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Individual values and motivational complexities in ethical clothing consumption: A means-end approach

Thomas Jägel

The University of Manchester, Manchester Business School,
Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB, UK

Kathy Keeling

The University of Manchester, Manchester Business School,
Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB, UK

Tel.: +44-(0)161-

Email: kathy.keeling@manchester.ac.uk

Alexander Reppel

Royal Holloway, University of London,
School of Management
Egham Hill, Egham Surrey TW20 0EX

Thorsten Gruber

The University of Manchester, Manchester Business School,
Booth Street West, Manchester M15 6PB, UK

Thomas Jägel works as a research project assistant for Manchester Business School (MBS), University of Manchester. Prior to that, he completed his masters in marketing at MBS. He received his bachelor degree in Communication Science and Political Science from the University of Muenster, Germany. His research interest focuses on ethical consumption and marketing and on qualitative online research methods. Further interests centre on advertising and consumer behaviour in the context of new media. He has interned in international advertising and PR agencies and is now Media Sales Consultant at Google, Germany.

Dr Kathy Keeling is currently a Senior Lecturer in Research Methods and Data Analysis at Manchester Business School. With a PhD investigating and modelling user acceptance of e-banking services (Manchester); MSc Applied Psychology (Distinction)(Manchester) and BSc Psychology she researches cross-disciplinary areas and applies psychological models of behaviour.

Thorsten Gruber is a Lecturer in Marketing and Service Management in the Manchester Business School, University of Manchester. Prior to that, he was engaged in postdoctoral research at the Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham and a part-time visiting lecturer at the University of Education Ludwigsburg. He received his Ph.D. and MBA from the University of Birmingham. His research interests include consumer complaining behaviour, services marketing and the development of qualitative online research methods.

Alexander E. Reppel is Lecturer in Marketing at Royal Holloway, University of London. His main research interests are in relationship marketing in consumer markets, marketing ethics, and consumer data management practices. Alexander is also involved in the development of innovative online research methods, such as interviewer- and non-interviewer-based online laddering techniques.

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With the expansion of ethical consumption, there is an increased need to understand the variety of consumer motives for consumer engagement in such behaviour. For the rapidly growing area of ethical clothing, this study explores consumers' desired consumption outcomes and personal values that drive ethical product preferences. Analysis of data obtained through a semi-qualitative laddering approach (n = 98 ethical clothing consumers) reveals 5 dominant perceptual patterns relating not only to environmental and altruist ethical concerns, but also more individual motives of value for money, personal image, and well-being. Further analysis shows that consumers have to compromise and balance between their conflicting end-goals. The study augments previous findings in ethical clothing research as researchers can better understand how specific attributes of products relate to the emotional and symbolic aspects and link back to consumer values. Though limited in scope by its exploratory character, the study contributes towards a deeper understanding of ethical consumer behaviour, implications for theory; practice and further research are discussed.

Key-words: Ethical clothing, means-end approach, laddering, ethical consumption, personal values, complexities

This study explores consumers' desired consumption outcomes and personal values that drive ethical product preferences. Analysis of data obtained through a semi-qualitative laddering approach reveals 5 dominant perceptual patterns relating to environmental and altruist ethical concerns and to individual motives of value for money, personal image, and well-being. Augments previous findings in ethical clothing research on how specific attributes of products relate to the emotional and symbolic aspects and link back to consumer values.

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The market size for ethical consumption in the UK has almost tripled within the last decade (Co-operative Bank 2009). Even in times of economic crisis, many consumers still exhibit ethical consumption behaviour (Carrigan & de Pelsmacker 2009) such as downshifting, recycling, boycotting or purchasing ethical goods. The small but exponentially growing market of ethical clothing (Mintel 2009) represents an especially promising research area within this field. The notion of ethical clothing is multifaceted, as reflected by the use of various terms such as eco, fair-trade, organic, sustainable or recycled clothing (Mintel 2009; Thomas 2008), and customers' changing approach towards clothing recycling and disposal and boycotting of unethical clothing companies adds further to its relevance.

Until recently, the role of ethical concern on clothing choice seemed marginal (Carrigan & Attala 2001; Iwanow, McEachern & Jeffrey 2005; Joergens 2006), but currently, results suggest that ethical clothing consumption is relevant for a growing number of consumers (e.g., Niinimäki 2010). Issues around understanding ethical clothing consumption have been attributed to the complex pursuit of multiple personal values that underlie consumers' choice criteria in clothing consumption (Butler & Francis 1997; Kim & Damhorst 1998) but these values themselves are not well understood (Niinimäki 2010). This is important as values are often linked to strong positive and negative affective responses as they "represent important consequences that are personally relevant" (Peter, Olson & Grunert 1999: 71). Schlegelmilch (1996) argues that the level of involvement in environmentally concerned purchases leads to central rather than peripheral, heuristic information processing and so concerned consumers consider concrete facts rather than emotional appeals. Hartman (2005) suggests that a combination of factual and emotional

benefits works best to position environmentally friendly products. Certainly, some debates around the nature of consumption argue for the 'privileged place' (Cova 1999) of emotions and symbolic aspects of products (Cova 1999, Elliot 1994). Hence, an understanding of how product attributes link back to personal values seems a worthy focus of attention.

This study therefore explores consumers' product preferences in ethical clothing and how these are linked back to personal values thus contributing towards an understanding of the value that consumers seek from ethical apparel. After a review of the literature on ethical clothing and the role of personal values in ethical consumption we describe a study using the semi-structured laddering technique to develop consumer motivational chains among a sample of ethical clothing consumers. The study reveals the dominant motivational patterns behind ethical clothing choice, discusses the implications and research directions in the context of ethical fashion.

Further, in highlighting the importance of personal values as determinants of ethical consumption, this paper contributes to the broader literature on green and ethical consumption, as the study reflects recent shifts in consumer practice and research focus. Our study sheds light on the motivational complexities faced by ethical consumers (Szmigin, Carrigan & McEachern 2009) and supports the broadening of consumer involvement from a purely 'green' environmentally concerned consumer towards an 'ethical' consumer who is also socially aware (Harrison, Newholm & Shaw 2005). Our study finally aims to make a methodological contribution by applying the semi-structured interviewing technique of laddering to ethical clothing.

Ethical clothing consumption

The purchase of clothing that uses environmentally friendly production, as well as fairly traded clothing (with the focus on achieving better prices and working conditions) is

closely related to clothing boycotts and buying second-hand for recycling reasons, which, all taken together, accounted for a market size worth of about £1 billion in the UK in 2009 (Co-operative Bank 2010). Hence, an inclusive definition of ethical clothing covers all clothing produced and traded with regard to its impact on the environment and the people involved (Mintel 2009). Mintel (2009) estimates that spending on ethical clothing has quadrupled within four years and predicts further growth, driven by a stronger consumer demand for fairly produced and sustainable clothing. Although research interest in ethical clothing consumption has increased in recent years, studies tend to focus on single issues, on eco clothing (e.g. Niinimäki 2010), organic clothing (e.g. Lin 2009), fair-trade (Shaw, Hogg, Wilson, Shiu & Hassan 2006), buying from socially responsible businesses (Dickson 2000), clothing disposal and donating (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges 2009) and clothing recycling (Shim 1995). This can make drawing generalisations about the importance of product versus ethical attributes difficult. Further, some differences in the outcomes of studies may be attributed to the type of sample. For example, Joergens (2006) and Iwanow et al (2005), in studies of all clothing consumers, conclude that price, style and quality are the primary influence on clothes purchase, ethical considerations are of secondary importance. In contrast, Sneddon, Lee & Soutar (2009) and Dickson & Littrell (1996) specifically research ethical consumers, finding ethical concerns do have relevance for clothing purchase decisions. Thus, at least for a subset of consumers, ethical product attributes present important choice criteria.

However, it can be concluded that there is a complex mix of 'multiple end-goals such as self-expression, aesthetic satisfaction and group conformity' (Kim & Damhorst 1998 p. 132) behind ethical clothing consumption. Consumers may try to reduce and avoid feelings of guilt by not simply discarding their old clothing, simultaneously seek utilitarian value and well-being (Ha-Brookshire & Hodges 2009, Lin 2009), or feel themselves driven by

an 'ethical obligation' (Shaw et al. 2006). Ethical clothing consumers may also search to express their ideology and self-identity through their clothing, i.e., egoistic motives (Niinimäki 2010).

In sum, the review of literature reveals a wide range of motives behind consumers' ethical clothing consumption. Dickson & Littrell 1996, and Dickson (2000) using path analysis, specifically theorise and demonstrate a hierarchical system of effects with global values as the most abstract level affecting more specific attitudes. Importantly, the attitude towards the behaviour of purchasing apparel in an ethical context was a better predictor of purchase behaviour than was attitude towards the apparel itself (Dickson & Littrell 1996). Thus, the use of a laddering exercise, with its power to show the full account of how personal values in relation to ethical clothing are satisfied through the interrelation and interaction of product attributes and consequences appears valid. Our study therefore aims to capture as much of the complexity of relevant product preferences and benefits sought by buyers of ethical clothing as possible, and to show how these are linked to underlying personal values.

Values as Drivers in Ethical Consumption

Values, defined as 'desirable, trans-situational goals' serve 'as a guiding principle in peoples' lives' (Schwartz 1994, p. 21) and thereby have an important role in determining and limiting ethical consumption (Kilbourne & Beckmann 1998).

For Schwartz (1992) human values are characterized by two orthogonal dimensions: self-enhancement vs. self-transcendence and openness to change vs. conservation, resulting in four distinct value orientations. (1) Self-enhancement as a value orientation includes power and achievement values, thereby highlighting self-interest, while (2) self-transcendence in contrast emphasizes concern for others. (3) Openness to change

highlights independent action and thought, whereas (4) conservation is characterized by self-restriction and resistance to change (Schwartz 1992). Personal values can therefore be conflicting in nature.

Schwartz's value framework and the use of the Schwartz value survey (1992) have provided useful insight into environmentally friendly, (Gilg et al. 2005) socially conscious and frugal consumer behaviour (Pepper, Jackson & Uzzell 2009) and consumption of fair-trade products (Doran 2009). Stern, Dietz & Kalof (1993) adapt Schwartz's framework in stating that three values, biospheric values and altruistic values and egoistic values determine consumers' environmental concerns. Biospheric (or ecocentric) values reflect a concern for the non-human species, plant or animal and the conservation of the planet in general; egoistic values manifest in trying to maximize individual outcomes, and altruistic values reflect concern for social justice and the welfare of other human beings (Stern, Dietz, & Kalof, 1993). Shaw et al. (2005) also find a set of relevant values related to the Schwartz (1992) framework for ethical consumer purchasing, including traditionalist values (such as security) or values related to openness to change (such as independence).

However, whilst undoubtedly providing insight and structure on the nature of values in ethical consumer purchasing, criticisms of these studies are that the pre-defined value sets risk missing other relevant constructs and it is not always clear how values translate into consumers' concrete choice-criteria for ethical products. Consequently, the flexibility of means-end theory (Gutman 1982)(see below) initially used in the context of product and brand positioning (Gutman 1982; Reynolds & Gutman 1988) represents a potentially valuable framework to understand pro-environmental and pro-social behaviour in terms of the underlying personal values (Jackson 2005).

Means-end approaches and laddering technique

While Hines and O'Neill's (1995) study on determinants of clothing quality provides a rare example of an application of the laddering approach related to clothing, laddering techniques and their foundation in means-end theory have sporadically been used when researching ethical consumer behaviour (Jackson 2005), recycling behaviour (Bagozzi & Dabholkar 1994), preferences, categories and differences between countries relating to organic food (Zanoli & Naspetti 2002, Padel & Foster 2005, Baker, Thompson, Egelken & Huntley 2004). These studies reveal the divergence and complexity of perceptual and motivational patterns of consumers when buying ethical products. In particular, how ethical and non-ethical considerations interact, for instance, ecological product features such as the absence of chemicals are also linked to the self-related motivations of health and personal well-being (e.g., Zanoli & Naspetti 2002).

Means-end chain theory (Gutman 1982) posits that consumers use means (products, activities) to attain ends (valued states of being). More specifically, the theory assumes that consumers' preferences towards certain offerings (*attributes*) are determined by functional and psychological *consequences* for the consumers, which help them to strive for underlying terminal *values* (Gutman & Reynolds 1988). The means-end theory thereby frames consumer decision making as the basic problem and assumes that consumers strive for maximising positive outcomes (benefits) and avoiding negative outcomes (risks) that these consumption decisions entail (Olsen & Reynolds 2001). The evaluation of what are positive and negative outcomes is in turn determined by personal values that people want to attain (Gutman 1982).

Values are the consumers' universal life goals and represent the most personal and general consequences individuals are striving for (Rokeach 1973). Importantly, attributes and consequences can differ in nature. Attributes can be very concrete or rather abstract (Grunert, Beckmann & Sørensen 2001), whilst consequences can be either functional and

tangible (often experienced directly after a purchase) or take more personal or emotional forms, thus representing psychological and social consequences (Olsen & Reynolds 2001). Overall, attributes, consequences and values form interrelated and hierarchical structures in consumers' minds (Gutman & Reynolds 1988). For the present research, means-end theory represents a suitable framework as it clearly specifies how product purchase decisions are linked to values and accounts for the fact that different attributes, consequences and values can be present in a given context. It puts special emphasis on the linkages between components, as these carry the majority of the meaning (Reynolds, Dethloff & Westberg 2001).

Within research using means-end approaches there is no agreement whether the obtained structures should be interpreted as cognitive maps or context-dependent motivational structures (Grunert et al. 2001). We agree with Clayes & Vanden Abeele (2001), that a main contribution of MEC theory can be seen in reconciling the motivational and cognitive schools in consumer research, as product knowledge (on preference) level is linked to more personal concepts such as values. Thus, means-end chains can be interpreted as cognitive and motivational structures alike.

Means-end chain theory is closely linked to the qualitative interviewing technique of laddering (Reynolds & Gutman 1988), which elicits, rather than imposes, the consumer attitude and value structures. This represents a methodological advantage to closed-question survey-based approaches that do not necessarily allow for sufficient respondent reflection on the relevant values for their decision-making (Dietz, Fitzgerald & Shwom 2005). Laddering usually involves semi-standardized personal in-depth interviews, with the interviewer probing to reveal attribute-consequence-value chains (i.e., 'ladders'). The interviewer repeatedly questions why an attribute, a consequence, or a value is important to the respondent. The answer then acts as the starting point for further questioning, until

saturation is reached. Cognitive concepts obtained during the laddering interview and analysis are summarised in a graphical representation of a set of means-end chains termed a Hierarchical Value Map (HVM) (Reynolds & Gutman 1988).

Study design

Velodu-de-Oliveira, Ikeda & Campomar (2006) identify barriers to the use of laddering in marketing research: interviews can be time-consuming and expensive; sets of answers can be artificial, as questions focus on reaching a higher level of abstraction and respondents might feel uncomfortable talking about questions at value-level. The researcher might bias the interview and analysis process through pre-established expectations and might therefore analyse the results overly simplistically.

We addressed most of these issues relating to the interview process by choosing a non-interviewer based 'hard' laddering approach via questionnaires with open-ended questions. Hard laddering can be distinguished from the 'soft' laddering approach, which uses in-depth interviews (Botschen, Thelen & Pieters 1999). Whilst producing similar results to soft laddering (Botschen et al 1999), hard laddering is more efficient for collecting data than soft laddering, as it is easier and less costly to administer, so enabling larger and more representative samples (Russell et al. 2004). Furthermore, hard laddering can reduce social response bias, as social pressure is lower than in soft laddering (Russell et al. 2004) and eliminates a considerable part of researcher bias (Grunert et al. 2001). Nevertheless, Philipps and Reynolds (2009) criticize hard laddering approaches as respondents might not reach high levels of abstraction due to a lack of probing opportunity by an interviewer. We addressed this serious criticism by taking advantage of the technical advantages of conducting our questionnaire online, and programme in extra help and prompts.

There are important benefits for hard laddering in an online environment, e.g., lower transcription errors; it is cheaper, faster and more convenient than a pen-and-paper approach (Russel et al. 2004). Further, the online questionnaire software allowed a more flexible, interactive and appealing design than a pen-and-paper based equivalent.

Based on an earlier instrument, we developed a detailed laddering questionnaire and explanation based on multi-step exploration and piloting. This research phase included face-to-face laddering interviews and a pen-and-paper version of the questionnaire, which was then revised upon feedback, adapted to an online version and pre-tested again. The final questionnaire started with simple definitions of the terms ethical and eco clothing, adopted from Mintel (2009), in order to ensure a shared understanding among all participants. As recommended for laddering interviews, the questionnaire continued with socio-demographics and warm-up questions to activate participant cognitions about the topic... Consumers were asked to indicate which of a list ethical and eco clothing acquisition behaviours they had done during the last six months.

A tutorial followed to explain the constructs of attributes, values and consequences and the laddering process, using an example from outside green/ethical marketing so later results were not influenced by the tutorial. In addition to the explanations given in the tutorial, to help consumers to further understand attributes, participants were encouraged to consider the wide range of attributes relating to ethical and eco clothing and that they should not feel limited in their choice.. Participants were further asked to think of decisive attributes for past ethical purchases, similar to a difference by occasion elicitation (Gutman and Reynold 1988) and also those attributes that would make it (more) likely for them to buy in the future. This question had proven to work well at the piloting stage and is similar to the Reynolds (2006) and Philipps et al. (2010) concept of 'on the margin' elicitation, asking a question that identifies main barriers to a purchasing decision. As the

aim of the research was to obtain the whole range of attributes, these barriers should be taken into account. With this in mind, respondents were asked:

'First, please try to think about the three most important features or attributes that an item of ethical and eco clothing should ideally possess. Choose those attributes that have convinced you to buy ethical and eco clothing in the past or which could convince you to buy it in the future.' This procedure helped elicit a wide range of consumer preferences in relation to ethical and eco clothing.

At the next step, respondents used a large open text box to answer why the first attribute they had just identified was important to them. In subsequent steps, respondents explained why what they indicated in the previous boxes was *in turn* important to them. Participants could maximally fill in five text boxes per ladder. After completion of the first ladder, the process was repeated for the second and third attribute. If participants wanted help to answer the laddering question, they could tick a dedicated help button, which provided an additional question based on probing techniques for soft laddering interviews (Reynolds & Gutman 1988) with the aim of helping structure respondent thoughts, e.g., postulation of absence of the attribute "*what would happen if the product did not possess the attribute?*"; evoking the situational context "Can you think of a specific situation in relation to your previous statement?"; third person probing "*It might help to picture others in your situation and why it might matter to them*".

The sampling was handled by a UK research agency by sending out invitations to randomly chosen members of their large and demographically diverse existing panel of potential respondents, rewarded by small, non-monetary incentives. Panel maintenance involves routine membership, fraud and data quality screening to ensure valid and unique responses. Grunert and Grunert (1995) argue that for the success of a hard laddering approach the mean respondent involvement with the product category should not be too

low (as cognitive structures would be too weak) or too high (as cognitive structures would be too complex for a hard laddering approach). Therefore, screening questions ensured only consumers reporting at least one relevant ethical clothing acquisition behaviour could take the survey (i.e., bought eco clothing or fairly traded clothing, engaged in recycled clothing acquisition or boycotted unethical clothing retailers and brands). Equally, the screening requirements were low enough to ensure the sample covered a range of respondent involvement with ethical clothing acquisition and fashion. The Zaichkowsky (1994) measure of product involvement provided a check on respondent involvement.

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

		Total = 98 respondents				
Gender	Male	27%	Ethical Clothing Acquisition Behaviour	Bought eco clothing	70%	
	Female	71%		Bought fairly traded clothing	50%	
Age	20-24	3%		Bought from ethical company or boycotted unethical companies	42%	
	25-34	20%		Engaged in recycled clothing acquisition	57%	
	35-44	29%				
	45-54	16%				
	55-64	23%				
	65 and above	7%				
Employment status	Full-time	52%		Income	Up to 10,000	20%
	Part-time	14%			10,001-20,000	28%
	Retired	19%	20,001-30,000		22%	
	Unemployed	10%	30,000-40,000		13%	
	Other (caring, etc.)	5%	Above 40,000		16%	
Education	Secondary school	20%	College	47%		
	Further education	16%	Postgraduate	15%		

Respondents were predominantly female, and 90% were between 25 and 65 years of age (see Table 1)..Further, 48% of the sample report incomes at or below £20,000. As the average UK wage is circa £25,900 (Office for National Statistics 2010), this is not completely consistent to Mintel (2009) findings that potential buyers of ethical clothing

come from upper socio-economic groups. One possible explanation is that participants in this study actually *bought*, whereas Mintel focuses on *potential* buyers. Furthermore, the proportions of female, retired and part-time workers in this study come from sectors with lower than average wages (ONS 2010) and Mintel's (2009) research focus does not include boycotting or recycled clothing acquisition. Age-wise, Mintel (2009) describe a similar skew to this study.

As an indicator of the sample suitability for the hard laddering approach (Grunert & Grunert 1995), involvement with the product category (Zaichkowsky 1994) provided a satisfactory level (mean = 4.9 scale 1-7). Therefore, it can be assumed that for the majority of respondents the effectiveness of a hard-laddering approach was not negatively influenced by the lack or complexity of cognitive structures (Grunert & Grunert 1995). The sample size derived from the intention to reach full theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation in this context means that no new relevant category emerges from further analysis, that categories are well-developed and links between categories well-established. Most hard laddering operate with sample sizes of about 50. In the present study, the larger sample size ensured that categories were well-developed even at value-level and allowed us to gain insights into the relative importance of different constructs and the links between concepts in order to detect dominant perceptual patterns.

Analysis

The analysis of the laddering data comprised three main steps, following the guidelines as set out by Reynolds and Gutman (1988), Gengler and Reynolds (1995) and Grunert et al. (2001). First, for each respondent responses were grouped into 'chunks' of meaning (Gengler & Reynolds 1995) to specify the elements of means-end chain for each respondent. This way, individual ladders, consisting of attributes, consequences and values, were constructed separately for each respondent (Reynolds & Gutman 1988).

We then developed meaningful categories based on phrases and key words based on comprehensive lists of clothing attributes and personal values (Schwartz 1992). Where applicable, we defined categories in line with existing concepts from the literature. The coding procedure was iterative and labour-intensive, including splitting, combining and redefining categories in line with content analysis techniques. We reduced the number of concepts until we reached a manageable number of 50 (Gengler & Reynolds 1995) (see Tables 2-4).

Initially carried out by a single researcher, a second researcher with expertise in ethical consumer research, and a third researcher with laddering expertise carried out a cross-check whether the categories were clear and distinguishable, and theoretically consistent (Grunert & Grunert 1995). Some categories were re-shaped after these reviews. The resulting data were then entered into the software LADDERMAP (Gengler & Reynolds 1993). LADDERMAP assists construction of an implications matrix displaying how often an element leads to each other element in the laddering data directly and indirectly (Gutman & Reynolds 1988). The implications matrix bridges the qualitative and quantitative elements of the laddering technique, allows examination of the different types of relationships and determination of the dominant paths likely to appear in an aggregate map (Reynolds & Gutman 1988). This aggregate map, the hierarchical value map, displays dominant perceptual patterns (Reynolds & Gutman 1998), the size of nodes and thickness of lines represents the number within the laddering data. Since the HVM must be interpretable to allow managerial implications (Gengler & Reynolds 1995) only linkages mentioned by a certain amount of respondents are graphically represented. Three different cut off points were tried and compared to identify the most meaningful and interpretable map (Christensen & Olson 2002) given the Gengler and Reynolds (1995) recommendations that never less than 70 percent of the direct linkages are represented.

We chose a cut-off level of 4, as the resulting map keeps the balance between data reduction and retention (Gengler, Klenosky & Mulvey 1995) (see Figure 1).

Results and discussion

Using the 98 interviews, we identify 11 attributes, 12 consequences and 8 values to appear on the HVM (see figure 1). The attributes level at the base of the HVM (unshaded circles) forms the product preferences of buyers of ethical clothing. These include both generic product attributes (such as price, quality, style and comfort) and attributes that relate to the ethical character of the product such as recycled and natural materials, environmentally friendly production techniques and fair working conditions and wages for the workers.

The breadth of attributes may be attributable to the sample composition, respondents reported a wide spread of involvement with ethical clothing issues. However, the range also supports other research showing consumers who buy ethical clothing often base their choice not solely on product or ethical attributes, but on a combination of both. (e.g., Dickson & Littrell 1996, Joergens 2006, Iwanow et al. 2005, Niikimäki 2010), and the pronounced role of product performance is in line with Niinimäki's (2010) observation that ethical consumers want clothing to be durable.

On the next step of the ladder, the consequence-level (light shading), the 14 categories reveal a wide range of perceived consumption benefits and risk. This sample of consumers want to 'support the environment' and 'promote better living conditions' for workers by buying ethical products. This has also psychological consequences for consumers, as they enact their responsibility by helping the environment, and try to avoid the risk of responsibility for others suffering due to their choice in clothing ('avoid exploitation').

Table 2: Table of all attributes

Name of Attribute	Number of times mentioned	Characteristics
Natural materials	37	Ethical clothing should be made from natural materials such as organic cotton and bamboo and not be synthetic.
Product performance	34	Consumers want their clothing to be fit for purpose, hard-wearing and durable.
Fair wages	33	Consumers want to ensure fair payment of factory workers and raw material suppliers when buying ethical clothing.
Environmentally friendly production techniques	32	Ethical clothing should be produced with a minimum effect on the environment (no gases, low carbon footprint) and animals
Comfort and fit	31	Ethical clothing should be soft, comfortable and provide a good fit.
Style	30	Consumers look for design and style in ethical clothing.
Quality	29	Ethical clothing should provide high quality in materials and stitching
Fair working conditions	27	Ethical clothing should be made under safe and healthy working conditions, without child labour or sweatshops.
Price	26	Ethical clothing should be fairly priced and be affordable for consumers.
Recycled	15	Consumers seek clothing which is recycled or re-used, and which is recyclable.
Local sourcing	14	Consumers avoid certain countries of origin and prefer local production of ethical clothing.
Brand	10	Consumers look for trusted brands as to ensure they buy ethical.
Information	9	Consumers want to information on labels to ensure that clothing is really ethical.
Sustainable	9	Ethical clothing should be made ensuring a long-term benefit for environment and local workers, as by using renewable resources.
Choice and availability	4	Consumers look for a wide range of ethical clothing to choose from.
Clean	4	Ethical clothing should be in a good and clean condition, even if it is recycled.

Table 3: Table of all consequences

Name of Consequence	Number of times mentioned	Characteristics
Support the environment	52	Consumer want to help the environment and reduce their own and their products' negative impact.
Avoid exploitation	38	Consumers don't want to be involved in exploiting others and avoid unethical companies.
Feel of wearing	37	Consumers want a comfortable feel when wearing ethical clothing and want to avoid sweating.
Look good	32	Consumers want to look good, smart, fashionable, and feel dressed properly.
Stay in budget	31	Consumers can afford ethical clothing, stay within their budget and save money for other things.
Assume responsibility	28	Consumers feel they have a responsibility and ethical obligation to contribute and 'do their bit'.
Value for money	24	Consumers feel they get good use of the money they invest in ethical clothing.
Produce less waste	22	Consumers can reduce and avoid waste.
Promote better living conditions	21	Consumers want to have a positive impact on other peoples' lives by buying ethical clothing.
Reduce buying	20	Consumers want their clothing to last so they need to replace them less often.
Promote health	9	Consumers want to sustain their health, avoid skin irritations or allergies.
Act as an ambassador	9	Consumers act as an ambassador of ecological and social issues in their social environment.
Avoid feelings of guilt	8	Consumers would feel guilty if they did not buy ethical clothing, and want to avoid the feeling of guilt.
Ensure paying for a right cause	6	Consumers want to feel sure that they are truly paying for a right cause.
Recycle and re-use	5	Consumers want to recycle and re-use clothing themselves, and want to re-sell and donate it.
Fight unethical companies	5	Consumers take action against companies that engage in unethical clothing production and trade.
Promote local economy	5	Consumers aim to assist workers, shops and companies in their communities and in the UK
Animal welfare	4	Consumers want to help animals and wildlife.
Convenience	3	Consumers can save time and avoid stress related to the maintenance of ethical clothing.

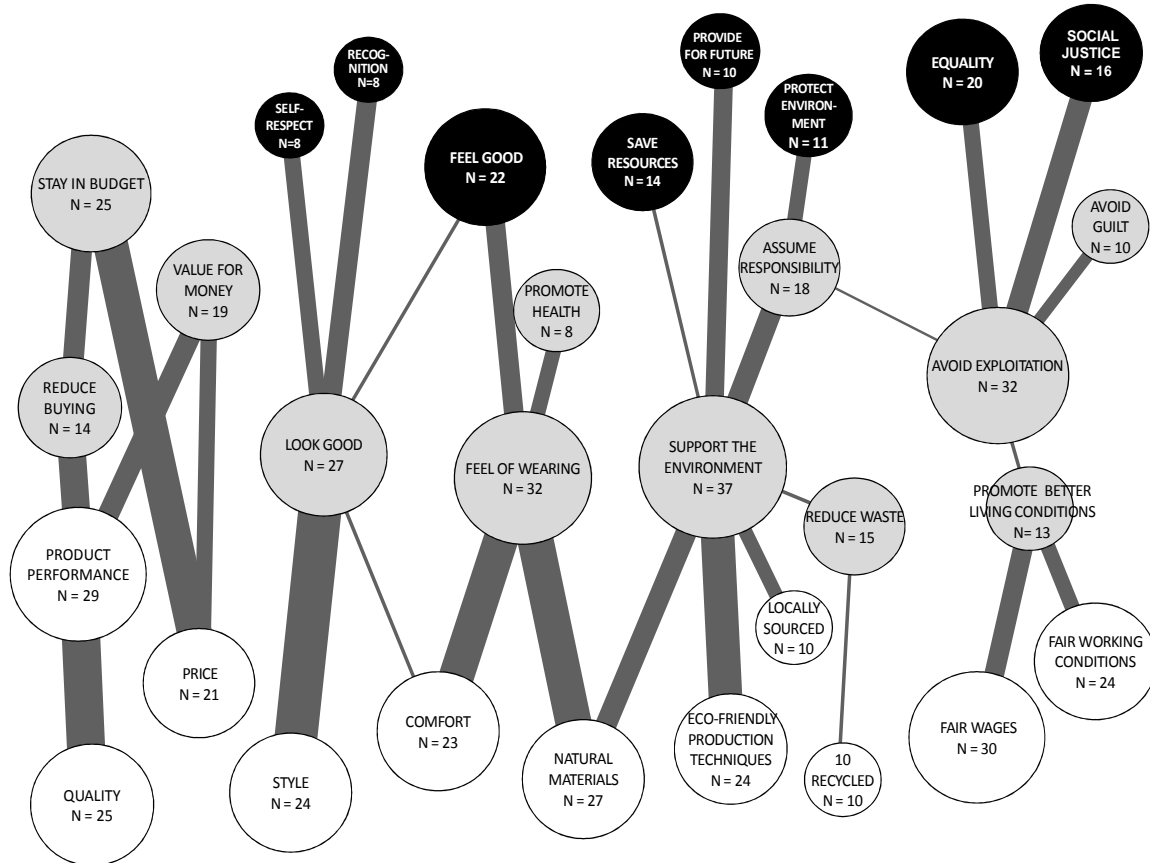
Table 4: Table of all values

Name of Value	Number of times mentioned	Characteristics
Feel good	26	Consumers seek personal and emotional well-being.
Equality	23	Consumers believe that everyone deserves equal treatment and opportunity.
Social justice	19	Consumers care for the weak and wish more caring and sharing of wealth in society.
Save resources and prevent pollution	15	Consumers strive for saving the world's scarce resources and prevent it from being polluted.
Provide for future generations	13	Consumers want to sustain the environment for generations to come.
Protect the environment	12	Consumers feel strongly about preserving nature.
Self-respect	11	Consumers want to believe in their own worth, be self-confident and act self-congruent.
Social recognition	9	Consumers want respect from others and are concerned about the image they project to them.
Security	8	Consumers seek safety and security for themselves and their families.
Influence	6	Consumers want to have an impact on their immediate environment.
Benevolence	4	Consumers strongly feel about helping people in their closer environment.
Health	4	Consumers ultimately seek to live a healthy live.
Uniqueness	4	Consumers want to feel individual and one of a kind.
Unity with nature	2	Consumers want to live in harmony with nature and animals.

This supports Shaw et al.'s (2006) notion of an ethical obligation that drives these consumers. At the same time, the presence of constructs such as 'look good', 'stay within budget' and 'feel of wearing' on the HVM shows that consumers still search for individual benefit and take into account personal and financial needs in ethical clothing consumption. On value-level of the means-end chains (darker shading), consumers engaging in ethical and eco clothing identify 8 different values, demonstrating the pivotal importance and complexity of personal values as drivers of ethical clothing consumption. Three different

values directly centre on saving the environment, and can therefore be classified as biospheric.

Figure 1: Hierarchical Value Map for ethical clothing consumption.



Altruism also drives ethical clothing consumption, as the concepts of ‘social justice’ and ‘equality’ demonstrate, although egoistic motives are also apparent (‘social recognition’ and ‘self-respect’). This supports Kim and Damhorst’s (1998) claim that self-expression and group conformity must not be neglected in explaining ethical clothing consumption. The importance of accounting for individual desires and needs in ethical and eco clothing is also reflected by consumers’ drive for emotional well-being (‘feel good’).

The relationships between constructs and their strengths allow for a discussion of how the revealed values impact on product preferences in ethical clothing. By focusing on the

strong links between attributes, consequences and values, five dominant perceptual patterns can be revealed (see figure 2).

Dominant patterns

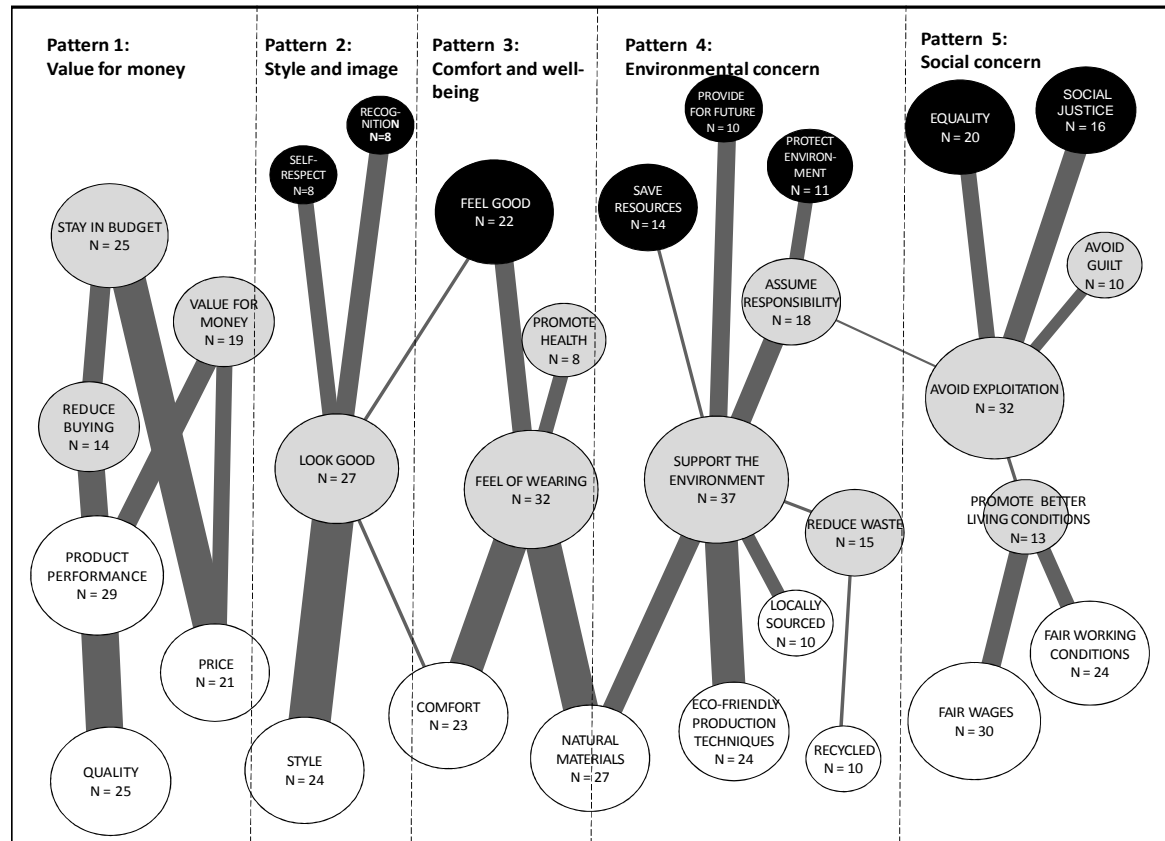
(1) In the first perceptual pattern, 'Quality' emerges as intrinsically linked to aspects of product performance. Respondents infer durability and maintaining shape from their general requirement of quality for two main reasons: First, durable and well-performing clothing reduce the need to replace clothing quickly. This respondents link these attributes to saving money and staying within a limited clothing budget. Second, consumers want to get value for money. Consistently, 'price' equally strongly links to budgetary considerations and to 'value for money'. This perceptual pattern is clearly driven by individual, and more specifically, financial benefits and utilitarian value.

(2) For the attribute 'style', buyers of ethical and eco fashion follow a relatively straightforward perceptual pattern. They have a preference for style and design because they want to 'look good', which ultimately helps conveying a desired image to others ('social recognition'). Similarly, the benefit of looking good helps ethical consumers to create a better self-image and feel more confident ('self respect'). Ultimately, consumers following this pattern use ethical clothing to convey a certain image to others and to express their self-identity, concurring with similar comments from Niinimäki (2010).

(3) The concepts of 'comfort and fit' and of 'natural materials' are both strongly linked to the consequence of 'feel of wearing'. Consumers seek to feel comfortable in their clothes. For some respondents the feel of wearing of eco materials is also related to health issues ('promote health'). This pattern supports Lin's suggestion (2009), that a segment of consumers buying in this clothing sector is driven by need rather than want, as clothing choice is motivated by their personal health. Yet for the majority of respondents following

this perceptual pattern, emphasis on comfort, fit and natural materials is driven by a desire for well-being and ‘feeling good’.

Figure 2: Dominant patterns in the HVM



(4) The fourth dominant pattern centres on consumers’ environmental concern. It is characterized by richness of concepts on attribute and value level. Here ‘recycled’ and its consequence to reduce waste appear, highlighting the interrelatedness of clothing acquisition and disposal. Besides eco-friendly materials and modes of production, consumers following this pattern also care for the geographic origin of their clothing, this supports the findings of Niinimäki (2010). The biospheric values associated with this pattern also vary in nature. Buyers of eco clothing wishing to ‘protect the environment’, have a very active focus that is further highlighted by its link to ‘assuming responsibility’. Consumers who feel responsible are more likely to take pro-environmental action. The construct ‘provide for future generations’ (Bagozzi & Dabholkar 1994) represents an

environment-related value with a more anthropocentric focus. In this case, consumers' preference for environmental attributes is ultimately motivated by concern about humankind. However rich on attribute and value level, the pattern is still unified by a single and very pronounced mediating benefit: Consumers want to 'support the environment' and reduce their own personal negative impact on it.

(5) The fifth distinguishable perceptual pattern centres on aspects of consumers' social concern. By stressing fair wages and working conditions, respondents aim to help provide better living conditions for other people (Dickson 2000). Nevertheless, 'avoid exploitation' is a more important motivating construct containing a societal and a psychological component. By avoiding involvement in exploitation of others, buyers of ethical clothing seek to avoid feelings of guilt, but more importantly consumers want to live up to their altruistic values of 'equality' and 'social justice'. In sum, this perceptual pattern concerns preferences ultimately rooted in enduring beliefs about equal opportunities and helping others.

It is noteworthy that these patterns are all of similar relevance in the HVM. Even though the environmentally centred pattern is the richest in numbers of concepts, it does not appear as a 'main' motivation in the HVM, this may be attributable to the sample composition with its wide spread of involvement with ethical clothing.

Motivational incongruencies and value trade-offs

Looking at the dominant perceptual patterns and their relation to one another, there are two striking details: First, according to the Schwartz (1992) framework, patterns are rooted in supposedly opposing value orientations (egoistic vs. biospheric and altruistic). The end-states that consumers want to attain by buying ethical clothing are potentially conflicting.

Second, there are few strong links between these patterns with the exception of natural materials being solidly linked both to the ‘comfort and well-being’ as the ‘environmental concern’ pattern. This means, that if consumers have to compromise on product features, they equally have to compromise on their opposing personal end-goals.

Grunert and Grunert (1995) describe both a motivational and structural view of the means-end approach from which meaning can be derived. From a motivational viewpoint, the distinct means-end chains help illuminate consumers’ buying motives, from a cognitive structure view, they model consumption relevant cognitive structures (Reynolds & Gutman 1988). Structurally, what is striking is the relative lack of links between patterns 1 and 5 with patterns 2, 3 and 4. Pattern 1 does not reach the value level, suggesting it is principally a utilitarian preference, whilst patterns 4 and 5 link back to principally moral values. Whilst it is true that the lack of links is a feature of the cut-off point used and some respondents may have expressed linkages, the numbers were so small (less than 4 of 98 respondents) that they did not appear. The lack of linkages suggests that pattern 1 is revealing a potential non-compensatory preference structure, that is, this preference must be first fulfilled before others (Edwards 1986). Non-compensatory processes are widespread especially when combining information from different domains. Etzioni (1986) argues that the qualitative differences between moral and utilitarian preferences may imply they cannot be traded off or substituted for each other. Thus, for some segments of customers, price can act as a decision heuristic, whose level (and indeed presence) may vary with changes in market characteristics. Thus, we can explain why price is dominant for some consumers, if the price is too high, other preferences will have minimal effect. Conversely, for other consumers, strongly held moral values mean some products will not be bought, no matter how cheap.

For patterns 2-5, through a combination of the structural and motivational aspects, we can conceive two configurations at work, one that seeks to satisfy values connected to the use of the clothing, which also seems to have links to the ego values, and another where the attraction of ethical clothing links back to environmental and altruistic values. This supposition is supported by Dickson and Littrell (1996) who also distinguished dual pathways leading to purchase, one attitude towards the behaviour of purchasing ethical clothing and the other attitude towards the clothing itself. Thus, for many consumers both a wider ethical attitude and narrower product attributes contribute to purchasing behaviour, a finding supported by the separation of the dominant pathways in the HVM. These distinctions and finding the dominant paths used by groups of consumers could greatly assist marketers enhance their targeting efforts.

We took this insight as a starting point for closer analysis of the laddering data to look for explicit consumer statements expressing such complexities, as these could not be captured during the coding procedure for constructing the HVM.

Indeed, we found evidence that requirements for ‘value for money’ and ‘style and image’ on the one hand interfered with consumers’ environmental and social concern (see table 5 for sample quotes). Their financial limitations lead consumers to prioritize price, even though they want to ensure fair wages and (expensive) natural materials in order to live up to their altruistic and biospheric values. Furthermore, ethical clothing that is congruent with consumers’ biospheric and altruistic values does not always fit with their style preferences that they need in their striving for (self-) respect.

The ethical clothing consumer in result encounters complexities and needs to compromise (Szmigin, Carrigan & McEachern 2009), as s/he has to prioritize between self-enhancing and self-transcendent values. This results in ‘value trade-offs’ (Padel &

Foster 2005) that consumers need to make when buying ethical clothing (Dickson & Littrell 1996).

Both these dimensions can be found within the HVM, as consumers not only have to balance between egoistic ('self-respect' and 'social recognition') and altruistic values, but also between presence ('feel good') and future ('provide for future generations'). The notion of 'balance' was explicitly addressed by some respondents. Respondents describe prioritising between competing motivations (see table 5):

Table 5: Sample quotes expressing complexities and paradoxes

	Price/value for money	Style and image
Environmental concern	<p>It is important to me as a person to try and save money but also spend it on eco clothing.</p> <p>If the product is not able to wear well then I would be forced to consider a less ecologically sound product due to financial necessities</p>	<p>I want to reuse old clothes but want myself and my children to look nice.</p> <p>Ethical / eco issues are important to me, but if the only choice is to look like a mad aura-therapist from darkest Glastonbury in acres of tie-dyed trailly purple cotton, I'd rather find other ways than clothing to be a responsible human being</p>
Social concern	<p>On the one hand my choice has to be cheap. On the other hand if clothes are cheap they may result from unfair trade.</p> <p>We are living in difficult economic times and it is a balance of doing good for the planet, others in countries where they depend on production of these goods and being able to afford to buy 'luxury items' – it is sometimes cheaper to buy for example, second hand, which doesn't produce much money for those in need in developing countries, but does its bit for the planet."</p>	<p>I don't want to look bad but I don't want others to suffer so I look better.</p> <p>Good styles so that it does not give a fuddy, duddy impression and so that I look good important because I want to support fair trade <i>and</i> look good</p>
	Need for balance	Willingness to pay
Concern for effects on close family	<p>I have to put the needs of my family before the needs of the rest of society. The problem is that the one affects the other and I have to be continually careful</p>	<p>I can afford to pay a little extra to support this issue, I cannot afford to erode the lifestyle of my whole family to the extent that they would resent these values.</p>

to maintain a balance.

I live on a budget but still care about the world. Therefore I need to find a way of maintaining a workable balance.

I need to be a realist - there is no point buying an ethically traded pair of jeans if it means that I can't put food on the table for my family or pay the bills

Implications for theory and practice

Our laddering data results represented in the HVM contribute towards the body of knowledge by firstly reconciling the findings from other studies expounding a hierarchical system of effects (e.g., Dickson & Littrell 1996) with those considering the complexity of cognitive schema regarding ethical decisions (e.g., Whalen, Pitts & Wong 1991) and those discussing consumer trade-offs (e.g., Dickson & Littrell, 1966; Auger, Burke, Devinney & Louviere, 2003). Secondly, the data augment previous findings as meaning can be derived by examining data from both the motivational and structural viewpoint (Grunert & Grunert 1995). Through examining the HVM alongside individual comments, researchers can better understand how specific attributes of products relate to the emotional and symbolic aspects and link back to consumer values. The study provides insight into how values in effect drive preference. By interpreting the links and their strength between concepts, we can identify clearly distinguishable motivational patterns centred on ethical concerns such as environmentalism or social consciousness but also rather egoistic ones relating to value for money, image or well-being. This helps to explain the complexities that consumers encounter in ethical consumption. It is also interesting that consumers place similar emphasis on environmental and social concern, confirming the image of an 'ethical' and not only 'green' consumer.

The study supports previous work on the width of consumer preferences, ranging from fair treatment of workers and an eco-friendly production mode to generic clothing requirements in terms of quality, price and style and wide range of values such as

biospheric, altruistic but also egoistic, impacting on ethical clothing preference. This is consistent with findings from laddering-studies in organic food (Baker et al. 2004; Padel & Foster 2005). This potential for trade-offs between competing values in both food and clothing sectors suggests consumer internal conflicts can be expected across product categories.

The notion of 'balancing' links to research on consumer strategies in dealing with the complexities of ethical consumption (e.g. Newholm 2005) and has analogies even outside of ethical consumer research, e.g., Mick and Fournier's (1999) balancing paradigm of consumer satisfaction. The respondent discourse about balancing and the distinct patterns in the HMV suggests that at present the "ethical" component of clothing is seen as distinct to the product attributes and price/quality attributes. However, the HMV can also be understood as a potential network of interrelated concepts. It may be possible to encourage ethical clothing purchasing if 'ethical' aspects can become an intrinsic aspect of the product, that are in balance with individual needs, style criteria, etc. Respondents wanted a modern look, yet requirements of durability and ethical sustainability would not fit with styles that go out of fashion quickly. Marketers have to address consumer complexities and can deliver value by offerings that help consumers 'balance' their individual needs and desires and their ethical concerns. Based on our findings, we therefore suggest an approach of 'slow fashion' (Fletcher 2007, Niinimäki 2010) that combines high quality materials with modern, yet timeless design. Critically, Fletcher (2007) describes slow fashion as about balance, that is, between "change and symbolic expression as well as durability" so that clothes support identity and communication needs as well as utilitarian needs. Slow fashion provides opportunities for mutually beneficial relationships and interactions between makers, designers, buyers, retailers and consumers in the production, design and use of the garment. Consumers want a 'win-win' situation, in which all parties involved in

and affected by the purchase profit, this includes the consumer getting good value for money. Especially in economically turbulent times, this approach creates promising marketing opportunities (Carrigan & de Pelsmacker 2009).

Conceptually and methodologically, the application of a means-end approach indeed allows for capturing the whole range of relevant personal values and establishing clear and interpretable links between constructs at different levels of abstraction. It thereby proves a valuable approach in researching values in ethical consumption. This study represents the first means-end approach applied within the area of ethical clothing, and uses a significantly larger sample size than most laddering approaches within the area of ethical consumption research.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The study was mainly exploratory in nature; results remain tentative and require further substantiation. By using an existing representative panel and screening questions, we did our best to ensure a high sample quality of consumers engaging in ethical clothing consumption. Yet the socio-demographic profile of the sample still differs somewhat from Mintel's (2009) description of (potential) buyers of ethical clothing. Although a help function included probes to assist respondents reach their value level, the missing flexibility of soft laddering individual probing (Reynolds & Gutman 1988) resulted in a lack of contextual cues to help code some borderline cases (Grunert et al. 2001). Furthermore, some of the detailed richness of the data cannot be displayed in the HVM (Velodu-de-Oliveira et al. 2006). We partly addressed this issue, by looking closer into the data for reported complexities, yet had to neglect reporting here some potentially interesting phenomena due to their rarity within the data. So analysing the laddering data

and constructing the HVM became a ‘balancing’ task itself (Gengler et al. 1995). Nevertheless, these remain as signposts for future research.

One major limitation lies in drawing conclusions to the single consumer based on the HVM, which represents an aggregated cognitive map of a relatively, but not completely homogeneous consumer group. We can neither assume that all motivational patterns are relevant for all consumers nor that it is only one pattern per consumer. Indeed, our data suggest there are often conflicting multiple patterns for individuals. Further insight can therefore be gained by combining laddering data with a segmentation approach (see Botschen et al. 1999) to assess whether there are clearly distinguishable ethical consumer types. This way, we could add to what is already known about how consumers deal with competing values, and marketers could use this insight to refine their targeting efforts. There is already some evidence of that distinct groups of ethical clothing purchasers and users exist (Auger et al (2003), Dickson (2005), Dickson & Littrell (1996), and a tentative analysis that we conducted with this dataset proved useful insight, but lies beyond the scope of this paper and needs further substantiation with a larger sample size.

Similar to laddering studies within organic food (Baker et al. 2004; Padel & Foster 2005) means-end approaches can be used further within the area of ethical clothing to provide more detailed insight. This could be done by comparing different consumer groups such as buyers and non-buyers of ethical clothing, different product categories (e.g. organic vs. fairly traded clothing) or adding an intercultural component. Means-end approaches can also be applied to yet other ethical product categories in which consumers pursue supposedly mixed values.

Based on our findings we suggest an approach to researching ethical consumption that does not pre-determine sets of values from the outset. Combining Schwartz’s (1992) value framework with qualitative research techniques proves to provide rich insights (e.g. Shaw

et al. 2005). Personal values can rather be used to help explain consumer ambivalence and complexities in choice when it comes to ethical products. In sum, opportunities lie ahead not only rethinking the areas with which to do ethical consumer research, but also in the way to approach these.

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