive." (R7)

Stocking items to fit ethics and not demand may be a form of altruism in its perseverance despite poor returns.

> "we all believed in organics; so we want to promote it as much as possible so, from Day One, we've always had organic veg in... it's only really... probably in the last year it's actually paid for itself, because we used to lose out every week. But I'm a strong believer in it... Even if it was a loss leader, I'd still continue with it." (R8)

> "we're not gaining by it, it takes us more time to fill a bottle on the premises and to measure it out and to have to wash the equipment than to just buy a bottle and sell it on - it's much easier for us to do that. So that is one commitment we make... to these ideas." (R10)

This may seem to contradict much said above, but tends to operate only in a limited domain (especially for organics, a market close to most wholefood shops ethics) and not indefinitely as economic constraints come into play eventually (see 7.5.1.). In the end, the economic considerations must be included in a realistic operation: decision-making based *solely* on ethics is seen as idealistic by both small retailers and organic farmers:

> "you have got to make money... So you have to work with the materials you choose in order to make a profit... that's where a number of things do go in perhaps being too altruistic about the thing; you've got to be realistic. And sell some things which aren't necessarily perfect, aren't organic." (R3)

> "you've got to be a bit more ruthless. It's alright having ideals and things, but you can't always carry them through as you'd like to do... When it comes down to it, you're in business." (R2)

For some small retailers and farmers, others who take their ethics more strictly are "admirable" (R5) but not necessarily realistic as they are trying to bypass the economic realities.

> "I don't believe that you could run a healthfood shop on only organic products, I just don't think it would be possible. It might be idealistic [laughs]. But not a possibility." (R3)

> "There can't be many people that can be so ethical about everything that they sell." (R2)

7.3. Environmental Responsibility.

The environmental responsibility of business is clearly identified and stated by the multiple retailers in their publications and oral data and in ASDA's use of "environmentally responsible" product labels. The smaller retailers discuss responsibility less explicitly, emphasising more clearly internally-driven ethics, which follow similar lines to responsibility but are less dependent upon widespread approbation (see 7.5.2.).

For multiples, environmental responsibility has been incorporated into company policy since the late 1980s with the increase in media coverage of environmental issues and the rise of green consumerism (Marshall and Roberts 1992 and see 2.4.). It is now represented in general policy statements (Harte and Owen 1991) such as:

> "We recognise our responsibility to the community and the environment in which we operate." (KwikSave publication)

The multiples commonly slot environmental responsibility in with other forms of social responsibility, e.g. to employees, charity etc., which have been part of decision-making since the 1970s (Sethi 1981). The environment is therefore included but not prioritised, as is evident in this director's comment:

> "A successful organisation today demonstrates a responsibility in a whole spectrum of areas; environment clearly sits in amongst those areas." (S1)

In data from the multiples, there is considerable emphasis on an internal source of environmental and social responsibility - a set of business ethics or morals, the need to do 'the right thing' which is defined internally so that:

> "the company thinks green, considers green... the company believes it's the right thing to do." (S6)

Such internal ethics and moral obligations relate to the key position of retailers in today's society, identified thus:

> "It's a moral responsibility. And I think it's part and parcel of a company's position in society. And we've always... been extremely conscious of that." (L9)

This power transforms business from a purely economic to a social institution which therefore requires legitimation of its activities by reference to moral arguments (also Buck 1992; Smith 1990; Epstein 1991); and to bridge the legitimacy gap between its goals and society (Sethi 1981). Yet this is difficult to reconcile with the profit baseline (noted in 7.2.) which emphasises the economic and denounces the moral responsibility (also Friedman 1988).

The smaller retailers seem to perceive stronger internal ethics, especially vegetarianism, often as an aim of their business rather than added onto other criteria, which can preclude the stocking of profitable lines. The smaller retailers have therefore undergone less *change* in response to public environmentalism, because their concentration on healthy and proenvironmental products started before the increase in public interest. Internal morals are therefore more evident and less linked to public approbation, e.g.:

> "It seemed a fairly moral way of making a living." (R5)

In terms of the delegation of responsibility within the company, different companies have different strategies. Some companies establish dedicated management to the task of environmental monitoring and change. Some "compartmentalise" (S5) responsibilities to sections or sites so that responsibility operates over a specific sphere or aspect of job only and is therefore weakened by this fragmentation and dilution. This is perceived at the local level as "doing our bit" (as with individuals, see 6.2.) where there is "individual responsibility" (L8) on all staff to help with company policy and contribute but not to consolidate the approach in particular job specifications because:

> "we don't want dedicated management just to monitor the environmental policy, it's got to be the function of all management." (S6)

7.3.1. Internal and External Ascription of Responsibility.

If companies claim internal morals and responsibilities owing to their position in society, these morals and responsibilities must be dependent, as with consumers, upon the social context in which the business operates. This context of moral requirements (Fishkin 1982) means that even business's internalisation of such norms is, in essence, a reaction to its context and not solely an internal development.

Therefore, company morals do not exist in isolation but are dependent upon definition by consumers (via their expectations) and subsequent approbation (via their purchases), so that multiples claim that:

> "The source of change of anything is the consumer... what that consumer wants, he or she will get." (S6)

The definition of internal company morals depends upon the external moral norms of the society in which it operates, but also upon the strength of its reputation. Trust (see 8.4.) invested in a company's reputation often conveys expectations of moral actions and therefore helps to define how far the company should be acting on its own moral stimulus and how far it has to be goaded into change. The obvious corollary to this is that when public expectations rise for individuals, they will also rise, although perhaps to a lesser height, for business. Business will have to change to become more morally acceptable, to live up to more exacting standards in order to gain public legitimation. (Of course, if expectations weaken with the rising priority of economic costs, standards of acceptability may be less stringent.)

> "it's like eradicating child labour from British mines. That was drummed out on social grounds... what had been perfectly acceptable... was thought to be unacceptable". (S5)

It seems most likely that business responsibility must be defined and evaluated *both* externally and internally through internal change and self-assessment, and not solely internally as some policy statements may imply, although others recognise the stimulus of public expectations. This twofold source is clear from the oral data:

> "We will do things which we think are morally and ethically correct, the sort of things which we think our customers will expect us to do." (S5)

The large retailers adopt a stance as *choice-providers*, seeing their role as one of providing alternative products and enabling choice but not dictating levels of sacrifice to customers, not imposing it through provision of only green products but by:

> "offering them as an alternative to standard products to give customers a choice - 'environment friendliness' can involve a price premium, or some limitations in the product's function, and the Company does not wish to impose these restrictions by not offering an option." (Sainsbury's publication 1991 p5)

> "It's not for us to dictate what our customers do and don't buy. It's not for us to say, 'We're not gonna sell you aerosols, because *we* think they're bad.' We're retailers. We have to satisfy the demand of the population we service, and they tell us eventually through their purchases, what they do and don't want." (S1)

This also applies to not dictating the recycling ethic to consumers - recycling sites and information are provided but not forcefully. This sense of not dictating ethics to customers is also evident in data from the small retailers, although the desire to do so underlies their discussions more clearly.

> "So all we do is open a shop... and that's it, that's as far as we go saying that you shouldn't do this." (R5)

Therefore, change must originate in the consumers' desire to act and cannot be the responsibility of the retailer. This suggests implicit perception of the retailing function as amoral (also Gorz 1988) and certainly less than influential if responsibility is to be passed to consumers (and see 3.6.2.).

A common belief expressed by retailers is of a voluntary change in internal company culture to an proenvironmental stance, a perception of the right decisions or even of moral values, not apparently stimulated by costs, legislation or publicity needs (also 7.2.1.).

> "[We] haven't made a song-and-dance about it because it's part of the culture now, it's inbuilt. You just do it, you don't do it for any other reason than it's perceived as being the right thing to do." (S6)

However, the adoption of such a stance must be justified by demand. The decision over what is morally acceptable is implicitly passed onto the consumer,

despite belief in the internal existence of a stimulus for change, because of the need for legitimation (Smith 1990; Harte *et al* 1990), and hence survival, in the public domain.

> "All sorts of things going on which we tell people about because it's all part of justifying what we do, otherwise we're always accused of being cynical and superficial and short term and only in it for the money... [but] it starts from within, it's part of the thinking, part of the culture and attitudes of the people in control of this business." (S1)

> "We don't sell ecologically based or environmentally based products in their own right as loss leaders to gain kudos or whatever. We make things that we think are right... the things that are right for the customers, that the customers have been shown to demand. And if the customers don't like them, they don't buy them, we stop selling them." (S5)

It seems that ascription of responsibility may be more clearly made to business for its internal operation but actions in the public domain, e.g. product reformulation and marketing, are passed to the public for moral legitimation of business responsibility.

Large retailers, and also the less radical wholefood retailers, seem to recognise simultaneous internal and external sources of ethics, but they declare the consumer as the *ultimate* repository of responsibility. The retailer has a moral obligation to offer product choice but not to dictate or force responsible behaviour. If customers do not demand environmentally friendly, choice is not required and stocking ceases. This reflects their reactive stance (see 7.7.) and the response of internal ethics to context as outlined above.

The responsibility outlined by multiples in the data seems to fit Sethi's (1980) use of a "prescriptive" responsibility as one that operates congruently with social norms and therefore goes beyond the obligation (the "proscriptive" responsibility) to obey economic and legislative principles. This proscriptive element is also seen where business identifies its responsibility to react to change enforced through such media as the Montreal Protocol. Sainsbury's is clearly stimulated by this to state that:

> "Sainsbury's feels a very real sense of responsibility to do all it can

> to stop using CFCs in its business." (Sainsbury's publication 1989; also 1991)

The responsibility does not go as far as Sethi's (1980) "proactive" form in promoting social change - this is perceived as outside business's remit. The proscriptive responsibility also fits Smith's (1990) class of business responsibility where profit is maximised whilst behaviour meets an acceptable moral minimum (also Adams 1992; Fishkin 1982; and see 3.6.2. and 7.7.).

There is a sense of the joint, but partial, responsibility of business to change.

> "we need the desire to be felt throughout the chain, it's not our responsibility entirely. It has to be a joint effort by everyone concerned." (S5)

7.4. Impact.

Like consumers (see 6.3.), retailers acknowledge several kinds of impact that their decisions have on the environment, on other companies and on the consumer. Most obviously, there is the environmental degradation through the use of products and processes. The impact of proenvironmental decisions will therefore be to minimise this damage or modify its type.

> "If we can sell a product which is less harmful to the environment and at the same time better for us as human beings, then we've got to be doing good rather than bad." (R7)

However, there are conflicts within this because consumption, and therefore retailing, will always involve environmental impacts (see 7.5.1.).

Retailers perceive themselves to have an impact on the stances of other companies by their example and encouragement to change, plus the assurance of providing a market for green products. The retailers' responsibility is not to promote change but to enable it through congruence with social norms and the communication of this congruence to others:

> "We show them our principles and how we are doing what we're doing so we would expect our suppliers to have the same attitudes towards environmental responsibility... It's not right for us to make demands on suppliers in that way." (S1)

The impact on the consumer is only implicitly indicated through the references to proactivity and indirectly through the provision of information, products and therefore choice (see 7.7.). Small retailers tend to promote environmental groups by displaying their posters and other information, and one newly-opened shop also serves as a meeting-place, having a strong impact on local groups.

> "I think it's an encouragement to people to know that we exist... if we were to go out of business, it would probably be felt as quite a body blow to quite a number of the groups". (R7)

Impact is not as important in rationalising business responsibility as it is for individual responsibility. More important is the social context of public approbation and demand.

7.5. Proenvironmental Change and Constraints.

All retailers tend to identify customer sacrifice in qualitative terms related to the loss of performance involved in using green products (see 6.7.1.)). In contrast, changes made by multiple retailers are principally defined economic terms by those retailers. Characteristically, such changes are easy and gradual in nature, although the management at one multiple feel it has undergone huge, "phenomenal" (L6) changes:

> "The world of retailing looks at what we've done here with disbelief... It's a model of how you change culture, attitudes and organisations." (S1)

In general, though, multiples have only undergone moderate changes and in the early stages of proenvironmental voluntary change, the easy changes of product and company are those first adopted (Buck 1992), for example:

> "So instead of taking the whole world and trying to cure it *once*... with a finite resource available, you have to determine priorities, so we'll do the easy bits first." (S1)

These changes involve little or no financial sacrifice, nor do they cause difficulties for on employee time or operational systems. The pervading example is that of CFC removal from aerosols (and later from packaging and refrigeration systems): chemical substitution was performed by the manufacturers; the products,

now bearing "ozone friendly" labels, were handled in the same way as previously; demand justified the change and made it easy in economic terms. Similar reference can be made to the siting of public recycling banks in retail car parks, which are easy to administer and therefore require little sacrifice. Easy changes to company culture can be enacted through increasing management awareness of environmental action and producing policy statements on this for wider consumption by the public: this is now common practice for the retail multiples.

This idea of environmental change being easy change (at least at first) is also conveyed to the customers as the modified green products require them to make little sacrifice or change their lifestyles. Moderation seems to be the key to change by retailers and to be what they expect of their customers (and see 6.7.1.).

Retailers further perceive that change, for them, must necessarily be gradual, even ponderous, and made up of a number of steps or minor changes: this has several implications. Firstly, it implies caution, due to the uncertainties of the green market and an emphasis on reaction not proaction:

> "we've got to be careful as a company because... we always have the customers' interest at heart and we've got to be sensible and sometimes we may seem to be a little slow, but it's because we have to take the whole explanation... into our scrutinisation before we say, 'Right, go ahead, do it.' Otherwise it could be a failure". (L8)

Secondly, it implies a longer term approach than is evident from policy statements. Companies are keen to display to the public a history of (not previously acknowledged) proenvironmental behaviour plus a commitment into the future. This seems in part a legitimation of the present level of moderate change.

> "there will be the long term commitment of businesses like ours, who've grasped environmental responsibility with both hands and said, 'This has got to be part of the way we conduct our business.' Regardless of the economic climate, we will continue to down-size, down-gauge, reuse, reduce - all the things we have been doing." (S1)

> "This is not new for us... We certainly didn't *turn onto* environmental things, we've been doing some of these things for a long time as part of... our social responsibility." (S5)

A gradual process implies that the company intends building on changes and that the environment is a permanent feature within decision-making, although

dependent upon the evolution of operations rather than superficial or *ad hoc* changes. It also means that changes may not be visible to the public but exist in-store and therefore that the public's criticism of superficial commercial changes is due to their limited knowledge of company conversion.

> "much of the public work has been on the product range. Much of the private work has been on the bits and pieces of our operations that the public doesn't get to see." (S1)

This does not ensure that the environment has, or maintains, a high salience within decision-making and may in fact be low down the list, but a permanence is declared for it.

Thirdly, environmental issues may be developing alongside other low-salience issues as part of an overall change in company culture, especially where major retailers are attempting to move upmarket, e.g. at Tesco. As one commentator wrote:

> "The greening of Tesco is the result principally of research which showed that Tesco customers are becoming more sophisticated and critical." (Higham 1990b p17)

This involves both the company intentionally changing the customer base by different marketing and stocking strategies and the public changing their attitudes towards environmental products.

7.5.1. Economic Constraints.

Voluntary change is initiated by priorities placed upon profit and (externally or internally defined) ethics. These priorities can be both dynamic and internally contradictory, and the extent of the resulting change is subject to a number of constraints, emanating from internal business principles and external social and operational considerations.

Economic constraints are perceived by retailers as well by consumers (see 6.5.) in the oral data. Retailers differ from consumers in that they outline cost thresholds in operations more clearly and may therefore quantify and more pointedly emphasise relative costs. This is because economic priorities are closer to the essence of business to that of consumption due to their emphasis upon profit (see 7.2.). To some extent, sacrifice of all the material gains of technology and commerce

is not necessary and most of modern consumption patterns can be retained, with tolerable modification in the light of environmental considerations. Beyond this threshold, sacrifices in terms of cost are not tolerable: the profit priority constrains change to moderate forms. The difficulty is establishing this threshold because of the multiples' view that:

> "Sustainable development says you are allowed to use some energy. You can burn things. You don't have to go and live in a tent in the middle of a field and chant. You can actually exist and consume - but what's an acceptable level of consumption?" (S1)

Cost constraints serve to control the extension of ethics to action but are more flexible for small retailers than for multiples e.g.:

> "it's paid off for me to stick at it... if organics still wasn't [sic] making any money now, I would probably forget it, 'cause I'd given it enough. Thank goodness it picked up and that is that." (R8)

For small retailers, sales control the choice of stock, the market limits actions and 'good' but expensive changes are precluded: economic determinants thwart ethical initiatives. This is more clearly developed than for multiples who more uncritically accept economical priorities like they accept the incongruence between ethics and behaviour due to their view of the market and consumer sovereignty (see 7.2.).

> "I tend to, wherever possible... stick to the ethics, but it's not easy in business. It's far from easy, when you've got an overdraft hanging over your head... At the end of the day, I'm in business to make money... I can't do it just because it's there to be done... You can't always run things to your own criteria." (R4)

> "No matter how concerned about tomorrow and the future you are, today is the day that you've got to concentrate on. And if you can't pay your bills today, tomorrow doesn't make much difference, which is the big thing." (R2)

Underlying such evidence, it seems that the cost constraints operate as identifiable limits to altruism but differ for different products and time periods.

Some multiples suggest a degree of economic flexibility in constraints in that environmental considerations may promote the weakening of very strict economic conditions, even in very cost-conscious retailers. This occurs where green products

are allowed a longer trial period than normal new lines due to a belief in the salience of environmental issues, despite poor economic performance.

> "on a purely commercial basis, within [the company], perhaps there wouldn't be as wide a representation as there is, but our commitment means that we will continue and we won't just say, 'It doesn't work, get rid of it'... I'm not saying they'll stay forever, they may not, but it's been given an extended chance to prove itself." (S6)

However, this flexibility has a limited tolerance and only represents a small, not indefinite, extension of normal tolerance. In other companies, green products are treated as any other new line and such flexibility of priority does not operate.

Purely economic limits to the adoption of ethical actions operate through price, where very high differentials, "absolutely ridiculous" prices (R2), prevent stocking.

> "we stock as many organic things as we can that are available, although, because they tend to be more expensive, there's a lot of things we feel we can't sell." (R10)

Where demand cannot be ignored, some compromise between economics and ethics may well operate for small retailers, depending on the nature of the business, but neither is clearly prioritised. There are "grey" areas where ethics are shifted (sacrificed) towards economic needs, e.g. in the sale of "unnecessary" (R7) but cruelty-free cosmetics; in imported but organic food to boost supply despite high fuel consumption, in a similar perception to the externally derived cultural constraints on individuals (see 6.6.). Here ethics may be shifted on one ethical dimension but another is retained, e.g. for vegetarian textured vegetable protein (TVP):

> "For years we held out against selling it [TVP] and it's very hard to put across why, but it's because it's a very processed food... But eventually we gave in, capitulated in the face of demand and we've sold *loads* since... and there was this principle, which is a good principle... but we were doing ourselves out of so many sales that eventually the sales argument won, I'm afraid. You can only take your principles so far, you've got to compromise, because... you're creating a demand that is in line with your ethics, but you've got to meet the demand that is already there, half-way." (R10)

Implicit in the data discussed above is a deliberate pragmatism. Small retailers may perceive that their business, although operating on some ethical

principles, is still based upon consumption and the dominant (environmentally unfriendly) culture, and is only relatively less harmful itself.

> "Are we the ones who ought to be telling people, 'Don't buy'? Would an empty shop encourage people to buy less? Or would a shop selling what we consider to be the right products be more of a benefit to the Earth anyway? We're all going to buy T-shirts, we're all going to wash the bath out at some stage or another, wash the dishes. We've all got to eat." (R7)

This is the inherent contradiction of business and green ethics so the business therefore must continuously operate on a(n illusory) compromise by selling the best, most ethical products its economic constraints will allow it to.

> "the aim of the place was to, on the back of a commercial success... also do other things as well, but that commercial success was going to be of an environmentally benign nature." (R7)

> "In society as we've got now, the only real way to run a green business is to lock your door and go home... You can't sell something without hurting something, without doing some damage." (R5)

The fallacy of full compatibility between environmental and economic goals in business has been exposed elsewhere (Higham 1990b; Irvine 1989a) but the seeming compromise remains a key idea for the multiples in their literature and discussions.

> "The need for environmental protection forms an integral part of Safeway's business philosophy. The impact that any of our activities - and even those of our customers - might have on the environment is for us a number one consideration... [We have a] commitment to pursuing business activities and investments which are compatible with sound environmental practice." (Safeway publication p1)

And the Department of the Environment seem to be perpetuating this idea as the White Paper states clearly that:

> "There is... no contradiction in arguing both for economic growth and for environmental good sense." (Department of the Environment 1990 p8)

7.5.2. Qualifying Perceived Costs as Non-sacrifices.

Retailers perceive that their voluntary proenvironmental changes can generate both positive and negative effects, the latter allowing change to be conceptualised as sacrifice (as discussed in 6.4.). However, the data do not *clearly* suggest that retailers suffer any negative effects without compensatory benefits.

Negative effects of proenvironmental change in operation might be the cost of extra time involved in tasks, e.g. sorting materials for recycling, or of material changes, e.g. changing a car fleet to unleaded with catalytic converters which "cost us a *fortune*" (S1), e.g. changing refrigeration gases and systems which was "very costly" (S6).

Although, *prima facie*, this appears to represent a sacrifice for the company, closer investigation of the data reveals two main qualifications. Most critically, if a change is not supported by sales and therefore shows no profit, it may be discontinued. This is expressed as a response to choice and responsibility exercised by consumers, i.e. they choose not to buy. The multiple would therefore be providing an undesired (unjustified) service in offering choice after this point and would be sacrificing profits to be made with other products. This would not be tolerated for an indefinite period.

Secondly, it is sometimes made explicit that, in the end, *any* costs taken on by the retailer or the manufacturer must necessarily be passed onto the customer as the source of all funding, through higher prices.

> "That is an economic reality, that the investment that we make, either in sponsoring research and development or choosing relatively expensive but more socially acceptable production... our customers pay for." (S5)

This appears to be a rather simplistic view, ignoring the elasticity of demand in that customers may only tolerate a certain amount of change, putting a ceiling on how far they will pay for it. Despite this, responsibility seems to be acted on by the retailers in the premature belief that the customer agrees and will pay the costs for it, i.e. take on the sacrifice. There is the notion that in this way customers are penalised for company changes, that the company is not sacrificing but is forcing the consumer to do so. Elsewhere, this is identified as public responsibility and

legitimation, a business principle upon which the company must operate and thus the company does what the market will tolerate and no more.

In addition, the retailers can choose or refuse proenvironmental action, which is at the present time voluntary and costly but it may soon be legally compulsory and still costly but not a sacrifice in the sense that the term is used here (see 7.6. and 7.7.).

7.5.3. Non-economic Constraints on Proenvironmental Behaviour.

As well as cost priorities, other factors are perceived to limit voluntary change by multiples, including product, technological, size and structural constraints.

Despite environmental considerations, retailers perceive the necessity of retaining environmentally harmful elements of products. Packaging, especially using plastics, is a current "bête noir" (S5) of large retailers as it has poor environmental connotations but massive advantages in their systems of production and distribution, in maintaining product quality and in marketing. Here change is limited to reducing volume "to minimise our dependency on it" (S1), and not to radical redesign of systems to reduce the need for packaging.

> "the bottom line is not wasting money on it. Not doing too much but doing enough so that the packaging performs the function." (S5)

This may be seen as a social limit owing to consumer expectations of the product, but also a structural one given the systems established by multiple retailers to streamline and standardise their operations.

> "We're not throwing everything out of the window, because much of what we do depends on packaging. Packaging is a great friend to everybody, much as we think it's got certain ungreen things about it. Life without packaging is a misery." (S1)

> "you have to satisfy the customer that the product that they purchase is up to the quality they expect... I don't believe anybody would accept four broken custard tarts on their table because they knew [the company] weren't overpackaging them." (L9)

There are further limits due to technology, or lack of it, where the ability to change is curtailed due to the inadequacies of knowledge and available machinery. This is perceived with respect to both recycling and product design where the limits

of available technology have been reached and further change will only be possible with advances in technology, something not often realised by consumers.

> "I've come from an ozone-depleting, global-warming, energy-intensive, solid waste landfilling aerosol can to an ozone-benign, non-global-warming, reusable product which doesn't go to landfill. So have I got an environmentally friendly product?... Where do I go next?" (S1)

> "One of the problems... is paralleling our desire to recycle... with the costs of that process and the ability of the recycling industry at this moment in time to handle those items." (L9)

However, one small retailer seems to push closer against the limits of technology that others and see standards as less acceptable:

> "[Plastic product-wrapping is] not entirely satisfactory. I have to admit that. But it's the limitations of what we can do with the facilities we've got." (R1)

Until technology improves, product performance is poor, which is explicitly noted by the retailers as a sacrifice their customers are not willing to make (see 6.7.1.). This technological constraint emanates from the technocentrism (O'Riordan 1976) of retailers and their markets (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991) and their consequent emphasis on easy, technical solutions (Heberlein 1974) rather than deeper ones through changing systems.

Technological advance is usually perceived as change dependent on the manufacturer, putting responsibility onto an industrial sector where multiples say they have little influence. There is therefore an external control to which retailers can only react and not initiate due to the limits of the retailing function.

> "I think we are in the hands of the producers to a degree... we can't take the whole brunt of the development of it, they must come with their part, we must come with our part." (L9)

There is a limited influence on manufacturers which can promote product development indirectly. However, this is more of a passive role, where retailers place the "onus" of product change on their suppliers, the manufacturers:

> "The Company is watching the development of totally CFC-free blown foam insulation materials... and encouraging its suppliers to

conduct tests on new materials." (Sainsbury's publication 1991 p4)

This view from the data is contradicted by Adams *et al* (1990) and Cowe (1992) who point to the power of retailers in guiding manufacturers due to their position as mediators between manufacturers and the buying public. Retailers rather than manufacturers are seen as the drivers of green innovation (Simms 1992; Buck 1992; Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte 1990) and therefore their competitive advantage lies in being proactive and promoting change (Blaza 1992; Carey 1992).

Size constrains change because small companies may be prevented from changing by their lack of influence over suppliers. When a firm wishes to be proactive, such limits chafe and inhibit the adoption of a pioneering role.

> "If we were as big as Andrex we could demand an entire factory to do exactly what we wanted at any time we wanted to. Because in that sort of market [paper] we're fairly small, we have to take what's available until it comes to a point where there's somebody else who has something better available." (R1)

Small size also means that there may be limits on employees' skill and time, with organics perceived to be awkward and consequently "extremely labour-intensive" (R10). There may also be limits on the shelf space available for products, so that priorities on stocking green products are under more pressure and may be superseded.

Conversely, large companies may feel constrained by their large size and perceive the ability only to change slowly, piece by piece.

> "To try and move... 300 plus stores... forward all at the same time, in an area where we're still gaining experience, would be naive." (L9)

At the local level, managers of stores in Leeds tended to feel that their stores were too old and too small to be at the vanguard of proenvironmental changes occurring in bigger and newer stores in the chain. The constraints on the local stores, which reduced the requirement to be as environmentally responsible as other stores, seemed to originate partly in the distance from the headquarters of the chain, allowing some managerial flexibility. They originated also partly in the perception that their northern location gave them a smaller proportion of green consumers to provide for than stores in the South, where green consumerism is more widespread.

However, the relative status of the store also seemed important: they were perceived by their managers to be more "basic" than other stores in the chain and so less attractive to green consumers and having less investment to update their environmental image and activities.

Further structural constraints are perceived by small and multiple retailers in the case of organics, where the supply is inconsistent and of low volume due to its production level and distribution networks (Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte 1990). However, these criticisms of organic production are seen quite differently by the organic farmers I interviewed, none of whom were in favour of selling to multiples. They see the multiples' rigid standards of appearance and delivery as unsuitable and unrealistic for their type of produce and network, and as representative of a system which encourages consumption and waste.

> "it's mainly supermarkets who are saying continuity of supply is a problem. If they didn't put such constraints on supply, it wouldn't be such a problem." (F3)

In this way, the higher standards demanded by the multiples necessitate more grading-out of below-standard produce amounting to as much as 30% of the crop (The Guardian 1992 August 12 p3; Dudley 1991), and the farmers allege that *this*, not production, is increasing the premiums which the multiples consequently blame for poor sales. They also feel that the multiples' methods of selling and promoting work against the sale of organic produce, despite multiples' declared commitment to it, by prioritising price and appearance above quality and taste and putting an incorrect perspective on the reason for buying organic.

7.5.4. Criticisms of Business Change.

Chapter 6 outlined the reluctant and moderate nature of proenvironmental change from the consumer perspective. In contrast, these individuals seem to expect more than moderate change from multiple retailers and manufacturers, and members of the public and environmental groups likewise criticise visible changes in business as superficial:

> "they seem to have gone quite a long way without actually having to go very far themselves". (125)

Because of the size of larger companies and their turnover, several individuals feel that business is more capable of change than individuals, that this financial power enables them to change as:

> "The billions these firms are worth, they could do a heck of a lot more." (262)

> "[ICI could say] 'We've made so much profit, now people are getting a bit worried about what we send into the rivers; let's spend a bit of money on public relations and do a bit of clearing up.'" (215)

There is sympathy from only two individuals for the economic and structural constraints on big business perceived by the retailers above. More individuals perceive smaller and local firms as attempting to change more, and with more genuine motives, than the multiples.

Several individuals perceive the necessity for businesses to react and meet public expectations because:

> "the manufacturers seem to have got the message and all seem to be trying to turn the tide to get in favour with what they think must be the general mind of the population." (125)

This is seen as bandwagon-jumping and is regarded by all individuals who discussed business change as transparently superficial, as a "con" or "gimmick" because:

> "Nobody wants to sell now anything that doesn't say 'environment friendly' on it, so it's nearly everywhere." (215)

Smaller retailers, farmers and consumers all strongly criticise the motives as well as the extent of larger companies' change and express distrust of their seeming green conversion. The general view is that they are hiding profit motives under environmental motives so:

> "They're in it for the money, they're not in it for the environment." (100)

> "they want to give the impression that they're concerned, but... their primary concern is economic return." (313)

> "[firms] might make a conscious effort to keep people happy and stop getting bad publicity, but they wouldn't be concerned. They'd be

> doing it purely as a PR venture... what company goes out to please somebody else without it costing?" (11)

The smaller retailers see the profit priorities of the multiples as overwhelming any environmental ethics, whereas they themselves try to preserve them. They emphasise the differences between the two groups:

> "If the supermarkets are taking [organics] up, they do because it's profit, I don't see them doing it for any other reason". (R1)

> "a lot of supermarkets will only carry lines if they can turn over a certain amount. And unless they meet these targets, out it goes, because something else can occupy that space... We've kept some lines on for quite a while." (R2)

> "[Holland and Barrett's] ultimate motive is profit... and it's their ultimate and only motive at the end of the day, and we differ from them in that respect.". (R10)

Some individuals and small retailers perceive the inherent contradiction of business and environment, because the methods of business seek to increase consumption and maintain the structures which lead to environmental damage.

> "It's all part of the way a capitalist society operates: the competitiveness and the firms and producers vying with each other, so there's all this advertising. So there's all this packaging, because the packaging is part of the advertising". (292)

Others see the prevention of change by unwillingness in the higher ranks.

> "People who have the power to use the materials to do what they want, don't want to change... the seeds of true progress in many fields are restricted by vested interests... The truth and the desire to put things right at the very highest level is very often not there." (310)

The power of retailers in society is mentioned, stating that have the financial and structural muscle to resist pressure from other quarters, to maintain their own autonomy and viability, which makes them inherently non-environmental:

> "there's a vast commercial and industrial establishment that resists [environmental groups]. And it will probably win." (237)

However, the power of retailers to change themselves and others is often denied by retailers themselves because they prefer to emphasise the constraints on

their ability to change. There remain only isolated suggestions of such power in the data:

> "When you have a group of like-minded people running seven billion pounds worth of business, you can do a lot." (S1)

7.6. The Benefits of Proenvironmental Change.

In contrast to being constrained by economic principles and cost sacrifices, some forms of proenvironmental change are perceived by multiple retailers as being positive and good for business (also Simms 1992; Blaza 1992; Buck 1992). Hence, proenvironmental change is not a sacrifice or altruistic *per se*. This is shown in the oral data where proenvironmental change is perceived as being an investment in the future of the company:

> "Investors... are increasingly concerned and informed about environmental issues. The success of recent initiatives demonstrates forcefully that responsible environmental policies can be highly compatible with good business decisions and can enhance shareholder value". (Safeway Annual Report 1991)

This long term view seems most prevalent, with short term costs, although probably readily identifiable and even measurable, accepted within a vista of long term benefits as a move towards long term social viability.

> "There are going to be certain things which are going to be costly and may not actually benefit the company in the short term, but I believe a lot of the procedures... looking long term it will be cost-effective, not only from a cost point of view but from a human point of view... it's got to be beneficial to the company but not necessarily today, tomorrow." (L8)

There are differing views as to whether change shows such tangible returns in sales or less tangible ones where business earns respect and loyalty.

7.6.1. Tangible Benefits.

Retailers may see the ultimate justification of proenvironmental activities and professed responsibilities in terms of sales - the tangible, economic expression of approbation. As a whole, the commercial retail sector is seen as having more to gain

than industry, which, "at the sharp end" (S5), has to pay out more for changes to equipment and damaging practices, with lower direct returns. Economic spin-offs from proenvironmental change rather than product sales are perceived to be significant by the retailers:

> "In commerce, by and large, investment in the environment is a money-earner... it's a very happy spin-off... in the sense that if we peak efficiency... then out of that comes minimised costs and therefore maximised profits". (S5)

> "Our commitment to environmental responsibility in no way weakens our standing as the no-nonsense, no-frills lowest-cost retailer. Just the opposite: environmental responsibility is plain good sense for both the business and our customers." (KwikSave publication)

So, minor changes can remove or reduce inefficiency in processes or minimise excess or waste and therefore reduce costs of production. For example, Safeway's energy conservation programme saved them about £1 million between 1988-1989 (Adams *et al* 1990).

This raises a problem for conceptualisation. The connection between the environmental benefits and the economic benefits of some actions is so tight that it becomes difficult to see whether the environmental review or the economic incentive stimulated the change. In some cases, an environmental review serves to initiate economic re-evaluation, and as a spur to changes which are rationalised economically after being pointed out environmentally. Increases in transport efficiency which save fuel and therefore costs are one example. In this case, the environmental benefit alone would prove insubstantial and not initiate change, but as a high priority alongside cost incentives, it can illuminate unseen potential. This does not presume the environment secures a higher priority than profit but the view is that:

> "it's an excellent spur to make us look again, very consciously, at a lot of these environmental issues and out of these things... shakes out profits. You get rid of inefficiencies." (S5)

Although the ultimate goals have been called irreconcilable by observers (Higham 1990), multiples tend to labour the rather simplistic view that environmental and economic considerations can sit in easy balance, even that they go alongside one another in decision-making:

> "truthfully [change] has got as much to do with the economy as it's got to do with the environmental drive, because the two things really go hand in hand... whatever... is the most economic actually is the most environmentally friendly". (S5)

It seems likely that a priority operates both ways: in some cases environmental ideas illuminate a route towards cost savings, e.g. through increased efficiency, and in other cases cost incentives prompt actions which prove to have beneficial environmental consequences. In the latter case, it seems that the rising costs of landfill have driven forward reviews of in-store waste volume and handling (which subsequently reduced environmental impacts because:

> "by aggressively attacking recycling, there are opportunities to turn existing costs into revenue." (Marks and Spencer internal publication)

> "a commercial consideration: we've got to save costs, but a net result of saving those costs will be to actually reduce the volume of paper." (L9)

> "That is good environmental sense... All of those things are nice little earners as far as we're concerned *but* they all contribute to the environmental equation." (S5)

However, it is rarely that environmental issues predominate or act alone. Where immediate costs are low or long term benefits are high, economics can support or instigate proenvironmental changes. Even where costs in the short term are substantial, if tolerable, they may still be passed onto the consumer and involve no serious disadvantage to the retailer.

7.6.2. Less Tangible Benefits.

Not all the perceived benefits of change are measurable in economic terms. Some changes offer the less tangible benefits of enhanced reputation, image, good publicity and brand loyalty, as all the multiples observe:

> "I don't think it's measurable in terms of whether it gives you sales opportunities... I think people who view the environment as purely a consumer-driven marketing exercise have got it slightly wrong." (S1)

> "it's not all money. We do a lot of things. But there again, you get the good P.R. out of it... There's an angle in most things." (L7)

Benefits may raise competitive advantage, in anticipating legislation, and good publicity relative to other firms. Perhaps more pessimistically, hazards of poor publicity are perceived if no change is undertaken (also Simms 1992) and thus voluntary change at least avoids such negative effects.

> "You will not find, I'm sure, any major public company that does not make a strong environmental statement... if a large company does not make a statement, their shareholders and others will start becoming suspicious and raise questions" (S5)

> "the very blasé attitudes which a lot of people in industry and commerce had, and still to some extent have, about 'saving the planet'... those sort of things will assume greater commercial importance, that those people that are not actually doing something active in their defence will be driven out of business." (S5)

Retailers agree that those companies failing to display their environmental responsibility will not be successful in the long term. In this sense, the declaration of responsibility may be a defensive measure, to pre-empt criticism, taking "a more defensible attitude" (S5) so that:

> "It'd be difficult for people to point the finger at us and say we're doing all these nasty sort of things." (S6)

Multiples tend to emphasise less tangible benefits rather than the tangible benefits of operational efficiency gains or green product sales because the latter tend to be minor.

> "I don't really believe that our main priority should be worrying about whether we're selling green products or not... What *I* think the company needs to do is to make sure that we observe our commitment in all our management decisions to respect the environment." (S6)

However, a good reputation builds trust and loyalty and should eventually have a beneficial effect on sales. Therefore investment in intangible benefits via environmental responsibility is an (indirect) investment in long term economic viability.

7.7. Proactivity, Anticipation and Reactivity in the Retailer's Role.

Throughout this chapter, there has been an emphasis on the conflicts and

contradictions over where change, responsibility and sacrifice originate: whether from the retailer, government, consumers, other companies. This section attempts to draw together some of these contradictions in terms of the role of business in proenvironmental change.

A proactive stance in promoting social change (Sethi 1981) is expressed by some retailers in their publications and oral data, both in terms of stocking new products and in modifications to in-store operations. This is motivated by responsibility which may be ahead of legislative requirements or market demand and the company sees itself as pioneering or leading some new field, e.g.:

> "we've acquired a growing reputation for being proactive, rather than reactive." (Safeway publication)

The need for such proaction in the green market is also urged by business people such as Blaza (1992) and Carey (1992) so that individual firms can gain competitive advantage, but also so that the business sector can avoid legislative compulsion and retain autonomy (Galbraith 1972; Carr 1988).

Critics of business and economic rationality (Galbraith 1972; Gorz 1988; Smith 1990; Wernick 1990) suggest that large companies are able to manage demand for specific products through information and advertising (and see 3.7.). This would represent proaction very clearly but there seems little explicit evidence in the data for this. At the implicit level, there is a suggestion that several multiples do attempt to influence demand, through the use of environmental responsibility as justification and advertising, but this is poorly developed and there is often clear advocation of an amoral stance with morals being the domain of the public.

> "We are selling a lifestyle [that's environmentally damaging]... whether we like it or not, those are customer demands. Now, there's an argument about whether we were guilty of creating those demands and whether we just fulfil those demands and that's a moral argument." (S5)

> "We've got to be honest about it, we're here to make money... Are we moralistic or are we selling something that will make money?... There's a bit of both". (L7)

The data also reveal limits to any perceived proactivity: it may only apply to certain areas or issues, e.g. Safeway concentrates on organics and is "extremely

selective" in its priority on the environment at the expense of other responsibilities (Adams *et al* 1991 p137). Proactivity cannot be pursued indefinitely; at some point demand must justify the action because:

> "you can only force a new product upon customers to a certain degree for a very, very limited time." (S5)

Small retailers seem to be more strongly proactive than multiples in several respects. Firstly, they may wish to initiate and promote certain products such as organics and provide channels for producers and growers to sell them.

> "We do keep trying to push organics... you're providing a service by being there, offering them an outlet and opening up the channels for growers to supply their products to people who want them". (R1)

Secondly, some wish to convert customers, in a non-aggressive way, to vegetarianism or some other branch of their ethics. Thus they may promote awareness of the environment and groups amongst their customers and the local community through providing information about such groups and their activities. This is especially true of one of the most recent wholefood shops in the area, which explicitly aims:

> "to make it more than just a shop.. a place where people can come for information and ideas [and contact green groups]... it's part of the idea originally that we wanted to inform people as part of education... to promote these ideas and way of life." (R7)

Thirdly, they may seek out alternative suppliers, whereas multiples seem to expect more from their existing ones.

> "it's taken us a long time to actually find [a factory] where the recycling point is the factory... and they can produce a product... and also wrap it in paper". (R10)

However, the data from the multiples suggest that, rather than initiating change, the proactivity, in the environmental field at least, is restricted to anticipating legislative or market changes. Therefore, although positive, it represents movement in the direction of foreseen change and required compliance, rather than having a hand in establishing this direction.

For some multiples, a proactive stance is denounced outright as incautious and

too far ahead of demand to be fulfilled.

> "I don't truthfully see [the company] trying to beat the high street competition of being the first into the eco-labelling field.. that's not our style. Invariably it's a good way to lose money." (S5)

Alternatively, proactivity might be impossible due to the small size and influence on manufacturers for change. This is especially so for small retailers who often wish to be more proactive but perceive stronger constraints.

The stance preferred by multiples to proactivity is one of having a competitive edge, paradoxically, by *following* the trend of other companies, which does not risk out-and-out proactivity without the back-up of proven demand. Here, the aim is to keep up with the field, not necessarily to lead it.

> "We're not trying to lead opinion... We can set an example [that's all]." (S6)

> "We will probably be more truthfully dragged along rather than breaking new ground... [Our policy is] to a little extent - I won't say dilatory, but conservative". (S5)

> "We will react rather than lead... We will never, ever, I don't think, be the pioneers... unless it's proved to be sensible." (L8)

With the multiples, it becomes difficult to distinguish clearly between voluntary change, which is often devoutly expressed, and the implicit forces implicitly prompting change, such as environmental legislation (and see 7.3.1.). In many cases, it seems likely that changes in a multiple's behaviour are neither strictly forced nor purely voluntary in the sense used of sacrifice above, but, again, are *anticipatory*, reactive to other changes and responsive ahead of their enforcement but recognising that such enforcement hovers in the near future.

A common example is of the anticipatory move that retailers claim to have made in relation to CFC-free products and systems: but this was done in the light of the Montreal Protocol to reduce CFC production. Indeed, the CFC issue seems to have been the first major non-food environmental issue to prompt retailers' response (Simms 1992). It is now accepted as standard and no longer a stimulus for change because the changes it instigated have now been made. Such anticipatory change is preemptive and offers a short term competitive advantage until other companies catch

up with the leaders; it is therefore good for short term profits and long term reputations. This is also seen in relation to retailers' perceptions of forthcoming EC legislation: on eco-labelling (now in draft, see 2.6.); on compulsory environmental audits and statements (see Owen 1992); on restrictions on packaging.

> "Now when the future of eco-labelling becomes crystal-clear and bodies like the British Retail Consortium have a view that we all subscribe to, then we will be in there and do it." (S5)

> "Rather than be jumped on, January the first, 1994, we start to look in now... what are we gonna do about it? And use that as an example of preemptiveness here... an actual example of us being proactive rather than reactive." (S6)

This contrasts with literature suggesting that the compulsory environmental auditing of companies and a directive to force the recovery 90% of packaging waste and the recycling of 60% of it within ten years are only at a very preliminary stage (Owen 1992; The Guardian 1992 July 16 p8; Harte and Owen 1991). The retailers are clearly attempting to anticipate such legislation and translate it according to its impact on their business.

Thus, proactive and anticipatory sources of change are confused. The anticipation of legislation was the stimulus; it was not a case of retailers initiating change without such a stimulus. Change therefore represents more reaction than proaction and the data often shows this for multiples:

> "we are - not responding to - we're anticipating these changes and the way that we run our business... will become increasingly modified because of social and public demand." (S5)

So the role preferred by multiples is one of reaction, to customers, to legislation, to changes in the economy (also Simms 1992; O'Riordan and Rayner 1991). This meets Sethi's (1981) conceptualisation of a prescriptive business responsibility which operates (at least partly) in congruence with social norms and which incorporates the proscriptive responsibility of compliance with external forces such as economics and legislation. This falls between Smith's (1990) two close categories of profit maximisation with action at a moral minimum (also Adams 1992) and necessary profit with affirmation of other companies' proaction (see 3.6.2.). The retailer data show this:

> "the pressure has built up, partly led by demand from the public, partly led by media comment, but significantly the cost of disposal." (L9)

> "Sainsbury's is responding to the gathering momentum of public concern about the environment." (Sainsbury's publication 1989)

Reaction involves the anticipation of trends in sales and in legislative requirements and this future orientation permits the early response to both, so that:

> "we've got to be aware of the trends... Figures say green products are getting this percent of the market and growing. We have got to logically get our share of the market, which is what we're trying to do." (S6)

There are conflicting points of view within organisations and within individual conversations over whether the company is initiating or responding to change, with more advocation of proactivity coming from those higher up the management structure than the local store managers.

7.8. Concluding Remarks.

This chapter has outlined the motivations behind retailer proenvironmental behaviour, such as stocking green products and producing green policy, with reference to environmental responsibility and economic benefits. Constraints, principally economic in type, are important in restricting the depth of change but economic considerations also serve as instigators of change together with simultaneous environmental reviews. Often, environmental and economic considerations are cited as joint priorities but environmental considerations alone rarely prove sufficient to initiate change.

The role in green consumerism preferred by retailers in the data is a reactive but anticipatory one, representing prescriptive responsibility but not proactivity in the environmental field. The priority on making profit renders economic concerns more significant and the impact of actions less significant in the retailers' perspective than in the consumers' perspective.

The next chapter looks at retailers and consumers simultaneously in relation to environmental information and its evaluation, which affect the ascription of responsibility and the operation of constraints, as previously discussed.

CHAPTER 8: INFORMATION, TRUST AND EXPERTISE.

8.1. Introduction.

Chapters 6 and 7 dealt with individual and retailer changes in terms of responsibility, image and constraints. The stimulus of information is important in ascribing responsibility, recognising impact and in building constraints but it also operates in specific ways to build trust, which influences responsibility, and to render individuals or companies dependent on the expertise of others (see 3.8.). It is also perceived to trigger action, although this relationship is weak without other similar prompts.

8.2. Lacking Information.

As mentioned (in 6.2.1.), in general non-members of environmental groups perceive environmental information to be less available and accessible to themselves than to environmental group members; in turn, group members perceive this problem for others but not for themselves. However, this is not so across the board: a few non-members contradict this view as they feel there is too much information, that they are saturated and bored by it all, e.g.:

> "one's enthusiasm for it rises and falls... the more one is exposed to it, in one sense one is aware of it, but in the other sense, one is accustomed to it. And we can tend therefore to overlook it." (125)

The key issue seems to be not the absolute level of information held by individuals (as others have tried to measure, e.g. Maloney and Ward 1973; Maloney *et al* 1975) but the *useful* amount of information required. This is clearly relative to interest, activity and knowledge and to the information level people consequently perceive that they need, which must be action-related. This is a common theme - the appropriateness of information, e.g.:

> "if you're a total expert and you want to know exactly, I presume it won't all be on there [a product's packaging]. But then very few people are. So I think it's sufficient as far as I'm concerned." (215)

There seems no clear tendency. Individuals range from those frustrated by lack of adequate information and feeling ignorant, but needing very general,

explanatory material and unacquainted with (or unmotivated about) how to go out and seek this, through the informed individuals treating simple information with disdain but denying action, to those informed on a non-specialised or more practical level who are highly active in environmental groups.

Retailers also see no clear tendency of a lack or surfeit of information mostly because they see their different types of customers having different levels of information about products and processes. Organic farmers seem more critical of the depth of customer information, but this does not damage their business because even superficial organic information is action-related, i.e. people purchase despite the fact that:

> "They have their interpretation of what organic food is and the most basic one is that you throw horse manure on it... They don't realise that the ultimate idea is to be sustainable... It's not their fault that they haven't been told." (F3)

Perhaps one clear indication is that awareness, even very general awareness, is necessary as a first step: this can then define the information needed by the individual and identify possible sources - very detailed information is not necessary to elicit action, providing it is action-related and functional. This is also apparent for its providers as the aim of groups is the provision of action-related information (see 8.3.1.).

Where individuals perceive a lack of action-related information, the deficiencies identified in the data relate to two issues: the quality and amount of information. The quality of the information may be criticised also as too specialised, using "right long words" (145) and too detailed for the individual to comprehend and act on, again emphasising the importance of the actionable component:

> "you don't really get enough information on the jars to tell you exactly *why* the green one is supposed to be better than the non-green one". (292)

> "you know it's helping... but that's all. You don't know the reason why you're buying [something labelled ozone friendly]... Because you're trying to talk about something you don't really now much about". (145)

On the contrary, it may be too simple to explain anything, e.g. product labels

may be:

> "very basic... you feel a bit unintelligent reading 'em. It's as if they're designed for somebody of a bit lower intelligence." (11)

In addition to a passive lack of information where individuals feel poorly informed, there is a sense that information is withheld by others with power over its release, especially government and industry but also scientists. Hence, the provision of information is criticised because it may be held only by experts (see 8.4.3.), with one third explicitly putting information in the realm of experts not of laypeople, and therefore only partially released into the public domain due to intentional and external control e.g.:

> "But *they* tell you what *they* want you to know, what they think you *should* know". (239)

> "we keep being told bits of things and it's very hard to understand what that means... it's hopeless expecting [non-experts] to understand it". (284)

> "I think the public should know what goes on in factories. And I don't think we do. You have to work hard to find out." (292)

Environmental group members and non-members feel that such control can hide the worst aspects of environmental problems and therefore preempt action on them, and that this is intentional. This seems to have been particularly prompted by revelations at the time of data collection about the concealment of information about the Chernobyl nuclear accident and other incidents before wider disclosure in the *glasnost* period. This, and other instances of information concealment, aroused feelings of fear and apprehension in several individuals prompted by their perceived ignorance and powerlessness.

This belief in the concealment of knowledge implies two features of systemic control. Firstly, the information providers can manipulate knowledge and only release that to the public which fulfils their own goals. Therefore, as Giddens (1990 p44) notes, knowledge is filtered according to the power relations in society. Secondly, this means that the public are unable to discuss fully the implications of information and events and that access to the debate on such topics is exclusive (also Wynne 1992 p115). This is one aspect of environmental groups campaigning, in

order to bring information held by powerful groups, and those experts perceived to be in control of information release, into the public debate (see 8.4.3.).

These problems of lack of information are addressed by various groups seeking to provide information to the public in response.

8.3. Providing Information.

Individuals who are not members of environmental groups are more likely to be concerned about their own lack of information and the inadequacies of information provided, whereas members are concerned about the lack of information in the public domain overall. Both groups of individuals and also the retailers emphasise the importance of environmental information provision in its function to persuade, to make behavioural choice informed and to attempt to lead that choice in certain directions.

There are several groups of information providers, each with different aims, attempting to persuade the public to support different causes. Environmental groups need social justification of their campaigns through public support (Lowe and Goyder 1983) but this is only seen implicitly in the data, in the perceived need to seek such support through awareness-raising and informational campaigns. Business needs social justification of its activities (Smith 1990; Harte and Owen 1991) and economic support of its products and companies, both of which are displayed in the data.

One of the main sources by volume of environmental information identified by individuals, particularly non-members, is that of broadcast and press media (which is addressed in the data only in terms of the perceptions of individuals of the media and not the perceptions of media representatives). It is worth noting, however, that although much of the environmental groups' activities are reported in the media, they are edited and filtered according to the needs of these dominant channels of dissemination, leading to two contrasting criticisms.

Firstly, a few non-members feel that information provided through the broadcast media (and government using the media) is "propaganda" (100), encouraging proenvironmental behaviour and not choice. This links into the feeling of saturation (see 8.2.) with environmental messages, especially through TV coverage. This is also suggested by Burgess (1990) in that various media texts are

saturated with environmental meanings purposefully for consumption by their audiences. For a minority this seems inescapable, permeating every routine and avenue of action, a "constant bombardment" (125). This can lead to saturation and indifference as the public become accustomed to the ideas but impervious to the action they advocate. Here the impact of information is blunted.

> "[TV programmes are good] but you don't want 'em every week. I think you can push it down people's throats that much they get fed up of it". (262)

> "we all know that it's a bad idea to cut them [rainforests] down but it's no good going on and on and making documentaries about it, you're not going to change any more minds in this country". (284)

Secondly, members and non-members feel that the media are inherently disposed to discourage change in social and commercial systems, and that this inertia will prevent the dissemination of adequate, useful environmental information which might promote such change as:

> "the people who are the influences, the media and so on, they're all commercially oriented." (237)

So, conflicting views exist of the orientation of the media on environmental issues and the consequent trustworthiness of the information they provide.

As well as media provision, education is identified by individuals as providing information, particularly during socialisation where provision is more structured than the mere dissemination through media or groups. What members and non-members seem to identify is information learnt "by example" (244), especially the example of your elders when a child, and not from paper or screen. Activists therefore feel the need to adopt "an educative role" (244) as a way of training the individual in an acceptable behaviour pattern, because of inadequate proenvironmental socialisation in the past. This must necessarily be a slow process and be done "very gently" (262). The ideal here seems to be a cumulation of information and practical face-to-face examples producing a slow, permanent conversion of behaviour and awareness as:

> "once it's implanted in your brain, it's there and you won't forget it." (239)

> "if you have a sensible education, you will think about these things. You don't walk through the world with blind eyes and the only thing that occupies you is what's on telly tonight". (215)

Often a distinction is drawn between the socialisation of the individual speaking and the inadequate socialisation of others, who litter the streets and are not proenvironmental in their actions. This relates to the privileged socialisation of the individual and their consequent possession of 'correct' attitudes and behaviour as noted in 6.2.2..

8.3.1. Environmental Groups as Providers.

In general, the environmental group members consider themselves more informed than do non-members, being both in the possession of facts and the knowledge of where to search for further information, e.g.:

> "I personally deliberately make an effort to try and keep informed, so I consider myself better informed than Tom, Dick or Harry up the street." (310)

There may indeed be too much information available to group members and they need to concentrate only on particular aspects and file the rest away for reference.

> "You have to limit what you read and what you don't read or you never get through it all". (306)

In contrast, the majority of group members perceive non-members and the public generally as lacking information. Because of this difference, environmental group members see their key function as providing information. They are a source of information for those actively requesting it; they are using information to persuade others who have not been exposed to information and are passive in seeking it out. (The importance of having impact through raising environmental awareness in these ways was noted in 6.3..)

Many activities of groups are rationalised as ways of conveying information, either in the rather mundane activities of arranging speakers and visiting schools or through the higher profile gestures of Greenpeace. As one local Greenpeace fund-raiser and activist comments:

> "this is the whole purpose, the direct actions, that unless the public *knows*... if you don't *know* that's going on, what can you do about it? It's when they've brought it to the attention of the public... there was such a public outcry, the powers-that-be, they *have* to look at doing something about it." (249)

This rationalisation depends upon a belief in the power of information to stimulate and reinforce action (see 8.5.) and also in a general lack of information amongst the (non-active) public which explains their non-action because:

> "people don't realise. If people realised, there would be an outcry... if these facts were put in front of people properly". (251)

However, it is not only the case that group members perceive that others lack information, it is also that they perceive that they avoid it, they ignore it through ignorance of the severity of the problem, through lack of interest or through fear of what that information will mean for them as:

> "some people don't *want* to believe a nasty truth. We all want to hide our heads in the sand from some nasty truths." (244)

> "Any issue, environmental issue or anything, if they're not interested, they won't listen". (262)

> "People know what they want to know, don't they? They hear what they want to hear". (13)

> "because they don't like what they're seeing, they try not to understand it. They actually say, 'I don't know what's happening, what's caused it, therefore I can't really do anything about it'." (F3 and Green Party activist)

Environmental activists and members perceive barriers of ignorance and avoidance which become difficult to breach because of the impossibility of forcing information on people because it arouses hostility and rejection thus:

> "I've fallen into the trap of trying to ram my ideals down people's throats and of course what happens is I get a block straightaway". (F3 and Green Party activist)

This makes people who don't respond to information very difficult to reach, which can be "discouraging" and frustrating for group members who see their aim as information providers unfulfilled, e.g for this Greenpeace local activist:

> "I don't really believe in the power of the word any more. I used to think you could persuade anyone with an argument. I don't believe that any more. People just take up a defensive position." (251)

The ability of environmental groups to generate support and legitimation to back up their activities depends upon their credibility and reputation for truth, through an assessment of their motives as altruistic and not profit-making. This makes members and non-members perceive their information to be believable and reliable. Hence, the data suggest that it is the provider of the information *as part of a system* of provision (also Giddens 1990) that is trusted and not the information itself nor the particular individual providing it.

8.3.2. Business as Providers.

One key source of environmental information is labelling and advertising which encompasses all forms of "promotional information" (Wernick 1990). Some people feel themselves to be dependent upon this for information, for example, this non-activist who feels she has little other information to work with:

> "The only way you really know if it's ozone [friendly] is if it's got a label on it." (145)

Retailers identify their own role as information-providers, a role which has several purposes. Firstly, information is necessary as depersonalised advice to enable customers to be able to make an informed choice, in conjunction with the assumption of consumer sovereignty (see 3.7.) thus:

> "We do see ourselves as providers of products and information and if people are not in possession of the information which allows them to make choices, sensible choices, informed choices, then we have seen the gap... [and filled it as] part of the greater process of education and media". (S1)

This has been derided by critics because such information provision can be geared to company not consumer goals and therefore represents demand management (Galbraith 1972; Smith 1990; Wernick 1990).

Secondly, information provision is seen by retailers as part of an educative role shared by retailers, farmers, media and government, educating the public into acceptable behaviours according to social norms. However, as with environmental

groups (see 8.3.1.), the education is to be of a soft, implicit form, there is to be no dictating or preaching, because this would arouse hostility and thus fail:

> "We don't actually go out of our way to tell 'em.. You don't go into a shop to be preached at... But people ask." (R5)

So information is passively offered, on packaging, noticeboards and leaflets, with the stance that if customers are interested, they will ask about it:

> "It's available but we don't make a big thing out of it." (R1)

One newer, more radical wholefood shops does publicise its ethics to emphasise their commitment:

> "It's part of the idea originally that we wanted to inform people as part of education". (R7)

There is thirdly a role for information as an exercise in justification of business activities and this is threefold. There is firstly justification of prices - the belief that an informed consumer will not regard a premium as prohibitive if information persuades that consumer that the product is worth it. There is secondly justification of the loss of quality in a product due to its improved environmental element, e.g.:

> "You have to put that [information] on the product to explain to the consumer why the product doesn't work as well." (S1)

There is thirdly and most significantly justification of the company's actions. This tends to be more implicit in the data than the other two forms, in the notion that information provided about ethics and environmental activities secures good publicity and contributes to a business's reputation (see 7.6.2.). Retailers, especially multiples, speak of the need to reassure customers of their reliability, to overcome distrust of their activities and suspicion of their motives caused by a lack of information. Poor information provision would be a counteractive move in that silence would be construed by the public and other observers as inaction:

> "there is a widely-held perception amongst the environmentalists, but only amongst the environmentalists, that [company] do nothing... if a large company does not make a statement, their shareholders and others will start becoming suspicious and raise questions". (S5)

Information provision therefore aims to legitimate activities and image to shareholders, employees and public but this aim is only shown in the data in such implicit terms as reassurance. The need for legitimation is commented on by Harte and Owen (1991) and Smith (1990) and seems clear in the data as all multiple changes and responsibility are passed onto the customer for legitimation (see 7.3.1 and 7.7.).

A fourth reason to provide information relates to promoting action and applies particularly to small retailers interested in promoting political activities and environmental pressure groups. Some perceive that information may be a trigger to action (see 8.5.) or be used as a substitute for action where the economic constraints prevent retailers stopping stocking a disapproved-of but profitable item. Here, ethics can be partially redeemed by information provision encouraging purchasing to change in line with ethics.

So there are four reasons to provide information and this information can be specified on the pack where multiples produce own-label products. For other products, information can be provided in leaflets and posters and also products can be chosen for stocking according to their informative qualities. All these forms of packaging and design information, plus direct advertising information, are included in Wernick's term "promotional information" as they all signify the product in some way. Here the emphasis will be primarily on labels and leaflets as they are the main ways in which retailers give out promotional information, unlike the manufacturers' use of environmental reference, e.g. for cars (Holder 1991).

Multiples perceive the function of such product information to be to convey the extra environmental benefit of the product over other brands, i.e. its competitive advantage or "positive environmental advantage compared with a similar standard product, or one it replaces" (Sainsbury's publication 1991). This emphasis on positive information by multiples contrasts with the general perception of smaller retailers (and consumers) that most product information is negative, declaring what the environmentally friendly product does not contain or do, e.g.:

> "It doesn't tell you what's in it, it tells you what's not in it." (R10)

> "We need a lot more legislation so that people are told what products are; they don't want to know what it *isn't*." (R5)

Product labelling is a thorny issue in terms of what is a valid reference. Some labels and advertisements have already prompted environmental pressure groups such as Friends of the Earth to criticise their environmentally friendly claims (Earth Matters 1989/90 No.6, 1991 No.10, 1992 No.14). This problem is terminological - 'friendly' is used on products which are inherently *not* harmless and this is recognised by the multiples, e.g.:

> "at the end of the day, there is hardly anything which is environmentally friendly, it's about degrees of unfriendliness." (S5)

Hence, most of the multiples now reject 'environmentally friendly' labels for their own brand products, but they retain it on others brands stocked and ASDA still uses 'Environmentally Responsible' on own-label products. Typical statements on this theme from the oral and publication data are:

> "Nobody sensible should be using the word 'environmentally friendly' anyway and we didn't, right from the start... [we only use] factual statements... [which are] analytically verifiable... We will not make statements about the 'environmentally responsible', 'friendlier', 'friendly' kind, whatever - it's not on." (S1)

> "Sainsbury's never makes unrealistic claims, nor ones which it cannot substantiate." (Sainsbury's publication 1991)

> "Environmentally based symbols or labelling should not be exploited to offset environmentally negative effects of either the product or its packaging." (Safeway Environmental Information Pack 1991 p6)

The problem with environmentally friendly labelling seems to be that its blanket adoption has led to spurious usages. Multiples claim it is now meaningless and subjective and that they prefer more verifiable claims as to contents of products, or information based on performed rather than potential actions, e.g. "recycled" claims are better than "recyclable" ones especially where public access to recycling facilities are poor. This clearly links into the concept of information as a precursor for action, and where the action is unavailable the information should not be provided, e.g. Sainsbury's is not labelling plastics as 'recyclable':

> "since it regards it as misleading to do so when no recycling facilities exist in the UK for this type of material." (Sainsbury's publication 1991)

The optimum level of product information which retailers feel they should adopt for leaflets and labels is a non-specialised one so that it is comprehensible to the uneducated masses as:

> "The people you can appeal to on the awareness or green level are a minority... we can't be too intellectual about it... That passes some people by. You have to appeal on all levels to make it work." (R7)

> "It's no good us investing time and effort in producing thirty to forty million leaflets now, if people pick them up and they can't read them. Or if they can read them, they can't understand them... because people don't know what polyunpronounceables are." (S1)

Information should therefore be practical in describing impact (important in ascribing and reinforcing responsibility, see 6.3.2.) and not highly intellectual or abstracted from behavioural situations. Some elements have to be specialised to be accurate, e.g. chemicals used in products, but the environmental processes are generally described in less academic ways, e.g. a Tesco leaflet describes the greenhouse effect thus:

> "The problem began with the increase in these gases caused by man's activity. They too rise into the atmosphere and add to the insulating layer. Unfortunately this thicker layer means that too much heat is trapped inside instead of escaping into space." (Tesco publication, 1992)

A crisis of confidence is perceived where the generalisation of wording means that information is misused or contaminated. This is a problem where the use of environmentally friendly, biodegradable and organic symbols is weakly regulated and there exist "grey areas" in the definition of such claims. This means that manufacturers and labellers can change wording so that it is legally correct but sins by omission, e.g. free-range eggs are produced under production methods which belies the implication of the phrase (The Independent 1992 July 13 p32).

There is a need to clarify the vagueness in promotional information identified by both consumers and retailers and also to tighten the application of such rules, through stronger watchdog bodies.

> "there is always that proviso: that it depends in fact exactly how something is worded, what it says. And while people may misread it, and it might even be designed to be misread, you can't entirely blame

> the supplier for using the existing rules as they are. It's a question of rules being tightened." (R3)
>
> "I would caution you on the need for definition... you do need some kind of monitor, don't you, so that the customer knows what you mean by 'organically'". (L9)

Also important is information on the company's activities in the form of environmental disclosure. Here information is provided as justification as in leaflets and labelling but tends to be very patchy. It is usually dependent upon "specific narrative" (Harte and Owen 1991; Owen 1992) which is seldom quantified but relates specific incidents of proenvironmental change, e.g. the data reveal narratives about car fleet conversion to unleaded, CFC refrigerant changes, recycling of coathangers, but not an overall assessment of company-wide progress.

8.4. Evaluating Information.

Provision of information is not the end of the story. Once in possession of information, individuals assess its worth according to its content and its provider. This evaluation includes issues such as certainty, inaccuracy, intention to mislead, trust and expertise.

8.4.1. Uncertainty in Information.

There is a considerable amount of uncertainty relating to environmental information, both for consumers and retailers. This falls in to two groups: uncertainty about scientific information and uncertainty about promotional information.

Individuals perceive four sources of uncertainty in current scientific theories about environmental change, especially global warming. Firstly there is the lack of "scientific proof", in terms of facts, which is identified explicitly by eight individuals but has different effects depending upon stance. For a minority of non-members, this lack of proof exacerbates the difficulty of accepting the theories of environmental degradation where the problems are not easily visible. This is especially true for pollution and for global warming, where people cite poor summers as factual contradictions to the theory. The lack of facts makes the argument weak:

> "it is not really proven that it is spray cans and exhaust gases that do the damage so I tend to keep an open mind." (215)

This is due to the complexities of the environmental problem as identified by this scientifically-educated group member:

> "the chemistry and the physics of the environment is so complicated that we've no idea whether it matters whether we put a bit of phosphate or a bit of nitrate into it... there isn't a simple answer". (284)

This kind of factual uncertainty seems to relate to technical uncertainty (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991; Functowicz and Ravetz 1990) due to its emphasis upon the accuracy of facts as proof. It may also have some component of methodological uncertainty (ibid. and see 3.8.1.) as the data do not show a sufficiently clear distinction between these forms. This contrasts with Collins (1987) distance effect, where the distance of the individual from the research strengthens their perceived certainty of the facts produced by it. However, Collins does recognise that this can be complicated by scientific controversies and the data suggests that it is also complicated by environmental awareness and behaviour. Hence, for the more active environmentalists, factual uncertainty, although perceived, does not shake belief in environmental degradation, e.g.:

> "I think that we see [that] things are apparently normal... I say they aren't normal... though it doesn't look like it, to any of us including me, my guts tell me we are building up totally insoluble problems". (273)

The second source of uncertainty emerges because people perceive that scientists, as a group, are in disagreement and dispute because of a lack of factual proofs for either side, and therefore that scientific controversies exist which weaken certainty (Collins 1987). This relates in part to methodological uncertainty (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991; Functowicz and Ravetz 1990) but stresses the uncertainty of experts rather than the uncertainty of technique or information and is rooted more in the behaviour of people and the scientific system where:

> "all scientists argue the toss with one another". (288)

The sides in these disagreements seem unclear and poorly defined to the non-

specialist, who consequently cannot identify with either. This is perceived to be due to a lack of expertise (see also 8.4.3.) and the corollary that scientific debates are closed to non-experts:

> "particularly on highly technical things like nuclear power, people are kept from voicing their opinions or from feeling that have a right to opinions, because they can't have the necessary - or what people are told is necessary to give technical knowledge". (273)

Again, (as in 8.2.) control and certainty is held by others so that, for the individual, especially non-members who perceive themselves as less informed than environmental group members anyway:

> "we don't know for certain what is happening. They're all theories really. Some people say in fifty years we'll all be dead. Other people say, 'Ah, you're worrying too much, there's no worry.' You don't know what to believe". (100)

Because of a lack of facts and scientific agreement, both the public and retailers perceive gaps in the scientists' knowledge, rendering it limited at present, for example on the causes of ozone depletion which are:

> "so poorly understood, even by the chaps who are supposed to know about it, the meteorologists". (284)

> "You know that CFCs are not environmentally friendly, but can you be certain until they actually decide that the things they're replacing them with *are*. They could be thought to be environmentally friendly and may not be... So the scientific evidence doesn't seem to be correct." (305)

Additionally, multiple retailers perceive the scientific process of life-cycle analysis (or cradle to grave assessment) of products and processes to be poorly developed as yet, despite using it themselves. In this specialised area, the two problems of factual and expert uncertainty increase the uncertainty of life-cycle analysis but here there is a belief that advancing scientific knowledge will deal with the problems in time:

> "we're not expert at [life-cycle analysis]... neither's anybody else. And it's all subjective interpretations at this stage, so we're not getting too far *publicly* on looking at that side of product assessment, because it's very immature, it's undeveloped." (S1)

The third source of uncertainty is the history of changing scientific theory, weakening its credibility. Several individuals point to the scientific adherence in the 1970s to the theory of an imminent Ice Age, in mockery of the present assertions of imminent global warming. This suggests a perceived lack of rigour, that scientists operate according to scientific fashion. Although still regarded as experts, this is seen as a weakness, making certainties unstable, hence:

> "Last year it was global warming, next year it'll be something else." (284)

> "they tend to jump to conclusions very quickly... It seems to be an 'in' thing to come up with a new idea - what might cause what. Then everybody seems to hop on the bandwagon and after two or three years you suddenly learn to your amazement that it wasn't that, it might have been something totally different, or at least it can't be proven conclusively." (215)

Fourthly, scientific information may be biased due to the funding body the scientists rely on. This means 'pure' science is contaminated by the needs of business, which can twist the truth or obscure sections of it. Interestingly this contamination is usually not ascribed directly to the scientists but to the disseminators of their work through marketing. The implication is that such contamination is something that scientists are forced to do but control of it rests with funding bodies:

> "You can't say the scientists are lying, can you? Maybe not telling the [whole] truth... They don't tell you everything". (239)

> "I know that there are as many scientists who are... on the side of food manufacturers as there are scientists who are on the side of... what you might call the truth, or the people's side against the manufacturers." (237)

Funding also puts a priority on technological development and commercial progress, not on time-consuming investigations of all possible consequences. This omits areas of study and therefore does not eradicate uncertainties in those areas:

> "the whole affair [of nuclear waste] isn't thought out, because what they're going to do with that, nobody knows. They don't know how long it will take to get rid of it and they don't know what's going to happen about it and specifically the cost." (215)

For the retailers, the problem of uncertainty has another implication where

scientific information is the basis for costly commercial changes. Here science is used as a justification, both inside and outside the company, of the expenses of proenvironmental change, for example to show that a change of CFC refrigerant is needed due to the scientific proof of the effect of CFCs on high-level ozone. If there is uncertainty, this investment is in jeopardy, because, if this evidence changes later, the investment will be undermined and unjustifiable, rendering it a financial sacrifice which is too great for the company's environmental responsibility. Certainty is needed to guarantee the investment and uncertainty makes it difficult to commit to because:

> "We can't make major changes on ourselves and make demands on our suppliers which cost people serious money if the underlying science is unsound or likely to be changed; the weight of scientific opinion has to be there to support the view, to confirm the issue as it is being expressed". (S1)

8.4.2. Trust and Distrust of Promotional Information.

As well as uncertainties about the scientific information in the media, individuals perceive uncertainties in promotional information (Wernick 1990) provided by business. However, scientific uncertainties are regarded as mainly unintentional and a consequence of a lack of proof. There is more doubt among consumers about the motives of promotional information providers as this means that uncertainties in this case may be perceived as *intentionally* created and misleading, using vague terms in order to sell products.

Promotional information seems to be given a wary reception. For the public, it seems that the undeniable motive of business - to make money - taints the information it gives and leads to doubt and suspicion of both motives and information in publicised proenvironmental changes to products and company (also 7.5.4.).

Two forms of information are involved - broadcast advertisements and also packaging and labelling - and both are seen as manipulative, selecting and employing information to fulfil the needs of its providers. This perception of motives leads to uncertainties about the information provided, e.g.:

> "I rather think that some of the firms are cashing in on this ozone friendliness and so on and I have begun to have my doubts about how true that is." (244)

The most obvious way in which information is seen as manipulative and therefore dubious in the use of blanket terms such as 'environmentally friendly' or 'ozone friendly' or even 'biodegradable' in marketing. Such terms are criticised as too vague to be meaningful and only motivated by profit-making principles to make money out of green consumerist concern so that the changes they imply in the product or company cannot therefore be real:

> "there may not be anything different from a product previously; they can just put a badge on because it's got no harmful ingredients in it... there's probably something else in it that does just as much damage". (237)

> "They know that there is a green market now, so they're trying to say, 'This is a natural product', but I'm very suspicious". (101)

> "I don't know what they're allowed to label 'organic' and therefore I don't entirely trust it." (284)

> "Sometimes I think they hedge a bit. They're not... specific". (239)

Prima facie, it appears that these labels are not useful because of the paucity of the information. They need to be more specific about the particular environmental attribute, to explain more clearly what the difference between the 'green' and the 'non-green' option is. In their vagueness, such labels only promote suspicion as they seem to gloss over the uncertainties perceived (see 8.4.1.) which loses them credibility and makes them appear intentionally misleading and " a con" prompting scepticism thus:

> "anything that's labelled 'ozone friendly' I think you can basically disregard. You assume that that's marketing hype... Because nobody actually knows what chews up the ozone." (284)

> "I don't think it's really truthfully labelled... [it] don't always explain exactly what it does". (146)

> "a little thing saying 'environmentally friendly' without giving any further explanations and I would doubt very much that these are what they say are." (215)

This is also recognised by multiples, a number of whom claim to have rejected blanket terms and criticise manufacturers still using them for:

> "green claims by omission: they say 'recycled' and that's all they say, they don't say what it's come from or what has been saved by its being recycled. They encourage this perception of 'buy recycled and save the rainforest'." (S6)

However, the implicit problem seems to be not a lack of information but the ease of using such labels without further qualification. The distrust of companies' motives means that the information they provide is construed as an expression of superficial change merely pretending to be more substantial. The company is therefore perceived as jumping on the bandwagon and therefore nothing is taken on trust so that "you've got to be very suspicious" (237). It does not seem likely that more information would be used by individuals *per se* but it would be a means of greater legitimation of change and of the validity of environmentally friendly labels.

This same distrust of labels and motive is exhibited by multiples of manufacturers, whom they perceive to be more commercially oriented than retailers and therefore more likely to mislead. This is shown implicitly in the following comment:

> "[dolphin friendly tuna]... that really was a consumer move, that the suppliers reacted perhaps worryingly quickly in the sense that it was *bloody* quick and all of a sudden the new labels were there." (S6)

The real issue of misleading information is the degree of the legitimation of the proenvironmental change implied. More information equates to more legitimation but in all cases trust resides not in the information itself, but in the provider of that information (see 8.4.4.) and their motives.

Information may therefore be unintentionally or intentionally misleading. Although the consumers make little clear distinction between the two types, their emphasis on the profit motive of business suggests that they believe it is intentionally misleading whereas science is less intentionally so (see 8.4.1.). The multiples protest that although misleading advertising was produced in the late 1980s before the main thrust of public attention and observation, this was *un*intentionally misleading, involving "genuine mistakes" (S1). Furthermore, since then all information is

carefully screened because the identification of misleading information would do serious damage to high profile brands and therefore embodies too high a risk:

> "people who've got years and millions of pounds invested in their brand names are not seriously even gonna *risk* anything that would detract from the integrity of those brands because they've too much invested in them." (S1)

The smaller retailers and farmers still believe that the production of intentionally misleading information occurs, but recognise that this may be done within the bounds of legislation by exploiting the loopholes in ambiguous or lax regulation.

> "Most of the suppliers... are genuinely honest within the rules of what one is allowed to do and call things at the moment." (R3)

There is also the misuse of the Soil Association symbol with the intention to mislead, which is cited as a particularly important source of concern by organic farmers in the data. Consumers give trust to such symbols (Giddens 1990) and therefore its exploitation undermines this trust and the organic farmers' market.

As well as misleading information provided by retailers to consumers, multiples identify misleading information given by consumers to retailers via market research, which shows a discrepancy: a far higher proportion of green consumers are identified in market research than in sales figures. They ascribe this discrepancy to both the media and the consumers, where the media hypes up a minority demand and where consumers give the socially acceptable response to questions and not their real response - not to sacrifice quality or money. The consumers are therefore misleading in providing inaccurate information; although:

> "If *challenged*, they care... they would claim to be environmentally friendly". (L9)

> "all the time, you've got the consumers telling you one thing, but actually doing another... They talk about being a good green consumer, but it hasn't yet permeated quite sufficiently in there to actually be reflected in the purchasing habits." (S6)

> "the media would have us believe that the British public is a lot greener, a lot more environmentally concerned than it really is." (S5)

8.4.3. Expertise and Lack of Expertise.

A key element in the evaluation of information and its providers is the level of expertise of the individual. Much environmental information is perceived as very scientific in that it is very specialised. In contrast, the majority of individuals tend to view themselves as unscientific, having little specialist experience and no formal training in scientific methods, with about a third expressly stating "I'm not a scientist" (e.g. 249, 273, 237, 125) or something similar, in order to identify themselves as non-experts:

> "I'm not an academic in any way... If I say it, it's probably wrong, because it's very general information." (310)

Even scientific experts are perceived as having gaps in their knowledge due to uncertainties in environmental facts and theories (see 8.4.1.). These gaps are wider for non-experts, so that a lack of training leads to an feeling of powerlessness in evaluating product claims and in evaluating the theories behind them:

> "There's lots of information, but lots of it is conflicting. And it's very difficult for somebody, the man in the street, to evaluate it." (237)

> "I think you have to be an expert to form an opinion on that [nuclear waste] and I'm not an expert." (237)

> "consumers say they're not influenced by advertising and by packaging and by claims, but they are, because we don't know any better... even people who are aware of the facts would be at a loss to distinguish the truth from what's an advertising sell." (237)

The evaluation and verification of information is seen to be in the hands of experts, with (usually scientific) training and facilities such as laboratories. They can be employed by companies or pressure groups such as environmental or consumerist organisations. The inability of the lay person to check on expert claims means that they rely upon those experts who have the ability to do so and who therefore control information and its assessment because:

> "it's almost impossible for us people, not being scientists, to know where the truth of the matter lies." (237)

The response to this in the data appears to be the establishment of trust, where information and efficacy is lacking and therefore the only option is the development of trust to allow the acceptance of uncertainty (also theorised by Giddens (1990) and Luhman (1979)).

> "I can only assume and trust that what they say is on there is in actual fact factual and is good for the environment... trusting at face value". (249)

> "We can all be mizzled - we're told that it's good, told it's green, then it turns out it's no different from the others... It gives a whole list of things it hasn't in. I imagine it must be true." (290)

> "I assume it does have an effect if we're choosing environmentally friendly products. I assume that we're helping to preserve the environment. I *assume* - I don't know." (100)

> "One only goes on what we're told... I tend to sort of think if that's what they say, it must be on the basis of the soundest advice, and therefore we should be grateful for what they're doing... We trust our scientific and government leaders and experts to do it for us". (125)

This lack of evaluative ability is reinforced where the products show no visible features which prove or disprove claims for them, e.g. pesticides, CFCs, additives. Individuals use visual features to help them decide, but these are often weak criteria.

> "it just seems logical that a product that's not falsified in any way, in other words, is not dyed pink and it's a natural-looking colour, there seems to be a logic there that tells you that it's more authentic... I tend to go for what I consider a more natural product than one that's supposed to be environmentally friendly. You can sense there's a difference... [but] it's quite possible to be fooled". (237)

> "If it looks convincingly environmentally friendly [I buy it]". (274)

This use of visibility as a criteria is noted by Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte (1990 p6-8) who quote a 1989 Mintel survey to show that there is more consumer interest in less processed organic produce because of the perceived visibility of its freshness.

Retailers can perceive themselves similarly unable to evaluate information where their retailing function prevents them from employing teams to check

manufacturers' environmental claims. This renders manufacturers as the experts and locates control outside the retailers' sphere for non-own-label products.

> "We don't have access to their factories and access to their formula or information. You have to rely on the integrity of these people to do their job properly." (S1)

> "we aren't scientists here whatsoever. We take at face value what we're told." (S6)

Like the consumers, the multiples put forward their lack of scientific training - "we're not environmental science experts" (S1) - as a barrier to evaluation and the lack of visibility of environmental changes such as biodegradability. (This seems to point to a trust-doubt ratio (see 8.4.3.)).

Some retailers take it upon themselves to check sources within their capabilities or where requested by customers to verify the trust in the manufacturers and to remove the minority doubt.

Four group members perceive themselves as having a level of scientific training that is above average. As noted here (in 4.3.3.) and in other studies (e.g. Tognacci *et al* 1972), environmental group members generally have had a longer education than non-members, so they might be expected to have had more scientific training. However, such training does not guarantee expertise and therefore to remove distrust, nor does it even increase trust in a straightforward manner. Some scientifically trained individuals are more suspicious of scientific theories, feeling able to criticise them.

> "I have a sort of scientific mind... I'm also a chemist, so I don't believe that chemicals are necessarily bad... I spend all my life doing science". (284)

For other group members, the gathering of scientific knowledge increases their agreement with scientific theories and therefore increases the perceived threat and the need for action.

Despite the previous discussion, none of the environmental group members are stopped in their tracks by this lack of knowledge and expertise. It does not preclude the formation of opinions: it is not perceived necessary for every individual to become a specialist on a subject to be able to act in relation to it. A general

awareness and interest are seen as more important in action than expertise:

> "It's all gut feeling... I never let detailed knowledge of the facts, or rather the lack of it, get in the way of opinions." (273)

> "I'm aware that there is such a thing [as the greenhouse effect] and I'm aware of what the consequences could be. I'm aware, loosely, of some of the causes, but the actual scientific nitty-gritty I'm not particularly aware of - I don't think you necessarily need to be." (100)

It seems that some aspects of information, especially theories, are compartmentalised and esoteric but the components important for behaviour are more practical and therefore more generally accessible.

8.4.4. Trust and Doubt.

As mentioned (see 8.4.3.), the data show that trust in information is based upon trust in the provider (as suggested by Giddens 1990) and this is acknowledged by both individuals and retailers. They evaluate information according to the motives of the provider and how these might colour the information, and also according to experience and past knowledge of the provider - which, for business, can ensure customer loyalty.

To some extent, it seems that the expertise and specialisation of the provider tend to engender trust in the information that is provided. However, this can be qualified where there are areas of doubt and suspicion contradicting general, diffuse trust, particularly as regards promotional information:

> "You assume that they're not being allowed to get away with telling a pack of lies. You *assume* but I don't know. Are they telling lies?" (100)

The data therefore suggest that there is a ratio of trust to doubt (as also proposed by Campbell 1978; Luhman 1979; Giddens 1990). The general system of information providers and verifiers is trusted and this *allows* certain aspects of it to be distrusted, such as labelling. Luhman (1979) suggests that trust functions to remove uncertainty and chaos where there is a lack of information and agency because of the systems of information provision in society (Giddens 1990). The lack of agency and the increase of trust reinforces the dependency seen in the data here,

where individuals become dependent upon experts and information-providers (see 8.4.3.), and necessitates distrust to regain some agency. The data also identify the need for experts to monitor the experts, e.g. in the shape of a watchdog body on labelling, and for stricter controls on definitions. So, trust-doubt ratios are important in permitting social continuity by passing over a lot of decisions and responsibility to others, but distrust retains some agency in immediate problems.

One case in which the trust-doubt ratio operates is where there are health problems in the family. Despite medical experts identifying the source of the problem, the individuals may prefer their own interpretation, e.g. air pollution, trusting more to their own sense or emotion than to the (limited) knowledge of the experts, e.g.:

> "the scientists will tell you that it does you no harm whatsoever. But *I* don't know that. I sense that it does do me harm." (237)

This was also noted by Fessenden-Raden *et al* (1987), who suggest that people who have suffered unexplained or unfamiliar health problems latch onto new information and explanations of these. As in the data here, this is prompted by their distrust of experts and their belief that such information has been withheld. They prefer to distrust information that differs from their personal opinion (Fitchen 1987).

There is minority doubt about the information from environmental groups, because it overemphasises certainty in its aim to persuade action and therefore employs dubious science.

> "if these guys [Friends of the Earth] are going to use scientific arguments, and that's probably a good idea, then they should make absolutely sure that they've got their science right. Because otherwise they'll madden people like me.. who know some science and will spot the holes in the argument, because it's very poor news to use a fallacious scientific argument because it will impress a lot of people." (284)

This contrasts with a wider trust of environmental groups due to their motives going beyond self-interest. This increases their credibility, which tends to overwhelm doubts about the scientific objectivity of their arguments.

There is also minority doubt about the motives of scientists, where they might be creating scares in collusion with the media as part of "a con" because:

> "[the public] think, 'Ooh, that's very scientific, it must be true.' Not at all, it may just be lies." (284)

Again, this contrasts with a wider perception of scientists as unbiased experts, although limited by the extent of knowledge as described above. This clearly demonstrates perceptions of the authority of science as also discussed by Barnes (1985), Etzioni and Nunn (1991) and Yearley (1991) in such comments as:

> "[a physicist is] much more qualified to say... because of his expertise and so on, you're liable to believe it." (237)

> "you believe him because he's a doctor. There are people who are figures of authority that you do tend to believe." (237)

In fact a number of men, both members and non-members of environmental groups, see science as a source of optimism and therefore trust it as a system:

> "I believe in science, I believe that real science is looking for truth and... that's what I go back to". (284)

> "I am [worried about the environment] but I always think man's ingenuity will come up with a way of combatting it, or meeting it in some way." (310)

> "science leads in an abstract way. They just make discoveries and the commercial people get hold of it, which is where technology comes into it... if it's marketable, you can sell it... It's up to scientists to find a way of making a motor car that... isn't pumping out all sorts of awful gases". (237)

A trust-doubt ratio also operates between retailers and manufacturers. Retailers give a diffuse trust to their manufacturers and suppliers, usually based upon experience, a history of satisfactory dealings and an "established" reputation, but also have specific doubt over their environmental claims:

> "how [the manufacturers] changed [their detergent] and what they put in, I don't know. All you can do is say they're a company with a name and presumably that product is what they say it is; they haven't put something naughty in it to make it work." (R2)

> "The sort of manufacturers that I'm dealing with, I trust them inasmuch that the product is what they say it is." (R3)

> "We have to go on what our suppliers say. Or what the

manufacturers say. And in the end you have to trust them." (R8)

> "There's a bit of cynicism creeps in sometimes because... someone says, 'Hey, this is really green' and you read something in *Which?* says, 'No, it isn't'. So I wonder." (S6)

Retailers also see a lack of scientific proof for some of manufacturers' claims, e.g. for biodegradability:

> "I've had no great scientific evidence that a lot of these biodegradable products are in fact biodegradable, as far as plastic goes." (R4)

As with the consumer, the doubt seems to lie in the motives of the manufacturers with the odd situation that the multiples, whose information the consumers distrust due to their profit motives, distrust the information of the manufacturers due to the manufacturers' profit motives. This is because the commercial thrust of manufacturing is perceived by the multiples as stronger than that of retailing and thus the manufacturers are fast reactors to any possible bandwagon.

> "the big manufacturers do appreciate and understand and are reacting to the market... because they are very, *very* commercially orientated people". (S6)

This raises issues of possible exploitation where superficial changes are publicised, but this is slightly different to the consumer situation. For the multiples, the possibility of exploitation is less important ethically because it can be passed onto their consumers, but it may have repercussions on the reputation of both types of retailers if manufacturers stocked by them are exposed as unsound.

8.4.5. Trust and Business Reputation.

Multiples and retailers see customer trust as an important part of their reputation and hence their future viability. It is therefore better to encourage trust than merely to provide excesses of information, so multiples downplay environmental PR as a tactic, asserting that too much would be cynical (i.e. exploitative). There is an underlying worry that this would also expose the company to scrutiny (see 7.3.) and therefore trust is preferable to environmental information provision in securing legitimation thus:

> "Our company policy is not having a very high, very noisy environmental profile. We... rely upon the trust that our customers have in us, in doing things which are decent." (S5)

The trust in retailers is due to their position in society and their direct contact with the consumers, unlike manufacturers who have to communicate through the retailers.

> "There's a lot of trust in retailers, mainly because we're accessible... you see your retailer... We think we're *earned* that trust, it's not a false trust." (S1)

However, some multiples see this trust eroding in a climate of public distrust and questioning of companies and other bodies that were formerly trusted. Legitimation is becoming more difficult to gain as:

> "People question authority, people question so-called facts that are put before them. Now, that sort of thing tends to erode blind faith". (S5)

It is clear that as public expectations of companies rise (7.3.1.), legitimation through information and trust becomes more exacting:

> "It's becoming fashionable for companies large and small to actually make an environmental statement... to state to the general public... where they stand. And I think as a form of reassurance in a way." (S5)

Information provision is also part of the defensive position mentioned previously (see 7.6.2.), to justify the company's position and the trust of its customers with a clear need for public (customer) legitimation:

> "All sorts of things [are] going on which we tell people about because it's all part of justifying what we do, otherwise we're always accused of being cynical and superficial and short term and only in it for the money." (S1)

Some product information is used explicitly for customer reassurance, e.g. ASDA acknowledge that all UK detergents are biodegradable but still use the phrase "contains biodegradable detergents" on packs saying "this is just for reassurance" (ASDA Hi-Time magazine 1991).

The Soil Association symbol is identified by organic farmers as a conveyor of confidence and trust and is therefore subject to abuse.

> "You've got to have it to sell it to shops, shops won't buy it unless it's symbol... It's all a matter of trust, and also the fact that you know the symbol." (F6)

8.5. Information as a Trigger to Action.

Information is perceived as a stimulus for action, as a necessary precondition as suggested in Chapter 6. Individuals and retailers see a need for information provision to enable informed choice, of products, of recycling behaviour, of voting. In this sense, information is an essential input to the decision-making process as:

> "You've got to have all the facts to be able to make an informed decision." (239)

> "if you open your eyes and really look, you're gonna find and when you find, you've got to do something about it... you're not turning your back on it." (F3)

Information is predominantly action-related in that it may define the scope of possible action, e.g. relating purchases to particular environmental problems particularly in the advertising media. This is noted by Gardner and Sheppard when they point to the effectiveness of CFC-free aerosols as green products because:

> "for the first time, consumers were able to relate a relatively humdrum activity - pressing an aerosol button - to the global destruction of the ozone layer." (Gardner and Sheppard 1989 p220)

The actionable component of information is underlined in the data, e.g. for this local Greenpeace fund-raiser:

> "you get as much information as you can as to what is happening, then see what you can do to stop it." (255)

Information provision includes the diffusion of action possibilities alongside ideas, e.g. environmental group advocate ethics and sell environmentally related products alongside information on the status of their campaigns.

The absence of information is perceived by group members to preclude action, so the possession of information becomes a necessary precondition thus:

> "If you're aware of it, you can do something. If you don't know about it, there's nothing you *can* do." (249)

> "Without the information, you stay as you are... Without the right information, you're lost. People'll just not bother." (255)

However, it is not a *sufficient* precondition. Individuals identify where they are informed about a problem but remain inactive (see 6.4.) and they also identify this in others, where information is not believed or rejected because of the changes it would necessitate if accepted and acted on. Although information may provide a moral stimulus, creating a sense of responsibility, it is not adequate to initiate behavioural changes alone due to constraints (see 6.5., 6.6. and 6.7.). In addition, the forcing of information on people in an attempt to change their behaviour can arouse hostility, resentment or create a defensive attitude, which tends to rely on the uncertainty of such information (see 8.4.1.).

The reverse sequence to information initiating action may also operate: where the individual is already interested or concerned or active, *this* forms the stimulus to seek information.

> "it's *because* it's a concern that's uppermost in my mind, and it's *because* I've made contact with these organisations." (292)

> "if you're not the sort of person I am, and you're not watching, particularly the programmes that appeal to me... then maybe you don't hear." (290)

This suggests that information in a vacuum is insufficient to change anything and that, at most, information is contributory to behaviour rather than initiating it, although it does seem to enable behavioural choices. Information may therefore be more significant by its absence in constraining behaviour than where it is present in initiating behaviour.

8.6. Cycles in Information Provision.

Information goes through cycles in terms of the volume provided, especially connected to media coverage (e.g. Downs 1972) when:

> "it just sort of dies down a bit, so you're not totally bothered about it." (274)

Individuals and retailers identify peaks of environmental coverage in the media, with a recent main peak identified in 1988-1990, just prior to the first

interviews.

> "two years ago when there was the tremendous green upsurge... you could buy green everywhere. And now most of that's disappeared." (284)

(This is also echoed in relation to voting patterns (Johnston 1989; Greenline 1992 No.97, No.98)).

The retailers therefore respond to these cycles of salience in judging the amount of information they are expected to provide. Recent changes mean that the Soil Association symbol and other ways to confirm the integrity of products is now more necessary because of the prominent background information about them.

Multiples also identify the current "fashion" amongst their competitors towards increasing information provision, with an increasing variety of green products vying for attention. As with other activities, there is a need to be at least anticipatory on this, if not proactive (see 7.7.).

There are type cycles in environmental issues: different scientific theories rise and fall in prominence with time. Particularly important now seem to be global issues, which are perceived as more high profile than in the 1970s, suggesting a globalisation of issues (also O'Riordan and Rayner 1991; Giddens 1990 p124). This is seen in data from the multiples by the identification of "high profile" issues as the ones on which action must be seen to be taken. This is strengthened by a perception of oncoming legislation from the EC to make environmental statements and audits compulsory for big companies, even though this is only yet in a very early draft form (Owen 1992).

Global issues are more strongly connected with green consumerism than local ones as the green claims made for products usually refer to wider problems such as ozone depletion, tropical deforestation, to widen their relevance across many markets. However, individuals tend to emphasise local issues (see 9.2.).

8.7. Concluding Remarks.

This chapter has looked at some of the issues relating to environmental information with respect to the public, environmental groups and retailers. The last two groups see a clear function in providing information to legitimate their own

activities and thereby win public support.

Information is important, but not sufficient, in initiating proenvironmental action through the self-ascription of responsibility in an acknowledgement of impact. This effect is complicated by problems with the acceptance of information provided by groups whose motives are distrusted. The uncertainties stem from perceived deficiencies in scientific theory and proof and from the suspected distortion of information according to the motives of its providers, perceived as elites. A perceived lack of expertise in evaluating the information both necessitates trust of the systems of information provision, yet permits distrust of portions of these, such as the labels on green products. The control of information by elites, compounded by the individual's inability to evaluate the extent of this, complicates the connection between information and action, although the *need* for action-related information remains clear. In some cases, action is precipitated by proenvironmental opinion and information, but it seems likely that the constraints on reception and assessment of information weaken its impact and make it unlikely to initiate proenvironmental behaviour alone.

The next chapter brings together issues from this and the previous two chapters to investigate the spatial and temporal contexts of motivations, constraints and information and their respective effects on green consumerism and other forms of public environmentalism.

CHAPTER 9: THE SCALE AND SCOPE OF PROENVIRONMENTAL ACTION.

9.1. Introduction.

Having looked at the initiating and constraining factors in individual and retailer proenvironmental change in the previous chapters, it is necessary to draw together some of the themes about the scale and the scope of the resulting action. In this chapter, the geographical and social scales of individual actions, such as green consumerism, are discussed, as well as the temporal nature of action, with particular reference to the future of the green market. As well as scales, types of action are discussed, including political acts and group acts as options alongside the individualistic, economic act of green consumerism.

9.2. Spatial Scales of Action.

Individuals assess possible proenvironmental actions in terms of impact and responsibility (see Chapter 6), but employ different methods of prioritising acts. Priority can be placed on the immediate (local) or the wider (global) concerns, or incorporate aspects of both. It is usual for individuals to consider both immediate *and* global issues, but for them to relate their own actions specifically to types of each. As for information (see Chapter 8), it is the action-related component of scales which is significant in green consumerism and other proenvironmental behaviours.

9.2.1. Concepts of Immediacy.

There are two components to the concept of immediacy, where local issues are prioritised: the geographical (physical) component, e.g. the local vicinity, and the social component, where the immediate area of concern is defined in terms of social connections, such as one's family or nation. The two aspects reinforce one another, emphasising social ties and the importance of locale. One or the other may be explicit with the other less so, but they are inherently connected in environmental references such as the following from an activist and a non-activist respectively:

> "you think of your own first, and then when you know that they're OK, then you spread it out. You spread it out into circles: your own,

> your direct family, then neighbours, people in the same town, the same city, same country, same world." (255)

> "it's not so much the greenhouse effect that I'm worried about. I'm more concerned with what's going on in the streets... this is what people bother about: it's the immediate things, it's how it's gonna be for their children in everyday life". (100)

The social aspect of immediacy is especially prominent where health is involved. As mentioned in 8.4.3., health concerns are related by individuals to environmental degradation. Where this degradation affects their own health and their family's health, environmental information and action are prioritised. For example, five individuals, both members and non-members of groups, have had serious illness in their immediate family which they ascribe to environmental pollution either explicitly through discussion or implicitly through doubt of the official verdict of their doctors (also noted by Fitchen 1987). This point is illustrated by the following non-activist, who remains concerned 5 years after her son's premature birth and subsequent illness:

> "Was it something toxic in the gases?... Was it something in the environment? In the drinking water?... you can't help but wonder and think... because the environment's getting more polluted and did that affect me directly?" (101)

Several others mention as examples of immediate health concerns the asbestos-contamination cases in Armley in West Leeds, which were covered by local media during the interviewing period (see 4.1.1.). This combines the geographical component - the closeness of the problem - with the social - word is passed through friend networks across the communities.

Such discussions raised emotions because they have raised the awareness of the individual to a specific environmental concern with serious consequences. As also noted by Fitchen (1987), however, individuals do not necessarily agree with the causes established by perceived experts, especially where experts are distant from the individual and therefore unfamiliar (Wynne 1987). The perception of risk from the immediate environment is related more closely to the 'visibility' of the threat. Pollution is cited as a concern by the majority of individuals because it can be sensed, e.g. as car fumes, smoke, river algae. This is similar to Wynne's (1987)

"familiarity" of environmental risks affecting their perception. In his discussion, the cognitive aspect of health and other issues, i.e. their familiarity or knowledge held about them, is important as well as the emotional aspect of the concern which they consequently raise. In the data here, the familiarity of environmental degradation seems strongly related to visibility. Both affect people's reactions to environmental problems, in that they perceive visible and familiar problems to be more capable of identification and solution than non-visible ones, such as radioactive contamination. The recent revelations about the Chernobyl accident (its five years anniversary occurred at the time of interviewing, accompanied by media attention and investigation) seems to have underlined environment-family health concerns, in particular through the continued abnormalities discovered there. Concerns over the spread of radiation by weather systems, from the Chernobyl area to Cumbria and the local environment, shows the urgency added to an international issue by the identification of a local component. Asbestos contamination of Armley in West Leeds again illustrates the same point. A direct link is made between the physical environment and the immediate problems of the family, depending upon visibility and familiarity, e.g. for this Green Party local activist:

> "we have huge problems of also toxic materials being dumped... all the things that are going into the water, into the air, into the land, we don't know what it's going to do. The one that worries me most of all... is that radioactivity thing." (273)

As well as in health concerns, social immediacy is significant in assessing sacrifice in the form of financial costs of proenvironmental action. The point explicitly made by several individuals is that monetary concerns are primarily rooted in immediate concerns for the family budget and the consequences of sacrifice on the well-being of the family. This therefore works in the opposite direction to the identified health concerns in that environmental concern is reduced for those unaffected by health issues but affected by cost.

For both these immediate health and monetary concerns, individuals perceive some critical level or threshold which a threat must pass to initiate action. Their present level of inaction means that the threshold has not been passed so that concern and action are weaker. The threshold will be overturned if they perceive a stronger

threat, defined as a closer, more immediate threat. The threshold is therefore constructed in relation to the individual's position as:

> "human nature waits until things get really bad, until there's a crisis situation before they'll do anything. It's got to either hurt them in the pocket or a member of the family's got to die from something that has been proved to be related to pollution in the environment before it will cause any change... I won't really [change]... until I feel more threatened by what's happening." (101)

> "We're parochial about these things, aren't we? If we notice something around us that's not right, we kick up a fuss about it. But something which doesn't sit in our view, with implications for us now, we don't really worry about". (305)

From the preceding, both social and geographical immediacy can be effective in prioritising health and money concerns. They can therefore encourage or discourage proenvironmental action, such as green consumerism, in strengthening the responsibility which it addresses though giving a local component to the wider issues of pollution addressed by green products. Geographical immediacy offers other considerations where physical environmental changes noted in the vicinity can serve as a focus for environmental concern. The location of problems in the vicinity makes them more visible and tends to drive off ignorance or avoidance of issues, so:

> "Until it happens in your area [you're not bothered]... If it actually happens to you, then you bloody well know." (292)

Here the environment is often specifically the local *urban* environment, with issues of cleanliness, tidiness and order rising to the surface. The prime concern is usually an aesthetic one. Half the individuals across all groups specifically cite aesthetic issues such as urban development, buildings and especially litter as sources of concern and there are further references to local (visible) pollution of waterways in particular and general deterioration of the urban environment. This is not directly related to green consumerism, but to similar forms of public environmentalism, such as recycling and general environmental awareness, rooted in a local context.

There is a concern with the local population, that they are lazy, apathetic and ignorant (see 6.2.1.) and that they are fouling their local nest, which others have to share. There is also concern to bring the countryside within the urban area and

thereby reduce our separation from it, although this is a minority concern raised by those living in less urban areas, for example on the edge of Ilkley Moor.

9.2.2. Consequences of Immediacy.

Social and geographical immediacy can have two contrasting effects. Firstly, they can stimulate the need for action through the impossibility of ignoring such doorstep concerns. Immediacy thus serves as a strong trigger to action through prompting information-seeking and concern over environmental damage.

> "it's an immediacy that triggers off the desire to do something... I get things, 'Please help this child in West Africa' or whatever, and you really mean to do it and you really think it's important... on the other hand, if you saw the little boy and he was there you'd do it immediately without thinking". (244)

This is facilitated by the immediate environment being within the sphere of influence and control of the individual. This is the basis for impact potential and therefore encourages the self-ascription of responsibility (see 6.3.2.). The connection between local degradation and action is rarely explicit however, except for those involved in local environmental groups, whose declared aims relate to geographically immediate problems and sites and depend on perceived local efficacy and impact (see 6.3.1.). This does not mean that they reject wider issues, but that their chosen impact is through the local system, as part of a wider network, e.g. Greenpeace local groups, Council for the Protection of Rural England and local groups under umbrella organisation such as EYE on the Aire. One member of the latter comments:

> "you can achieve more... more quickly... in your own immediate area and life... you can start where you are... and try and keep your own immediate environment clean and healthy. And then you can spread out with campaigning and educative campaigns and be involved with groups who... have a wider kind of perspective." (292)

This is the basis of the slogan adopted by the Green Party of 'Think globally, act locally', which is quoted as a slogan by two Green Party members, and the integral connections between local and wider issues are mentioned specifically by eight individuals, mostly members of environmental groups. This slogan has obvious connections with green consumerism where the issues addressed are global, or at

least international, but the actions they precipitate are local.

Secondly, and in contrast, immediacy can promote a parochial attitude, which restricts action. Where immediacy is the only consideration, wider issues of the consequences of actions are irrelevant. This is the simple view of the NIMBY phenomenon as a selfish concern for one's own. The data here suggest that parochial self-interest is only ascribed by individuals to others not to themselves, e.g. for Green Party and Greenpeace members:

> "I don't think people look any further than their front door or their front gate. It's a small world but people make it even smaller... As long as a person has fairly decent water coming out of his tap, they're satisfied." (262)

> "They might be environmentally conscious around their own homes, but probably a lot of those people who have beautiful gardens are the people who have dumped their rubbish down the footpath, across the field." (292)

> "lots of people will only think up to their front door and not much further. It seems a trend nowadays: 'As long as I'm alright, to hell with the rest.'" (215)

The NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) phenomenon of concern linked only to threats to one's own environment and neighbourhood has been prominent in media discussion and criticism of local actions. Kemp (1990) has called this concept "too limiting" (p1240) in that it makes NIMBY motives unidimensional when they really include a range of technological, environmental and socioeconomic concerns and judgements beyond self-interest. Kemp also relates the use of the term NIMBY to the forces controlling public debate, such as its use by NIREX to belittle public concern over nuclear plants.

In 9.3.1., it is clear that immediacy, as a force defining impact and action for the self, is a positive notion with connections to social and geographical context. Where immediate issues of environment, health and family budget are prioritised by individuals over wider issues of global or international problems, the distinction is that only the immediate concerns are action-related, the others are only for discussion. This is due to the sphere of efficacy being limited to the immediate, with wider issues beyond individual action but not beyond concern. So the distinction

points to more than individuals being "necessarily preoccupied" with the immediate (O'Riordan and Rayner 1991 p91). Kemp's assertion of the oversimplification of NIMBYism seems therefore justified by the data because there are contextual issues inherent in immediate concerns as well as their significant actionable component. deHaven-Smith likewise suggests that:

> "most people's attitudes about the environment are rooted in their day-to-day experiences, not in *abstract* concerns about the planet's, the nation's... ecology". (deHaven-Smith 1988, emphasis added)

For deHaven-Smith, the concrete concerns of immediacy are linked by ideas disseminated from elites to build coalitions of support for groups and wider campaigns. This is seen in the environmental movement's use of the abstract idea of global change as a "principal rhetorical device" (Buttel *et al* 1990 p58) and the advocation of green consumerism by some environmental groups.

Spatial immediacy is less important for retailers than for individuals. Retailers do operate in a local context with an emphasis on helping the local environment and community, and have a sense of local spheres of responsibility centred upon stores and their depots, beyond which responsibility passes to a higher power. Also, multiples clearly identify the need to translate wider issues of company-wide policy into actionable components at the local level. However, the most important issues for retailers exist at the wider scale.

9.2.3. Wider Scales.

As well as immediate problems, all individuals cite concern for environmental problems wider than personal health or the local environment, especially pollution, marine life (dolphins), nuclear problems particularly Chernobyl (in the light of recent revelations), climate change and the Western world's over-consumption in comparison with poverty in the South. More importantly, members, and most non-members, of environmental groups link both scales of process together, to suggest a natural, *inherent* connection between local and global processes, thus:

> "they're all different worthwhile things part of an overall strategy and attitudes to life, the way the world should tick... the big canvas". (288)

"if it happens locally, it's going to happen in a broader aspect." (101)

Further, environmental group members in particular see a chain of action consequences so that problems are unbounded: they cross borders, they affect large populations and one culture affects another culture as problems spread:

> "what goes down your sink, goes down your drain, doesn't stop at the end of the garden. It just doesn't affect *you*, it goes *en masse*. so what everybody else bungs down the drain... affects all of us." (249)

This reflects the globalisation of environmental issues that has taken place in the 1980s (also identified by Giddens (1990 p124); Buttel *et al* (1990) and in the establishment of a new journal in 1990 called Global Environmental Change). The media notion of 'environment' now more commonly refers to the global environment or some global component of it, e.g. the atmosphere. Green marketing also embraces this notion, as green products usually address global issues, e.g. ozone depletion is addressed by CFC-free sprays, deforestation by sustainably-harvested timber. Retailers and organic farmers also identify global processes and their use in green consumerism as important in the development of their own and their customers' ethics. This is especially so for the multiples, who display recognition of the globalisation of issues in recent years and emphasise such issues as the focus of their environmental action:

> "the policy meant the identification of environmental issues... if you start with the high altitude things, you've got the global warming, ozone depletion, air pollution, water pollution, land pollution". (S1)

This is due to the high national profiles of multiples and the need to have a nationally relevant policy surpassing solely local issues (although these are also addressed by individual store managers). The European scale is particularly identified by multiples as it forms an important legislative context and source of change (see 2.6., 7.7.). An interesting focus for retailers is how consumption in the West is exceeding our share of world resources. This perception results in expressions, by environmental group members and retailers, of derision and guilt about Western culture,. However, this appears to be only compensatory rather than strongly linked to action, again emphasising that wider effects are less closely related to action than are local effects.

However, most of these wider concerns are not directly related to proenvironmental action by the individuals, although they may be related to group actions, e.g. those by Greenpeace on a world stage. For most individuals, wider problems are at least as important as local ones, although their actionable content may be less, e.g. for a local group member:

> "the more people are concerned about environmental matters, then that's reflected in what they do about their local environment. And someone that's concerned about that must also be concerned about wider issues." (313)

This partially relates to the perceived restricted sphere of efficacy rendering only immediate issues actionable, but also to the distancing of the individual from such problems. Such global issues are too *big* for both action and comprehension and some are too distant and diffuse to be related to the individual's life: both perceptions relate to a lack of specialised knowledge and expertise (see 8.4.3.). Some, e.g. nuclear accidents, may be too frightening for contemplation and therefore *purposely* made distant. Wynne (1987) suggests a similar process when he considers the dread and unfamiliarity in perceptions of nuclear power and its associated risks, due to the lack of power felt by individuals over its development. Other global issues may be perceived as too invisible to be noticed or acted on, despite having a high media profile, but this is partially due to an individual's focus and partially due to informational inadequacies. Individuals recognise such distancing, e.g. the following come from a non-member and a local group activist respectively:

> "The ozone layer and the greenhouse effect seem so enormous, so absolutely colossal... It's got to be whittled down to the sort of level at which we can understand it, which generally means being told that the hairspray and the polish on our supermarket shelves is 'ozone friendly'... It's terribly hard to imagine things on a global scale, and we're such tiny, insignificant creatures in the plan of things". (125)

> "These things seem so remote, unless they're brought home to people, they seem so remote from them... it's something over there that doesn't touch on our lives." (305)

Thus, global issues can be distanced from individuals if there is little perceived impact of the distant upon the immediate. All the environmental and most of the public sample acknowledge that this argument of distance exists for others.

For themselves, there is a sense that distance is reduced by mass media and communication (also Giddens 1990 p18), enabling even very remote problems to become visible, and therefore more immediate. This is important for green products whose selling point is distant from their sources, e.g. mahogany in the UK, so that the visibility of problems can be enhanced, thereby increasing immediacy and a trigger to action in the realisation that "it always comes back to you in the end" (215).

9.3. Temporal Scales of Action.

As well as action occurring in response to spatial scales of impact and efficacy, there is a temporal scale of reference for impact and responsibility. The temporal scale may be short term or long term depending on the issue and individuals are not restricted to holding only one temporal perspective. Temporally immediate considerations are dealt with in the context of the impact and responsibility felt in the light of current constraints (see Chapters 6 and 7). There is a distinction between such temporally immediate considerations and more temporally distant ones and this can be explicit for group members with specialised aims, e.g. a member of the local Greenpeace group:

> "You're doing things that are for the present as well as the future. Saving the whales is for the present you get a result in the present. But you know you're not going to get a result about the greenhouse effect for forty years. You're not going to know what effect you've had." (255)

The general perception of environmental action, such as green consumerism and environmental group campaigns in particular, is that it is geared to the long term, being mediated by a concern to maintain environmental quality into the next century at the least.

As with responsibility (see 6.2.1.), individuals perceive themselves to be caring about and considering the future, seeing the whole picture of long term environmental impact on humans and the whole environment. In contrast, they perceive others to be less considerate of the longer term consequences of their actions - others are limited to short term considerations.

There are both negative and positive facets of such a longer term view. The

negative aspect is a concern about future environmental deterioration, the positive is a belief in a growing environmental consciousness and a related development of the green market (see 9.3.2.).

9.3.1. Perceptions of Future Impacts.

The most common temporally distant considerations relate to the negative consequences of action on future generations. Where individuals are also parents, generational impact connects with social immediacy so that both temporal and spatial scales of action define the focus of concern as the maintenance of the immediate family, as for these fathers of two:

> "you're really doing it for your kids, to carry on. If the Earth gets wrecked, what's the point of having kids?" (255)

> "I've got two lovely boys and it's a permanent worry... It makes me think more about the future. It's not just me; what happens to me isn't important, but it's them." (273)

Where the individual has no children upon which to focus their worries, there is still a sense of generational decline in environmental quality, but it is more diffuse in subject, as for the following men with no children:

> "anybody who was seeing any continuity in the future ought to be thinking about these things, because their children or their children's children... is going to be affected... I suppose it doesn't have the same impact on me, because it's not going to affect me in my lifetime. Although [suddenly doubtful] I don't know..." (305)

> "I think people're thinking, 'It might not work for me, but is it gonna work for my children and their children and their children?' I think people are looking way ahead." (239)

There is a sense that parents wish to ensure a good environment for their children, to the extent that this is prioritised over the present environment and its quality for adults, but this is expressed usually only in vague terms, e.g. by this father of two:

> "I want a decent world for me children. I'm not too bothered for meself." (100)

Therefore, buying environmentally friendly products and other forms of

proenvironmental action can be connected to benefitting children (the individual's or others'). However, this actionable element of the temporal consideration is rarely made as explicit as by this young organic farmer and Green Party activist:

> "My concern was that it was going to be a future for her [his four-year-old daughter], that was what drove me... for me to just live as if there was no tomorrow was selfish. So now what I had to do was live my life in a way that I'm giving her the opportunity to survive." (F3)

There are various views as to the severity of both present environmental damage (see 6.2.1.). However, there seems to be a general perception of declining environmental quality in the longer term which will impact more severely on the children because they will then be adults. Species loss and pollution figure highly in this concern, as do nuclear issues, e.g.:

> "I'd hate to think that there was nothing natural, that they'd [animals] just been allowed to die. That there was just nothing left [for the children]... I just can't imagine how horrible it would be." (249)

This is compounded where environmental changes are perceived (by eight individuals) to be more of a future threat than a present one, not having a great impact on those who are now adult:

> "It's not happening now, you see, it's something that's going to get worse and worse in the future... the gap in the ozone layer doesn't seem to be of much impact now, but it's going to have some time in the future." (305)

> "it's not the sort of thing to affect me in the here and now, but I think it's gonna affect the planet and obviously future generations." (101)

Although there is also concern about environmental degradation impacting on adults, it is relatively less severe than that they perceive for their children and future generations. This is especially true for older individuals, who perceive that environmental degradation will have little effect on themselves because they will not live long enough for environment quality to worsen significantly.

This may in essence serve to postpone the need for action into the more distant future, as the impact (key in promoting action, see 6.3.) is only long term. For more active environmental group members, there tends to be a greater belief in

an immediate threat, so that present as well as future generations are subject to impact, e.g. in the view of a Green Party activist:

> "We're unable to see the amount of damage we're doing until it's already too late... That's happening now. It already has happened. It's just a case of how bad it gets." (258)

A problem for encouraging action is perceived, especially by group members, because long term considerations are more vague and less customary than short term ones. Hence, it is more difficult for individuals to think far ahead, the perspective is less coherent and steady. This allows the individual to discount the long term consequences of their actions and to adopt a (false) short term perspective, something which is particularly criticised by group members:

> "we've got a false perspective on time. We see two hundred years as a long time". (258)

> "we find it extremely difficult to see things that are any timescale longer than a year or two. We're used to thinking in weeks." (284)

And this is echoed by non-members, e.g.:

> "there is this view that if you don't look after the environment, you won't have a family in the long run, anyway. Or your children won't have a family. But it takes a hell of a lot of vision to think of fifty years and a hundred years hence, dun't it? And most people are not gonna be thinking like that." (100)

9.3.2. Perceptions of the Future of Green Consumers.

In contrast to the above negative views, the positive facet of long term views is the belief that future generations will be more environmentally conscious, due to better environmental education and more caring attitudes. Such a belief embodies hope and optimism but tends to be rather diffuse, although again those with children tend to identify this trend in their own children's education. This optimism is shared by most individuals and also by the smaller retailers and farmers, and is especially significant in women's comments, such as the following:

> "If you can have these children that are growing up now to be more caring then surely there's got to be a light somewhere at the end of

this dark, dismal tunnel." (249)

> "I think it won't be our generation that counts, I think it's the children that are in the schools now. They are far more aware of what is going on than maybe their parents are." (239)

> "the kiddies themselves are getting wiser and wiser... all about the ozone layer and saving cans and doing all the little bits. I think if that's kept up and carried out throughout school that our next generation are going to be a lot more thoughtful then our generation ever were". (R8)

This clearly parallels the retailers' beliefs that the long term future of green consumerism depends on more proenvironmental education and socialisation of consumers. Retailers talk of the younger generations as "the shoppers of the future" (L7) and, in implicit references to consumer sovereignty, claim that change is in such shoppers' hands, that they will be more demanding of proenvironmental change which will open up the green market and convince more businesses to change.

> "those are the people who are gonna change things... so it's gonna grow... They will demand greater emphasis being placed on types of products doing the least damage to the environment. So what we're seeing now... it's the tip of the iceberg." (L7)

However, not all children will remain so radical: there will be a thinning out of ranks so that a lesser proportion remain green consumers into adulthood as constraints on them strengthen, e.g. according to one multiple:

> "it's easy for young people to be idealistic, OK, because they don't really deal with the real world. When they start to deal with the real world, then there is an element of compromise between their ideals and what the world can deliver". (S5)

It is interesting in this respect that multiples have invested in environmental education facilities, underlining the importance of the education of future shoppers to purchase such items and guarantee markets. For example, Safeway produce an environmental information pack for schools and is involved with Open University and Polytechnic courses and initiatives, as well as investing in research and development on products such as organics (Safeway publication 1991).

The retailers have a lot to say about the future, due to their more developed policy and planning mechanisms, particularly for multiples. However, they do not

only refer to the long term future in terms of generations, but also to the shorter term developments in green markets. Different retailers have different perspectives on whether the costs of environmental changes may yield benefits in the long term (see 7.6.2.), so the planning horizon will influence environmental development and therefore also the consumer choice and information they provide.

9.3.3. Temporal Context and Future of the Green Market.

The availability and promotion of green products expanded in the late 1980s (see 2.4.) and burgeoned into a poorly defined but often cited green market. Multiples identify their involvement in the green market variously as significant since 1985 (S1), 1988 (S5), 1990 (S6). However, the level of environmentally friendly product sales is now perceived by some small and multiple retailers to have "peaked" around 1989-1990, e.g.:

> "I don't think it's going to go any further... people's enthusiasm and response has waned dramatically... the initial enthusiasm and trumpet-blowing [by other companies] of green merchandise has waned a bit". (L8)

This coincides with a period of peak environmental media coverage and general developmental activity in the green market between 1988-1990, a peak also perceived by consumers, e.g.:

> "A couple of years ago, there was a lot of talk about green issues and so on, and it's all gone into the background now." (290)

After this point, interest has been less intense, with lower sales and destocking of products identified at one multiple and election performance by the Greens has particularly declined. This decreasing interest in green products is blamed on the recession by the small and large retailers and farmers and this linkage of environment and the affluent society is also noted by Marsh and Christenson (1977). Three of the smaller retailers see difficulties in maintaining their businesses in this economic climate as:

> "[It's] a quiet time for all businesses... As a business proposition, it's not looking too brilliant at the moment." (R7)

The necessary initial condition identified for any further expansion is the end

of the recession with a general belief that green products will then pick up again, underlining clearly the importance of cost constraints (identified in Chapters 6 and 7). There are varying predictions as to the future of the green market beyond that point: it is widely, but vaguely, seen as a growth market by smaller and multiple retailers, e.g.:

> "It's here to stay, it's gonna grow to a certain level and then it's gonna plateau out [after five years]". (L7)

> "I think more people are getting into it... At the moment we sell more and more every day." (R6)

> "there's definitely a growth, it's definitely not a market in retreat." (R9)

Despite a long term consensus, there are contradictions as some multiples assert that in the short term there may be an initial surge but then a fall-off in sales due to price and performance problems. This tends to be more prevalent amongst local store managers, e.g.:

> "I don't think it's moved - it's a niche... but I don't think it's gonna be a great success". (L2)

One multiple local manager comments that the supermarkets may be jumping in ahead of demand in the short term, which will eventually increase in the long term:

> "One of the problems with retailers is that you tend to be too early. And there's a great temptation to reject it and then not to go back and what you need to do is two years later go back and see whether the market's changed or not, 'cause perceptions and stances change." (L9)

A sensitive issue for smaller retailers is how far the supermarket multiples will encroach upon their business if green becomes more mainstream in the future. They perceive that multiples have the advantage of bulk discounts and the inbred culture of one-stop supermarket shopping so that people are "supermarket-oriented", which will become more important with more mainstream products. Some of their concerns follow:

> "[wholefood shops have] struggled for a long time to open up this market... the supermarkets now see an opportunity for profit and

> come in and stock everything and just in one little corner of their things, almost wiping out their [wholefood shops] market." (R1)

> "it's the green product market more than the organic market that the smaller retailers like us have suffered in... because every supermarket now has got their own brand of so-called green products... There's a whole segment of society who are supermarket shoppers, who don't really go to other shops... if they are getting environmentally conscious then they're going to buy the things in the supermarket because they're there, the one-stop shopping idea." (R10)

However, the smaller retailers seem more ready to predict overall expansion in the green and wholefood markets because the involvement of the multiples is exposing green products to a wider market and to those mainstream consumers the wholefood shops do not reach. So, even though supermarket shares may increase and the wholefood sector's share decrease proportionally, the viability of individual small businesses is maintained through having the same portion of a bigger pie.

The organics market is more problematic for analysis than other production sectors, because it has supply constraints as well as a longer conversion time (two to five years for land conversion) complicating increased production to allow market expansion. Perceptions of the state of the organic market vary widely - "steadying" (R8), "pretty quiet" (F5), "a commercial failure" (S5) - with the main growth period of interest and sales identified as 1988-1989 as with other products.

In the main, organic farmers are not experiencing problems selling their own small volumes and seem cautiously optimistic about the market as a whole, but not about themselves as a block within it. This is because of incursion by larger producers with more commercial power to expand markets and set up profitable systems:

> "Some of these big fellas now that are using chemicals, they will do it [convert] from an economic point of view, not the principles... and they'll swamp us. They'll be able to produce much cheaper stuff and that's it, we'll be finished". (F2)

It seems that organics is perceived by multiples as less able to change and to become mainstream than other green product sectors and will remain "a niche market for a few years" (Safeway publication 1991), despite the some multiples' investment in its development. This is due to structural constraints on its production, rendering

it not wholly compatible with multiples' systems which at present account for 60% of organic produce sales. Although critical, the organic farmers recognise this:

> "In the ordinary market, they look upon organic as a niche... We *hope* it will continue to expand. What we *will* do, I think, is consolidate." (F6)

There has been more commercial research and prediction about organics as a sector than other green sectors, as other green products are less closely defined. Predictions for organics are put "realistically" at between 3% and 5% of sector sales for fresh produce by the end of the century (Coopers and Lybrand Deloitte 1990 p11), with a high of 10% for vegetable sales, compared to between 1% and 2% now.

In their literature, as opposed to during interviews, the multiples rarely predict the future of the green market. This may be due to commercial secrecy over development of new products but also points again to their stance of reaction rather than proaction (see 7.7.), only looking to current trends in order to plan reactive behaviour not in order to influence the trend.

9.4. The Social Context of Action.

As well as the temporal and spatial context, there is the social context of action. This includes whether behaviour is performed with others or singly, and the type of behaviour chosen.

Green consumerism places emphasis on individual rather than collective action (Smith 1990; see 1.3.). In parallel, the passive environmental group members and the non-members in the data often portray themselves as non-joiners, rejecting collective activity, although they may espouse individual actions, e.g. this non-member describes herself:

> "We're not really organisers.. [We're] Passive members. As opposed to activists." (101)

This does not mean that they deny the relevance of groups, only that non-members and some members construe actions in non-group terms. This shows the connection between agency and structure with acts being individual with a structure of group acts and constraints, echoing Thrift's comment (1983 p26) that "capitalist societies are both collectivist and individualistic". The emphasis on individual acts

favours green consumerism as it is depersonalised, although not decontextualised, in comparison with group acts. As Hirschman (1970) noted, purchases as economic signals (categorised by him as exit, see 3.9.) to show disapproval are preferred by the public to political or other actions performed collectively in consort with others (categorised as voice, or protest (Boudon 1982)). This preference stems from the assumption of consumer sovereignty (Smith 1990), the perceived constraints on the operation of voice and the perception of purchases as an easy, clear-cut option (Hirschman 1970). The rejection of voice as an option in preference for exit as suggested by Hirschman is implicitly supported by the data.

At the same time as rejecting membership, non-members admire the activities of environmental groups, especially Greenpeace who are widely admired for their daring in their very visible gestures, e.g. against whaling ships. They are also described as "non-political", although this indigenous term appears to stand for 'non-partisan' in the sense of having no political bias, and are applauded as non-violent by members and non-members. However, such groups are also separated as a distinct culture, undertaking extreme actions that individuals cannot be involved in (even members, who are only fund-raisers), and sometimes as "daft" (239, 262, both members of Greenpeace) for daring.

Conversely, some of the active group members portray themselves as active in groups, identifying their desire to join in, to participate and to work with others.

The passive members and non-members therefore look at the activists from outside the group and this gives rise to a number of images of group members. They are seen to belong to a different culture at one extreme (and see 6.6.), which permits a wider scope of actions than the mainstream culture of passive members. They are distinctive: a number of stereotypes persist, including the student, the hippie, the vocal advocate of asceticism, despite recognition by those describing them that these are merely stereotypes.

"they're still seen as being slightly crackpot, lunatic fringe". (125)

The activists and some passive members perceive this stereotyping of themselves as odd, "cranky", "extremist" and *separate* by virtue of their actions. They do see it lessening over recent years as the mainstream culture becomes

increasingly interested in their actions and beliefs. The following comments from an activist, small retailer and farmer respectively show this, for their different activities:

> "People stereotype us, *still*. They still expect you to come looking like somebody out of the Sixties... I think nowadays, we're not regarded as cranks... We are still stereotyped to some degree, but I don't think as much." (249)

> "it's become less of a silly idea, less of a cranky idea that everybody should save the planet. It's no longer a fringe idea". (R10)

> "when we came here, the [conventional] farmers thought we were cranky. Now they respect us." (F6)

9.4.1. Political Proenvironmental Action.

As discussed, green consumerism places emphasis upon an individual act which is essentially economic (Vogel 1975 in Smith 1990 p182). There is also scope for political proenvironmental acts, both individual and collective but this is far less important than economic acts, such as green purchases and subscriptions to environmental groups. In Hirschman's (1970) terminology, green consumerism and other economic acts are "exit" options rather than "voice" options. They are easier because they are depersonalised and individualistic acts, involving decentralised decision-making (Smith 1990). Voice, or protest (e.g. through demonstrations, petitions or votes), is more personal and requires more commitment to changing the source of the problem than merely exiting from one company with a bad environmental record to purchase products perceived as environmentally friendlier from another. The emphasis on exit options in the data here supports Hirschman's (1970) view that exit is preferred because it is viewed as easier and more effective in economic terms. In turn, this preference will tend to cause the atrophy of the art of voice as people become less able to protest (ibid.), which has strong implications for the future of environmental campaigns.

Smith (1990 p132) suggested that, if consumer sovereignty truly operates, a purchase vote under green consumerism may properly be regarded as political participation, although it is more moral than political. This is not explicitly

supported in the data as only a few individuals mention the power of the vote in persuading governments to change (like consumer sovereignty) and some environmental activists describe themselves as political and even purchasing as a political act, e.g.:

> "It's a political act, really [laughs] buying recycled toilet paper in Safeways". (274)

In contrast, four out of seven Green Party members and several non-members interviewed specifically described themselves as non-political or rejected any interest in politics, the following examples being typical:

> "I very rarely listen to politicians. I'm very ignorant about what's going on in politics: I'm not a political person at all." (273)

> "I'm non-political. So, I embrace bits out of each politics." (255)

> "I don't vote for any political party, I'm apolitical". (306)

There was little positive assertion of political acts, except by two Green Party members and implicit advocation by one wildlife group member. It seems likely that individuals are portraying themselves as non-partisan rather than strictly non-political in terms of not participating in the political side of society or voting. There a negative choice of political party, as most individuals do not explicitly espouse any party and reject most of them, with even some Green Party members renouncing their intention to vote for it.

The data in this study offer little hope for Green political success in coming years, in the light of poor election performance recently (and see 3.3.). There seems to be a rejection of voice as political protest (as mentioned with reference to Hirschman 1970), with the following comments coming even from Green Party members:

> "I think the Green Party's a dead duck." (273 (Green Party Member))

> "I would never think you'd get a Green government". (288 (Green Party Member))

> "as the situation is now, there's no way they [Green Party] can get into power, so in a way in a national election, going for them is a wasted vote." (255 (Greenpeace local activist))

The Green Party (nationally) again is seen as a separate culture, but the criticisms go further than for other groups, including criticisms from members or recently lapsed members. The national organisation is perceived as "odd", with very left-wing views, poorly organised, unrealistic and generally having poorly developed policy, network and activities. The strength of feeling indicated in the following members' comments:

> "they couldn't walk a dog. They seem to be very chaotic... [and] spend an awful lot of time talking and very little time doing anything about it." (273)

> "They need one powerful person to come in and sort them out on the inside, stop all the buggering about... [they're] hopelessly incompetent". (284)

Even those who work in a local Green Party and are less critical do not see the Green Party as a political party out to get votes and to win elections, but as a form of pressure group being more effective as a threat and a competitor, albeit a weak one. This was reported by Rudig and Bennie (1992) and is also seen in the data thus:

> "they know that we're [Green Party] there and if they do absolutely nothing then we would attract more votes than if they did something, so they're gonna do something." (258 (Green Party activist)

> "I'm not sure that I believe that political parties can actually make a lot of difference, so I think joining the Green Party was more in the way of opening up more debate on the environmental issues". (274 (Green Party member))

> "People talk about, 'Will the Greens ever get to power?' As far as I'm concerned, the Greens are in power. But it's a different form of power, power of increasing awareness, the power of influence. If it wasn't for the Green Party, the green issues wouldn't be on the agenda of the mainstream parties." (organic farmer and Green Party member)

Despite this claim to be non-political, the data indicate a wishful ascription of responsibility to governments (and see 6.3.3.), with the assertion that they should legislate to enforce proenvironmental behaviour. However, the Government is perceived to be environmentally inactive so that any change is only tokenism for the

growing green tide and the emergence of the needed legislation is unlikely:

> "I don't feel any political party... can do anything for conservation... conservation is just being kicked to the bottom of the pile and always has been and it always will be". (306)

As well as political and economic action, related proenvironmental behaviours embrace principally vegetarianism, animal rights (including anti-bloodsports, animal welfare, campaigns against animal testing), peace and anti-nuclear campaigns and the rights of indigenous peoples. Around half the group members interviewed were members of more than one environmental organisation. This multidimensional activity was also noted by Lowe and Goyder (1983) who estimated that over 60% of environmental group members were involved in more than one organisation (also Bull 1990).

9.5. Moving into the Mainstream.

A key notion in much environmental group literature and academic and market research relates to the levels of proenvironmental activity in the population; this was also examined in 4.3.1. and 4.3.2., with high levels of green consumerism and household recycling reported amongst the public.

However, the extent to which the mainstream consumer is now influenced by green issues is very difficult to measure, due to the dynamism of changes in production and product development and of information and labelling in the retailing and manufacturing sector. Self-reporting of green purchasing may also not match reality (see 3.4.) complicating estimates. Despite the multiples' reluctance to reveal market survey results, both retailers and consumers have varied perceptions of how far fringe environmental concerns and actions have become mainstream. (Section 6.6. also discusses the cultural constraints perceived by individuals in moving from mainstream to fringe actions.)

Some multiples perceive that green products, particularly organics, have not yet consolidated their position in the green market in their stores. It is, however, obvious that some elements of green consumerist concerns have now been incorporated into mainstream retailing, the most successful group being CFC-free products which are now accepted as standard and no longer unusual (Simms 1992),

and also recycled paper. Organics remains very much a niche according to multiples, due to high cost and poor supply. In some respects, therefore, mainstreaming of green concerns has occurred, but only where this was not affected by the constraints of cost (profit), cultural and quality of life (see Chapters 6 and 7), i.e. only in the minority.

> "it will become more important but it will take a long time to get through to anything over fifty percent of the population." (R3)

The smaller retailers perceive the green market to be broadening out, but acknowledge that this may be because their customer base is the already-converted, giving a biased view of the population's change.

> "I suppose we get a false sense of security here. I tend to believe that things are changing within the world and people are becoming more together about things but I don't know whether that's actually true or whether it's just that I'm in contact with that kind of person all day." (R8)

The multiples also suggest that green products will follow the same pattern as healthy eating ones, with such concerns being picked up on by major manufacturers who incorporate such elements (e.g. low-fat, high-bran) into products, eventually overwhelming the smaller producers.

> "green things will go the way of healthy eating, where the major manufacturers will encompass it within their culture... whereas the specialist... they've by and large gone. But what they were standing for, what they were trying to do, has been incorporated within the big major players". (S6)

This is perceived as a threat by the farmers, representing such small-scale producers.

General perceptions of the mainstreaming parallel those of future green market (see 9.3.3.) because more mainstreaming means a widening proportion of the buying population becoming involved. The common perception is therefore positive and favourable, but vague in detail.

9.6. Concluding Remarks.

This chapter has looked at the spatial and temporal scales of the retailer and individual perspectives studied in the previous three chapters. Geographical and social immediacy link closely to action; wider issues, such as those addressed by green consumerism, do so less strongly but do link clearly to concern and their effects on more local issues. Timescales of perception into the future seem to be relatively short in assessing the effects of environmental issues and proenvironmental action, particularly in terms of concentrating on the self and the immediate generation. This was more diffuse and vague for those without children, whereas parents had a clearer focus for their worries about short term environmental degradation as it affected their own children.

Generally economic acts such as green consumerism were emphasised above more collectivist or political proenvironmental acts. This suggests the attractiveness of economic, individualistic and depersonalised acts to express public environmentalism, in the ease of adopting, performing and withdrawing from such acts.

The final chapter of this thesis draws together these and previous themes to assess the nature and future of green consumerism within the light of this thesis and the changes occurring at present.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS.

10.1. The Context of Green Consumerism and This Study.

This study has concentrated on the motivations and constraints involved in green consumerism and related forms of public environmentalism. It has taken green consumerism to be the preferential purchasing of products perceived as environmentally friendly and has noted that it emerged in widespread form in the UK only in the late 1980s, making it a relatively recent phenomenon. The clear links between green consumerism and voluntary environmental organisations were noted, as were the use of environmental references and the sale of green products by businesses and the development of environmental legislation on UK, EC and more international scales. It was shown that green consumerism in the UK is developing in a context different from that in other countries, where products and companies are more regulated and where groups and the public are more politicised. This illustrated the importance of the social and political context on the development and permanence of green consumerism, as well as its obvious economic context in purchasing.

The choice of proenvironmental behaviour, whether protest (e.g. political campaigning and petitions) or depersonalised exit (e.g. green consumerism, boycotts), was taken to represent a behavioural commitment which has been measured quantitatively by numerous studies. However, these tend to neglect the individual's perception of their influence and role, and therefore the reasons for the common non-correspondence of attitudes and behaviour.

These reasons needed to be addressed through studying the interconnected perceptions of individual power and of action options, relative to other agents, within a specific behavioural context. This study therefore investigated perceptions of trust, efficacy, agency and responsibility, which serve as key motivating elements in the commitment to proenvironmental behaviour such as green consumerism.

The research design to investigate such motivating elements, and the constraints upon their translation into behaviour, comprised both quantitative and qualitative stages but focused on the qualitative data. This design emphasises: the individual meaning of situation and action; data proximity via depth interviews; use

of indigenous typologies and comparative analysis of cases; interpretation oriented towards theory generation rather than verification. The sampling design reflected these in its use of purposeful sampling; data quality and integration were emphasised over representativeness. Overall five groups of people were interviewed in three clusters: public and environmental group members (as consumers); small and multiple retailers; organic farmers (as both producers and retailers).

The design of the research therefore allowed the development of rich grounded theory on the motivations and constraints felt by all five groups and the interactions, similarities and dissimilarities amongst them. The main themes revealed by this research are outlined below.

10.2. Environmental Responsibility and Impact.

The motivations behind proenvironmental behaviours, such as green consumerism, relate to perceived environmental responsibility and its ascription, through perceptions of efficacy, agency and the moral requirements of the cultural context. The importance of cumulative impact in reinforcing responsibility was noted. An individual's action is perceived to be morally obligatory where it only involves minor sacrifice but yields identifiable benefits. A lack of impact would negate the sacrifice and make it heroic, not morally required (Fishkin 1982). Further, the impact is produced *en masse* by the additive total of many individualistic actions. So, although not a collectivist action, the sacrifice is vindicated at the group level because the individual impact is negligible but the cumulative impact is strong.

The incongruence between felt responsibility and actual behaviour was explicitly referred to by respondents and has been noted by other workers (e.g. Liska 1974; Schwartz 1968). This raised feelings of hypocrisy and inadequacy, although not deeply felt. The constraints producing this incongruence are perceived to have sources both external and internal to the individual and operate in three main spheres: economic considerations; cultural expectations; personal quality of life or lifestyle considerations. For each, external factors can make sacrifice too heroic, and therefore not required: this indicates a perceived lack of agency to choose behaviour. In contrast, internal priorities cause the individual to refuse a sacrifice which is perceived to be morally required; in this case, the individual is recognising that

choice and agency are inherent in the adoption of such public environmentalism. These constraints tend to make voluntary individual change not radical but moderate, as exemplified by green consumerism.

The motivations behind retailer proenvironmental behaviour, such as stocking green products and producing green policy, depend on both environmental responsibility and economic benefits. Constraints, principally economic in type, are important in restricting the depth of change but economic considerations also serve as instigators of proenvironmental change when simultaneous with environmental reviews. Often, environmental and economic considerations are cited as joint priorities in a simplistic avowal of the compatibility between environmental and economic goals (also Higham 1990b; Irvine 1989a, 1989b). However, environmental considerations alone rarely prove sufficient for change to occur as this would require business to assess its activities morally, which is not an inherent principle of retail operation (Gorz 1988; Friedman 1988). The priority on making profit rendered economic concerns more significant and the impact of actions less significant in the retailers' perspective than in the consumers' perspective. Retail environmental responsibility depends more on external sources because consumer and social expectations of business activities, not the internal priorities of business, define what is environmentally acceptable.

10.3. Issues of Information and Scale.

Both environmental groups and retailers see a clear function in providing environmental information to legitimate their own activities and thereby win public support. Information is important, but not sufficient, in initiating proenvironmental actions. This is done via communicating the cumulative impacts of green products and other actions to individuals and thereby strengthening the self-ascription of responsibility as mentioned. This effect is complicated by problems with the acceptance of information provided by groups whose motives are distrusted. The uncertainties stem from perceived deficiencies in scientific theory and proof and from the suspected distortion of information according to the motives of its providers, perceived as elites in control of information which they withhold from non-elites. A perceived lack of expertise in evaluating the information both necessitates trust in

the systems of information provision, yet permits distrust of portions of these, such as "environmentally friendly" labels on products.

Despite these problems, and although the level of information required by specific individuals is very variable, the need for *action-related* information remains clear. In some cases, action is precipitated by the reception of proenvironmental information, but it seems likely that the constraints on receiving and assessing information weaken its influence and make it unlikely to initiate proenvironmental behaviour alone. Also, the search for information is often prompted by proenvironmental feeling and therefore it is not information which is the instigator, but prior perceptions of the need to find such information to clarify action.

The spatial scales of the retailer and individual perspectives emphasise geographical and social immediacy in defining responsibility and the effectiveness of information. Immediate issues are more closely linked to action and concern than wider issues, such as those addressed by green consumerism, which are linked clearly to concern rather than action and to their effects on more local issues. Temporal immediacy is also seen where the assessments of the effects of environmental degradation and proenvironmental action concentrate on the self and the next generation. Parents have a clear focus, in their children's future, for their own worries about short term environmental degradation, whereas this is more diffuse and vague for those without children.

Immediacy of behaviour was also found in that, generally, economic acts of proenvironmental behaviour, such as green consumerism, were emphasised over more collectivist or political proenvironmental acts. This suggests the attractiveness of economic, individualistic and depersonalised acts to express public environmentalism, and the ease of adopting, performing and withdrawing from such acts.

10.4. Individual-Retailer Interaction.

The role in green consumerism preferred by retailers in the data is a reactive but anticipatory one. This represents prescriptive responsibility (Sethi 1981) but not proactivity, at least in the environmental field. The retailer data suggest that consumer sovereignty operates to define the environmental responsibility of business in terms of consumer expectations and demands. However, this is accompanied by

a need to anticipate, if not force, such demands through information and product provision. There is therefore a two-way flow of instruction (Galbraith 1972) where retailers respond to consumer decisions and use environmental responsibility, references and information to legitimate their activities and affect consumer decisions in turn. Retailers therefore affect consumers both positively, in anticipating purchase and providing information oriented to their products, and negatively where such information and activities produce distrust and disillusionment in consumers about retailer proenvironmental change. This consumer response stems from a suspicion of business motives which, again in turn, causes retailers to change their information and persuasion strategies.

10.5. The Fluctuating Context of Green Consumerism.

This research was undertaken in a specific spatial-temporal context. All data collection took place between 1990 and early 1992, mainly in Leeds. The small sample size and geographical scope of the study anchor the research findings strongly to the Leeds context. Characteristics of this area which may have influenced results were outlined and the importance of contextuality stressed, as a feature of the qualitative emphasis. Although the detail of such a case study is unlikely to apply in its entirety to other locations in the UK, the main themes are likely to be common to other UK urban and suburban localities. Application to non-UK contexts is likely to be more problematic because of the discussed differences in legislation and the development of green consumerism and the green market elsewhere.

The period of data collection was likewise specific, in that it followed the emergence of green consumerism and widespread Green Party political support in 1988-89, and moved into the recession period of 1991-1992 when other issues, such as the National Health Service and the community charge (poll tax) took priority in general and local elections. This context will have affected the outcome of this research as this is the period when, in some respects, the green issue moved into the mainstream of business and consumer markets, especially between 1988 and 1990 (Marshall and Roberts 1992). Environmental products appeared in even the most mundane product sections in large and small stores across the country. Some commentators believed that this signalled the acceptance of such behaviours into

mainstream culture:

> "What we have witnessed is the emergence of a new orthodoxy. The environment no longer has a whiff of the unconventional about it; it is part of the warp and weft of everyday life." (Burke 1990 p11)

This seems overstated, in the light of perceptions in this study of the political acts and environmental groups as extreme, in a different culture to the ordinary consumer. Further, if green consumerism, and other forms of public environmentalism, do move into the mainstream in the near future, this presents a real challenge to the strength of action. As noted here, changes which do *not* involve a major sacrifice are the ones adopted by both individuals and retailers in the mainstream. It is possible that the spreading of green consumerism and other similar behaviours through all sectors of society will only include those products or actions which differ only a little from the normal practice. This suggests that the mainstreaming will cause a dilution of the strength of proenvironmental action, due to the internal and external constraints perceived to restrict it in the mainstream culture.

Even whilst this thesis is being completed, the context continues to fluctuate, affecting public support for proenvironmental behaviour and therefore its movement into the mainstream. Recently, the Green Party's internal differences of opinion have surfaced in the media, centring upon the decision by Sara Parkin and others not to seek reelection to the central council, earning unfavourable newspaper reviews (e.g. The Guardian 1992 September 11 p1) and gaining little credibility. The widely-publicised Earth Summit (the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 was denounced by many critics as falling short on environmental action at the important international level. It seems that environmental issues are again sliding down the political agenda. However, similar declines in the 1970s, following the oil price crisis, led to predictions that environmentalism was dying (see 2.3.), which were confounded by its rise in the later 1980s.

With this warning of the pitfalls of prediction in mind, what changes to the sociopolitical context in the immediate future might affect the development of green consumerism and public environmentalism as examined in this thesis? Four main

issue clusters seem worthy of note.

First is the EC eco-labelling scheme, which should be in place by the end of 1992 for a range of product sectors. The assurance of a tested environmental label should assuage some of the uncertainties (examined in Chapter 8) regarding promotional information and the morally suspect motives of its producers, and thereby encourage green consumerism. However, this depends entirely on the credibility and comprehensibility of the eco-label scheme, which cannot be guaranteed at this early stage.

Secondly, 1992 is the year of the EC single market and in coming years the stronger legislation of specific European countries may become the standard for all the EC members. This has implications for the regulation of industry and farming as well as retailing, especially with regard to polluting activities. For example, German legislation has recently been implemented to make producers responsible for the collection, recycling or incineration of their own packaging (The Guardian 1992 June 26 p29), thereby incorporating economics into environmental considerations (as noted in 7.6.1.), and facilitating green consumerism.

Thirdly, there is the issue of economic conditions. If the UK recession has strengthened the economic constraints on green consumerism and the retailers ability to change, recovery should weaken them and make more economic sacrifices possible and morally required. This would widen and diversify the green market and hence encourage retailers to anticipate, and even be proactive, in pushing forward green products to a receptive market.

All these three changes would facilitate the use of exit options such as green consumerism. Hirschman (1970) suggests that such exit preference would atrophy the art of voice, or environmental protest. This seems to be evident in the fourth set of changes as, despite wide coverage of individual campaigns and environmental issues, the Green vote has collapsed, with a poor showing in the General and local elections held after the end of data collection in 1992, and environmental groups seeing their membership rolls declining. The environmental movement is strongly connected to the development of public environmentalism (see Chapter 2) and its public disintegration could either weaken green consumerism in turn, or see the continued preference of exit over voice and the steady atrophy of the public's

inclination to protest over environmental issues.

These four issue clusters only suggest short term changes; longer term ones are more difficult to predict. It seems likely that green consumerism will depend on these and other features of its sociopolitical and economic context as to how far it merges into the mainstream in the UK in the 1990s and beyond.

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APPENDIX A: QUANTITATIVE STAGE.

Telephone (public sample) questionnaire used in the quantitative survey.

and

Self-completion (environmentalist sample) questionnaire used in the quantitative survey.

(see Chapter 4 for more details).

Appendix A 2

Hello. My name is ... and I'm calling from the University of Leeds. We're conducting some research into how people think about the environment. Could I ask you a few questions?
(IF NECESSARY SAY: It'll only take about five minutes and all your answers will be completely confidential.)

TIME NOW:_____

Q.1. There are lots of organisations or clubs that are involved in conservation or environmental activities. Some try to reduce pollution, some to protect wildlife or the countryside and others have more general environmental aims. Do you belong to any of these sorts of organisations? Yes 1 No 2

Q.2. Do you ever take household waste to recycling points?
Yes 1 No 2

Q.3. Do you ever take part in outdoor conservation projects (where a group of people work together to improve the environment e.g. by dry stone walling or working on nature reserves)?
Yes 1 No 2

Q.4. Do you ever take part in organised protests, demonstrations, election campaigns or other political activities because of environmental issues? Yes 1 No 2

Q.5. Some products in the shops are labelled environment friendly, green, ecologically sound or ozone friendly. Some examples are: recycled paper products, non aerosol deodorants, organically grown vegetables and biodegradable washing up liquid. Do you ever buy any of these kinds of products? Yes 1 No 2

IF 'NO' GO TO Q.10. ON PAGE 3, IF 'YES' CONTINUE:

Q.6. How often do you choose to buy any kind of recycled paper products rather than the ordinary kind? Is it ..(READ OUT)..

Always	1
Most of the time	2
Sometimes	3
Occasionally	4
Or never?	5
(DON'T READ OUT) Not available to me	6

IF EVER BUY THESE: Q.6b. Do you usually buy these recycled paper products at a supermarket, a large store or chain store, or at an independent smaller shop?

Supermarket	1
Large store	2
Independent smaller shop	3

ASK ALL GREEN BUYERS:
Q.7. How often do you choose to buy any kind of biodegradable (environment friendly) detergents rather than the ordinary kind? Is it ..**(READ OUT)**..

Always	1
Most of the time	2
Sometimes	3
Occasionally	4
Or never	5
(DON'T READ OUT) Not available near me/no choice	6

IF EVER BUY THESE: Q.7b. Do you usually buy these biodegradable detergents at a supermarket, a large store or chain store, or at an independent smaller shop?

Supermarket	1
Large store	2
Independent smaller shop	3

ASK ALL GREEN BUYERS:
Q.8. How often do you choose to buy fruit and vegetables grown organically rather than the ordinary kind? Is it ..**(READ OUT)**..

Always	1
Most of the time	2
Sometimes	3
Occasionally	4
Or never	5
(DON'T READ OUT) Not available to me	6

IF EVER BUY THESE: Q.8b. Do you usually buy these organically grown fruit and vegetables at a supermarket, a large store or chain store, or at an independent smaller shop?

Supermarket	1
Large store	2
Independent smaller shop	3

ASK ALL GREEN BUYERS:
Q.9. Some cosmetics and toiletries are labelled environment friendly or ozone friendly, such as biodegradable shampoos and non aerosol or non CFC deodorants. I don't mean those labelled as "not tested on animals". How often do you choose to buy environment friendly toiletries rather than the ordinary kind? Is it ..**(READ OUT)**...

Always	1
Most of the time	2
Sometimes	3
Occasionally	4
Or never	5
(DON'T READ OUT) Not available to me	6

IF EVER BUY THESE: Q.9b. Do you usually buy these environment friendly toiletries at a supermarket, a large store or chain store, or at an independent smaller shop?

Supermarket	1
Large store	2
Independent smaller shop	3

ASK ALL:
Q.10. How important are environmental issues to you personally? Are they ..(READ OUT)..

Very important	1
Quite important	2
Neither important nor unimportant	3
Not very important	4
Not at all important	5

Q.11. Some people decide not to buy products because of their environmental effects, their political background or their country of origin. Examples might be cosmetics tested on animals, ivory, real fur garments or produce from South Africa. Do you ever decide not to buy products for these sorts of reasons? Yes 1 No 2
I consider these reasons, but they're not paramount 3

(SAY TO RESPONDENT:)
I'd now like to ask you some questions about yourself. This is just so that we can be sure that the group of people we have spoken to is representative of the people of Leeds on the whole.

C.1. Firstly, how old are you? _____(years)

C.2. (RECORD SEX - DO NOT ASK UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY!)

Male	1
Female	2

C.3. Are you ...(READ OUT)...

Single, engaged	1
Living with your partner	2
Married	3
Separated, divorced or widowed?	4

C.4. Are you in paid employment at the moment? (IF OVER 60 AT C.1. CHECK IF THE RESPONDENT IS RETIRED)

Full time	1
Part time	2
Not in employment/student/off sick)	3
Retired	4
Other cases	5

C.5. ESTABLISH SOCIAL GRADE BY ASKING ABOUT OCCUPATION. (KEY QUESTIONS: MANUAL/NON MANUAL? IN CHARGE OF STAFF OR BUDGET AND HOW BIG? WHO DO THEY REPORT TO? SELF EMPLOYED? MAKE ANY NOTES OVERLEAF)
A (1) B (2) C1 (3) C2 (4) D (5) E (6) DK/NS (7)

C.6. Do you have any children living with you under the age of 18? IF 'YES' ASK: How many?
(RECORD TOTAL CHILDREN IN HOUSEHOLD, NOT JUST RESPONDENT'S CHILDREN.)
None 1 2 3 4 5 6 7+

C.6b. How old are they, starting with the youngest?
(RECORD AGES OF ALL CHILDREN IN YEARS)
A ___ B ___ C ___ D ___ E ___ F ___ G ____ OTHERS ____

C.7. How old were you when you left full time education? _____
Student at present 1
(Returned to education aged _____)

C.8. Do you usually do the household shopping?
Yes - usually on my own 1
Yes - usually/often with someone else in the household 2
It depends, sometimes I do it and sometimes someone else does it (but separately) 3
No - someone else usually does that 4

(SAY TO RESPONDENT:)
That's the end of the main survey. Thanks for answering the questions.

As well as a telephone survey, we're doing some interviews with people in their homes, so that we can discuss environmental issues in more detail and talk about why people do or do not buy green products. Would you be willing to be interviewed like this?
Yes 1 No 2

IF 'NO' THANK AND CLOSE. IF 'YES' CONTINUE:

What would be a suitable time for the interview?

RECORD DETAILS BELOW AND TRY TO GET SEVERAL TIME SLOTS.

(SAY TO RESPONDENT:)

We're not going to contact as many people for the in-home interviews as we have on the 'phone. We'll select a sample of people we've interviewed on the 'phone who are willing to be interviewed at home. If you are selected in this way, we'll call you back to get a definite time for the interview.
Finally, can I just take your full name and address?

Mr/Ms:

Address:

Telephone number: 0532

That's all I need to know. Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

Time now: _____ Interview length: _____ (minutes)

Date: _____ Q/N: _____ Type: (T) 1 2 3

QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

This research is being conducted from the Department of Geography at the University of Leeds. We are interested in how people think about the environment.

The questions below are about the environment and about yourself as an individual. All your replies will be confidential, so please answer all the questions. In most cases, there will be a choice of answers supplied with the questions: please tick just one box next to the answer that applies to you. The numbers next to the boxes are for office use.

If you feel that you cannot answer a question using one of the answers listed on the questionnaire, please write in your own words the answer you would give. We can then add this to our list of answers if several people feel they need to give the same kind of answer.

Where you are asked to reply in words or numbers rather than just by ticking a box, please give the detail that is asked for.

Part 1: The Environment.

Q.1. There are lots of organisations or clubs that are involved in conservation or environmental activities. Some try to reduce pollution, some to protect wildlife or the countryside and others have more general environmental aims. Do you belong to any organisations like these? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q.2. Do you ever take your household waste to recycling points? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q.3. Do you ever take part in outdoor conservation projects, where a group of people undertake environmental tasks, such as dry stone walling or planting nature areas? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q.4. Do you ever take part in demonstrations, organised protests, election campaigns or other political activities because of environmental issues? Yes ☐ No ☐

Q.5. Some products in the shops are labelled environment friendly, green, ecologically sound or ozone friendly and some examples are recycled paper products, organically grown vegetables, biodegradable washing up liquid and ozone friendly sprays. Do you ever buy any of these kinds of products? Yes ☐ No ☐

IF YOU DON'T BUY THESE KINDS OF PRODUCTS, PLEASE GO TO Q.10. ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE.
IF YOU DO EVER BUY THESE KINDS OF PRODUCTS, PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW BY TICKING ONE BOX FOR EACH.

Q.6. How often do you choose to buy any kind of recycled paper products rather than the ordinary kind?

Always ☐ 1
Most of the time ☐ 2
Sometimes ☐ 3
Occasionally ☐ 4
Never ☐ 5

Q.6a. Where do you usually buy these recycled paper products? (TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

At a supermarket ☐ 1
At a large store or chain store ☐ 2
At an independent smaller shop ☐ 3
Never buy them ☐ .

Q.7. How often do you choose to buy any kind of biodegradable detergents rather than the ordinary kind?

- Always ☐ 1
- Most of the time ☐ 2
- Sometimes ☐ 3
- Occasionally ☐ 4
- Never ☐ 5

Q.7a. Where do you usually buy these biodegradable detergents? (TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- At a supermarket ☐ 1
- At a large store or chain store ☐ 2
- At an independent smaller shop ☐ 3
- Never buy them ☐ .

Q.8. How often do you choose to buy fruit and vegetables grown organically rather than the ordinary kind?

- Always ☐ 1
- Most of the time ☐ 2
- Sometimes ☐ 3
- Occasionally ☐ 4
- Never ☐ 5

Q.8a. Where do you usually buy these organically grown fruit or vegetables? (TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- At a supermarket ☐ 1
- At a large store or chain store ☐ 2
- At an independent smaller shop ☐ 3
- Never buy them ☐ .

Q.9. Some cosmetics and toiletries are labelled environment friendly, or ozone friendly, such as biodegradable shampoos and non aerosol, or non CFC, sprays, such as deodorants. (These may or may not be labelled "not tested on animals".) How often do you choose to buy these environment friendly toiletries rather than the ordinary kind?

- Always ☐ 1
- Most of the time ☐ 2
- Sometimes ☐ 3
- Occasionally ☐ 4
- Never ☐ 5

Q.9a. Where do you usually buy these environment friendly toiletries? (TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

- At a supermarket ☐ 1
- At a large store or chain store ☐ 2
- At an independent smaller shop ☐ 3
- Never buy them ☐ .

EVERYONE SHOULD ANSWER THE REST OF THE QUESTIONS.

Q.10. How important are environmental issues to you personally?

- Very important ☐ 1
- Quite important ☐ 2
- Neither important nor unimportant ☐ 3
- Not very important ☐ 4
- Not at all important ☐ 5

Q.11. Some people decide not to buy products because of their environmental effects, their political background or their country of origin. Examples of these sorts of products are: ivory, real fur garments, cosmetics tested on animals and produce from South Africa. Do you ever decide not to buy products for these sorts of reasons?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Part 2: Yourself

This second and last section asks some questions just about yourself. This is so that we can see whether the group of people we receive questionnaires from is representative of the people of Leeds on the whole. Of course, all the answers you give will be completely confidential.

Q.12. Please state your age: _____ years.

Q.13. Are you ...

Male ☐ 1
Female ☐ 2

Q.14. Are you ...

Single ☐ 1
Engaged ☐ .
Living with your partner ☐ 2
Married ☐ 3
Separated ☐ 4
Divorced ☐ .
Widowed ☐ .

Q.15. At present, are you ...

In full time paid employment ☐ 1
In part time paid employment ☐ 2
Not in employment (not retired) ☐ 3
Retired ☐ 4

Q.16. If you are working at the moment, please give details of your occupation in the space below. If you receive an occupational pension, please give details of the job this pension is from in the space below. If you yourself are not working, but there is someone else in the household who is, e.g. father, spouse, please give these details for their job.

Job title in full: _____

Kind of work: Manual ☐ Office ☐ Are you self employed? Yes ☐ No ☐

How many people you manage (or employ if self employed): _____

Qualifications that apply to your work, e.g. HNC, degree, professional qualifications.

_____

Office use only: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐

Q.17. How many children do you have living with you who are aged 17 or under?

None ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 or more ☐

Q.18. Please give the ages in years of any children you have aged 17 or under:

_____ years.

Q.19. At what age did you leave full time education? _____ years.

Q.20. Do you usually do the household shopping?

Yes, I usually do that on my own	☐ 1
Yes, I do the shopping but with someone else in the household	☐ 2
It depends, sometimes I do it and sometimes someone else does it	☐ 3
No, someone else usually does the household shopping	☐ 4

Q.21. Finally, please give your full postcode in the space below.

_____

That completes the main questionnaire itself. Thank you for giving us this information.

As well as a postal survey, we are conducting some interviews with people in their homes, to discuss environmental issues in more detail and to talk about why people buy or do not buy products because of their environmental effects. Are you willing to be interviewed like this? Yes ☐ No ☐

If you are:

Please indicate when you would be available, or when you know you will not be available, e.g. "4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays except Fridays" or "Saturday mornings only". This is a long term survey that will be continuing for at least a year, so if you are unavailable in the next few weeks, remember that we would still be happy to contact you after several months.

Available days: _____

Available times on these days: _____

We are not going to contact as many people for the in-home interviews as we have for this postal survey. We will therefore select a sample of people who have completed this questionnaire and who are willing to be interviewed at home. If you are selected in this way, we will contact you in the coming months to sort out a definite time for the interview.

Finally, please give your full name and address below. It would help if you could also give your telephone number, if you have one.

Name:

Address:

Telephone number:

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire!

Office use only
D/R:
Q/N:
G/T:

APPENDIX B: QUALITATIVE STAGE.

Table B.1. Breakdown of Qualitative Sample by Demographics and Socioeconomic Indicators. (See 5.3. for more details.)

	Public Sample	**Environmentalist Sample**	**Combined**
Total	12	16	28
Demographic indicators	**Public**	**Environmentalist**	**Combined**
Male	6	10	16
Female	6	6	12
15-24	-	1	1
25-34	3	3	6
35-44	6	5	11
45-54	1	4	5
55-64	-	2	2
65+	2	1	3
Socioeconomic indicators	**Public**	**Environmentalist**	**Combined**
Working full-time	6	6	12
Working part-time	2	4	6
Seeking work etc.	2	3	5
Retired	2	3	5
Social grade: A	1	1	2
B	5	5	10
C1	3	6	9
C2	2	1	3
D	1	-	1

Appendix B 2

Life stage	Public	Environmentalist	Combined
Single	2	4	6
Living with a partner	2	1	3
Married	7	10	17
Separated/widowed/divorced	1	1	2
No children under 18 at home	7	11	18
1 child under 18 at home	3	1	4
More than one child under 18 at home	2	4	6
Left full-time education aged:	**Public**	**Environmentalist**	**Combined**
10-14	1	-	1
15	2	3	5
16	2	5	7
17-18	1	1	2
19-21	1	1	2
22-25	3	4	7
26-30	1	1	2
31-50	1	-	1
Role in Household Shopping	**Public**	**Environmentalist**	**Combined**
Main shopper	5	6	11
Shares shopping	4	6	10
Alternates shopping	1	2	3
Not main shopper	1	2	3
Other	1	-	1

Appendix B 3

Behavioural Index (see 4.3.2. for details)	Public	Environmentalist	Combined
1	3	-	3
2	-	-	-
3	5	-	5
4	-	-	-
5	2	4	6
6	-	1	1
7	-	-	-
8	2	8	10
9	-	-	-
10	-	-	-
11	-	3	3

Table B.2. Profiles of People Interviewed in the Qualitative Stage.

Numbers are those used to reference quotes in Chapters 6 to 9 and relate to original questionnaire numbers. **NOTE:** TEA = terminal education age (age on leaving full time education); index = score on behavioural index between 0 and 11 (see 4.3.2. for more details).

PUBLIC:

11: female; married; 25-34; in part-time employment - social grade D; TEA 17; index 1.

13: female; married; 25-34; in part-time employment - social grade C1; TEA 23; index 5.

54: female; married; 45-54; not in employment - social grade D; TEA 15; index 3.

87: male; married; 65+; retired - social grade C2; TEA 14; index 1.

100: male; married; 35-44; in full-time employment - social grade B; TEA 22; index 3.

101: female; married; 35-44, in part-time employment - social grade A; TEA 22; index 3.

125: male; single; 35-44; in full-time employment - social grade B; TEA 23 (and returned to education at 30); index 8 (in interview 3).

145: female; married; 25-34; not in employment - social grade B; TEA 16; index 1.

146: male; married; 65+; retired - social grade B; TEA 17; index 5.

215: female; married; 25-34; in full-time employment - social grade B; TEA 26; index 5 (also Greenpeace passive member).

237: male; living with a partner (who also participated in the interview); 35-44; in full-time employment - social grade C2; TEA 15; index 3 (also Greenpeace passive member).

239: male; single; 35-44; in full-time employment - social grade C1; TEA 20; index 3.

ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP MEMBERS:

244: female; married; 65+; retired - social grade A; TEA 22; index 11 - local activist in Council for the Preservation of Rural England.

249: female; married; 35-44; in part-time employment - social grade B; TEA 15; index 5 - local fund-raiser and activist for Greenpeace.

251: male; single; 15-24; in full-time employment - social grade C1; TEA 16; index 8 - local fund-raiser and activist for Greenpeace.

255: male; married; 35-44; in full-time employment - social grade C2; TEA 16; index 8 - local fund-raiser and activist for Greenpeace.

258: male; single; 25-34; not in employment - social grade not given; TEA 23; index 8 - local Green Party activist.

262: male; married; 45-54; retired - social grade not given; TEA 15; index 6 - Green Party and Greenpeace passive member.

273: male; married; 35-44; in full-time employment - social grade A; TEA 21; index 8 - local Green Party member and activist.

274: female; single; 35-44; in part-time employment - social grade B; TEA 22; index 8 - local Green Party member and sometimes activist.

284: male; married; 45-54; in full-time employment - social grade B; TEA 22; index 5 - Green Party and Friends of the Earth passive member.

288: male; single; 35-44; in full-time employment - social grade B; TEA over 21; index 8 - Green Party local activist and also for Survival International.

290: female; married; 45-54; in part-time employment - social grade C1; TEA 16; index 5 - Green Party passive member.

292: female; living with a partner; 55-64; retired - social grade B; TEA 16; index 11 - activist in local preservation groups.

305: male; single; 55-64; retired - social grade C1; TEA 16; index 5 - activist in local preservation groups.

306: female; married; 25-34; in full-time employment - social grade C1; TEA 26; index 8 - activist in local preservation groups.

310: male; married; 45-54; in part-time employment - social grade C1; TEA 18; index 11 (in interview 6) - activist in local preservation groups.

313: male; married; 25-34; student - social grade C1; TEA 16 (now returned to education); index 8 - activist in local preservation groups.

SMALL RETAILERS:

R1: Major wholefood wholesaler to Yorkshire region, by delivery and cash and carry; run by co-operative; established 1976.

R2: Wholefood shop, family-owned since 1990.

R3: Small wholefood shop with cafe, single-owner since 1989.

R4: Small wholefood shop, single-owner since 1988.

R5: Wholefood shop, family-owned since 1984.

R6: Small wholefood shop, single-owner since 1989.

R7: Self-styled Green shop/supermarket, family-owned since 1990.

R8: Small wholefood shop, single-owner since 1987.

R9: Small wholefood shop, single-owner since 1991.

R10: Wholefood shop, run by co-operative since 1978.

R11: Small healthfood shop, primarily herbalists, family-owned since 1933.

MULTIPLE RETAILERS:

S1: Director interviewed of major multiple superstore.

L6, L7: Store managers of S1 in Leeds interviewed by telephone.

S2: Literature from upmarket multiple superstore.

S3: Literature from Northern-based multiple superstore.

S4: Literature from major multiple superstore.

S5: Environmental manager interviewed of major multiple department store.

L8, L9: Store managers of S5 in Leeds interviewed in person.

S6: Company secretary and main buyer interviewed of major multiple discount superstore.

L1, L2, L3, L4, L5: Store managers of S6 in Leeds interviewed by telephone.

FARMERS:

F1: 100 acres hill sheep; farmgate and direct retail to established customers; low input/output system.

F2: farming 1.5 acres fruit and vegetables; sales to local wholefood and greengrocers shops; Soil Association symbol held for 3 years.

F3: farming 8 acres fruit and vegetables plus hens; some direct retail, primarily wholesale to shops in West Yorkshire; Soil Association symbol held for 2 years.

F4: farming 1.5 acres fruit and vegetables; retail on-site and little to wholefood shops; charitable status and City Council funding; 7 part-time staff; Soil Association symbol 4 years.

F5: farming 7 acres vegetables; sales to local shops and to wholesalers; Soil Association symbol held for 3 years.

F6: farming 8 acres fruit and vegetables plus 30 in grass; sales retail on-site, wholesaler to shops; 2 employees; Soil Association symbol 7 years.