Ethical consumption and Iceland

A review of current literature and an exploratory study

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Lokaverkefni til MS-gráðu
Sálfræðideild
Heilbrigðisvísindasvið

HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

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Abstract

The ecological impact of society depends largely on consumer activities. All the phases of consumption - production, delivery, purchase, use and disposal of products – have repercussions on the environment, as well as on the larger society. For this reason sustainable production and consumption are central elements in the debate about sustainable development.

This final project consists of two parts. Part 1 is a six-chapter review of obstacles which have been found to hamper ethical consumption. The paper focuses on Iceland in specific, and reviews the state of ethical consumption in Iceland and the barriers to its diffusion. Finally, a number of possible avenues of action are described and reviewed, with an eye on the Icelandic situation.

Part 2 consists of a paper presenting the findings of an original research on ethical concerns among Icelandic consumers. The paper was presented at Þjóðarspegillinn XIII 2012, the annual social science research conference of the University of Iceland, on October 26, 2012.

Contents

Part 1:

Barriers to ethical consumption:
A literature review, with a special focus on Iceland

1. Introduction

This paper discusses ethical (or sustainable) consumption, paying a special attention to the barriers which may limit its diffusion. The argument focuses on Iceland, an especially interesting case. Iceland, in fact, presents high levels of consumerism (Guðmundur Jónsson, 2011; Sigurður E. Jóhannesson, 2010); however the level of reflexivity on matters of consumption is still relatively low.

The paper then reviews a number of policy suggestions aimed at fostering ethical consumption, and pro-environmental behaviours in general. The analysis closes with a final look at sustainable consumption in Iceland; its situation is considered in light of the arguments discussed.

Chapter 2 opens with a short introduction of the notion of sustainability, to then move on to ethical consumption. This concept is presented through a brief history, and an overview of critical voices.

Chapter 3 focuses on those factors that have been identified as obstacles to ethical consumption, and pro-environmental behaviours more in general. The barriers are analysed dividing them into demographic factors, factors external to the individual (for example institutional and social barriers to action) and finally psychological factors, internal to the individual.

Chapter 4 analyses the case of Iceland. The chapter includes a review of findings regarding Icelandic consumers and their pro-environmental concerns, as well as an overview of the most relevant Icelandic policies and plans regarding sustainability and ethical consumption. The focus then moves on to the barriers that, according to findings, may limit the spread of sustainable consumption in Iceland. Three experts in the field of ethical consumption, sustainability and CSR in Iceland were interviewed in order to gain some deeper insights into the Icelandic panorama.

After making a case in favour of increased sustainable modes of consumption, Chapter 5 reviews suggestions aimed at fostering ethical consumption. These include policy tools of various kinds, as well as non-institutional avenues of action.

Chapter 6 brings together the arguments raised earlier in the paper, and suggests a feasible avenue for action in Iceland, in light of the policies and plans currently underway.

2. What is ethical consumption? A brief history

2.1 Sustainable development

In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development published the Brundtland Report (officially titled “Our Common Future”), which brought the concept of “Sustainable Development” (SD) at the forefront, making it a buzzword for the future. The report contains the most famous and widely used definition of SD: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It segues: “Thus the goals of economic and social development must be defined in terms of sustainability in all countries” (Brundtland & World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43).

Unsustainable modes of production and consumption have been indicated as a key cause of environmental degradation, as well as social injustice (UNEP, 2009). At the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, member states agreed that the “major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances” (UNCED, 1992, section 4.3).

In 2002 the World Summit for Sustainable Development reiterated the importance of this theme. “Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production” was indicated as one of the three overarching objectives of sustainable development, an essential step in order to achieve SD. At the same conference states were urged to begin formulation and implementation of national strategies for sustainable development. The goal of these strategies is to incorporate the philosophy of SD into the larger policy framework of the country, so that economic, social and environmental policies are all compatible with, and aim towards, sustainable national growth (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2012, 2013).

In the past decade, sustainable consumption has thus become an important policy issue both at the national and international level (Fuchs & Lorek, 2005; Seyfang, 2006). By the year 2009 106 member states of the UN had started implementing a National Strategy for Sustainable Development (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2012).

Despite its growing political presence, sustainability is not an uncontested notion.

Proponents of sustainability have criticised the concept for being too broad and elastic: “sustainability” can be used to cover many different, and sometimes incompatible, actions and goals – including business as usual. The concept’s looseness, they argue, makes it flexible but also meaningless, as it can be used for mere lip service (Adams, 2006; Gray, 2010).

A further criticism regards the problem of metrics: there is no consensus on how to measure sustainability, and no way to know whether it has been achieved (Adams, 2006).

Sustainable development has also been criticised as not radical enough to bring about the necessary environmental and social changes. A number of experts (e.g. Kallis, 2011; Martínez-Alier 2009; Martínez-Alier, Pascual, Vivien, & Zaccai, 2010) believe that sustainability and economic growth cannot be achieved simultaneously; for this reason, they suggest the new paradigm of sustainable de-growth (where environmental conservation and increased social wellbeing are achieved decreasing GDP and economic growth) as a more environmentally viable alternative to sustainable development.

2.2 Sustainable and ethical consumption

The increased political interest in sustainable consumption follows a longer-standing academic interest in the topic.

Since the early Eighties, researchers have been investigating how consumers express their social and environmental concerns via their consumption. The earliest studies in the field concentrated on the *Green consumer*, and were aimed primarily at market segmentation: identifying and defining who the Green consumer was, in order to quantify his or her market influence (Newholm & Shaw, 2007). The Nineties saw the emergence of the *Ethical consumer*, a more advanced version of the Green consumer: whereas the latter was only concerned with the environmental impact of his consumption choices, the former also shows an interest in social justice and labour issues, questioning the sustainability of current consumption and production models (Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Shaw & Clarke, 1999).

Ethical consumers express their opinions through positive and negative buying behaviours: in the first case, they select the products which better fit in with their values; this is sometimes referred to as *buy-cott*, as opposed to boycott. In the second case, they do not buy, or openly boycott, the brands whose practices are seen as unethical.

Many issues have been deemed as relevant for the ethical consumer. According to Starr (2009) the issues that are most often cited in the literature are:

- *Environmental protection*: buying foods produced with methods that do not harm or deplete the environment (e.g. organic and local produce, tree products that come from sustainably managed forests);
- *Labour conditions*: choosing products made under fair working conditions (this includes avoiding items produced using child or sweatshop labour);
- *Fair Trade*: preferring items that guarantee a fair deal to producers in developing countries;

- *Animal welfare*: for example buying animal products only from suppliers who treat their animals humanely (cage-free eggs, dolphin-free tuna, free-range meat), or avoiding products tested on animals;
- *Ecological Footprint*[1]: favouring energy efficient appliances, and products that produce less pollution, in order to limit the size of one's Ecological (or Carbon) Footprint;
- *Waste minimization*: choosing items with less packaging, and which can be easily recycled.

The relevance and impact of the ethical consumer are a matter of debate in consumption studies. Whereas some commentators believe that ethical consumers are increasingly more and that they can have a positive impact on styles of consumption and production (see paragraph 2.3), others deny that ethical consumption can make a difference. Some also express doubts that consumers who report ethical concerns actually act on them and buy ethical goods (see paragraph 2.5 for a more detailed discussion).

Although the terms *green consumption* and *ethical consumption* are often used interchangeably in many studies, there is an important distinction between the two, and the former should be considered a subset of the latter (Başgöze & Tektaş, 2012; Shaw & Shiu, 2003). In a similar fashion, albeit more precisely, the terms *ethical consumption* and *sustainable consumption* are often used as synonyms in the literature (Eden, Bear, & Walker, 2008; Goodman & Bryant, 2009; Hobson, 2006; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006); sustainable consumption is in fact close to synonymous to ethical consumption, and it has been defined as "buying goods and services that do not harm the environment, society, and the economy" (UNESCO, 2012). Therefore the two terms will be used interchangeably in this paper.

2.3 The rise of ethical consumption

Ethical consumption has surged in popularity in recent years. Experts have noticed a boom of sales of ethical products, especially in the food sector (Carrigan & De Pelsmacker, 2009; Co-operative Bank, 2011). In Europe, for example, it has been argued that ethical food shopping

[1] The Ecological Footprint is a sustainability indicator which calculates the amount of the environment needed to produce the resources necessary to support a particular lifestyle. The calculation includes both the goods and services we use, and the environment necessary to absorb the waste we produce (Global Footprint Network, 2013).

has moved from the fringes and become mainstream (Lang, 2010; Starr, 2009). Increasingly more people take ethics into account when making consumption choices, and the majority of consumers appear to prefer products which bear ethical qualities (Auger, Devinney, Louviere, & Burke, 2010; Lang, 2010; O'Rourke, 2005).

Various reasons have been put forward to explain the increased preference for more sustainable items. Among the most relevant factors that have been pointed out are the recurrence of crises in the food production system; the rise of environmental pressure groups; increased media reporting of social and ethical issues; the rise of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in many firms; and the larger availability of ethical products, which increasingly are of better quality (Auger et al., 2010; Brinkmann & Peattie, 2008; Newholm & Shaw, 2007; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

Most research in the field of ethical consumption has focused on Fair Trade and organic products.

The amount of research on Fair Trade is proportional to its success: sales of Fair Trade items (primarily chocolate and coffee) have systematically increased in recent years, even as consumption generally slowed down in the wake of the financial crisis (Adams & Raisborough, 2008; Co-operative Bank, 2011). Fair Trade has been marked as “the most successful and high profile element of ethical consumption” (Newholm & Shaw, 2007, p. 258).

Organic products have not met with the same levels of market success, at least in most recent years (Co-operative Bank, 2011; Soil Association, 2013). The recent slump in sales of organic goods has been attributed to the higher price of organic versus conventional food, rather than to a lack of interest of the consumers (Ruiz de Maya, López-López, & Munuera, 2011). Organic produce remains nonetheless a very popular topic in sustainable consumption literature (Pearson, Henryks, & Jones, 2011).

Other sectorial areas of academic interest have known increased attention in the past decade. Among the others it is worth mentioning the growing body of research on green energy, eco-fashion and sustainable and eco-tourism (Cervellon, Hjerth, Ricard, & Carey, 2010; McDonald, Oates, Thyne, Alevizou, & McMorland, 2009).

2.4 Ethical, moral and political

In recent years a large number of studies (e.g. Cherrier, 2006; Dilley, 2009; Hustvedt & Dickson, 2009; Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008; Shaw & Shiu, 2002; Shaw, Shiu, & Clarke, 2000; Woodruffe-Burton & Wakenshaw, 2011) have analysed ethical consumption through the lens of self-identity.

Self-identity is a construct which serves to both differentiate an individual, and conform him or her to the values and behaviours of specific social groups. Identity may also be seen as an

attempt to build consistency across one's attitudes and actions, in order to increase coherence of the self (Whitmarsh & O'Neill). In modern societies, people use goods to construct their identity and to express it, as well as to form opinions of others. With the different purchases they make, people construct a number of different identities (Richins, 1994). By choosing sustainable products, people construct an ethical self-identity which is not only meaningful to the subject, but is also understood as such by others.

According to symbolic interaction theory, the self is a social structure which originates from social experience. People use symbols (such as language or gestures) and take on roles which are symbolically understood by the self and others during social interactions. It is through the reflexive interpretive process of human interactions (understanding how others interpret our use of symbols, and how others see us) that self-concepts (and self-identity) arise (Mead, 1932). Symbolic interaction theorists have argued that people have many identities, potentially as many as the social systems in which they partake with different roles (Stryker, 2008).

Studies have shown that ethical self-identity is a good predictor of future behaviour: people who see themselves as ethical, or pro-environmental, are more likely to keep on making sustainable choices in the future (Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008; Newholm & Shaw, 2007; Shaw & Shiu, 2002; Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010).

Ethical consumer identities have been analysed in terms of their political commitment. Barnett, Cloke, Clarke, and Malpass (2005) asserted that ethical consumption embeds personal political beliefs into routine everyday consumption practices. By doing so, people create global networks of solidarity, as private efforts become interlinked into a larger, collective movement and political pressure group. Other authors have talked of "consumer citizenship", referring to the ways in which conscious consumerism transforms the private sphere of consumption into a political venue to speak up, and exercise citizenly rights (Clarke, Barnett, Cloke, & Malpass, 2007; Prothero, McDonagh, & Dobscha, 2010; Seyfang, 2006; Shaw, Newholm, & Dickinson, 2006). Others have extended further the parallel between consumption and citizenship: consumption choices have thus been characterized as a way to cast one's vote in the marketplace (Papaoikonomou, Valverde, & Ryan, 2012; Shaw, Newholm, et al., 2006). Some of the websites and magazines aimed at conscious consumers openly equate buying and voting: for example, the *British Ethical Consumer Magazine* exclaims "VOTE NOW", urging its readers to use money politically (Ethical Consumer, 2013). On the homepage of the Better World Shopper website, which generated the Better World Shopping Guide, readers are reminded that "As consumers, we vote every single day with the purest form of power... money" (Better World Shopper, 2006). Some commentators have underlined the paradoxical nature of this approach: by assigning so much value to consumption, we put commodities, rather than politics, at the

centre of the discourse, thus increasing materialism[2] (Connolly & Prothero, 2008; Shaw, Newholm, et al., 2006).

Recent data seem to confirm that there might be a risks in putting commodities at the centre: in a 2012 international research, the largest segment of consumers was high in both environmentalism and materialism: they claim they seek sustainability, but they do not want to give up their standards of consumption to achieve it (Bemporad, Hebard, & Bressler, 2012).

2.5 Critical voices

The tension between materialism and sustainability, already apparent in the phrase "sustainable consumption", is a contentious topic in consumption studies. A number of critics have argued that sustainable consumption is but a palliative action, and it cannot solve current environmental and social problems. Some of the experts remark that private initiatives, such as green consumption, actually counter the aims of sustainability, as they reduce the motivation for leaders to implement drastic, and more meaningful, changes (Crompton, 2008; Hamilton & Kasser, 2009). Others underline that individuals can only make a small difference: in fact "the main drivers of overconsumption in wealthy countries […] remain outside the reach of what is generally regarded as 'green consumption'" (Cohen, Brown, & Vergragt, 2010, p. 6), and only wider economic and political changes can meaningfully alter the current situation. Critics of overconsumption point out that only by reducing current level of consumption can we make a significant difference: substituting traditional for green products only hides the real problem, while simultaneously contributing to the reinforcement of harmful materialistic lifestyles (Alfredsson, 2004; Crompton & Kasser, 2009; Peattie & Peattie, 2009). For this reason Crompton and Kasser (2009) believe that campaigns to buy green may ultimately be negative for the environment, as they reinforce the perception that environmental protection and conspicuous consumption are reconcilable.

Consumers appear to be aware of the contradiction, but unable to escape the tension: in a recent study the respondents that most clearly recognized the need to downshift to lower levels

[2] Richins (2004) defined materialism as the importance given to acquiring and owning material goods in order to achieve major life goals or desired psychological states. Individuals high in materialism believe that material possessions and money are a highly important objective in life, conducive to happiness and life satisfaction. Materialistic people also use possessions as a cue to judge their own and other people's achievements. Material possessions are moreover seen by materialistic individuals as sources of identity, to such an extent that objects may come to define a person (Dittmar, 2008).

of consumption were also the ones who cared most about style and social status, and the most likely to equate shopping with happiness. 70% of them agreed with the statement “shopping for new things makes me happy” (Bemporad et al., 2012, p. 43).

On the other hand, a number of critics of ethical consumption have pointed out that, despite the enthusiasm for ethical consumption in media and in the academia, the breadth of the ethical goods markets is still minimal. Only 5-10% of North American and European consumers give a thought to ethical issues when they buy (Starr, 2009; Young, Hwang, McDonald, & Oates, 2010), and although Fairtrade has managed to successfully infiltrate the chocolate and coffee markets, the percentage of organic food produced and consumed is still very small (Fairtrade Foundation, 2013; Larceneux, Benoit-Moreau, & Renaudin, 2012).

The *attitudes-behaviour gap* between expressed ethical interest and aspirations, on the one hand, and actual pro-environmental behaviour on the other hand has been investigated in many studies, and it constitutes one of the most fruitful avenues of study in the consumption literature.

Two core questions underlie this field: Why do people not walk the talk? And, what can be done in order to narrow the gap between expressed concerns and actual pro-environmental behaviour?

2.6 Attitude-behaviour gap

Environmental attitudes have been found to have a usually small impact on pro-environmental behaviour (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). A number of studies tried to find an answer to the question: Why do people claim they prefer more ethical products, but then they do not actually buy them? More generally, why are attitudes weak predictors of behaviour?

Several authors have claimed that the explanation for this contradiction might lie in the methodology used while researching consumer preferences. The levels of specificity used in the research may be a problematic factor: questions about attitudes are in fact often broader in scope than questions about behaviours, making the results hard to compare, and leading to an apparently weak attitude-behaviour relationship (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). For example, a weak correlation might be found if respondents are asked about their attitude towards air pollution in general – and then checked on a specific behaviour, such as driving. In fact, even people who are very concerned about air pollution tend to drive. Ajzen and Fishbein (2005) remark that attitudes are more accurate predictors of behaviour when they both belong to the same scale of magnitude: specific attitudes can be good predictors of specific behaviours, while general attitudes have been found to be correlated to aggregate measures of multiple behaviours.

Others claim that the attitude-behaviour gap may derive from the fact that ethical consumers' stated intentions can be distorted by the *social desirability bias*, a systematic error in self-reported data which results from the desire of respondents to edit their answers in order to reflect a more favourable self-image. The social desirability bias is claimed to be especially high in research that deals with ethical considerations (Auger & Devinney, 2007; Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010; Fisher, 1993). This conclusion has however been disputed by Implicit Attitude Testing (IAT) studies. Vantomme, Geuens, De Houwer, and De Pelsmacker (2005) analysed explicit and implicit attitudes towards green consumer products. Their results showed that implicit attitudes were as positive, or even more positive, towards the sustainable product than explicit attitudes. They concluded that positive explicit attitudes towards ethical consumption are probably not affected by a social desirability bias. The validity of the IAT methodology is, however, still a matter of debate in psychological circles (Blanton & Jaccard, 2006; Blanton et al., 2009).

The weak impact that attitudes have on behaviour may also be due to a number of other factors, some of which are external to the individual, and others, such as habits (see discussion on p. 30), which are internal.

What other factors, then, prevent consumers from being more ethical?

3. Obstacles and barriers to ethical consumption

Research has identified a number of factors that influence the likelihood of behaving sustainably. Some of them can also be used to explain why people with pro-environmental attitudes do not follow through on them; others are, more generally, elements which play a part in preventing sustainable behaviours.

The discussion in this chapter will loosely follow Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002), where three types of factors which might inhibit ethical consumption are distinguished: demographic factors, external factors and internal factors.

It is important to remember that, though they are analysed singularly below, these elements often influence each other, in an interplay which further hinders the individual and prevents him or her from acting pro-environmentally.

3.1 Demographic factors

The main demographic factors that have been found to influence pro-environmental behaviour are gender and education.

Some research points out a “gender effect”: women are supposed to be more concerned than men with environmental protection and ethical consumption, more emotionally engaged with environmental themes and generally more open to modify their behaviour to become more sustainable. The reasons for this gender difference have been deemed cultural, as women appear to be more frequently socialized to feeling socially responsible and other-oriented (Hunter, Hatch, & Johnson, 2004; Luchs & Mooradian, 2012; Zelezny, Chua, & Aldrich, 2000). Others, however, contest these findings, pointing out that a number of studies have found the relationship between gender and pro-environmental behaviour to be insignificant (De Pelsmacker, Driesen, & Rayp, 2005; Olli, Grendstad & Wollebaek, 2001; Straughan & Roberts, 1999).

A positive correlation has been noted between years of education and knowledge about environmental issues. Education has also been found to be positively correlated to ethical buying and participation in green activities (Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics, & Bohlen, 2003; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Shen & Saijo, 2008; Starr, 2009).

The use of demographic factors to segment the population in search for the green consumer has been extensively criticised. Many experts agree that these data interact in complex ways with other situational, institutional and psychological factors, which should also be considered

when analysing how pro-environmental attitudes are constructed, and what drives people to behave (or not behave) pro-environmentally (Diamantopoulos et al., 2003; Marquart-Pyatt, 2012).

3.2 External factors

Some factors external to the individual have been found to have an impact on people's ability to act pro-environmentally. These can be broadly divided into three categories: economic factors, institutional factors, and social and cultural factors.

3.2.1 Economic factors

Ethical products tend to be more expensive than their traditional alternatives. For this reason, economic cost is often mentioned as one of the key barriers to the spread of ethical consumption (Lang, 2010; Plank, 2011; Quimby & Angelique, 2011). Auger, Devinney, Louviere and Burke (2008) believe that a product's ethical qualities will always be less important than its price and quality. Others, however, have noted that although economic factors are relevant, they alone do not determine people's behaviour: economic factors have to be analysed alongside social, infrastructural and psychological factors to understand why individuals buy what they buy (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

3.2.2 Institutional factors

Sometimes people cannot act pro-environmentally because of structural obstacles. These include the presence of inadequate policies; lack of necessary infrastructure; absence of ethical consumer options; insufficient information on which ethical options are available.

3.2.2.1 Wrong policy approaches

Policies aimed at improving pro-environmental behaviour may be ineffective or, more alarmingly, they may have an effect opposite to the intended one. This includes for instance policies involving split incentives, where the actor who pays the costs of action is not the one who benefits from it; a typical example are energy efficiency retro-fittings in rental housing (Lucas, Brooks, Darnton, & Jones 2008; Swim et al., 2009). Crompton and Kasser (2009) also note that policies which place a monetary value on the natural world may ultimately be deleterious, as they reinforce the belief that the environment is valuable only insofar as it has economic value.

3.2.2.2 Lack of options or infrastructure

The presence of physical barriers can be sufficient to obstruct pro-environmental actions. If the infrastructures needed for a specific behaviour are limited or missing, citizens may be unable to act ethically despite their desire to do so. This is often the case with behaviours requiring public facilities, such as recycling, or cycling instead of driving (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Quimby & Angelique, 2011). Woodruff, Hasbrouck and Augustin (2008) argued that, to expedite a change within individuals, it is necessary to provide them with the necessary infrastructures.

Industrial infrastructure can also constitute a barrier to sustainable consumption. If it is in fact possible, and relatively easy, to buy ethical in some product categories – such as food, where many alternative options, like Fair Trade and organic, are often available - other product categories offer a much narrower selection. The lack of ethical alternatives has been documented in sectors like fashion and white goods (big electric appliances such as fridges and washing machines). In the first case, research shows that sweatshop-made clothes can hardly be identified, as the complexity of current production and distribution chains make it impossible to ascertain the places and conditions of production of clothing items (Shaw, Hogg, Wilson, Shiu, & Hassan, 2006). In the case of white goods, a 2009 study (McDonald et al.) shows that ethical consumers have little expectation in regards to this product category: as most big appliances are produced by large multinational companies, consumers assume that these products are produced and distributed under poor social and environmental standards.

3.2.2.3 Lack of supply (and the problem of demand)

Sometimes people do not choose ethical products because the option is unavailable.

Companies produce few pro-environmental or socially responsible products because, it is argued, the demand is insufficient. However, the low availability of ethical products contributes to the limited demand (O'Rourke, 2005). Vermeir and Verbeke's (2006) study on young consumers confirmed that higher perceived availability of sustainable products is associated to more positive intentions to buy these items. Limited perceived availability of ethical products could therefore explain the gap between positive attitudes towards sustainable items and low intentions to buy them.

However, one may be object that increasing the number of ethical products may not, in itself, be positive for the environment. As Crompton (2008) argued, purely substituting conventional products with sustainable ones will not prove to be a viable solution for environmental problems: for this reason, in order to achieve results in terms of sustainability, ethical and sustainable options should arguably be promoted alongside efforts to reduce consumption levels.

3.2.2.4 Sources of information

People cannot consume ethically unless they are informed about the options. It has been argued that in order to be effective, the sources of information on sustainable alternatives need to be

authoritative, reliable and impartial. Consumers tend not to trust unknown sources or industrial spokespersons (Cervellon et al., 2010; McDonald et al., 2009; O'Rourke, 2005).

The information present on the products can help, but also create further problems: for example, products often do not bear information on the work conditions they were produced in – even when fair working conditions were respected (Auger et al., 2008). In order to fill in the missing information, consumers who wish to purchase ethically are required high levels of knowledge, or large effort to acquire such knowledge.

3.2.3 Social and cultural factors

The type of society people live in has an effect on the way they think: what they value as important, and what they consider normal (as in, part of the accepted norm). Moreover, social practices contribute to shaping the decisions people make, also in terms of consumption choices.

3.2.3.1 Social values and norms

The values which dominate a given culture have a big influence on people's lives: they organize the functioning of social, political and economic institutions, and they influence the choice of national policies and practices. The prioritization of a set of values at the culture level is thought to have a *priming effect*[3] on individuals' values too (Kasser, 2011).

People's behaviours are heavily shaped by cultural norms (which, in turn, are informed by values); the more environmentally concerned the society that people live in, the more they will feel compelled to adopt pro-environmental behaviour patterns (Michaelis, 2000). A growing body of literature about conformity shows that other people's (in particular the peer group's) consumer behaviour affects the single's consumption levels, as well as their charitable giving and contributions to the public good (Carlsson, García, & Löfgren, 2010). A study by Starr (2009) confirmed that people are more likely to buy and consume ethical products if people around them do too.

However, there is a consensus that our hegemonic culture is far from environmentally conscious. In the current society success is equated with the acquisition of goods: the value of materialism is all-encompassing, as consumer items have acquired the role of primary signifiers

[3] A priming effect occurs when a particular stimulus (called prime) causes different effects on a target than a control stimulus. Typical priming effects consist in facilitated recalling of the stimulus (Quinlan & Dyson, 2008). In the case above, if materialistic or money-related values are promoted by political leaders and policy-makers, they may become more easily available – and more easily prioritized - by individuals in that culture.

of identity and social status (Dittmar, 2008). In their 2008 study, Kilbourne and Pickett demonstrated that materialism negatively affects environmental belief, which in turn has a positive effect on environmental concern and pro-environmental behaviour.

The societal expectations about possessions, moreover, work as a strong pressure in favour of consumption and against conservation (Kilbourne & Pickett, 2008; Michaelis, 2000; Quimby & Angelique, 2011; Swim et al., 2009). For example, Brown and Kasser (2005) showed that there is a correlation between a strong personal focus on materialistic goals like money and status, and ecologically damaging lifestyles. Kasser (2011) also pointed out that nations which promote more materialistic values tend to pollute more, and generally display lower levels of children's well-being.

3.2.3.2 Consumption is embedded in social practices

Consumption does not happen in a void. On the contrary, consumption practices are deeply embedded in daily routines and personal relationships of affection and obligation: what we buy has a lot to do with the people we buy it for (for example, our family and relations), their desires and needs, as well as with household routines and gender and power relations in the household (Barnett, Cloke et al., 2005; Reid, Sutton & Hunter, 2010). Relations and affections may therefore shape consumption practices in directions that diverge from the subject's ethical concerns or attitudes (Barnett, Cloke et al., 2005; Szmigin, Carrigan and McEachern, 2009).

Papaoikonomou et al. (2012) claim that people's consumption holds meanings which only make sense when analysed from the point of view of the communities people belong to. For this reason they suggest that collective consumption should be analysed in order to comprehend individuals' behaviours.

3.3 Internal factors

Psychology has studied the internal factors (which include, but are not limited to, thoughts, values, attitudes, feelings and habits) that affect people's ability to act pro-environmentally.

The following review contains a brief discussion on the most frequently examined psychological obstacles to ethical and pro-environmental behaviour.

Some of the studies considered refer generally to *pro-environmental behaviour*. However, it is here assumed that ethical consumption can be considered a type of pro-environmental behaviour. Pro-environmental behaviour has been defined as "behavior that consciously seeks to minimize the negative impact of one's actions on the natural and built world (e.g. minimize resource and energy consumption, use of non-toxic substances, reduce waste production)" (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002, p. 240). This definition is congruent with the concept of ethical consumption. Other authors (e.g. Bamberg & Möser, 2007; Barr & Gilg, 2006; Jackson, 2005b;

Turaga, Howarth, & Borsuk, 2010) have, moreover, discussed ethical or sustainable consumption considering it a form of pro-environmental behaviour.

The factors analysed below have all been found to have an effect on pro-environmental attitudes and actions. They are presented separately here for the clarity of analysis; such a classification is however purely heuristic, as in reality many of the factors occur simultaneously, and influence one another creating further complexity.

3.3.1 Motivation

Some experts claim that the key challenge of ethical consumption consists in motivating consumers to shift to more environmentally and socially sound products (O'Rourke, 2005).

Motivation, however, is intertwined with numerous other factors, among which are values, knowledge, habits and opportunities. These factors can act as obstacles to pro-environmental behaviour and ethical consumption, and as such they will be analysed below (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Moisander, 2007).

One of the most frequently mentioned elements that can limit motivation to act is perceived equity. People feel less encouraged to act ethically if they believe that others will not behave in the same manner. This problem, referred to as *tragedy of the commons*, has long been recognized in studies dealing with cooperation, and is seen as one of the key factors to pro-environmental inaction. Some studies report that consumers use lack of equity as a rationale for their indifferent behaviour (Auger et al., 2010; Quimby & Angelique, 2011; Swim et al., 2009). In an experimental study by Belk, Devinney and Eckhardt (2005), which used video ethnography techniques, many respondents claimed that their lack of concern for ethical consumption was justified by the unethical conduct of many corporations: If corporations do not care about the environment, or workers' rights, why should the consumers? was the underlying rationale.

3.3.2 Values

Values shape people's motivation to act. Values are relatively stable and hard to change (Mirosa et al., 2011); a correlation has been found between people's values and the likelihood of acting pro-environmentally.

Values have been defined as "stable beliefs about the personal or social desirability of certain behaviours and modes of existence. Values express the goals/needs that motivate people and appropriate ways to attain these goals/needs" (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006, p. 173).

Personal values have been studied extensively in the field of pro-environmental behaviour. Fuhrer et al. (cited in Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002) suggested that an individual's values are influenced primarily by their closest social circle and are learned through socialization (family, friends, peer group), so that group values can affect personal values; secondarily, values are

influenced by media and political organizations, and thirdly, they are affected by the larger social and cultural system. When it comes to environmental values in specific, however, study of life experiences showed that personal experiences of nature and natural destruction play the greater role in shaping pro-environmental sensitivity (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

The relationship between values and behaviour is still a matter of debate. Some studies have shown little correlation between values and pro-environmental behaviour; others, on the other hand, have found that certain values have a direct causal influence on environment-friendly actions (Mirosa, Lawson & Gnoth 2011; Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002). Much research has focused on the matter of which values are associated with pro-environmental behaviour and ethical consumption. Following and expanding the model of universal values suggested by Schwartz (1992), intrinsic (or self-transcendence) values, such as the values of universalism, self-direction, equality and freedom have been found to motivate sustainable consumption. Intrinsic values are inner-directed, and closely tied to psychological needs; the pursuit and fulfilment of inner values have repeatedly been associated with higher levels of well-being and life satisfaction. On the other end of the spectrum, extrinsic (or self-enhancement) values, such as power, hedonism, achievement and ambition have been associated with unsustainable modes of consumption (Alexander, Crompton & Shrubsole, 2011; Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002; Kilbourne, Grünhagen, & Foley, 2005; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Research on American adults showed a correlation between a focus on extrinsic values and a higher ecological footprint, and a negative correlation between extrinsic values and pro-environmental behaviours (Alexander et al., 2011). Extrinsic values depend on how others perceive the individual, and they have been repeatedly linked to materialism and lower levels of well-being (Alexander et al., 2011; Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

The value of *universalism* is of particular importance for pro-environmental behaviour because of its prosocial attributes; people who are high in universalism value equality, social justice, peace, unity with nature and environmental protection. Research has repeatedly found a correlation between sustainable behaviours and the value of universalism (Karp, 1996; Shaw et al., 2005; Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002). In Doran's (2009) research on Fair Trade users, the value of universalism alone explained 20% of the variability in Fair Trade consumption. Moreover, loyal Fair Trade users prized universalism as the most important value out of ten values measured, whereas non-consumers of Fair Trade products ranked universalism low, as the seventh most important value out of ten; security, conformity, achievement and hedonism – all values associated with materialism and non-environmental behaviour – were all rated higher than universalism by non-consumers of Fair Trade.

3.3.3 Attitudes

Attitudes influence behaviour- and vice versa. In Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) attitudes are central in shaping individuals' behavioural intentions and, ultimately,

behaviours. In the TPB behavioural intentions are formed basing on attitudes, subjective norms and perceptions of behavioural control[4]. To this day, the TPB is probably the most widely used theory in research dealing with the causes and antecedents of pro-environmental behaviour.

Attitudes appear to be influenced by self-identity (see pp. 13-4 for a discussion on self-identity). Puntoni (2001) found that purchase intention is influenced by self-identity in two ways: directly, but also through the mediation of attitudes. Self-identity has been found to be a good predictor of behaviour; ethical or environmental self-identity, in specific, was repeatedly found to explain both attitudes and intentions towards buying sustainable products, such as organic and Fair Trade items (Hustvedt & Dickson, 2009; Michaelidou & Hassan, 2008; Shaw & Shiu, 2002; Sparks & Shepherd, 1992; Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010).

Despite the large relevance given to attitudes in the TPB, some studies have reported that attitudes are only weakly predictive of pro-environmental actions, as they can only influence low-cost behaviour (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

Other studies have pointed out the existence of a reverse effect of behaviour on attitudes. Attitudes and behaviour mutually influence each other, and changes in behaviour can bring about changes in attitudes (Reibstein, Lovelock, & Dobson, 1980). Golob and Hensher (1998) found that driving a car to work can negatively influence one's concern about greenhouse gas emissions; attitudes mutate to justify one's actions. Bagley & Mokhtarian's (2002) study confirmed that travel behaviour tends to reinforce related attitudes: the more people drive, the more positive they are towards driving. Engaging in pro-environmental behaviour can thus also change attitudes towards more pro-environmental: a person who recycles might start to think of herself as a person who cares about the environment – the attitude is adjusted to be consonant with the behaviour (Thøgersen & Crompton, 2009).

This backward effect of behaviour on attitudes has been explained using cognitive dissonance theory. Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance suggests that people feel discomfort when they hold contradictory beliefs, or when their beliefs and behaviours clash. Individuals are thus motivated to reduce inconsistencies in their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. This is achieved either by avoiding situations and information that would increase dissonance, or by modifying either the attitudes or the behaviour so that they are consistent. In the case above attitudes (on driving, on relevance of environmental problems) change in order to be consistent with the individual's behaviours (Haas et al., 2007).

[4] Behavioural control refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a particular behavior (Ajzen, 2002).

3.3.4 Environmental knowledge and awareness

Much discussion has centred on the role played by environmental knowledge in relation to sustainable behaviours. The “information deficit model” theory assumes that scepticism and lack of concern about scientific facts are the consequence of a too limited knowledge and understanding of science. This model thus posits that people’s doubts about scientific knowledge and innovations (be it climate science, or GMOs) are caused by ignorance of the scientific bases that lie behind (Sturgis & Allum, 2004). Increased scientific knowledge is therefore seen as sufficient to increase understanding of, and consequently support for, scientific discoveries and innovations (Bak, 2001).

Many policy-makers appear to still rely on an information deficit model, as they promote education and informational campaigns as the key to solve current problems and move towards a more sustainable future (Bulkeley, 2000; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009). It is, however, a matter of debate whether information is sufficient, or even necessary, to create more socially and environmentally conscious behaviours.

Critics of the information deficit model (e.g. Bulkeley, 2000; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Moser & Dilling, 2011) have argued that environmental knowledge has a weak effect at best on pro-environmental behaviour. In many cases, increased environmental knowledge does not lead to increased sustainable behaviours; on the contrary, it is possible to foster pro-environmental actions without increasing the knowledge of the subject (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

Others, however, have found prior knowledge of the ethical attributes of a product to be a strong predictor on purchase intentions, above the influence of other intangible attributes, making knowledge a relevant aspect in the field of sustainable consumption (Auger et al., 2010).

3.3.4.1 Ignorance and complexity

Although increased knowledge may not bring about behavioural change, unawareness of the issue is an evident obstacle to pro-environmental action: people are unlikely to look for a solution for a problem they do not know exists.

Ignorance can be an obstacle even when it is limited to not knowing which actions should be taken. Even people who are aware of sustainability issues may not know which courses of action are better for the planet (Swim et al., 2009). This is likely due to the complexity of sustainability issues, which are tightly connected to current systems of production and consumption. In order to consume sustainably in an aware and consistent manner within the current globalized systems, an individual would need to hold an array of specialized knowledge – including, for example, knowledge of the structure of production chains, the causes of environmental problems and the trade-offs deriving from different courses of action (Moisander, 2007; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Even getting information about specific single goods can be a time-consuming and complicated task. Verifying data regarding the social and environmental qualifications of products requires an amount of time and effort that few people want or have to spare (Shaw, Hogg, et al., 2006). Moreover, increased information can sometimes be burdening, rather than

helpful: ethical consumers are sometimes so overwhelmed with often contrasting information that they do not welcome additional information (Markkula & Moisander, 2011; Newholm & Shaw, 2007).

3.3.4.2 Sources of information

The presence of competing information from sources with opposite vested interest (e.g. marketers and NGOs) makes it harder for individuals to choose an appropriate course of action (Crompton, 2008). This problem is deepened by instances of mistrust for the sources of information, which has to do both with the legitimacy of the source and with personal prejudice or ignorance.

Research shows that people mistrust sources of information which they think are biased (for example industrial spokespersons) (McDonald et al., 2009; O'Rourke, 2005); however, many people also appear not to trust official messages coming from scientists or government officials (Swim et al., 2009). Cervellon et al. (2010) also found out that consumers often mistrust ethical claims from brands they do not know.

3.3.5 Emotional involvement and distancing

Emotional involvement has been defined as "the extent to which we have an affective relationship to the natural world" (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002, p. 254). An emotional investment in environmental problems and sustainability issues is arguably crucial to change behaviours. Kühtz (2007) argues that, if we want to move towards more sustainable lifestyles, we need to focus first on expanding people's moral sensitivities so that they include the destiny of other people as well as that of the natural world.

Emotional involvement is, however, hampered by a problem of distance, both in time and in space.

Many environmental problems happen at a slow pace, so that there is a large time lag between cause and consequence. Unsustainable behaviours (such as driving a lot, or buying foods grown using pesticides) provoke consequences which are often geographically or temporally distant from the individual. The lack of tangibility of the effects of our actions causes an emotional distance which, it has been argued, cannot be fulfilled simply by increasing intellectual knowledge (Kühtz, 2007). In other words, even when people have been taught that pesticides cause eutrophication, they may still not feel part of the problem, or compelled to change behaviours, because they do not experience direct and visible feedback to their actions – or change thereof. The rational knowledge of the consequence appears therefore to be inferior in effect to the emotional knowledge.

In a similar fashion, when it comes to consumption the geographical and cognitive distance between places and methods of production, on the one side, and areas of consumption on the other causes an emotional distancing that may lead to lack of concern and inaction (Eden et al.,

2008; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). In other words, even when one knows the implications of production chains, they will hardly think of oppressed workers and river pollution in China when buying a new pair of trousers: the leap is too large – even when the knowledge is present.

The problem of distancing also arises when we take into consideration future risks or gains. Humans, in fact, tend to be focused on the present, undervaluing future losses or gains. This bias in favour of the present is frequently observed in case of environmental issues, and is called *judgmental discounting*. Discounting refers to the undervaluing of distant or future environmental risks or gains as opposed to present risks or gains (Gattig & Hendrickx, 2007). The bias of judgmental discounting becomes an issue of equity when what we discount is not our future, but that of the next generations: in other words, when future risks will be borne by others (Hoffman & Bazerman, 2007; Swim et al., 2009).

3.3.5.1 Defence mechanisms

Increasing the individual's emotional connection to environmental problem does not always bring about adaptive, pro-environmental behaviours. When levels of threat, anxiety and helplessness become too high (which may be the case when people are faced with the possible consequences of unsustainable lifestyles and unhalted climate change), individuals have been known to resort to defence mechanisms such as denial, delegation, and apathy and resignation.

Denial consists of suppressing negative emotions by denying the reality of the facts (Hamilton & Kasser, 2009). It is a strategy some people use when reality clashes with their core values and beliefs. Denying the reality of the facts resolves the cognitive dissonance (see p. 25) resulting from a mismatch between actions and sentiments, freeing the person from negative feelings. People also use denial strategies to resist information that does not conform to their world-view (Hamilton & Kasser, 2009; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

Delegation has to do with shifting the blame from oneself to outside sources to remove feelings of guilt. Individuals blame others for the problem, thus distancing themselves from the issue, but also from any means of solving it: people who do not feel part of the problem will hardly make any personal sacrifices to solve it (Crompton & Kasser, 2009; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

Apathy and resignation are indifference strategies that people use when they feel helpless to shield themselves from negative feelings (Hamilton & Kasser, 2009). These strategies however tend to reinforce unsustainable behavioural choices, ultimately worsening environmental problems: in fact people who are indifferent, or resigned, see no motivation to change their socially and environmentally unsustainable lifestyles (Cafaro, 2005). Research confirms that people who are resigned to the ineluctability of climate change tend to be less prone to act pro-environmentally (Crompton & Kasser, 2009).

3.3.6 Locus of control, self-efficacy and perceived consumer effectiveness

People are more likely to take action when they feel that they are able to bring about change. In the case of pro-environmental behaviours, people's belief in their ability to make a difference has been studied under different names: some of them are locus of control, self-efficacy and perceived consumer effectiveness.

The *locus of control* consists in an individual's perception of their ability to make a difference through personal behaviour. People with an external locus of control, who believe that their action cannot make a difference, are less likely to behave pro-environmentally (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Huebner and Lipsey (cited in Lindsay & Strathman, 1997) pointed out a positive correlation between internal locus of control (belief that personal actions can have an impact) and pro-environmental behaviour.

A construct similar to locus of control is *perceived self-efficacy*, defined as the belief in one's abilities "to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (Bandura, 1998, p. 624). Perceived self-efficacy is akin not only to locus of control, but also to the TPB's perceived behavioural control (see pp. 24-5) (Ajzen, 2002; Meinhold & Malkus, 2005). A few studies have demonstrated that self-efficacy is a predictor of pro-environmental behaviour (Kim, Jeong & Hwang, 2013; Lindsay & Strathman, 1997).

Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE) is used to refer to consumers' self-efficacy beliefs when it comes to environmental preservation: people with high PCE are more convinced that their purchases can help protect the environment (Hanss & Böhm, 2010). PCE has been found to be a predictor of ecological behaviour (Ellen, Wiener & Cobb-Walgren, 1991). In Vermeir and Verbeke's (2006) study on sustainable dairy products PCE was found to have a significant positive effect on attitude towards buying these products. Attitude was, in turn, strongly correlated with intention to buy. Straughan and Roberts (1999) analysed a number of demographic and psychographic criteria in their study on the segmentation of pro-environmental consumers. The variables included demographic measures such as gender, age, and income, and psychographic ones such as environmental concern, PCE, liberalism and altruism. PCE was found to correlate with pro-environmental behaviour above and beyond all other factors.

3.3.7 Desire for comfort and convenience

People's desire to be comfortable and not feel inconvenienced can constitute a barrier to the taking on of sustainable behaviours. Lack of time, along with cost, have been deemed strong obstacles to consuming more sustainably. Jackson (2005b) claims that time is a major limit in the shift towards more sustainable modes of consumption. In fact, when they are under time pressure, people tend to use simpler decision heuristics, relying more on habits and routine. According to Jackson, the fast pace of contemporary life and the increasing number of sources

demanding people's attention limit behavioural change, cementing instead habit and past behaviours.

It may however be argued that lack of time is not an external barrier, but rather a self-imposed one deriving from a desire for convenience.

Barr (2007) found that convenience was a predictor of behaviour when it came to reusing old items, reducing purchase and recycling garbage. People tended to reuse, reduce and recycle more if these actions did not inconvenience them.

McDonald et al. (2009) point out that this desire for convenience is visible also in self-appointed green consumers, who sometimes in their decisions put ordinary concerns such as time and convenience above their pro-environmental values.

3.3.8 Habits

A large part of people's behaviours is driven by habit, rather than by rational or reasoned choice (Steg & Vlek, 2009). Ecologically unsustainable habitual behaviours have been counted among the biggest obstacles to climate change mitigation efforts, as habits are very resistant to change; even when they can be modified it takes a long time, and the results may be temporary (Swim et al., 2009).

Habits become stronger with repetition, and when a behaviour becomes habitual a large effort may be required to break it, so much that the force of habit has been compared to that of inertia (Kühtz, 2007). Research (e.g. Staats, Harland, & Wilke, 2004) has shown that intentions are less predictive of habitual behaviour than of deliberate behaviour. Habitual behaviour is also less flexible to new information than reasoned behaviour. Steg and Vlek (2009) call this *selective attention*: when acting out of habit, individuals tend to only focus on the data that confirms their choices, disregarding information that deviates from their habitual behaviour and may attempt to modify it.

In the context of consumption, habitual behaviours have been noted in people's tendency to choose products that do not differ critically from those they have previously purchased (Auger et al., 2010).

3.3.9 Conflicting goals and aspirations

As was mentioned earlier (see par. 3.2.3.2, p. 22), consumption practices are embedded in, and sometimes structured by, routines and relationships. Individuals' consumption is limited by various constraints, sometimes prosaic like the aforementioned time and money; moreover, people use their consumption to achieve a number of different goals, some of which may clash with the desire of being sustainable. The conflicting priorities and aspirations (for example using objects to display status or taste, or taking care of the dear ones through material goods) may

pose a limit to the possibility of buying more ethically (Markkula & Moisander, 2011; Shaw & Clarke, 1999; Swim et al., 2009). In a study by Szmigin et al. (2009) ethical consumers expressed the tension inherent in having to make complex ethical choices, reporting feelings of guilt and awareness of being a 'hypocrite' for not always prioritizing ethical attributes in their daily shopping.

Even when people decide to make sustainable purchases, the competing ethical claims of different products may cause a discursive confusion. Should an ethically-minded consumer prefer Fair Trade fruits, or local produce? Fair Trade products guarantee a better deal to farmers in developing countries; on the other hand, these goods are imported from faraway places, thus contributing to pollution through their transport. Local products, on the other hand, do not contribute to reducing social injustice, but they have low *food miles*[5]. Again, should an ethical consumer choose a second-hand appliance or buy a new, but more energy-efficient one? The complexity of these issues demands difficult value judgments on the consumer's part, and risks to create cognitive dissonance in the sustainability-conscious individual (Eden et al., 2008; Lang, 2010; Markkula & Moisander, 2011; McDonald et al., 2009; Moisander, 2007). Cognitive dissonance involves psychological discomfort, which may take the form of feelings of hypocrisy (as in the case of Szmigin et al.'s (2009) subjects) or guilt, as was reported by the participants in Bray, Johns & Kilburne's (2011) exploratory study (Elliot & Devine, 1994; O'Leary, 2013). In both these studies, ethical consumers reported feelings of dissonance when they did not opt for the ethical alternative.

3.3.10 Rebound effect

Rebound effects can negatively affect people's ability to act pro-environmentally. The rebound effect is a negative spill-over which occurs when a new behaviour brings about a gain, but also consequences which counteract the said gain. This effect has been observed in sustainable consumption: for example, in the transport sector fuel efficiency gains from new engines have been offset by an increase in sales of large, highly-consuming cars (Farber, 2012; Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Swim et al., 2009; Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010). Similarly, in the past decades energy savings deriving from the use of more efficient electrical products have been offset by an increase in the number of electrical items families own on average, so much that, despite technological improvements, general energy consumption has been rising. A causal relation has

[5] Food miles is a sustainability measure commonly used for food products. It consists in the calculation of the greenhouse gas produced for the transport of the goods from the producer to the consumer (Weber & Matthews, 2008).

been noted between the efficiency gains and the increased consumption, both in the case of transport and in the case of electricity use (Herring & Roy, 2007).

Crompton (2008) argues that rebound effects might be linked to the motivation which lies behind behaviour changes. He believes that if people were to change their consumption patterns for environmental reasons, rather than economic ones, rebound effects like those mentioned above would be less frequent.

Mazar and Zhong (2010) report a different kind of rebound effect: ethical purchases, they argue, may have a negative "moral" spill-over. A correlation was found between purchase of green products and immoral behaviours, like lying and stealing. The authors explain the correlation by theorizing that after an ethical purchase the moral self feels a boost, which gives a license for asocial and unethical behaviours.

The factors presented above all act as barriers to the diffusion of more sustainable styles of consumption. Appropriate courses of action have to keep into consideration that several of these factors may appear and act concurrently. For example, policies and campaigns need to take into account the psychological antecedents of consumer behaviour, as well as the role of habits and possible rebound effects, in their formulation (Jackson, 2005b). A number of policy suggestions are presented in chapter 5. They are assessed with respect to the barriers to ethical consumption and pro-environmental behaviour illustrated above.

4. Ethical consumption in Iceland: state and barriers

Despite increasing global interest in issues of sustainability and green economy, ethical consumption is a relatively under-researched theme in Iceland.

The absence of a strong literature on consumption, and sustainable consumption in specific, is significant because Iceland is a country with very high levels of personal consumption (Guðmundur Jónsson, 2011); according to a 2010 study (Sigurður E. Jóhannesson) it is one of the least sustainable countries (possibly the least sustainable country) on the planet. Yet the level of reflexivity on consumer issues does not appear to be congruent with the magnitude of consumption activities in Iceland, and the relevance of consumption in the Icelandic society.

This chapter discusses the state of ethical consumption in Iceland. The analysis is based on the most relevant literature on Icelandic consumers' attitudes and behaviours, as well as on three interviews that the author undertook in 2013 with Icelandic experts on the topics of social responsibility and sustainable consumption. The interviews were face-to-face and semi-structured; the aim was to gather information about issues relating with sustainability and consumption in Iceland, which correspond to the interviewees' areas of expertise.

The experts who were interviewed all work in private companies.

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Finnur Sveinsson is the CSR expert at Landsbankinn, one of Iceland's main banks.

Ketill B. Magnússon is the managing director at Festa, the Icelandic Center for CSR. He is also lecturer in business ethics and social responsibility at Reykjavík University, and the chairman at the National Parent Association of Iceland.

A number of experts in ethical consumption and sustainability working in Icelandic public institutions were contacted by the author, but they were not available for interviews.

The chapter starts by reviewing the most relevant studies on Icelandic consumers' attitudes and behaviours, to then move on to presenting selected policies and plans regarding sustainability and ethical consumption. A discussion on the main obstacles to ethical consumption in Iceland follows; it is based on recent data, drawn mostly from a survey the author undertook in 2012 and supported by the three interviews taken in 2013 with the Icelandic experts introduced above.

4.1 A brief history of sustainable consumption in Iceland

Experts in the sector describe a big societal transformation taking place in Iceland in the past 10 years, as issues regarding consumers' and producers' responsibilities have slowly come to the fore. In the past decade CSR initiatives have expanded in number and scope; matters of ethical consumption, and product quality, have increased their presence in the media; Icelandic citizens also appear to be more receptive to ideas of sustainability (Brynhildur Pétursdóttir, personal communication, March 21, 2013; Finnur Sveinsson, personal communication, March 15, 2013; Ketill B. Magnússon, personal communication, March 14, 2013). Ketill B. Magnússon (personal communication, March 14, 2013) noticed an increase in consumers' reflectiveness in the wake of the 2008 economic crisis. He believes that people's decreasing financial possibilities will translate into a deeper awareness of their consumption habits, and a shift towards more quality products.

The crisis also affected Icelandic firms, which responded by taking up more substantial CSR projects. These initiatives, which are part of an international megatrend demanding more transparency and responsibility, are in the case of Iceland more often propelled by the company's board and international partners than by consumer demand (Finnur Sveinsson, personal communication, March 15, 2013; Ketill B. Magnússon, personal communication, March 14, 2013).

Icelandic consumers, in fact, appear to be still relatively unmoved by matters of sustainable consumption – especially as compared to consumers in the other Nordic countries. It has been argued that, despite increased interest in the past decade, Icelandic consumers are still under-informed and quite cynical towards ethical consumption (Ketill B. Magnússon, personal communication, March 14, 2013).

4.1.1 Research on Icelandic consumers

4.1.1.1 2003: TemaNord research on ethical consumption

The first research which focused on Icelanders' knowledge and opinions about ethical consumption dates back to circa ten years ago (Brynhildur Pétursdóttir, personal communication, March 21, 2013). It was a study promoted by the Nordic Council of Ministers aimed at comparing the levels of awareness and interest in ethical consumption in the Nordic countries (TemaNord, 2003). The research revealed scarce awareness and interest about ethical considerations in Iceland: very few respondents reported taking ethical matters into consideration while shopping, and many displayed mistrust towards ethical products, a reason that they used as a rationale for their lack of concern. One respondent stated: "I think it is to[o] complicated. I don't trust the information I'm getting, and I don't think I should follow it" (p. 26). Another one expressed fear that "A label will just be a scam, just faked." (p. 36).

Along with mistrust, the Icelandic participants also displayed the highest levels of cultural relativism of all the Nordic groups. A few respondents agreed that, although it is an Icelander's responsibility to stand by fair working conditions in Iceland, labour practices abroad are not really Iceland's concern. As a respondent eloquently put it, "You see people sitting on the factory floor. But do they want a chair? Is it my business to say, 'you should have a chair'?" (p. 31).

A localism bias was also observed: the report judges striking the fact that the Icelandic groups were unanimous in asserting that they didn't know any ethical products, with the exclusion of Icelandic ones.

A few of the respondents lamented the lack of public debate in Iceland on themes of ethical consumption, underlining that the little concern displayed may be due to a lack of information. A respondent justified the lack of awareness and interest in the subject with the words "we haven't learned to think this way" (p. 48), thus (deliberately or not) underlining the necessity of more sustainability-focused education in Iceland.

4.1.1.2 2006: Þórunn Edwald's research

In 2006 Þórunn Edwald, an Icelandic Master's student in Marketing Communications at Bournemouth University, researched the levels of awareness and interest of Icelanders towards ethical consumption. Her results point at information and opportunity as the biggest obstacles to ethical consumption: most respondents reported that the reasons why they did not shop more ethically were limited offer of clearly ethical products, and insufficient information on the ethical standing of most other goods.

Once again, participants underlined that in Iceland there is too little public discussion on matters of sustainable consumption. Indeed, most of the people who reported consuming ethically (for example, choosing organic products or boycotting unethical companies) had previously lived abroad, and explained their interest in the topic referring to the wide media and public interest in the topic in the country where they had lived.

Þórunn Edwald moreover pointed out that in all the Nordic countries there are consumer watchdog organizations which investigate companies' activities, and at the same time educate the public about consumption. However, despite the historical and social relevance of NGOs such as DanWatch, NorWatch, SwedWatch and FinnWatch, there is still not an IceWatch.

The results also indicated that mistrust of private sources of information may be a limiting factor to ethical consumption in Iceland. Respondents stated that they did not trust Icelandic media to be impartial when reporting on issues of ethical consumption, as media tend to favour the interests of the businesses they financially depend on. Mistrust of companies' intentions was

also apparent: when asked about social responsibility initiatives, most people expressed fears of greenwashing[6]. At the same time, however, most respondents said they would not stop buying products from companies who had made it clear that they had no interest in social responsibility, thus displaying very little interest in the concept of CSR.

Public institutions were pointed to as the responsible party when it comes to providing information to consumers, instituting codes of conduct and controlling that these are respected (Neytendablaðið, 2008).

4.1.1.3 2007: TemaNord research on food labelling

A 2007 TemaNord research on food labelling tangentially touched on issues of ethical consumption.

The findings confirmed previous results: Icelandic consumers are the least concerned about ethical issues in the Nordic countries. One of the questions in the research focused on how important it was for consumers that food labels provide ethical information, regarding for example environmental impact of the products, animal welfare and human rights. Of the five Nordic countries surveyed, only in Iceland the majority of respondents (53%) believed such information was unimportant: in all the other countries most of the participants deemed the issue important (see Figure 1).

Icelandic respondents also appeared to be the least interested among the Nordic consumers in knowing where the food they eat comes from (TemaNord, 2007).

[6] Greenwashing is a marketing strategy aimed at making the public believe that the company, or product, in question is more pro-environmental than it is. It consists in the whitewashing of a company through the cynical use of an environmental image, aimed at misleading consumers (Laufer, 2003).

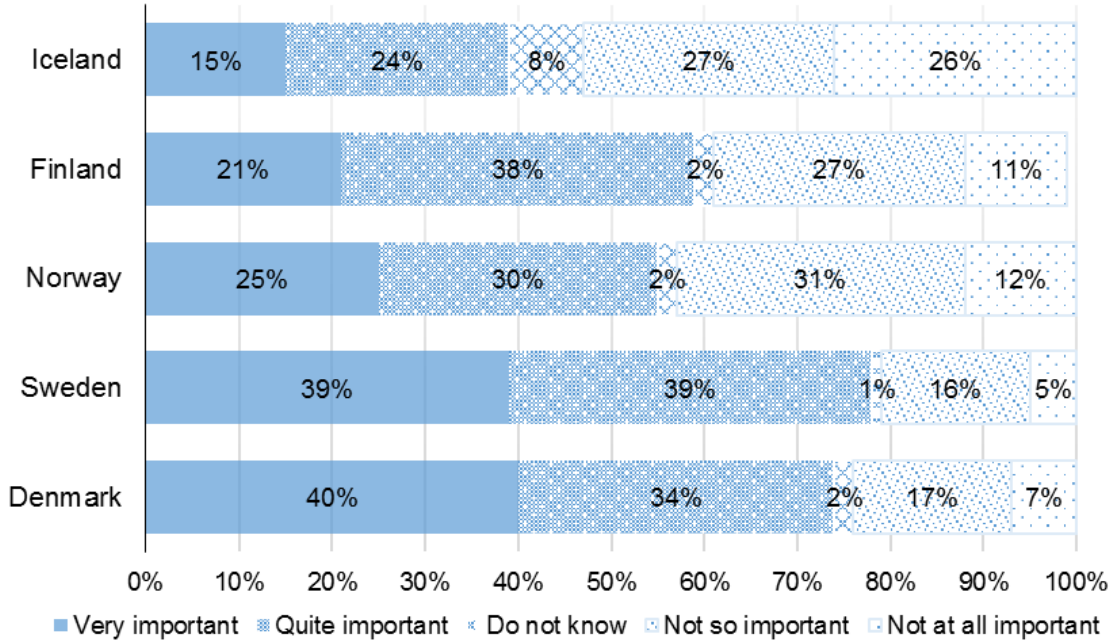

Figure 1. How important is ethical information on food labels, for example regarding environment, animal welfare and human rights - Nordic countries (data from TemaNord, 2007, p. 36: my elaboration)

4.1.1.4 2008: Research on consumer issues in Iceland

A 2008 research on consumer issues in Iceland included items regarding political and ethical consumption (Ragna B. Garðarsdóttir, Ásdís A. Arnalds, & Friðrik H. Jónsson, 2008).

The study showed that, although Fair Trade was not very well known among the Icelandic public (55% of the respondents had not heard of it), almost all the respondents were familiar with the concept of organic (98% had heard of it).

When it came to political consumption, however, Icelandic consumers appeared to be quite inert. The majority of the respondents claimed they had never boycotted a company or a product as an act of protest (only 46% and 38% of respondents had participated in a boycott respectively of a company or of a product).

As regards concern for ethical issues, the findings showed most Icelanders were unconcerned about animal welfare: 60% of respondents reported little to very little interest in how animals are treated to produce the goods sold in Iceland; only 29% claimed this was an issue that worried them.

The majority of respondents (58%) claimed they were concerned about child labour; one third of respondents (33%), however, reported little interest in this issue.

The results of this study thus depicted Icelandic consumers as not completely uninformed, but still little interested in issues of moral and political consumption.

4.1.2 Selected policies and plans regarding sustainability and ethical consumption

4.1.2.1 2002: Welfare for the future, 2002-2020

In 2002, as requested by the United Nations (see p. 10), Iceland released its first National Strategy for Sustainable Development (Ministry for the Environment, 2002). The aim of the strategy, which has an ample time frame (spanning from 2002 to 2020), is to be a general framework for specific policies. It sets long-term goals, and provides indicators to measure success. The final aim of the strategy, as is specified in its introduction, is to provide guidance in order to transform Iceland into one of the first sustainable societies in the world.

The national strategy is mostly focused on strictly environmental issues, both domestic and global. The main goals are creation of a healthy and safe environment, protection of Icelandic nature, sustainable use of natural resources and waste, and protection of the global commons, in specific oceans, the ozone and global climate.

References to sustainable consumption are scarce and sparse. There is a mention to a need for increased consumer education, an area where Iceland lags behind[7]; no specific suggestions are, however, given on how to improve the situation. The strategy cites safety of foods among its goals, which includes proper labelling of products. There is, though, no mention of information regarding the ethicity of the product's manufacturing process.

Similarly, the chapter regarding sustainable use of resources does not refer to sustainable consumption, focusing instead on soil conservation, waste generation and recycling and sustainable use of natural resources, such as fisheries, energy and vegetation.

It is worth noting that even when discussing the need to reduce the use of pesticides, the strategy does not mention organic agriculture, preferring a vaguer definition: "Technology that does not involve the use of dangerous materials will be encouraged, such as the use of biological control in agriculture and horticulture and disinfecting without the use of hazardous chemicals." (p. 31)

In 2010 the strategy was updated including specific objectives for the years 2010-2013; much more weight was then given to issues of sustainable production and consumption, and education for sustainability. The details are discussed below.

[7] p. 14: "Iceland is, however, lacking in some areas of public education compared to many developed countries, for instance regarding consumer education."

4.1.2.2 2008: "Step by step" brochure

In 2008 a collaboration between the Ministry for the Environment and the environmental NGO Landvernd brought about "Skref fyrir skref", a brochure designed to encourage ecological lifestyles.

The publication is aimed at individuals, and focuses on different ways in which citizens can reduce their consumption and become more environmentally friendly. The focus is treble: waste generation and recycling; sustainable consumption; reduction of pollution, and energy and water consumption.

Much of the advice provided may be seen as low-hanging fruit: citizens are reminded to turn off unused appliances, use public transport, bring along reusable bags when shopping, and walk or bike over short distances.

The suggestions given in the area of sustainable consumption oscillate between ethical and health concerns. The chapter on purchasing begins by advising readers to choose Eco-labelled products and services; a list of nine Eco-labels (which span from energy-related ones, to tourist-services oriented labels, to organic logos) is also provided at the end of the section. The brochure then recommends buying Fair Trade products and eating vegetables, preferably organic – their price premium, it notes, will be reduced if sales grow. Local foods are also advised; the rationale behind appears to be localism, and praise of Icelandic produce, as much as the logic of food miles. Readers are advised to choose tap water over packaged drinks, limit the use of chemicals in the house and buy only the food they are going to eat to prevent unnecessary waste. Finally, a paragraph is devoted to boycotting: Icelandic consumers are urged to boycott products made from unsustainable sources, or manufactured exploiting the workforce. In specific, goods made from rainforest wood and Fair Trade products are named as examples of items to boycott and buy-cott respectively, where "buy-cotting" is a type of politically informed active consumption.

The philosophy underlying the "Skref fyrir skref" project is that every individual can contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment (Sigrún Pálsdóttir & Stefán Gíslason, 2008).

It is hard to gauge the spread and effects of this informational campaign. Despite the amount of practical and useful information contained in the leaflet, the project appears to have been discontinued; the dedicated webpage (http://landvernd.is/Sidur/ID/586) was last updated in 2008, and the project manager could not be reached for comments.

4.1.2.3 2010: Welfare for the Future, priorities 2010-2013

In 2010 the Ministry for the Environment updated the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, specifying short-term priorities for the years 2010 to 2013.

The objectives set in 2010 partially mirror the emphases in the 2002 framework strategy, and partially divert from them to focus more specifically on issues of sustainable consumption and education for sustainability, two themes that the original document only touched on briefly.

The new priorities underline that sustainable production and consumption should be promoted through green public procurement, as well as through information campaigns focusing on the importance of individual consumption. Eco-labels (with a special attention to the Nordic Swan) are also seen as important means to foster ethical consumption; an increased attention to them, and adoption of them, are suggested.

Sustainable consumption habits are also mentioned as a relevant goal in the chapter devoted to welfare and public health. Finally, the document makes the link between present consumption and long-term sustainability explicit, underlining that sustainable consumption is also significant in terms of inter-generational equity.

The new objectives list sustainability education as one of the priorities. The final aim, according to the document, is "To create a society characterised by solidarity" (p. 8). This should be achieved by educating citizens about equality, democracy and social justice, as well as the importance of nature and the human impact on the global environment. The document specifies that this form of education will take place in schools, thanks to a new curriculum which includes sustainability among its core topics, but also through continued education in the workplace and generally throughout adult life. Education for sustainability is thus seen as a form of lifelong education, which contributes to forming more effective citizens (Ministry for the Environment [Umhverfis- og auðlindaráðuneytið], 2010).

4.1.2.4 2010: Regulation on GMOs

The first Icelandic regulation on labelling and traceability of genetically modified food dates to 2010. It is known as regulation 1038/2010, and it is modelled on European Union regulations n.1829/2003 and 1830/2003. It requires all products including GMOs to be labelled, in order to allow consumers to make an informed choice when purchasing foods (Helga Margrét Pálsdóttir, 2011; Stjórnarráð Íslands, 2010).

4.1.2.5 2011: Iceland 2020

The 2011 governmental policy statement titled "Iceland 2020" is the fruit of a collaboration between different stakeholders, including local authorities, interest groups and the general public. The report envisages Iceland in 2020 as a sustainable, efficient, prosperous nation.

The document sets 15 economic objectives, which touch on matters of equality, welfare and diffusion of technology. The goals are meant be reached in the coming 10 years.

Although the themes of green growth and green economy are present in the report, no attention is devoted to sustainable consumption. As a matter of fact, consumption is mentioned

only once, and in connection with issues of localism (Objective 14: “That the percentage of domestic food consumed by Icelanders will have increased by 10% by 2020”) (Prime Minister’s Office [Forsætisráðuneytið], 2011: p. 11).

4.1.2.6 2011: Strengthening of the Green Economy

The committee formed to bolster the green economy in Iceland published its final report in 2011 (Parliamentary Committee on the Strengthening of the Green Economy, 2011). The document suggests 48 actions which Iceland should undertake for a greener growth. The project aims at transforming the nation into a green economy, leader in the international market.

Green growth, it has been argued, is a functional approach to achieve sustainable development (OECD, 2012). In line with the very definition of SD, the report claims that a green Iceland would aim at guaranteeing prosperity and quality of life to both present and future generations.

The policy is divided into a number of points. For the scope of this paper, only a few are mentioned.

From an economic point of view, the Committee suggest to calculate other national indicators of wealth alongside Gross Domestic Product (GDP); the implications are discussed below (see p. 56). The importance of green public procurement is also stressed: on the one hand, the state and its subsidiaries are economically relevant actors, which could make a difference in the green products market; on the other hand, public bodies play an important position as forerunners of innovation and as role models for the larger society. Although the green procurement project was started in 2003, the report states the importance of setting more ambitious goals for Iceland; a new policy for the years 2013-2020 sets the objective of 50% of green national tenders by 2015, and 80% by 2020. In order to achieve this goal, the report suggests the strengthening of the website Vinn.is (http://www.vinn.is), an informational toolkit which has been used to disseminate relevant information to stakeholders (procurers, buyers and sellers alike) since 2003.

The economic policy also includes some incentives for environmentally-friendly goods and services. It is suggested that pro-environmental products should have a lower VAT, and green means of transport (whether it is buses, bikes or car-sharing systems) should be promoted also economically.

Education plays an important part in the creation of a more sustainable society. The report underlines the need for lifelong, out-of-the-classroom education: teachers, as well as public employees, should be offered training programmes informing them about all issues regarding sustainability. Sustainable knowledge should also be integrated into pre-existing courses; for example, the report addresses the importance of eco-driving courses, as they guarantee an economical as well as an environmental return to the individual.

The policy, finally, points out that a greening of Iceland could be an invaluable tool for image-building, as a green economy may attract more tourists and larger investments. It is, however, underlined that both the investments and the fluxes of tourists should be consonant with the environmental route chosen (Parliamentary Committee on the Strengthening of the Green Economy, 2011).

4.1.2.7 2011: New national curriculum for schools

In August 2011 a new national curriculum was adopted by pre-primary, compulsory and secondary schools. The new curriculum focuses on the importance of learning competences over knowledge and skills, and is based on six fundamental pillars: literacy, sustainability, health and welfare, democracy and human rights, equality, and creativity. These pillars are not meant to be taught as specific subjects; rather, they constitute an emphasis that should be reflected in educational programmes, but also in the school culture and society (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture [Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið], 2012; UNESCO-IBE, 2012). In the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture [Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið], 2012) sustainability is defined as including "respect for the environment, sense of responsibility, health, democratic working methods and justice, not only at the present time but also for future generations" (p. 16).

The Guide underlines not only the strategic interplay between different pillars (for instance sustainability, equality and democracy), but also the importance of specific sustainability knowledge. Knowledge of the ecological footprint and consumer education are specifically mentioned as important tools to increase and promote sustainable behaviours.

4.1.2.8 2013: Legislation on animal welfare

In April 2013 the Icelandic Parliament approved a new, more comprehensive legislation on animal welfare, which substitutes the previous law (nr. 15/1994) on the subject.

The law is innovative insofar as it introduces the concept of animal welfare in substitution of the older, and narrower, concept of animal protection. One of the most important improvements the new law introduces is the recognition that animals are sentient beings and that they should be free of discomfort, such as hunger, thirst, fear and distress, pain, injury and disease. The legislation is modelled on other European and Nordic ones, and it includes stronger penalties and fines to punish violators of animal rights. The law has a wide scope, as it applies to all animals working with humans, livestock, pets but also pests. One of the aims of the new legislation is simplifying its administration, and insuring that violators are punished in a timely manner (Atvinnuvega- og Nýsköpunarráðuneytið, 2013; Dýraverndarsamband Íslands, 2013).

Even though Ragna B. Garðarsdóttir et al.'s (2008) research had exposed little concern for animal mistreatment among the Icelandic public, in the past couple of years a few animal rights

pressure groups have arisen in Iceland. Some of them, such as Velbú, Samtök lífrænna neytenda and Dýraverndarsamband Íslands pressurized the government demanding tougher legislation on animal welfare and prompter enforcement of the law in cases of animal mistreatment (Árni Stefán Árnason, 2011). Dýraverndarsamband Íslands (the animal protection association of Iceland) recently expressed their satisfaction at the approval of the new law (Dýraverndarsamband Íslands, 2013).

4.2 Obstacles

The discussion on the barriers to ethical consumption in Iceland follows loosely the structure of the more generic discussion above (see chapter 3).

The discussion will be corroborated using results drawn from the studies presented above, as well as from a research the author undertook in 2012. This consisted of a survey which was meant to explore people's knowledge of ethical consumption, their ethical consumer behaviour and their attitudes towards environmental issues and sustainable consumption. 425 volunteers completed the survey, which was in Icelandic (see Appendix 1). For specifics about the methodology and a more detailed analysis of the results of this particular study, please refer to the paper presented in part 2, titled "Ethical consumption in Iceland: Results from an exploratory study in consumer awareness" (p. 84).

4.2.1 Demographic factors

Many studies have found women to be more concerned than men about environmental matters. Results from Iceland appear to confirm this international trend.

Icelandic women have been known to show more positive attitudes then men towards recycling, and higher levels of concern towards issues of animal welfare and child labour (Einar Mar Þórðarson, Fanney Þórisdóttir, & Friðrik H. Jónsson, 2008; Ragna B. Garðarsdóttir et al., 2008).

A gender effect was also visible in my data: women tended to report higher levels of concern about environmental and ethical themes. A difference in behaviour between the two genders was visible only in the item regarding organic produce: whereas almost two out of three (62,8%) female respondents claimed that they bought organic, only 42,6% of men reported the same.

When it comes to Fair Trade, although women did not buy Fair Trade more often than men, they reported ethical reasons for buying Fair Trade more frequently than men. For a more detailed analysis of the question and related results, ref. pp. 91-3.

My data revealed a general tendency towards stronger reported interest for pro-environmental and ethical causes among women than men. This is apparent even when both

genders tend to favour the same options: proportionally more women report concern for the environment (e.g. Figure 2 on reasons for buying Fair Trade).

As regards genetically modified organisms (GMOs), women tended to be less positive towards them according to my research. This result is consistent with the literature, as women tend to trust technological solutions less than men (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

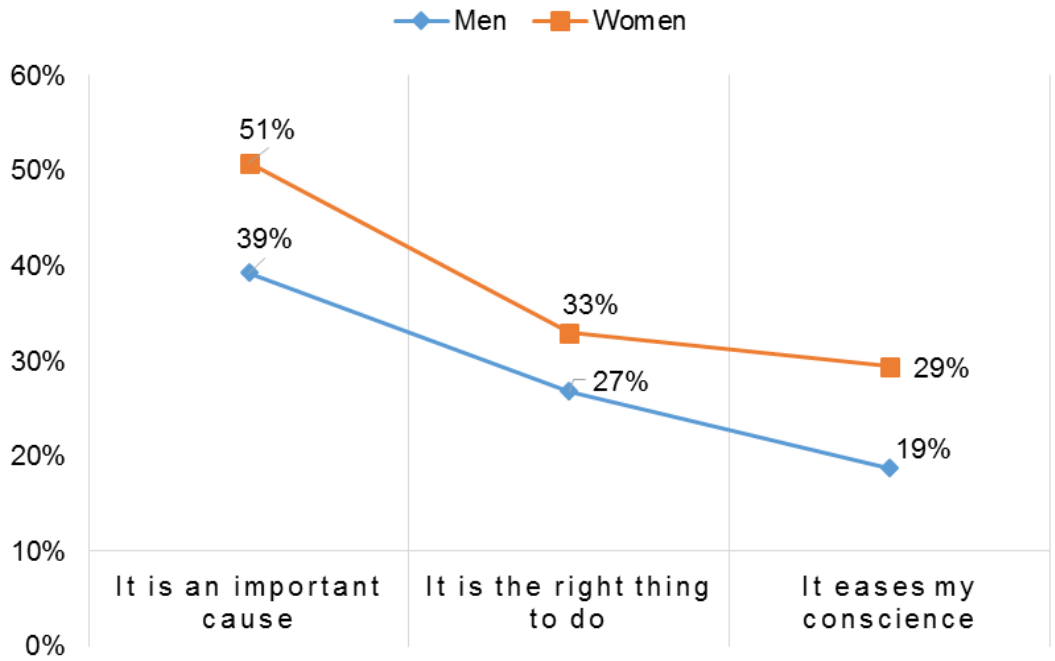

Figure 2. Ethically-oriented reasons for buying Fair Trade: gender differences

4.2.2 External factors

4.2.2.1 Economic factors

Cost is a known barrier to ethical consumption. The findings of my survey suggest that cost might be a barrier in Iceland as well: 2 out of 3 (66,7%) respondents who did not buy organic products cited cost as a very important reason for not buying organic produce, and an added 23,5% of respondents claimed it was an important reason.

However, when it came to declarations of intents rather than recollections of past behaviours, most respondents appeared to be less deterred by cost. When asked to rate cost and product performance against ethical attributes the respondents were divided: 34,4% of respondents agreed, while 32,7% disagreed, with the statement that in a product there are other aspects (such as price, brand and looks) which are more important than its environmental impact.

When presented with the statement “Environmental policies introduced by the government to address environmental issues should not cost me extra money” only 16,4% of respondents agreed, while the majority (54,4%) disagreed, thus rebutting the idea that cost is a strong barrier.

4.2.2.2 Institutional factors

Institutional barriers, such as insufficient infrastructure or inappropriate legislation, can act as barriers, limiting individuals' ability to act pro-environmentally (see pp. 19-20).

In Iceland, legislation about ethical consumption is arguably still inadequate. Brynhildur Pétursdóttir (personal communication, March 21, 2013) maintained that Iceland should promulgate stricter laws about products' quality and their manufacturing conditions, especially in reference to items that are imported into the country. The UK Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (2006) also underlined that choice editing by government and businesses is of great importance in leading consumer demand for sustainable products: by excluding high-impact items from the shelves, offering instead more sustainable ones, manufacturers, retailers and policy-makers can help "bring out the responsible consumer in everyone by making sustainable products the norm" (p. 3).

Ketill B. Magnússon (personal communication, March 14, 2013) believes that production in Iceland still lacks transparency, especially in the food sector.

In the past few years Iceland has known a number of health and food-related scandals (from a dioxin pollution in 2007 to the 2011 revelation that industrial salt had been used in food products for 13 years) which have brought to the fore issues of quality in the Icelandic production. The lack of transparency in the Icelandic food industry is also apparent in the inadequate labelling: food labels often do not report the country of origin, the complete list of ingredients or allergy information (Robert, 2012, 2013).

4.2.2.3 Social and cultural factors

Social norms have been found to be strongly influential on individuals' concerns and behaviours.

Brynhildur Pétursdóttir (personal communication, March 21, 2013) believes that in Iceland the individualistic and consumerist ethos are so widespread that they may constitute an obstacle to the adoption of more sustainable behaviours. Previous studies had found Icelandic society to be quite strongly individualistic (Edvardsson & Danielsdottir, 2012).

In a 2008 study on attitudes to recycling in Iceland, roughly 4 out of 10 (38%) respondents claimed that it was not their civic duty to recycle. Circa the same share (40%) of respondents stated that the decision to recycle or not was purely a private choice, and no one else's business. These items may be interpreted as corroborating the idea of a weak social norm towards recycling, at least in part of the population (Einar Mar Þórðarson et al., 2008).

Two items in my survey may be interpreted as referring to social norms: "Compared to most other nations, Icelanders are very environmentally friendly" (63,1% disagreed with the statement, 9,1% agreed), and "Compared to most other nations, Icelanders are very environmentally aware" (62,5% disagreed, 11,5% agreed). The fact that the majority of respondents disagreed with both items may be interpreted in the direction of a perceived lack of a pro-environmental social norm in Iceland. For an alternative interpretation of these items, see pp. 93-5.

4.2.3 Internal factors

4.2.3.1 Motivation

People's motivation to act pro-environmentally may decrease if they perceive a lack of proportionality between their own effort and other people's.

When questioned about matters of equity, however, the participants in my survey displayed no fear of free-riding. The large majority of respondents (87,4%) disagreed with the statement "There is no point in doing what I can about the environment unless others do the same"; half of the respondents disagreed strongly. Only 4,8% agreed. The people who answered my survey appear therefore to be little put off by matters of perceived equity. This answer reveals strong belief in personal ability to act (or self-efficacy; see p. 29), a characteristic that the respondents in my survey consistently displayed (see also pp. 95-6).

Basing on these responses fear of free-riding is not a barrier, and people are not de-motivated by seeing others act un-environmentally. In this case, there may be no need to introduce large societal changes (such as changing the social norm towards pro-environmental behaviours) to promote more sustainable lifestyles. It is, however, possible that this response is distorted by social desirability bias (see p. 17).

4.2.3.2 Values

When asked about reasons to buy organic products, most respondents in my survey appeared to give great importance to value-loaded reasons. Out of seven possible answers, four were rated "very important" by more than half of respondents (see p. 91 for a more detailed analysis). Two of these, "Because they are good for the environment" (very important for 67,8% of respondents) and "Because animals are treated more ethically" (very important: 53,6%), may be seen as informed by a universalistic value, as they are related to concerns of benevolence and environmentalism.

On the other hand, in the research by Ragna B. Garðarsdóttir et al. (2008) the majority of respondents (60,1%) showed little concern about the welfare of animals; and a third of them (33,2%) were also little worried about child labour. These responses appear far from being underpinned by the value of universalism, which includes a concern for social justice, equality and environmental protection.

It may be wondered whether these contrasting results derive from a variation in the research methods (the two studies involved a different methodology, and the questions asked were different) or whether, on the other hand, they may be due to mutated circumstances in the Icelandic panorama. Between 2008 and 2012, in fact, discussion on animal rights increased in prominence in Iceland: a number of animal welfare NGOs appeared and started lobbying for a change in animal welfare legislation (see p. 42).

4.2.3.3 Environmental knowledge and awareness

According to Icelandic experts in the sector, the biggest obstacle to increased ethical concern and consumption is lack of knowledge of the issues among Icelandic citizens (Brynhildur Pétursdóttir, personal communication, March 21, 2013; Finnur Sveinsson, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Previous studies reported that Icelandic consumers are little aware of, and interested in, sustainability. For example, Icelandic fashion designers describe little concern for ethical fashion among their clients (Harpa Lind Hrafnsdóttir, 2010).

An often patchy and incomplete level of environmental knowledge was also displayed by the respondents in my survey.

When asked about awareness of specific terminology in the field of ethical consumption, the very term “Ethical consumption” turned out to be virtually unknown to most (60,8%) respondents. The second least-known term, “Carbon Footprint”, was little known or unknown to 49,5% of participants. For a more detailed discussion of these results refer to pp. 88-9.

A question in my research focused on recognition of Eco- labels: respondents were shown 19 Eco-labels and asked to indicate all those they recognized. Five labels were recognized by the majority of respondents (see pp. 89-90). Two of these labels, the Swan and the Keyhole, are Nordic, and in the past few years they have been publicised and promoted by Icelandic public authorities (the Environment Agency of Iceland [Umhverfisstofnun], http://ust.is/; and the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority [Matvælastofnun], http://www.mast.is/). It is worth noting that the EU Eco-label (The Flower) was recognised by only one out of five respondents, despite the fact that, along with the Nordic Swan, it is one of the two official Eco-labels in Iceland according to the Regulation on Eco-labels N. 525/2006 (Parliamentary Committee on the Strengthening of the Green Economy, 2011).

Lack of knowledge and confusion in reference to concepts and meanings were apparent in the responses to my survey regarding GMOs. When asked “Can you tell which foods are GMO?” the majority (59%) of respondents reported they were not sure. An extra 30% said “It’s impossible to tell”, and only 11% claimed they could distinguish genetically modified products. Respondents were, moreover, rather divided and generally irresolute when it came to issues relating GMO: in half the items, more than 1/3 of respondents chose the mid-scale point (“Neither agree nor disagree”) in regards to statements on GMOs. In all the other cases (with the only exception of “I don’t care whether my food products are GMO or not”, where 46% disagreed with the statement) at least one quarter of the respondents reported uncertainty, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statements (see Table 1).

Table 1. Opinions on genetically modified products

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
GM products are healthier than other food products	32,3%	22,7%	39,7%	3,1%	2,2%
GM products are of higher quality than other food products	31,6%	21,4%	38,0%	6,1%	2,9%
I do not trust that GMO products are safe	13,5%	14,5%	29,2%	23,9%	19,0%
GM products are better for the environment	30,6%	25,5%	37,6%	4,6%	1,7%
I do not know in what way GM products differ from non-GM products	29,5%	32,9%	25,1%	8,7%	3,9%
GMO is necessary to overcome the global food crisis	17,4%	15,5%	34,4%	17,7%	15,0%
I don't care whether food products are GMO or not	20,4%	25,2%	19,2%	20,9%	14,4%
I trust Icelandic products to be good, whether they contain GMO or not	15,8%	20,1%	26,3%	22,5%	15,3%

Nonetheless, the majority of respondents to the survey did not report difficulties with managing the complexity of environmental information: 53% disagreed with the statement "I find it hard to know whether the way I live is helpful or harmful to the environment", and only 22% agreed. Similarly, 82% of respondents disagreed with the statement "The environmental impacts of my actions are too complicated for me to understand and worry about", thus showing that the respondents do not believe complexity to be an obstacle - at least, not an obstacle so big that it impedes action. It is debatable, however, whether this conviction derives from a full understanding of environmental issues or, conversely, from a complete lack of awareness of the impact of daily actions. It might moreover be argued whether this response may be affected by a desirability bias (see p. 17).

Mistrust had previously been identified as a barrier to the adoption of sustainable consumption in Iceland. TemaNord's 2003 research reported that Icelandic respondents appeared more sceptical towards ethical products and corporate responsibility initiatives than all the other Nordic groups.

4.2.3.4 Emotional involvement

The participants of my survey appeared to be relatively unaffected by emotional biases (see discussion on defence mechanisms, p. 28). When presented with the statement "Environmental

threats and impacts are frequently overstated", 82% of respondents disagreed (50% of them disagreed strongly), thus displaying little case for denial.

The majority of respondents also disagreed (87%, of which 66% strongly) with the statement "Environmental issues should be dealt with primarily by future generations", thus not displaying the bias in favour of the present known as judgmental discounting. Most participants also reported preoccupation about climate change and loss of biodiversity, both ecological problems with delayed consequences (ref. part 2, Table 2, p. 94). It should be noted that inter-generational equity is an important point in Iceland's National Strategy for Sustainable Development (Ministry for the Environment, 2002).

On the other hand, Finnur Sveinsson (personal communication, March 15, 2013) underlined that emotional distancing is one of the main obstacles to ethical concern in Iceland. The reasons are both geographical and economic. Iceland is a privileged nation insofar as it has not experienced serious environmental or social problems: the nation is rich in energy and natural resources, and there are no instances of endemic poverty. This fortunate situation, together with the geographical remoteness of the island, produces a feeling of distance and a lack of concern for social and environmental problems, as both the causes and the effects of production and consumption (including environmental degradation) take place far away, and are essentially invisible to the Icelandic public. As a consequences, people in Iceland may be relatively unaffected by concerns about their daily consumption, as the country is so disconnected from the places and times of production of most consumer goods.

Brynhildur Pétursdóttir (personal communication, March 21, 2013) also mentioned the relative absence, in comparison to other Nordic countries, of engaging documentaries on environmental and social themes on the Icelandic public channels. In her opinion, increasing the presence of interesting and informational programs on consumption issues on the media would produce a needed emotional response in the Icelandic public in the direction of heightened awareness and concern. The effectiveness of engaging programmes and campaigns which touch people's emotions is well known in the literature (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

4.2.3.5 Locus of control, self-efficacy and perceived consumer effectiveness

In Iceland's National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2002-2020 it is underlined that "Each individual bears responsibility and affects environmental and societal issues with his or her daily activities, consumption, transactions and participation in organizations and activities" (The Ministry for the Environment in Iceland, 2002: p. 20).

Respondents in my survey appeared to give much importance to personal responsibility. They also reported great confidence in their own ability to act pro-environmentally and make a difference. Almost all of the participants (95%) agreed that "Each individual / household can contribute to a better environment". When asked specifically about responsibility for environmental protection, 87% of respondents declared that individuals bear much responsibility;

not a single respondent stated that individuals should not be considered responsible for environmental conservation.

On the other hand, in Þórunn Edwald's research most participants reported low perceived self-efficacy, claiming that they did not expect their private consumption to affect how companies conduct their business (Neytendablaðið, 2008). These results are close to those obtained by TemaNord (2003) a few years earlier, where a respondent summarised the Icelandic mentality as follows: "We are so few here, a small nation, we were catching w[h]ales, what difference does it make what we do? Many people think like that" (p. 39).

4.2.3.6 Desire for comfort and convenience

Most respondents in my research seemed not to consider discomfort as a barrier to action. 57% of respondents agreed that they do what is right for the environment, even when it costs them more money or takes more time; only 16% disagreed.

4.2.3.7 Conflicting goals and aspirations

Although conflicting priorities (in life, as well as in the realm of consumption) have been pointed out as a barrier to pro-environmental behaviours, they do not appear to constitute an insurmountable limit for the respondents of my survey.

Almost half of the participants (49%) disagreed with the statement "There are more important things to do in life than protect the environment"; only 22% agreed. However, considering that the discussion about natural protection in Iceland does not usually include consumption issues, it is unclear whether this statement can be interpreted in relation to matters of sustainability.

When it comes to issues of consumption the respondents are, as a matter of fact, not as unanimous. The statement "When I buy a product, there are other aspects (such as price, brand and looks) which are more important to me than its environmental impact" divided the participants in three groups: 34% agreed, 33% disagreed and 33% neither agreed nor disagreed.

4.3 Concluding remarks

Basing on the findings summarized above and on the opinions of Icelandic experts on ethical consumption, it may be argued that in Iceland there are a number of obstacles to more sustainable consumption styles; these obstacles are of institutional, social and psychological origin.

In specific, the institutional barriers consist of inadequate legislation, for example as regards food labelling. There are, however, changes underway: a new animal welfare law has recently been approved, and an ambitious programme aimed at greening the national economy is in progress.

A strong stress on the values of individualism and consumerism constitutes a social barrier to sustainable modes of consumption. A correlated problem is a weak social norm towards pro-environmental behaviours, such as recycling. The upcoming calculation of GPI alongside GDP (the implications are discussed below, p. 56) may be considered a positive step taken by the State towards decreasing the relative importance of consumerism, favouring instead different ways of calculating success.

The most significant psychological barriers observed consist in insufficient knowledge of environmental issues, and emotional distancing. These two factors are not independent; conversely, they influence one another. Unawareness of the effects of unsustainable consumption weakens the emotional investment in sustainability issues, and lack of knowledge becomes compounded with mistrust for ethical claims. New educational plans in Iceland aim at increasing awareness of sustainability assigning it a bigger role in schools and in lifelong education. Education for sustainability in schools will be intertwined with notions stressing the importance of ideas such as solidarity, equality and creativity. Although the results of this new direction will not be apparent for some years (the new curriculum has not been enacted yet), this policy appears to go beyond a traditional information deficit model – aiming instead at using education to increase emotional involvement with nature as well as the global society.

5. Suggestions

A large part of sustainability research is directed towards finding feasible solutions in order to increase sustainable consumption. Some of these approaches entail consumers switching towards more ethical practices (e.g. European Commission, 2010; Martens & Spaargaren, 2005; Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, 2001); many, however, are more broadly aimed at decreasing levels of consumption and, ultimately, materialism (e.g. Crompton, 2008; Crompton & Kasser, 2009; Jackson, 2005a; Seyfang, 2006; Peattie & Peattie, 2009).

Numerous reasons have been put forward to illustrate why a shift to more sustainable forms of consumption is desirable. In this chapter the main reasons are outlined. The chapter then concludes by reviewing a number of possible avenues of action to foster ethical and sustainable behaviours: who should act, and how. The options suggested include themes present in the sectorial literature, as well as proposals referred in specific to the Icelandic case.

5.1 Why foster sustainable consumption?

The sustainability literature has highlighted a triple dividend: the adoption of more sustainable lifestyles is expected to bring positive repercussions on the planet, the society and the individual (United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability, 2012).

5.1.1 It is good for the planet

Sustainable consumption makes the links between personal actions, world poverty and environmental degradation explicit. It also offers a solution for these problems: for example, organic products. Organic goods are grown in the respect of the present and future environmental biodiversity; they are manufactured without the use of chemical pesticides or fertilizers (both known freshwater pollutants) and without gene manipulation (which has been linked to the birth of extra-resistant pests and weeds) (IUCN, 2007; Ongley, 1996; Ruiz de Maya et al., 2011). Sustainable consumption and production have been seen as key in climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies (Jackson, 2005b; SWITCH-Asia Network Facility, 2009).

5.1.2 It is good for society

Research has shown that intrinsic values like universalism, benevolence and equality are positively correlated to pro-environmental behaviours (Crompton, 2008; Crompton & Kasser, 2009). As regards sustainable consumption, the value of universalism in particular has been

found to inform Fair Trade shopping (Doran, 2009), attitudes towards organic food and purchasing of organic products (Thøgersen, 2007, 2011) and socially-conscious consumption in general (Shaw, Grehan, Shiu, Hassan, & Thomson, 2005). People who value universalism highly have a more prosocial, as well as pro-environmental, orientation: sustainable consumers thus use their consumption choices as a means to care for others and for the larger society. In the practices of sustainable consumption, it has been argued, private consumption (buying for oneself) and public citizenship (doing something for the larger good) overlap. According to Atkinson (2012), ethical consumers simultaneously obtain private benefits (such as authenticity, empowerment and social connectedness) and contribute to important public goals (like worker's rights, equality and a clean environment).

Sustainable modes of consumption have also been linked to community-building; for example, Seyfang (2007) relates the case of a local organic food network in Norfolk (UK) which helped create inclusion through communal participation, reconnecting the participants to the land as well as to the local community.

5.1.3 It is good for the individual

Research on materialism has repeatedly shown that a materialistic orientation is antithetical to personal satisfaction and happiness.

Materialistic values have been found to be negatively correlated to environmental beliefs, which in turn have a positive effect on environmental concern and pro-environmental behaviours (Kilbourne & Pickett, 2008). Materialistic orientations have also consistently been linked to negative states including unhappiness, anxiety, depression and illness (Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002; Kasser & Ryan, 1996).

An intrinsic life orientation, which also underlies the concept of a sustainable society, has on the other hand been correlated with higher quality of life and personal happiness (Brown & Kasser, 2005). Empirical studies also highlighted that other factors, such as security, clean environmental conditions and family and friendship networks, are at least as important as material possessions in relation to happiness (Mont & Plepys, 2008).

O'Brien (2008) further suggests that a new form of happiness may be derived from purchasing and using goods which have been produced in environmentally-sound and just labour conditions: she calls it "*sustainable happiness*", and it is a form of happiness that is shared with the larger society.

5.2 Possible avenues of action

The literature on sustainability is rife with suggestions regarding the fostering of sustainable consumption. They differ in the subjects they target as responsible for bringing about the

change, and in the type of actions they suggest. Some plans target official bodies and focus on solutions coming from above, under the form of policies and regulations; others underline the importance of information and continued education, and suggest community-based social plans; others again believe in a bottom-up approach.

There is a relatively large consensus around the idea that, in order to increase the relevance of sustainable practices, the most pressing need is changing the social norm. Many people are influenced by what others do, especially in the symbolically-charged realm of consumption; if sustainable consumption were to become the social norm, its acceptance and diffusion would increase, especially among individuals who are other-oriented (Starr, 2009; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Critics, however, argue that conspicuous consumption is such a fundamental component of contemporary societies that the ethos of sustainable consumption will hardly be an appealing alternative (Grant, 2010; Jackson, 2005b; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

Behaviour-based solutions may thus be seen as more feasible, as they are faster and simpler to achieve than value-based changes. Research has shown the existence of a reverse effect of behaviour on attitudes: changing the behaviour can sometimes serve to alter attitudes (see p. 25). Cohen et al. (2010) reflect that lifestyle choices do not necessarily have to be based on big ideas such as sustainability. They therefore wonder whether it is necessary to raise the consciousness among individuals, or if, on the other hand, changes can be obtained purely by changing behaviours. Behavioural interventions have been known to work to increase sustainability, at least in the case of energy consumption, recycling and transportation choices (Newsome & Alavosius, 2011; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Preuss (cited in Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002), however, warns that pro-environmental behaviours which are not informed by entrenched values or attitudes can easily be changed, and reversed to more unsustainable patterns. For this reason Abrahamse, Steg, Vlek, & Rothengatter (2005) suggest that interventions that combine antecedent and consequence strategies (for example, informational campaigns and goal-setting prior the performance of the environmental behaviour, and feedback and rewards post behaviour) will be most effective in changing behaviours.

Although most commentators would concur that the most efficacious action plan would require a combination of the measures outlined below, for the sake of analysis the different solutions are here presented separately.

5.2.1 Policy tools: Economic

Taxes and subsidies are among the most traditional policy instruments that the government can use, respectively, to discourage excessive consumption, and promote sustainable choices. Economic policy tools have been deemed very efficient and cost-effective for governments; temporary taxes and subsidies have been effective in producing permanent positive results in sustainable consumption (Nyborg, Howarth, & Brekke, 2006; OECD, 2011).

Finnur Sveinsson (personal communication, March 15, 2013) suggested that in Iceland excessively low taxation of natural resources such as water and energy may cause their overuse, and undervaluation (as cheap resources tend to be considered less valuable), by the general population.

Lang (2010) suggests that producers who apply higher social or environmental standards should receive subsidies. This makes economic sense, as ethical products internalize the costs which traditional production externalizes (for example, the cost of environmental protection, achieved by limiting pollution). This solution would also help eradicate the price barrier of sustainable products.

Grant (2010) proposes instead an individual consumption tax, which may be levied in substitution of the current income tax. Grant believes this could represent a more socially just alternative to current taxation; it would also better tackle unsustainable consumption by discouraging over-consumers.

There are, however, a number of experts of sustainable consumption who are sceptical of the proposed effectiveness of economic policy tools. Nyborg et al. (2006) point out that taxes that take responsibility away from the individual (transferring it, for instance, to the government) may be counterproductive, as they ultimately decrease personal motivation to act. A further limit of economic policy tools lies in their underlying assumption of consumer rationality. Taxes do not consider people's psychology; they offer rational appeals which, however, cannot produce significant changes as they clash against habits, emotional responses, cognitive limitations and social norms (Jackson, 2005b; Nyborg et al., 2006)

5.2.2 Policy tools: Regulatory

Regulations and industry standards have been a historically successful tool for increasing sustainable consumption. For example, regulation of appliance performance has proved effective in reducing domestic energy use (Kelly, 2012). The positive impact of standards and regulations lies in their perceived simplicity, which provides consumers with a shortcut for decision-making (McDonald et al., 2009).

In order to foster sustainable lifestyles, some commentators have argued in favour of governmental regulations that would reduce people's working time. Diminished working hours have been linked to both decreases in CO_2 emissions and augmented well-being and quality of life (Grant, 2010; Sanches, 2005).

It may however be argued that top-down interventions will be effective only if they do not clash with pre-existing habits and social structures: for example, in a society where a person's worth is based on how hard-working they are, a reduction in working hours might just lead individuals to look for a second part-time job. Other types of rebound effects are also possible: if people use their extra free hours to take a car-trip, or go on a shopping spree, the environmental gain deriving from reduced work hours might actually be negative.

As regards standards, governmentally-regulated Eco-labels, like the EU Energy Label, already help individuals make environmentally-sound consumer choices (McDonald et al., 2009). It has been argued that the progress made with ecolabelling could be furthered with the institution of a "superlabel": a unique informational label which could include, and summarize, a number of different standards. This solution has been suggested in different sectors, from tourism to food products, and aims at decreasing the informational burden on the consumer, as a single label is easier to remember than a number of sector-specific ones. A governmentally-managed or third party certified superlabel would also improve on the obstacle of consumer mistrust, which is often exasperated by the high number of unchecked green and ethical claims in the market (Buckley, 2002; Lang, 2010; Thøgersen, Haugaard, & Olesen, 2010). Others, however, (see Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, 2006) have expressed scepticism over all-generic labelling schemes, arguing instead that sector-specific labels are more functional. In order to increase effectiveness, they suggest that retailers should take on the burden of finding ethical products, offering their customers only the most sustainable choices. Szmigin et al. (2009) agree that choice editing by retailers can help improve ethical consumption while lightening the burden on the consumer.

In the case of Iceland, Brynhildur Pétursdóttir (personal communication, March 21, 2013) remarked that more aggressive legislation on the subject of consumer products may be needed to foster more ethical styles of consumption.

5.2.3 Policy tools: New types of indicators

Changing the way we measure national success and health may be one of the most important steps in the move towards sustainability. The use of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a proxy for welfare has received widespread criticism because of the lack of correlation between the growth of a country's economy and the wellbeing of its population (e.g. Costanza, Hart, Posner, & Talberth, 2009; European Commission, 2007; Osberg & Sharpe, 2000). In order to become an appropriate measure for welfare, GDP would have to be adjusted, including parameters which better account for social and economic disparities in the population, as well as the presence of externalities, including the depletion of natural resources (Easterlin, McVey, Switek, Sawangfa, & Zweig, 2010; Van den Bergh, 2004). A number of experts (e.g. Grant, 2010; Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Talberth, 2007) have therefore suggested that alternative indicators, like the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI), would be better suited to measure quality of life and happiness - and would also serve to increase the appeal of reductions in consumption for the citizens. Unlike the GDP, the GPI incorporates aspects of the non-market economy: it reflects social costs of economic inequality (for example, it decreases when poverty in the society increases), and it accounts for non-market benefits (for example, voluntary work, education of the population, public infrastructure; etc.) and costs (for instance, the GPI decreases according to the cost of

pollution, loss of biodiversity, number of car accidents, and cost of consumer durable purchases, among others) (Talberth, 2007).

Iceland has planned to introduce the calculation of GPI in the beginning of 2013, and to use it alongside the traditional GDP. This is part of a larger plan to strengthen the green economy in the country. The underlying rationale is that welfare is maintained only insofar as GDP and GPI grow alongside. When GDP, but not GPI, grows, it means that the increase in economic development is having a negative effect on welfare (Parliamentary Committee on the Strengthening of the Green Economy, 2011).

5.2.4 Policy tools: Public participation

Citizen participation has been seen as a key factor to promote sustainable behaviour. Experts (e.g. Barnett, Cafaro, & Newholm, 2005; Brulle, 2010; Lucas et al., 2008) agree that people are more likely to modify their practices to comply with new policies if they have taken part in their formulation. Public participation is also important in consideration of the role and meaning of consumption in contemporary societies. Consumers belong to social networks and communities, which contribute to shaping the individual's decision-making. For this reason Michaelis (2000) and Moisander (2007) maintain that a community framework is necessary to bring about change, as they believe that solutions targeting individual change will ultimately be ineffective. Similarly, Seyfang (2006) argued that ethical consumption choices should be understood, and framed[8], as part of people's citizenly duties, rather than as purely individual decisions.

In 2011 the city of Reykjavik opened a webpage called "Betri Reykjavik" which for the first time allowed residents to choose which projects should be developed in their neighbourhood. Betri Reykjavik lets citizens propose and vote on ideas that belong to different categories including, but not limited to, urban planning, transports, environmental matters and education. The virtual consultation website can be seen as an Icelandic instance of participatory democracy (Reykjavíkurborg, 2011; Stofnun Stjórnsýslufræða og Stjórnmála, 2012).

[8] In social theory, *framing* refers to a schema of interpretation and meaning that individuals rely on to understand and interpret events. Frames are constructed socially, and they are influenced by education, media, political leaders, public opinion, and social institutions in general (Holmes, Blackmore, Hawkins, & Wakeford, 2011; Lakoff, 2010). By changing the wording (the definition) of an event, different frames can be activated. For example, Darnton and Kirk (2011) advise against using words such as "development" and "aid" in social justice campaigns, because these terms activate frames of power (richer nations charitably helping less-developed, inferior ones) which can reinforce ideas of inequality and moral superiority.

5.2.5 Policy tools: Education

As discussed earlier (see p. 18), research has pointed at education (along with gender and wealth) as a discriminating factor to segment the ethical consumer: more educated individuals tend to be more concerned about the ethical attributes of products. Continued education has therefore been seen as an important tool to increase awareness in the subject of sustainability.

Critics of the "information deficit model" have argued that increasing scientific knowledge is not enough to foster sustainability (see p. 26). Some authors, such as Kühtz (2007), have thus suggested that education for sustainability should not be merely informational, but rather be structured as an emotional education, concerned with increasing the support to the positive and pro-environmental values of universalism, equity, freedom and justice. The Icelandic National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2010-2013 seems to adhere to this vision, as it explains that the general objective of education for sustainability in Iceland is "To create a society characterised by solidarity" (Ministry for the Environment, 2010: p. 9).

Grant (2010) suggests a "consumer skills"-focused education to facilitate the transition from resource-intensive to resource-light modes of consumption (from the consumption of material objects to the consumption of services). She believes that an education that focuses more on the arts than on science would help decrease reliance on technological solutions for environmental problems, while also furthering our ability to enjoy consumption-light activities. These activities (for instance writing poetry, or playing and composing music) require more specific knowledge than traditional consumption, but they also provide higher levels of well-being and are more environmentally sustainable. A shift towards non-material purchases was also advocated in the "Skref fyrir skref" brochure, which suggested Icelandic consumers to donate immaterial gifts to friends (such as theatre tickets, or a massage) rather than items (Sigrún Pálsdóttir & Stefán Gíslason, 2008). Brynhildur Pétursdóttir (personal communication, March 21, 2013) agrees that there is a pressing need for a shift to less material-based consumption - for instance, from the purchase of objects to the enjoyment of experiences.

Consumer education courses in schools are also mentioned as a means to promote sustainability in the new Icelandic National Curriculum Guide (Ministry of Education, Science and Culture [Mennta- og menningarmálaráðuneytið], 2012). It is, however, unclear whether this type of teaching will be adopted by Icelandic schools: the new curriculum has not been implemented yet, and current Icelandic legislation allows relative freedom to single schools. It is therefore yet unknown which directions different schools will decide to stress. For instance, some schools may decide to educate on sustainability issues by focusing on environmental protection or social justice rather than dealing with consumer issues (Ketill B. Magnússon, personal communication, March 14, 2013).

5.2.6 Policy tools: Information campaigns

Providing more information, it has been argued, is often not sufficient to change behaviours. Nonetheless, informational strategies are among the most frequently discussed and suggested tools in sustainability literature (Jackson, 2005b; Nisbet & Scheufele, 2009). What the most effective strategies to design informational campaigns are is still a matter of debate.

In order to be more effective, it has been argued that informational campaigns should first of all keep their message straight and simple. Complexity (of production and distribution systems, and consequently of consumer choices) is a recognized obstacle to ethical consumption: Tallontire et al. (2001, p. 27) stated that "The potential for growth in ethical consumerism appears to be in making ethical consumerism 'easy'". McDonald et al. (2009, p. 143) concurred that "the simpler the information supplied (providing it is from a trusted source) the more likely it is to be incorporated into green consumer decision-making". Several studies (e.g. Gatersleben, Steg, & Vlek, 2002; Thøgersen & Schrader, 2012) pointed out that even self-defined green consumers are sometimes unaware of the impact of their single choices, so that their ecological footprint may be high despite their attempts to make ethical decisions. What is needed, in this case, are down-to-earth, behaviour-oriented informational campaigns that educate consumers about the actual impact of different actions.

In order to increase effectiveness, some have suggested that strong self-efficacy data should be included in informational campaigns. The self-efficacy construct has been found to be positively correlated to pro-environmental behaviours (see p. 29). Brulle (2010) and Kim et al. (2013) propose that effective informational messages should contain both moderate fear appeals and self-efficacy information, as the two combined are more likely to induce sustainable behaviours than either presented alone. Brynhildur Pétursdóttir (personal communication, March 21, 2013) also argued that consumers need to feel empowered in order to act; for this reason, along with a problem, a possible solution has to be presented. In the November 2012 issue of Neytendablaðið, for example, an article explaining that the production of palm oil is often unsustainable also includes the logo of the sustainable palm oil certification, as well as the names of a number of companies that only use sustainable oil from certified sources. This way, readers are both made aware of an environmental problem and provided with means to help limit damage through their consumption (Brynhildur Pétursdóttir, 2012).

De Boer, Boersema and Aiking (2009) underline that messages need to be personally relevant to the individual to be effective. They suggest that personal engagement may be increased through single-behaviour informational campaigns which emphasize the matches between individuals' goals and attitudes, and the behaviour in question. By underlining the psychological fit between personal attitudes and sustainable behaviours, adoption of the behaviour is expected to increase, along with personal satisfaction and well-being. Mirosa et al. (2011) agree that informational campaign ads should focus on a single issue. Since different values have been found to correlate to different pro-environmental and prosocial behaviours, the authors suggest that the value, or combination of values, that underlie each specific behaviour

should be researched beforehand; the campaigns ads should then tap on the relevant value(s) that support each specific behaviour.

It has been argued that ethical consumption has both an other-oriented and a self-oriented component: people behave ethically to help the planet and humankind, but also to feel better (about) themselves. Sustainable consumption is thus also a vehicle for self-realization and emotional expression (Barnett, Cafaro et al., 2005; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). For this reason a more pragmatic strand of research suggests that informational campaigns should merely point out the individual gains that the subject may derive from sustainable choices, without dwelling on the benefits for the environment or the larger society (Devinney, Auger, Eckhardt, & Birtchnell, 2006; Martens & Spaargaren, 2005). This view is shared by Finnur Sveinsson (personal communication, March 15, 2013), who believes that effective sustainable campaigns have to focus primarily on personal gains: change to sustainability should be presented to consumers as a life choice, rather than as a personal sacrifice made in the name of generosity and altruism; the framing is thus seen as key. In order to be successful, campaigns thus have to provide a convincing answer to the consumers' question "*What is in it for me*"?

Not all sustainability experts share this pragmatic stance. Kasser (cited in Darnton & Kirk, 2011), for instance, believes that appealing to people's sense of self-interest may be a mistake, as it might diminish their sense of common good. Crompton (2008) agrees with Kasser, and stresses that appeals to self-interest will backfire as soon as the individual's self-interest motivates him or her to behave unsustainability. Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) agree that promoting the right values is necessary for prolonged sustainable consumption.

5.2.7 Corporate actions

Because of the complexity of current production and distribution systems, some experts (e.g. Martens & Spaargaren, 2005; McDonald et al., 2009) believe that top-down policy measures, as opposed to marketing interventions, are necessary to promote sustainability.

On the other hand, in the past few decades companies have increasingly contributed to the public awareness of ethical consumption, especially through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. CSR activities are driven by a firm's ethical understanding of its impacts and responsibility on society, and by the subsequent desire to contribute to the society in order to improve the company's standing and legitimacy (Maon, Lindgreen, & Swaen, 2009).

Corporate ethical initiatives have occasionally been known to lead societal change: in Chile, for example, companies were at the forefront, promoting sustainability and pro-environmental modes of consumption earlier, and much more strongly and effectively than the public actors (Ariztia, Kleine, Brightwell, Agloni, & Afonso, 2012).

Corporate ethical actions have been known to have a positive spillover on the larger society. Finnur Sveinsson (personal communication, March 15, 2013) described an increased interest in Eco-labels among Landsbankinn's employees after the firm's canteen was ecolabelled; the

change that started in the company was thus then brought to the homes by the interested parties, in a ripple effect. Ketill B. Magnússon (personal communication, March 14, 2013) confirmed that companies' initiatives can spill over positively in the larger society; however he noted that, in order to overcome consumer resistance and cynicism, corporate ethical actions have to come before the company's marketing of them.

5.2.8 NGOs and consumer associations

Non-governmental organizations, consumers associations and nonprofit organizations have historically been among the earliest and most active promoters of ethical consumption (Church & Lorek, 2006; Fuchs & Lorek, 2005). They have taken on the double role of urging firms to manufacture more sustainable products on the one hand, and motivating consumers to choose those products over traditional ones on the other hand. Research shows that consumers tend to trust these independent sources more than they trust companies, scientists and governments (Ariztia et al., 2012; Eden et al., 2008; O'Rourke, 2005).

Sanches (2005) argues that where influential NGOs are absent the public may be less aware of, and sensitive towards, the issue of sustainable consumption. Both Ketill B. Magnússon (personal communication, March 14, 2013) and Brynhildur Pétursdóttir (personal communication, March 21, 2013) lamented the relative weakness of consumer and voluntary associations in Iceland, and expressed the need for stronger grassroots organizations in order to advance ethical consumption in the country.

6. Conclusions

Sustainable consumption is a key objective in the road towards sustainable development.

The shift towards more sustainable modes of consumption is however a considerable and complex one, which is slowed down, and often impeded, by a number of factors of different origin.

An analysis of the main obstacles to ethical consumption identified three types of factors: demographic ones, external barriers (including economic, institutional and social and cultural factors) and finally internal, or psychological, barriers (ranging from values to emotional investment, to perceived self-efficacy, to habits, to lack of motivation and knowledge).

The case of Iceland was then considered. Despite high levels of consumption, and a large importance given to consumerism in the country, consumer issues are still understudied in Iceland. In particular, sustainability and sustainable consumption have not played a relevant role in the public discourse.

The main obstacles to sustainable consumption in Iceland that were identified can be summarized in three points: inadequate legislation; centrality of consumerism, and weak social norm towards pro-environmental behaviours; and finally limited knowledge of, and emotional investment towards, environmental and sustainability issues.

With reference to the suggestions outlined in chapter 5, it can be argued that several of the policies the Icelandic government has recent enacted, or has underway, may be of some effect in tackling few of the obstacles. For example, the calculation of GPI as an alternative to GDP may help bring to the fore the linkage between environmental sustainability, social justice and quality of life. Similarly, the introduction of public participation procedures, which involve citizens in the decision-making process, may help increase emotional involvement in the issues at hand, and decrease mistrust towards public initiatives.

However, it might be argued that the most important obstacle to sustainable consumption in Iceland is represented by the importance ascribed to consumerism in the society. This is a problem that has been identified as key not only in Iceland, but in general in western countries: consumption is at the centre of contemporary culture (Trentmann, 2004).

Some critics, notably Crompton (2008) and Jackson (2005a), maintain that in order to move towards sustainability, the main target to achieve is a decline in absolute levels of consumption – in other words, we need to consume less. Crompton (2008) warns against ethical consumption as a solution: he believes that small steps are not sufficient, and that currents levels of consumption are unsustainable – no matter whether we consume sustainably produced items or not. In a similar vein, MacKay (2008, p. 114) urged: “Don’t be distracted by the myth that ‘every little helps’. If everyone does a little, we’ll achieve only a little”. However it might be argued that, though possibly more limited in scope than what consumption reduction movements try to

achieve, ethical consumption may be a more feasible solution in societies which are strongly consumerist. Martens and Spaargaren (2005) argue in favour of policies focused on fostering ethical consumption versus larger actions aimed at decreasing consumption, their argument being that "reducing (or radically restructuring) consumption will likely lead to questionable social and economic outcomes" (p. 30).

The radical solution, which aims at decreasing consumption levels tout court, also clashes against two main psychological obstacles. On the one hand, consumerism has been defined as "a value structure that emphasizes the importance of material possessions and the pursuit of personal wealth" (Hirsh & Dolderman, 2007, p. 1585); and values tend to be quite stable constructs which are hard to change (Mirosa et al., 2011). Mirosa et al. (2011) suggest that rather than try to change people's values, policy-makers should suggest sustainable actions which are congruent with people's values. On the other hand, consumption has a strong symbolic meaning in contemporary societies. People use their possessions for a multitude of scopes: as sources of identity, as signifiers of status, as ways of caring about their family and friends, for example. The very acts of consumption are significant in themselves, with shopping having become both a pastime and a way to gain psychological benefits, such as increased happiness and well-being (Dittmar, 2008).

A feasible solution would be to complement the use of sustainable (as opposed to conventional) goods with resource-light consumption activities, in substitution for resource-heavy ones: in other words, we should buy ethical goods when items are needed, and in the other cases substitute the consumption of objects (buying items) with the consumption of activities (buying experiences). This suggestion, put forward, among the others, by the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (2006), takes into consideration both the urgency of the current environmental crisis and the centrality of consumption activities to individuals, offering a plausible and functional solution. A shift to less objects-focused styles of consumption may moreover bring about psychological benefits, as the negative relation between materialism and happiness has long been pointed out in psychological studies (see Kasser & Ahuvia, 2002).

How can such a shift be achieved? It has been argued that more attention should be devoted to promoting intrinsic, versus extrinsic, goals. Forms of education which focus on expanding artistic, emotional and creative sensitivities may be useful to lead towards intrinsic goals – which are informed by the inner-directed, and more self-fulfilling, intrinsic values (see p. 24). In Iceland plans towards more emotionally-focused forms of education are underway. The new Icelandic school curriculum also underlines the linkages between sustainability, social justice and democracy: this is an important change, as by 'connecting the disconnected' education may help reduce the emotional distance that currently constitutes a barrier to sustainable consumption in Iceland.

Intrinsic goals can also be promoted by media and policymakers through appropriate framing. Crompton (2008) underlines the importance of activating the right (intrinsic versus extrinsic) values when promoting sustainable behaviours; a study by Pelletier and Sharp (2008) confirmed

that pro-environmental messages can be made more effective by framing them so that they serve intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, goals.

The key factor in the shift towards more sustainable lifestyles, many experts agree (e.g. Brulle, 2010; Rowley & Phillips, 2010; Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, 2006) is the creation of a positive and appealing vision: in order to be accepted and embraced, the change to more sustainable lifestyles has to be made attractive and desirable for individuals. How can this be achieved? The UK Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (2006) suggested a co-creative approach which requires the coordinated effort of three actors: the government, businesses and individuals.

The role of businesses is to act as enablers; through choice editing (producing and distributing more sustainable items), for example, they can help reduce the consumers' decisional burden.

Individuals can help the government make the right decisions through their sustainable consumption choices, as well as through participative democratic procedures. Nisbet and Scheufele (2009) underline that the public has to be included in decision-making procedures from the early stages: if citizens feel they are being sold a ready-made policy they may not accept it or comply with it.

Governments and public bodies, according to the Sustainable Consumption Roundtable (2006), have the quadruple task of Encouraging consumers to make the right choices (for example enforcing appropriate taxes, rewards and penalties); Enabling consumers to be sustainable (providing information, education and facilities); Engaging (creating citizens' networks and promoting personal action and co-production of content) and finally Exemplifying (leading by example).

In the case of Iceland, it might be argued that public officials have been relatively weak when it comes to encouraging sustainable consumption through taxes and rewards (although the 2011 "Strengthening of the Green Economy" strategy includes increased incentives for green transport and consumption) and enabling (although future education plans seem to be going in the right direction). On the other hand, Icelandic citizens appear to have been given an increasingly big role in public decisions (defined above as "Engaging"), and there seems to be an increased awareness of the leading role of public institutions when it comes to shifting to a more sustainable economy (the 2011 "Strengthening of the Green Economy" strategy explicitly emphasises the leadership role of Althingi, the ministries and all governmental institutions (Parliamentary Committee on the Strengthening of the Green Economy, 2011)).

Crompton (2008), a tough critic of ethical consumption as a solution to current environmental problems, concedes that individual change *can* make a difference – if it is part of a bigger, concerted effort involving not only individuals, but also institutions and businesses.

According to Finnur Sveinsson (personal communication, March 15, 2013) new ideas, such as sustainability, sometimes take a while to arrive to Iceland; but when they arrive, they spread fast.

The increasing interest in sustainability among Icelandic policymakers may be just the first step towards a deeper reflexivity on consumption and environmental issues in the public arena.

Future research should analyse whether this kind of shift is indeed taking place, and whether the policies now in fieri have had any impact on the public opinion, especially as regards awareness of sustainability issues and ethical consumer behaviour.

Future research should also focus on which psychological and external obstacles impede specific pro-environmental behaviours among Icelandic consumers, in order to create appropriate measures to target each barrier.

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Part 2:

Ethical consumption in Iceland:
Results from an exploratory study in consumer awareness

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1. Introduction

Ethical consumption has been defined as “the conscious and deliberate decision to make certain consumption choices due to personal moral beliefs and values” (Crane & Matten, 2004, p. 290).

Studies on “green consumerism” started to appear in the 1980’s in England; “green” was later substituted by “ethical” as the range of morally relevant topics broadened (Newholm & Shaw, 2007). The term “ethical consumption” now generally includes concerns spanning from environmental protection, to animal welfare, to human and workers’ rights (Tallontire, Rentsendorj, & Blowfield, 2001).

In the past few decades the phenomenon of ethical consumption has become increasingly relevant.

From an economic point of view, ethical concerns have already affected specific markets (for example, those of elephant ivory and dolphin-safe tuna; Nyborg, Howarth, & Brekke, 2006), and ethical consumption is still growing, both in numbers and popularity (Auger, Devinney, Louviere, & Burke, 2010; Co-operative Bank, 2011). Businesses have reacted by starting to openly accept responsibility for their practices and enacting self-regulation projects (often under the label of Corporate Social Responsibility) which aim at increasing the firm’s positive contributions to society. This shift in business practices is so relevant that some marketers have claimed that “ethical consumption is perhaps the biggest movement in branding today” (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Moy, 2008)

From a political point of view, ethical consumption has been indicated as a crucial factor in the shift towards sustainable development (Tallontire et al., 2001; Thogersen & Schrader, 2012). The EU Sustainable Development Strategy includes the transformation of consumption and production patterns into more sustainable ones as one of the key challenges to be faced in coming years (Jäger, 2011). Clear links have been shown between various ethical consumption practices and environmental protection and sustainability (Michaelis, 2003; Ransom, 2006).

Academic and business studies investigating the ethics of consumer behaviour started to appear in the mid-1990’s; their number has been steadily increasing since, in relation to the growing relevance, and mainstreaming, of the debate on sustainability (Bray, Johns, & Kilburn, 2011; Thogersen & Schrader, 2012).

Despite the increasing significance of the subject from a social, political and ecological point of view, it has been lamented that ethical consumption is still an understudied field (Bray et al., 2011; Newholm & Shaw, 2007). This objection is especially valid in Iceland, a developed country with high levels of consumption which was recently revealed to be the nation with the largest Ecological Footprint in the world (Sigurður E. Jóhannesson, 2010). The Ecological Footprint is a sustainability indicator which measures the disparity between human consumption and

availability of resources. A person's or a country's consumption levels are calculated in global hectares, a weighted measure which translates into the amount of land needed to produce the resources and absorb the waste of the given subject (Global Footprint Network, 2012). Basing on the global bio-capacity, it has been calculated that if the world's population consumed as much as an Icelander, we would need 21 Earths to sustain us (Sigurður E. Jóhannesson, 2010).

Despite the high relevance of the topic, specific analyses on consumption patterns and styles in Iceland have been very limited in number and scope. Studies on ethics in consumption, in particular, are severely lacking; the few studies available on the topic have noted little awareness and interest in the topic among the population (Ragna B. Garðarsdóttir, Ásdís A. Arnalds & Friðrik H. Jónsson, 2008; TemaNord, 2003). However, those studies were limited in both scope and content. Therefore our research - part of which is presented here - aims to provide an insight into the status of ethical consumption among Icelandic consumers. Such knowledge is fundamental to design appropriate measures to support the diffusion of ethical concerns, pro-environmental policies and consequently pro-environmental and more sustainable behaviours, in the larger population.

The aim of the present paper is to provide preliminary descriptive information as to the levels of awareness of ethical consumer issues. Based on the scarce previous research findings we predict that issues related to ethical consumption will be unfamiliar to the respondents and that they will display infrequent ethical consumer behaviour.

As the sample was not representative, the results should not be generalized to the population as a whole, as it is expected that people who are already interested in the topic of ethical consumption are more inclined to respond to such a survey. Rather, our study intended to give a glimpse as to the levels of awareness and understanding of green and ethical issues.

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants and procedure

The data was collected via an online survey in May of 2012. Number of completed questionnaires was 425. As is to be expected in surveys relying on volunteers, the majority of respondents, 310 (72,9%), were female and 112 (26,4%) were male. Three respondents (0,7%) preferred not to provide information on their gender. Average age of respondents was 37 years (*sd* = 11, range = 19 - 73). The sample was collected via convenience sampling employing both a university mailing list and a social networking site. Participation was voluntary.

2.2 Measures

The questionnaire, which was in Icelandic, was created for the purposes of the present research. The items were intended to gauge knowledge of ethical consumption, ethical consumer behaviour as well as attitudes towards ethical consumption.

2.2.1 Knowledge

Knowledge of ethical consumption was measured primarily by asking respondents about their level of familiarity with terms relating to the area of ethical consumption and production; testing recognition of Eco-labels and asking about awareness of GMO.

Respondents were presented with the following list of terms: Green; Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO); Eco-label; Fairtrade; Organic; Ethical consumption; Carbon Footprint or Ecological Footprint[9]; Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Each term was presented in Icelandic with its English translation in brackets. Respondents were asked to report how familiar they were with each term and its meaning on a 4-point scale ranging from total unfamiliarity ("I have never heard of this term") to perfect knowledge ("I have heard this term and know exactly what it means").

To test Eco-label recognition nineteen Eco-label logos were presented to the respondents, who were asked to "check" all the logos they remembered having come across. No question was asked on actual knowledge of their meaning, or what they entailed. The Eco-labels were chosen based on their presence, or relevance, in the Icelandic consumer panorama.

Respondents were asked if they felt confident in identifying GMO products (Can you tell which foods are GMO?), possible responses were "Yes", "No" and "It's impossible to tell". Respondents were then asked a number of questions regarding GMO's such as and whether they knew how GM products differed from other products.

2.2.2 Behaviour and behavioural motivations

Ethical consumer behaviour was checked with two yes or no questions, which focused on previous purchases of organic foods and Fairtrade products. Further, behavioural motivations were measured by asking reasons for buying or not buying organic and Fairtrade products. Respondents were asked to rate importance of reasons for buying or not buying organic products on a 4-point Likert-like scale. Questions on Fairtrade were structured as multiple

[9] Although the terms are not strictly interchangeable (Ecological Footprint is a broader concept than Carbon Footprint, which it often includes), they have here been paired in order to simplify the discussion and also because they are often used alongside in the public discourse, as for example in many footprints calculators.

choice: respondents were required to check all motives that applied for buying / not buying Fairtrade.

2.2.3 Attitudes

Concerns about environmental degradation and responsibility for the environment were checked by asking respondents to signal agreement or disagreement (on a 5-point Likert scale) with 19 statements regarding the relevance of environmental problems and matters of responsibility. Responsibility for environmental protection and restoration was also checked in a following question. Respondents were asked to rate, on a 4-point Likert-type scale, how responsible six different subjects were (Scientists and specialists; International bodies e.g. the UN; National bodies, such as the government; NGOs; Companies; Individuals).

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Knowledge

Three terms (“Organic”, “Green”, “Fairtrade”) were well known by the majority (> 50%) of respondents (Figure 1); three terms (“GMO”, “CSR”, “Eco-label”) were well known by at least 30% of respondents. A gender analysis revealed that fewer men than women knew exactly what was meant by the terms “Eco-label” (men = 24%, women = 34%), “Fairtrade” (men = 40%, women = 55%) and “Organic” (men = 55%, women = 73%). These differences were significant, as supported by Chi square tests.

The two least known terms (“Carbon Footprint” and “Ethical consumption”) were well known to 23,6% and 11,3% of respondents respectively. Nearly 40% of the respondents had never heard of ethical consumption, and 31% had never heard of carbon/ecological footprint. These data support our hypothesis that ethical consumption is not widely known in Iceland.

The limited awareness of these two terms is of critical interest. Ethical consumption has become an omnipresent term in discussions about both consumerism and responsible business models (Devinney, Auger, & Eckhardt, 2010). Making private and public consumption sustainable is one of the core aims of the Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development, initiated in 2010. Nordic governments are responsible for the creation of incentives and rules which contribute to the shift towards greener consumption and production. This includes (but is not limited to) stimulating the demand for more ethical and sustainable products (Norden, 2012).

The concept of Ecological Footprint is especially relevant in Iceland for the reasons outlined earlier. It is also increasingly visible in a consumer context, as “carbon footprint” labels on products, indicating the item’s environmental impact, have known a fast increase in the past few years (de Koning, Schowanek, Dewaele, Weisbrod, & Guinée, 2010).

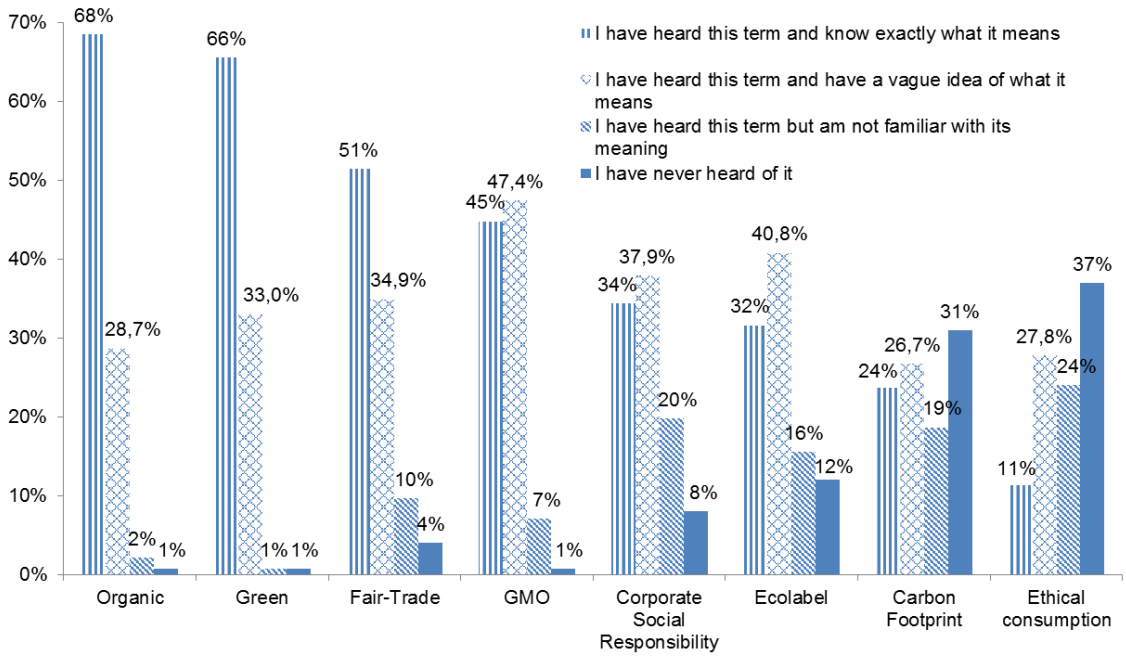

Figure 1. Knowledge of terms related to ethical consumption

On average, respondents recognised 6 of the 19 Eco-labels presented to them (*Mdn* = 5; range = 0 – 16). The most commonly known label (Figure 2) was the "Recycled / recyclable content". It is, incidentally, not a proper Eco-label, as it is not certified by a third party agency (Umhverfisstofnun, n.d.).

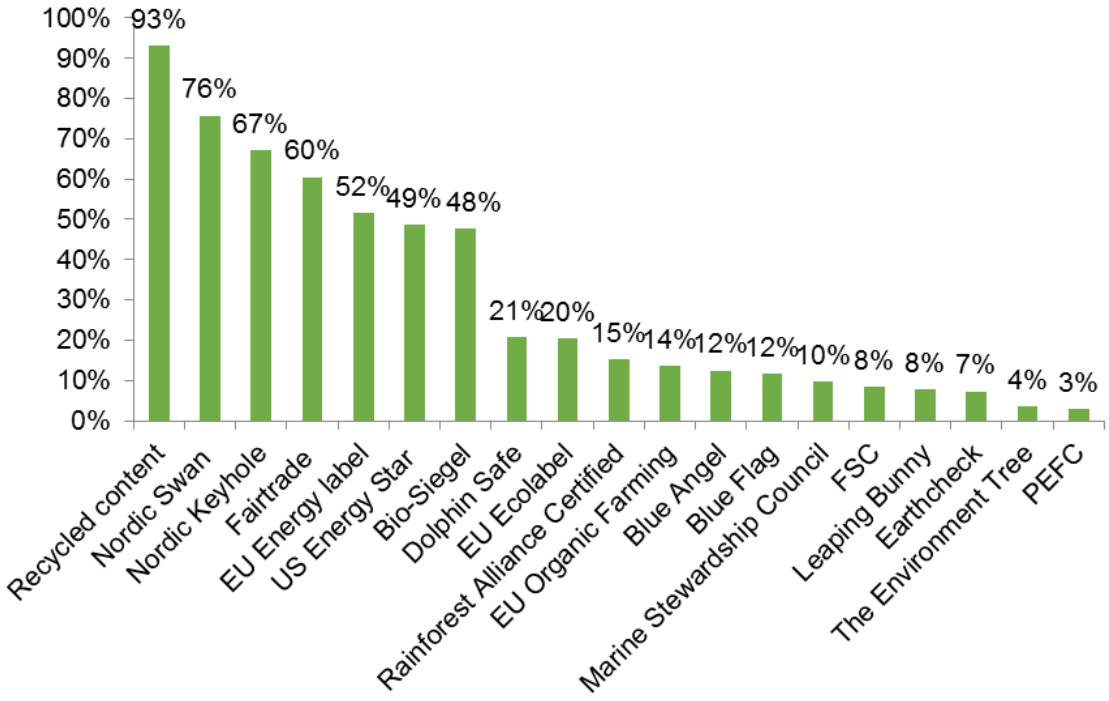

Figure 2. Knowledge of Eco-labels, ordered from best to least known

The two Nordic Eco-labels (the Nordic Swan and the Nordic Keyhole) appeared to be well known to most respondents. This data is consistent with official statistics regarding the knowledge of the Nordic Swan in Iceland (Nordic Eco-labelling, 2011). The figure is, nonetheless, significantly low if compared to other Nordic countries, where 93,5% of the population is familiar with the Swan logo (Nordic Eco-labelling).

The fourth most recognised logo, the Fairtrade symbol, was known to 60,9% of respondents.

The EarthCheck symbol, a touristic Eco-label, was among the three least known labels, despite the fact that a whole Icelandic community (the five municipalities of the Snafellsnes peninsula) has been holding the certification, and displaying the logo, for the past 4 years (EarthCheck, 2011; Framkvæmdaráð Snæfellsness, 2012).

The level of Eco-label recognition (based on the number of logos clicked) was crossed with the knowledge of the term “Eco-labels” (from the previously cited question on terms awareness). The better respondents claimed to know the term, the more Eco-labels they recognised (Figure 3), indicating an association between knowledge of the concept and awareness of ethical consumption options. Those who had never heard the term Eco-label recognized on average 4,1 labels (*sd* = 2,16) while those who knew exactly what was meant by the term Eco-label recognized on average 7,5 labels (*sd* = 3,10), $F(2,420) = 33,99$; $p < ,001$.

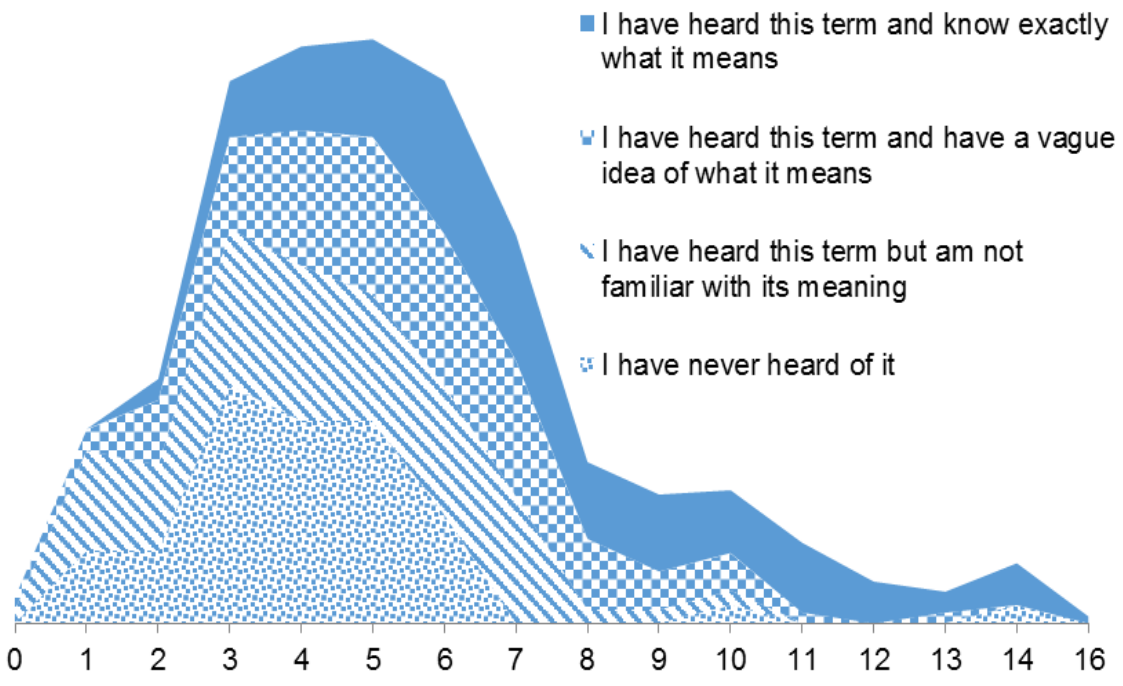

Figure 3. Knowledge of the term “Eco-label” and number of Eco-labels recognized

3.2 Behaviour and behavioural motivations

The majority of respondents (58%) reported buying organic products when they were available; 32,1% answered “no” and 9,8% chose “I don’t know”. Relatively fewer men (42,6%) than women (62,8%) reported buying organic food .

Those respondents who claimed to buy organic products were asked a follow up question about their reasons for buying organic.

Four out of the seven statements were judged as “very important” by the majority of respondents: “Because they are good for the environment” (67,8%); “Because they are healthier” (59,6%); “Because I want to support Icelandic production” (59,4%) and “Because animals are treated more ethically” (53,6%). The emphasis on health and pro-environmental concerns among the top reasons is consistent with the literature on organic products buying motivations (Cervellon, Hjerth, Ricard, & Carey, 2010; Hustvedt & Dickson, 2009). Two of the top four reasons – the first one and the fourth one- are evidently driven by ethical concerns. The third most chosen item, “Because I want to support Icelandic production” may be read as an ethical concern (food miles) or it could be seen as a form of domestic country bias (Auger, et al., 2010; Eden, Bear, & Walker, 2008). It has been here interpreted as an ethical-related concern for local produce because of the strong positive correlation this item has with “Because they are good for the environment” (r = ,48; p < ,01), as well as a significant, if weaker, correlation with “Because it is the right thing to do” (r = 34; p < ,01) and “Because animals are treated more ethically” (r = ,33; p < ,01).

Most respondents appear to assign more importance to public rather than private benefits. Of the most important reasons for buying organic, only health benefits are solely self-directed; the other three main buying motivations are hetero-directed.

When asked about previous purchases of Fairtrade products, the majority (65,4%) of respondents answered that they had previously bought Fairtrade-labelled items; 5,1% said they hadn’t, and 29,4% were not sure. Even if Fairtrade products are now considered mainstream in many Western countries, and are especially popular in European markets (Carrigan & De Pelsmacker, 2009; European Union, 2009; Newholm & Shaw, 2007), they appear to be little known to Icelandic customers, as more than one fourth of respondents did not know whether they had ever bought Fairtrade products.

It is also worth pointing out that 65,4% (n = 267) of respondents reported they had previously purchased Fairtrade items. However, only 216 of these 267 respondents had previously recognised the Fairtrade Eco-label (question 2). The 51 respondents who claimed they had previously bought Fairtrade, yet did not recognize the label, may be considered as either confused or displaying some desirability bias.

Respondents who had previously purchased Fairtrade items were asked reasons for buying Fairtrade. As they did in response to the organic aspects, respondents rated ethical and pro-environmental reasons among the most important (Figure 4).

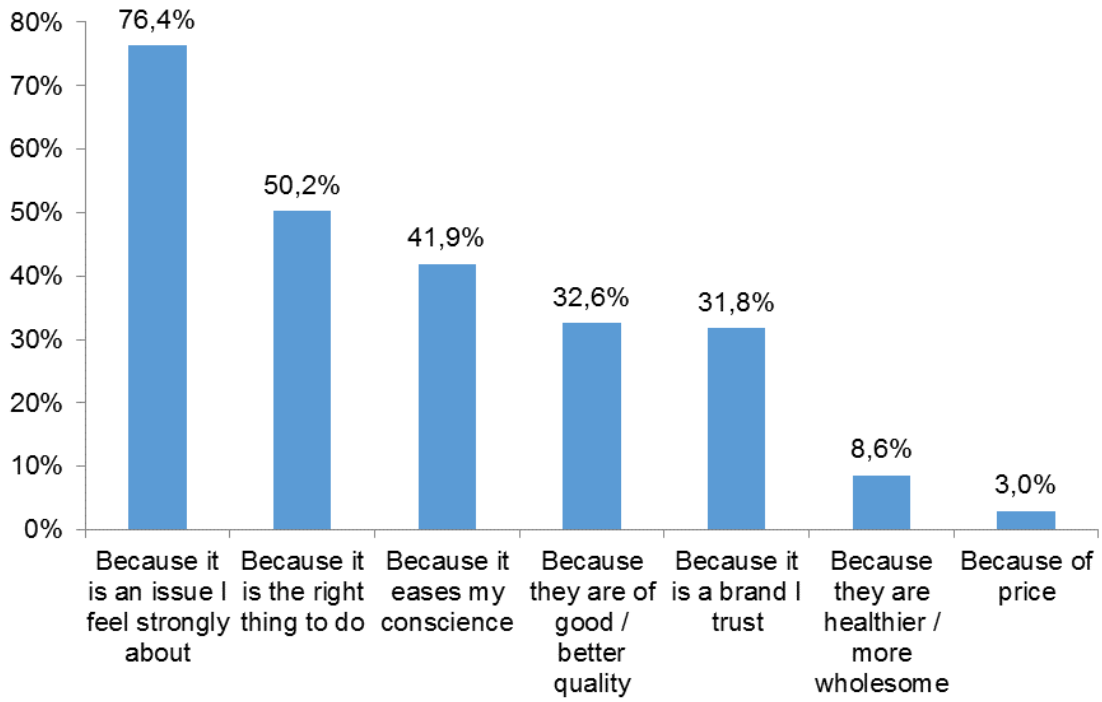

Figure 4. Buying motivations of Fairtrade items

Table 1. Pearson correlations of buying motivations for Fairtrade products

	Because it is a brand I trust	Because they are of good / better quality	Because of price	Because they are healthier / more wholesome	Because it is an issue I feel strongly about	Because it is the right thing to do	Because it eases my conscience
Because it is a brand I trust	1	,373**	,017	,218**	,297**	,170**	,208**
Because they are of good / better quality	-	1	,058	,368**	,330**	,274**	,226**
Because of price	-	-	1	,120*	,006	-,019	-,004
Because they are healthier / more wholesome	-	-	-	1	,145**	,108*	,164**
Because it is an issue I feel strongly about	-	-	-	-	1	,591**	,516**
Because it is the right thing to do	-	-	-	-	-	1	,541**
Because it eases my conscience	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

*p < ,05; **p < ,01

The top 3 reasons for buying Fairtrade were “Because it is an issue I feel strongly about”, “Because it is the right thing to do” and “Because it eases my conscience”. The three reasons were shown to be strongly correlated, corroborating the idea of an ethical, concerned consumer (Table 1).

Respondents who did not buy Fairtrade products indicated, as the most frequent reason for not purchasing Fairtrade, “Because I do not know what Fairtrade actually means/entails” (52,4%). The second most frequently chosen reason was “Because they are hard to find” (43%). Only 5 respondents chose “Because this issue is not one of my priorities”, thus indicating that lack of concern for the issue was not the reason.

3.3 Attitudes towards environmental issues

Respondents reported high levels of concern regarding environmental issues: 82% disagreed or disagreed strongly with the claim that environmental impacts are overstated; 81% agreed or strongly agreed that they are concerned about pollution; 80% agreed or strongly agreed they were worried about natural resource exploitation; while 66% agreed or strongly agreed that they were concerned about climate change (Table 2). The rate of respondents who perceived climate change as a serious threat is in line with other European states; according to 2011 data, 6 to 7 out of 10 European citizens believe that climate change is a very serious problem (European Commission, 2011).

Most respondents (83%) did not agree with the statement that the environmental impacts of their actions are too complicated for them to understand and worry about, thus indicating that environmental issues have a high level of relevance for the respondents.

The majority of respondents agreed that they would like to know more about the environmental impacts of their actions. Respondents also appear to believe that Icelanders could benefit from more environmental education: 63% disagreed with the statements “Compared to most other nations, Icelanders are very environmentally friendly” and “Compared to most other nations, Icelanders are very environmentally aware”. This perception that respondents have of other Icelanders appears at odds with the previous responses to the survey: in fact, the majority of respondents reported purchasing organic and Fairtrade goods; they said they do what is right for the environment, even if it costs them more time or money; they agreed that it is worth doing everything they possibly can for the environment even though others do not do the same.

Table 2. Attitudes about the environment and responsibility for environmental protection

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Each individual / household can contribute to a better environment	1,9%	1,0%	1,9%	23,4%	71,8%
Environmental threats and impacts are frequently overstated	52,0%	30,3%	12,4%	3,8%	1,4%
Environmental issues should be dealt with primarily by future generations	65,9%	20,6%	5,8%	3,1%	4,6%
Environmental issues will be resolved primarily through technological progress	20,6%	30,6%	28,4%	17,8%	2,6%
I am concerned about climate change	6,4%	9,5%	18,9%	39,6%	25,5%
Environmental policies introduced by the government to address environmental issues should not cost me extra money	18,1%	36,3%	29,2%	10,7%	5,7%
I do what is right for the environment, even when it costs more money or takes more time	3,6%	12,6%	27,1%	42,8%	14,0%
I am concerned about pollution	1,2%	5,0%	13,3%	44,9%	35,6%
There are more important things to do in life than protect the environment	15,3%	33,4%	28,9%	15,8%	6,7%
There is no point in doing what I can about the environment unless others do the same	49,5%	37,9%	7,9%	3,8%	1,0%
I find it hard to know whether the way I live is helpful or harmful to the environment	17,8%	35,8%	23,7%	20,9%	1,9%
The environmental impacts of my actions are too complicated for me to understand and worry about	35,6%	46,5%	15,0%	2,4%	0,5%
I am concerned about the overexploitation of natural resources (forests, water, energy)	3,1%	7,6%	9,1%	41,1%	39,1%
I wish I knew more about the environmental impacts of my actions and choices	4,5%	9,3%	21,7%	45,3%	19,1%
When I buy a product, there are other aspects (such as price, brand and looks) which are more important to me than its environmental impact	8,1%	24,6%	32,9%	29,1%	5,3%
I am worried about endangered species and the reduction of biodiversity	5,7%	9,0%	18,1%	39,0%	28,1%
Compared to most other nations, Icelanders are very environmentally friendly	30,7%	32,4%	27,8%	7,4%	1,7%
Compared to most other nations, Icelanders are very environmentally aware	27,9%	34,6%	26,0%	10,3%	1,2%

The conflict between the respondents' self-portrayal and their perception of others as less environmental than they are may be explained with the concept of illusory superiority, a bias which causes people to believe that they possess positive characteristics to a greater extent than the average (Hoorens, 1993). An alternative explanation for this discrepancy is that the respondents' inability to imagine other Icelanders engaged in pro-environmental behaviour might be due to a relative absence of such topics in the public discourse. This argument is based on the concept of "availability heuristic", which suggests that people's assessment of others' behaviours is influenced by their ability to imagine such behaviours. People tend to judge an event improbable if they cannot readily recall examples of its occurrence (Nyborg et al., 2006). Finally, the possibility of a sample bias cannot be excluded, as people who volunteer to respond to a questionnaire on environmental and ethical topics might be more aware of these issues than the general population.

3.4 Responsibility

Concern and interest in environmental and ethical issues was positively correlated with beliefs in personal commitment and responsibility, and negatively correlated with beliefs that environmental consequences are too complicated, and should therefore be solved by technology and future generations rather than through personal action (Table 3).

Concerned respondents, who believe environmental threats to be pressing, tend therefore to assign higher levels of responsibility to individuals.

Nonetheless in the question which dealt directly with responsibility for environmental protection, the large majority of respondents (87%) rated individuals as very accountable. No respondent thought that individuals bore no responsibility for environmental defence. Only governments were considered to be "very responsible" more often than individuals (88%).

Table 3. Concern for the environment and personal responsibility: selected correlations

	Environmental threats and impacts are frequently overstated	I am concerned about climate change	I am concerned about pollution	There are more important things to do in life than protect the environment	I am concerned about the overexploitation of natural resources (forests, water, energy)	I am worried about endangered species and the reduction of biodiversity
Each individual / household can contribute to a better environment	-,445**	,229**	,313**	-,134**	,126*	,127**
Environmental issues should be dealt with primarily by future generations	,202**	-,110*	-,150**	,189**	-,178**	-,183**
Environmental issues will be resolved primarily through technological progress	,402**	-,289**	-,291**	,249**	-,145**	-,201**
Environmental policies introduced by the government to address environmental issues should not cost me extra money	,242**	-,227**	-,226**	,210**	-,142**	-,228**
I do what is right for the environment, even when it costs more money or takes more time	-,278**	,324**	,440**	-,271**	,228**	,275**
There is no point in doing what I can about the environment unless others do the same	-,319**	-,280**	-,355**	,247**	-,303**	-,272**
The environmental impacts of my actions are too complicated for me to understand and worry about	,337**	-,309**	-,320**	,185**	-,243**	-,242**

*p < ,05; **p < ,01

4. Conclusions

The results of this survey point towards a gap between the values ("Attitudes") that the respondents hold, and their ability to act on them, due to their patchy knowledge of ethical consumption.

High reported concern for environmental issues is not matched by a corresponding level of awareness of green consumerism: the respondents are mostly unfamiliar with the concept of ethical consumption; they know few Eco-labels (which are arguably the main tool consumers can use to choose, and point business towards, greener products (Rex & Baumann, 2007); they tend to believe they purchase greener than they probably do (as is apparent in the inconsistency regarding Fairtrade buyers reported above).

Nonetheless, the answers show a strong belief in the idea of personal responsibility and ability to make a difference: The respondents' concerns about environmental problems are positively correlated to the idea that they are in charge of finding a solution.

Respondents assign high responsibility for change to the state and to individuals.

Although the individuals in the sample display a strong belief that every little bit counts, it has been argued that a shift to more sustainable patterns of consumption will be unfeasible on an individual basis. There are several reasons for this: Consumption is not an individual project, but occurs in a shared social network; individuals have to make an effort to look for information on the green attributes of products from multiple sources, which are often unreliable or have a vested interest; as consumers, individuals are faced with multiple, contradicting stimuli, so that sustainability issues have to compete with financial concerns and aesthetic preferences, among other things (Michaelis, 2000; Tallontire et al., 2001; Thogersen & Schrader, 2012).

The Nordic Strategy for Sustainable Development underlines the responsibility of governments in creating the necessary preconditions for a shift towards greener lifestyles. The Strategy aims at combining the provision of environmental information, to increase the citizens' awareness of the impact of their actions, with an increased availability of eco-friendly solutions, ranging from public transport options to organic products (Norden, 2012). The state is thus seen as responsible for creating the right context for individual action by increasing levels of general knowledge as well as creating incentives to help consumers concentrate their limited efforts on the most environmentally sound options.

Due to the nature of the sample (convenience sample of volunteers) the results of this research cannot be generalized to the whole population of Iceland.

In ethical surveys, respondents are liable to answer according to socially acceptable norms rather than actual behaviour (Tallontire et al., 2001). The possibility of a desirability bias has thus to be taken into consideration. Future research should investigate Icelandic consumers' ethical

concerns in the field of consumption more in depth, in order to get a more precise image of consumers' levels of awareness and relevant behaviours as regards the issues in question. The differences in terms of both knowledge and concern that the two genders displayed in this research should be investigated further. Men have, elsewhere, been defined as biased towards cynicism when it comes to environmental matters (ecoAmerica & SRIC-BI, 2006). Whether that is the case in Iceland, or whether women are, on the other hand, more biased towards giving desirable answers is a point worth exploring.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Rannsókn um neyslu á Íslandi

Velkomin

Þessi rannsókn er hluti af lokaverkefni mínu í meistaranámi í Umhverfis og auðlindafræði við Háskóla Íslands. Verkefnið snýr að þekkingu og áhuga Íslendinga á siðrænni neyslu. Fyllsta trúnaðar verður gætt við úrvinnslu gagnanna og gögnin verða eingöngu notuð fyrir lokaverkefnið. Þér er ekki skylt að svara einstaka spurningum eða listanum í heild. (Það tekur u.þ.b. 10 mínútur að svara spurningalistanum).

Þakka þér fyrir hjálpina.

Giada Pezzini, meistaranemi í Umhverfis- og auðlindafræðum við HÍ

Ragna B. Garðarsdóttir, lektor við Sálfræðideild HÍ

Hvort ert þú karlkyns eða kvenkyns

Viðkomandi upplýsingar verða notaðar til samantektar á öðrum svörum

( ) Karlkyns

( ) Kvenkyns

Hvaða ár ert þú fædd/ur?

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1. **Hér að neðan er listi yfir hugtök. Einhver þeirra gætir þú þekkt en ef til vill hefurðu ekki heyrt um önnur þeirra. Vinsamlegast gefðu til kynna hvort þú þekkir hvert hugtak og þá hversu vel þú þekkir það.**

   Vinsamlegast veldu einn svarmöguleika fyrir hverja línu

	Ég þekki ekki hugtakið	**Ég kannast við hugtakið en þekki ekki merkingu þess**	**Ég þekki hugtakið og hef einhverja hugmynd um merkingu þess**	**Ég þekki hugtakið vel og skil fyllilega merkingu þess**
Umhverfisvænn („Green")	( )	( )	( )	( )
Erfðabreytt matvæli (Genetically Modified Organisms eða GMO)	( )	( )	( )	( )
Umhverfismerki (Ecolabel)	( )	( )	( )	( )
Sanngjörn viðskipti (Fair-Trade)	( )	( )	( )	( )
Lífrænt (Organic)	( )	( )	( )	( )
Siðræn neysla (Ethical consumption)	( )	( )	( )	( )
Vistspor (Carbon Footprint eða Ecological Footprint)	( )	( )	( )	( )
Samfélagsleg ábyrgð fyrirtækja (Corporate Social Responsibility)	( )	( )	( )	( )

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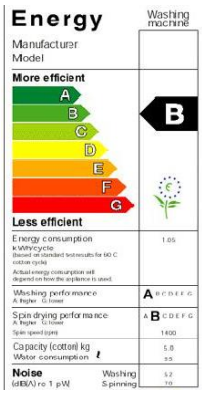
2. **Vinsamlegast hakaðu við þau merki sem þú kannast við af listanum hér fyrir neðan með því að smella á myndirnar. Ef þú kannast ekki við neitt þeirra getur þú farið áfram á næstu spurningu með því að velja "next" neðst á síðunni:**

 EARTHCHECK	 PEFC		 Energy Washing machine Manufacturer Model More efficient A B C D E F G B Less efficient Energy consumption Washing performance Spin drying performance Capacity (cotton) kg Water consumption Noise Washing Spinning
( )	( )	( )	( )
	 BIO nach EG-Öko-Verordnung		
( )	( )	( )	( )
 FAIRTRADE	 FSC	 SAFE	
( )	( )	( )	( )
	 RAINFOREST ALLIANCE CERTIFIED EST 1987		 energy ENERGY STAR
( )	( )	( )	( )
	 DER BLAUE ENGEL JURY UMWELTZEICHEN	 MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL	
( )	( )	( )	

Lífrænar vörur

3. Kaupir þú lífrænar vörur þegar þær eru í boði?

( ) Já

( ) Nei

( ) Ég veit það ekki

Lífrænar vörur

3a. [Only asked to participants who replied „Yes“ („Já“) to question 3]

Hér að neðan eru taldar upp nokkrar ástæður þess að fólk velur að kaupa lífrænar vörur. Hversu mikilvægar eða lítilvægar eru þessar ástæður þér?

	Mjög mikilvægt	**Frekar mikilvægt**	**Frekar lítilvægt**	**Mjög lítilvægt**
Því þær bragðast betur	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því þær eru dýrari	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því þær eru heilsusamlegri	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því þær fela í sér mannúðlegri meðferð dýra	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því þær eru góðar fyrir umhverfið	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því ég vil styrkja innlenda lífræna ræktendur	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því það er einfaldlega rétt að kaupa lífrænt	( )	( )	( )	( )

Lífrænar vörur

3b. [Only asked to participants who replied „No“ („Nei“) to question 3]

Hér að neðan eru nokkrar ástæður þess að fólk kaupir ekki lífrænar vörur. Hversu mikilvægar eða lítilvægar eru þessar ástæður þér?

	Mjög mikilvægt	Frekar mikilvægt	Frekar lítilvægt	Mjög lítilvægt
Því ég þekki ekki í sundur lífrænar og ólífrænar vörur	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því ég er ekki sannfærð(ur) um að lífrænt sé betri kostur	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því það eru ekki nógu margar lífrænar vörur í boði	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því lífrænar vörur eru of dýrar	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því lífrænar vörur eru af lakari gæðum	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því lífrænar vörur eru innfluttar frá öðrum löndum	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því ég treysti því ekki að allt það sem er merkt sem lífrænt sé það í raun og veru	( )	( )	( )	( )
Því ég vel frekar að styðja hefðbundna, ólífræna ræktendur	( )	( )	( )	( )

„Fair-trade“ vörur

4. Hefurðu einhvern tíma keypt vörur sem merktar eru „fair-trade“ („sanngjörn viðskipti“)?

( ) Já

( ) Nei

( ) Ég veit það ekki

„Fair-trade“ vörur

4a. [Only asked to participants who replied „Yes“ („Já“) to question 4]

Af hvaða ástæðu hefur þú keypt „fair-trade“ („sanngjörn viðskipti“) vörur? (Veldu allt sem við á)

[ ] Vegna tiltekins vörumerkis sem ég treysti

[ ] Vegna þess að þær eru góðar / í hærri gæðaflokki

[ ] Vegna verðsins

[ ] Vegna þess að þær eru heilsusamlegri

[ ] Vegna þess að þetta er málstaður sem er mér mikilvægur

[ ] Vegna þess að það er einfaldlega rétt að gera það

[ ] Vegna þess að það er betra fyrir samviskuna að kaupa fair-trade

[ ] Annað, hvað?

[ ] Ég veit það ekki

„Fair-trade“ vörur

4b. [Only asked to participants who replied „No“ („Nei“) to question 4]

Hvers vegna hefurðu ekki keypt „fair-trade“ vörur? (Veldu allt sem við á)

[ ] Vegna þess að ég er ekki viss um það hvaða þýðingu fair trade hefur

[ ] Vegna þess að þær eru of dýrar

[ ] Vegna þess að ég tel þær vera af lakari gæðum

[ ] Vegna þess að ég trúi því ekki að kauphegðun mín hafi nein áhrif á heimsmálin

[ ] Vegna þess að ég á erfitt með að finna þessar vörur

[ ] Vegna þess að þetta málefni er ekki forgangsatriði hjá mér

[ ] Vegna þess að ég vel frekar að kaupa innlenda vöru

[ ] Annað, hvað?

[ ] Ég veit það ekki

Erfðabreytt matvæli

5. Telur þú þig vita hvaða matvæli eru erfðabreytt og hver ekki?

( ) Já, ég veit það

( ) Ég er ekki viss

( ) Nei, það er ekki hægt að vita það

Erfðabreytt matvæli

6. Hversu sammála eða ósammála ert þú eftirfarandi staðhæfingum um erfðabreytt matvæli? Vinsamlegast veldu eitt svar fyrir hverja línu:

	Mjög ósammála	Frekar ósammála	Hvorki sammála né ósammála	Frekar sammála	Mjög sammála
Þau eru heilsusamlegri en aðrar matvörur	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Þau eru af meiri gæðum en aðrar matvörur	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég treysti því ekki að erfðabreytt matvæli séu örugg	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Þau eru betri fyrir umhverfið	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég veit ekki hver munurinn er á erfðabreyttum vörum og óerfðabreyttum	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Þau eru nauðsynleg til að koma í veg fyrir matarskort í heiminum	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég hef ekki áhyggjur af því hvort matvæli séu erfðabreytt	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég treysti því að íslenskar vörur séu góðar hvort sem þær eru erfðabreyttar eða ekki	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

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7. Hversu sammála eða ósammála ert þú eftirfarandi fullyrðingum? Vinsamlegast veldu eitt svar fyrir hverja línu:

	Mjög ósammála	Frekar ósammála	Hvorki sammála né ósammála	Frekar sammála	Mjög sammála
Hver einstaklingur / hvert heimili getur stuðlað að bættu umhverfi	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Umhverfisvandamál og áhrif þeirra eru ofmetin	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Framtíðarkynslóðir ættu frekar að takast á við	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

umhverfisvandamálin					
Umhverfisvandamál koma til með að verða leyst með tækniframförum	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég hef áhyggjur af loftslagsbreytingum	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Stefnur stjórnvalda í umhverfismálum ættu ekki að kosta mig fjárútlát	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég geri það sem er best fyrir umhverfið, jafnvel þótt það kosti mig meiri peninga og taki meiri tíma	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég hef áhyggjur af umfangi mengunar	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Það eru mikilvægari hlutir í lífinu en að vernda umhverfið	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég sé engan tilgang í því að leggja mig fram í umhverfismálum ef aðrir gera ekki hið sama	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Mér finnst erfitt að vita hvort lífsvenjur mínar séu góðar eða slæmar fyrir umhverfið	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Umhverfisáhrif gjörða minna eru of flókin fyrir mig til að hafa áhyggjur af	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég hef áhyggjur af því að náttúruauðlindir (skógar, vatn, orka) verði ofnýttar	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Ég vildi að ég vissi meira um þau áhrif sem gjörðir mínar og ákvarðanir hafa á umhverfið	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Þegar ég kaupi vöru eru önnur atriði (svo sem verð, vörumerki og útlit) sem skipta mig meira máli en áhrif vörunnar á	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

umhverfið					
Ég hef áhyggjur af útrýmingu dýrategunda og skerðingu líffræðilegrar fjölbreytni	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Í samanburði við flestar aðrar þjóðir eru Íslendingar mjög umhverfissinnaðir	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )
Í samanburði við flestar aðrar þjóðir eru Íslendingar mjög meðvitaðir um umhverfismál	( )	( )	( )	( )	( )

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8. Hversu litla eða mikla ábyrgð telur þú hvern þessara aðila bera á því að takast á við umhverfisvandann?

	Mikla ábyrgð	**Nokkra ábyrgð**	**Litla ábyrgð**	**Alls enga ábyrgð**
Vísindamenn og sérfræðingar	( )	( )	( )	( )
Alþjóðastofnanir (t.d. Sameinuðu Þjóðirnar)	( )	( )	( )	( )
Stjórnvöld hvers og eins ríkis	( )	( )	( )	( )
Frjáls félagasamtök (NGOs)	( )	( )	( )	( )
Fyrirtæki / Framleiðendur	( )	( )	( )	( )
Jarðarbúar	( )	( )	( )	( )

Athugasemdir

Hefur þú einhverjar athugasemdir eða ábendingar um rannsóknina og efni hennar sem þú vilt koma á framfæri?

Takk fyrir!

Þá er spurningum lokið.

Þakka þér kærlega fyrir þátttökuna!

Appendix 2: E-mail to the participants

Kæri viðtakandi,

Ég heiti Giada Pezzini og er meistaranemi í Umhverfis- og auðlindafræði.

Meðfylgjandi er könnun sem snýr að þekkingu og áhuga Íslendinga á siðrænni neyslu. Þessi rannsókn er hluti af lokaverkefni mínu í meistaranáminu.

Það væri mjög hjálplegt ef þú gætir fyllt út listann útfrá þinni eigin reynslu og þekkingu.

Könnunin er nafnlaus og verða svör ekki rakin til einstakra þátttakenda.

Það tekur 5-10 mínútur að svara spurningalistanum.

http://edu.surveygizmo.com/s3/892771/island

Þakka þér fyrir hjálpina.

Giada Pezzini
gip5@hi.is

Appendix 3: Letter from Persónuvernd

Giada Pezzini
Rauðarárstíg 33
105 Reykjavík

Persónuvernd

Rauðarárstíg 10 105 Reykjavík
sími: 510 9600 bréfasími: 510 9606
netfang: postur@personuvernd.is
veffang: personuvernd.is

Reykjavík 30. apríl 2012
Tilvísun: S5757/2012/ AT/--

Hér með staðfestist að Persónuvernd hefur móttekið tilkynningu í yðar nafni um vinnslu persónuupplýsinga. Tilkynningin er nr. S5757/2012 og fylgir afrit hennar hjálagt.

Allar tilkynningar sem berast Persónuvernd birtast sjálfkrafa á heimasíðu stofnunarinnar. Tekið skal fram að með móttöku og birtingu tilkynninga hefur engin afstaða verið tekin af hálfu Persónuverndar til efnis þeirra.

Virðingarfyllst,

Alma Tryggvadóttir
lögfræðingur

Hjál.: - Tilkynning nr. S5757/2012 um vinnslu persónuupplýsinga.