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# Valuing Green

*A Qualitative Study on the Priorities of Values, Personal Norms and  
Identity for Green Consumer Products*

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## | Abstract |

<b>Title:</b>	<i>Valuing Green: A Qualitative Study on the Priorities of Values, Personal Norms and Identity for Green Consumer Products</i>
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<b>Key words:</b>	Green consumers, values, personal norms, identity, buying motives
<b>Thesis purpose:</b>	To examine how consumers prioritise values, personal norms and identity for green consumer products.
<b>Methodology:</b>	The thesis has an interpretivist view of the world, in the sense that focus is on <i>understanding</i> the constituents and motives for green consumer behaviours. However, the researchers employ a critical approach which allows for a deeper analysis of the subject matter as it is dynamic and complex in nature.
<b>Theoretical perspective:</b>	One bipolar motivational dimension of Schwartz's Value Inventory served as the theoretical foundation of the thesis, namely the Self-Transcendence versus Self-Enhancement dimension. In addition, pertinent notions on identity and personal norms were supplemented in order to reach fuller understanding on the various factors that affect green consumer motives and behaviour.
<b>Empirical data:</b>	The production of knowledge has been regarded as an iterative approach in which inductive and deductive theoretical approaches are merged. Primary data was produced through thirteen in-depth interviews with Danish consumers.
<b>Conclusion:</b>	The conceptual model created on the basis on the theoretical concepts and empirical findings, shows how consumers prioritise between several values when assessing green products. The prioritisation is dependent on internalised values as well as the product function and the need that the consumer seeks fulfilled. The influence of norms appeared to be stronger for products that serve a utilitarian function, whereas identity is more important when the consumer is motivated by the self-expressive benefits of green products.

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**“Every time you spend money,  
you’re casting a vote for the kind of world you want”**

*Anna Lappe*

*Bestselling American Author and founder of Small Planet Institute*

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# | 1. Introduction |

*This study sheds light on the green consumer phenomenon through a critical inquiry into the deeper motives for engaging in green consumption. Values have been assessed as representing one of the deepest generators of consumer motives, thus they served the point of departure for scrutinizing how green consumers are motivated and subsequently prioritise when buying green Fast Moving Consumer Goods. As opposed to the majority of extant literature on green consumer behaviour, findings in this study indicate that consumers adhere to green products due to a desire to comply with the need for contributing to a safer, more harmonious environment but also due to self-centred motives in order to promote individual gratification and status.*

## 1.1. Background

Needless to say, the green consumer phenomenon has gained strong foothold in contemporary marketing disciplines. Initially perceived as representing rather eco-eccentric consumers, today's green consumer can be anyone from any background and ideological stance. In all probability, the majority of us know all too well the concern for the environment and the feeling of guilt that taps on our shoulder when we engage in behaviours, or buy certain products that go against ethical standards.

The increased focus on green products, particularly in western societies, is said to stem from a shift in era from post-modernism towards post-materialism (Kozinets, 2002; Dietz *et al.*, 2005). This new paradigm is characterised by an emphasis on non-monetary goals including self-expression and self-esteem, which is partly reflected in the increased emphasis on environmental protection and responsible consumer behaviour (Gardner & Stern 2002). Particularly Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) have been assessed as frequently used vehicles of communicating environmental concern (Solomon, 2003; Ghauri & Cateora, 2005). This can be explained by the low involvement they require, which implies that even less dedicated green consumers can express such a stance without having to engage in more demanding pro-environmental behaviours. FMCG in this light become the green statement of the commons.

Due to the wide and rather indefinable segment that green consumers represent, there has been observed an increased interest in understanding how green motives emerge and why some products appear to have higher priority than others. The green consumers represent a paradox as inconsistency in behaviours is the normality. Fragmented priorities and behaviours seem to represent the post-materialistic green consumer who wishes to comply with societal concern as well as express a responsible image, but who is not willing to transcend personal needs and desires (Nordlund & Garvill, 2002; Solomon, 2003; Dietz *et al.*, 2005). Hence, there seems to be a conflict between pro-environmental behaviour and personal interests. This phenomenon might be explained by the lack of clarity for the long-term pro-environmental benefits and the immediate personal benefits that can be gained for cheaper conventional products. This phenomenon has been coined 'the tragedy of the commons' (Karp, 1996), or 'social dilemma' (Thøgersen, 2007) as it refers to the negligence of collective benefits in favour of individual gains.

## 1.2. Previous Research

Literature scrutinizing the green consumer movement covers a variety of disciplines, and consequently determinants of the green consumer behaviour vary according to the scope of research. Thus, a complete overview of literature encompassing the green consumer is not feasible or desirable for this thesis. Rather, the aim for this section is to provide a brief overview of related issues and concepts to the chosen area of interest within green consumer literature.

Attempts to segment green consumers have been deemed insufficient due to the fragmented behaviours they represent (Peattie, 2001; Thøgersen, 2004). Therefore much research has turned focus on explaining the attitude-behaviour inconsistency by referring to rational cause-effect frameworks such as the Value-Attitude-Behaviour model (McCarty & Shrum, 1993) the S-O-R model (Hanson, 1980) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, Ajzen, 1985). These approaches suggest that green consumer behaviour can best be explained by investigating an individual's attitude towards the environment (Lee & Holden, 1999). However, prior research utilising this approach found that attitudes alone are a poor predictor of actual consumer behaviour (Lee & Holden, 1999, Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). Another line of research entails studies which have developed models of the determinants of green consumer behaviour. Theoretical frameworks used in this regard encompass e.g. norm-activation theory (Stern & Dietz, 1994) and cognitive dissonance theory (Thøgersen, 2004).

Motivational research has focused on the green phenomenon by viewing two opposing motives for engaging in, or rejecting, green behaviour; *altruistic* and *egoistic*, respectively (Bagozzi & Dabholkar, 1994; Lee & Holden 1999; Nordlund & Garvill, 2002; McBride & Seglow, 2003). The former refers to an unselfish position with the ultimate goal of another's welfare (Batson in Post et al., 2002). Such a motive has been regarded as the catalyst for green behaviour (Thøgersen & Ölander, 2003). In opposition, egoistic motives have generally been assessed as barriers for green behaviours as the consumer is not willing to transcend personal gains on in favour of the environment or others. Such a stance generally alienates the dynamism of green consumer motives, which are likely to reflect *both* altruistic and egoistic motives.

In line with the different motivational conflicts, arising from the fundamental incompatibility of environmental related goals and individual consumers' personal goals (Moisander, 2007); several researchers have also attempted to explain perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) as a main motivational determinant of green consumer behaviour (Scholder, Wiener & Cobb-Wahlgren, 1991; Berger & Corbin, 1992, Lee & Holden, 1999, Straughan & Roberts, 1999). Researchers advocating for this explanation postulate that individuals often find themselves in a dilemma of choosing between green or non-green products, and this choice is dependent on the individual's perception of being able to make a difference for the environment.

Many researchers have embraced the value concept in order to provide explanations on the complexity of green consumers (Furst *et al.*, 1996; Karp, 1996; Nordlund & Garvill, 2002; Dietz *et al.*, 2005; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). The significance of values in predicting consumer behaviour is infinite. Such an approach can be justified by the postulation that all humans possess the same values, only distinguished by the priorities they allocate these (Rokeach, 1973). Thus, values can be applied to research attempting to encompass the fragmentation that represents contemporary consumer society. Values are regarded as transcending specific situations (Rokeach, 1973, Solomon *et al.*, 2006) and are thus applicable for investigating consumer motives on a more generic level.

Moreover, values reside at a deep and internalised level of the individual and are therefore one of the stronger predictors of consumer motives and subsequent behaviours.

Research that attempts to shed light on pro-environmental motives through the construct of values often refer to the pioneering research that is offered by Rokeach's Value Survey (1973), Schwartz and Bilsky's Scales of Values (1987) as well as Schwartz's (1992) Value Inventory (SVI) (Karp, 1996; Nordlund & Garvill, 2002; Dietz *et al.*, 2005). These theories stem from a similar perspective, which regards values as being universal constructs that are inherent and identical for all humans. Merely the salience and priorities of these values differentiate between cultures as well as individuals. Thus, the above value research present frameworks that are said to represent *all* values and as such they have been deemed efficient for assessing the various values that consumers hold towards green products and behaviours.

The SVI has been used to various degrees in research on green behaviour. Despite covering the full scale of values, not all studies on green behaviours have included both motivational dimensions when assessing the motives behind green behaviour. In general, research points towards the 'Self-Transcendent' value orientation as being the most considerable generator of green behaviour (Karp, 1996; Nordlund and Garvill, 2002; Dietz *et al.*, 2005). In some research, 'Self-Enhancement' has been investigated with a critical approach by regarding it as a barrier for green behaviour because it centres on self-centred motives (Schwartz, 1992; Karp, 1996; Thøgersen & Ölander, 2003). Hitherto, merely a small number of studies have focused on the egoistic or Self-Enhancement motives to explain green consumer behaviour (Fraj & Martinez, 2006).

Sociological researchers have also attempted to explain green consumer behaviour by means of identity development and group communications between members (Haanpää, 2007). In this regard green consumer behaviour is considered as an area, in which one could expect identity to play an important role. Boyatzis & Akrivou (2006) put forward ideal identity as an explanation of intentional change, which guides and directs behaviour in a way that ensures self-satisfaction in the goal towards a desired state of being. Compared to green behaviour, ideal identity has been used as a means to explain the willingness to engage in green consumer behaviour.

Studies on Danish consumers' green behaviour has been dominated by Thøgersen's research on explaining green behaviours among Danes in different situations. His research includes among others; understanding morality in recycling behaviour (Thøgersen, 1994, 1996), examining the individuals' propensity to engage in environmentally friendly behaviour in various domains (Thøgersen & Ölander, 2003), cognitive dissonance (Thøgersen, 2004) as well as norm activation in social dilemmas (Biel & Thøgersen, 2007). Other studies on Danish consumers have focused on values in the purchasing of organic foods (Grunert, 1993; Grunert & Juhl, 1995) and concluded that the more universal values held the more likely consumers were to purchase organic food.

### **1.3. Problem Discussion**

Traditional perspectives on consumer buying behaviour have viewed consumer motives as deriving from a rational process, in which the consumer follows somewhat predictable cause-effect patterns prior to decision making (Solomon, 2003). However, there are strong indications that green consumers follow more complex structures as emotions are the catalysts for green motives. As such,

there is a call for new approaches in order to advance a fuller understanding of the complex green consumers.

Previous research conducted on the catalysts of green consumers has confirmed that values, personal norms and identity remain considerable factors in green behaviour. However, an increased understanding on how consumers are affected by these factors and moreover *how* they prioritise on the basis of these has been called for. Moreover, it is advantageous to enter a deeper level of the green consumer's mind and scrutinize the underlying causes for green motives, namely *why* they exist (Solomon *et al.*, 2006). In addition, there has been identified a greater need for a more thorough understanding of the causes and nature of social norms, values and dynamics in social groups (Nordlund and Garvill, 2002). As Wittgenstein (1967) wisely stated;

“There is a gulf between an order and its execution. It has to be filled by *the act of understanding*”  
[italics added]

Schwartz's Value Inventory (SVI) represents a wide-encompassing framework for a fuller understanding of the various constituents of values. Studies on values and green behaviour have oftentimes been deduced with this framework as a focal point. Such studies have often led to conclusions on various altruistic motives and behaviours based on the assumption that green behaviour primarily occurs as a consequence of genuine interest in environmental and animal welfare. Values in consumer behaviour have been referred to as multiple and interchangeable dependent on the complexity of the situation. In this regard Furst *et al.* (1996) argue that most product choices involve decisions that encompass value negotiations. However, they note that there is a need for developing a hierarchical structuring of values from an individual perspective in order to determine how values are prioritised in specific situations. Grunert & Juhl (1995) furthermore advocate that Schwartz's Value Inventory needs further examination in relation to the importance of specific values in green consumer behaviour, as green products are evidently influenced by certain values but *not* all. Additionally, they propose for research on Danish consumers focusing on the priorities of values as well as other aspects of consumer behaviour (Grunert & Juhl, 1995).

Another aspect of consumer behaviour which is perceived pertinent to explore is the notion of self-expressive motives for engaging in green consumer behaviour. Nowhere in extant literature has green behaviour been treated with main emphasis on the self-expressive perspectives of the phenomenon. Due to the post-materialistic values and current tendencies for expressing self-identity through products and brands, it can be postulated that there is bound to exist some more self-centred motives behind green behaviour than purely altruistic. Batson (in Post *et al.*, 2002) supports this notion by arguing that in Western society, the most common motive for benefiting others is ultimate for self-beneficial reasons. He states:

“Everything we do, no matter how noble and seemingly self-sacrificial, is really directed toward the ultimate goal of self-benefit.”

Consequently, this discussion regarding which motives tend to be predominant in green consumer behaviour has become pertinent in relation to the development of the research purpose.

A somewhat related issue is social approval, which can be understood in terms of the motive for developing attitudes, intentions and/or behaviours that are perceived to be of importance to pleasing others (Johar & Sirgy, 1991). However, social approval can also be viewed upon as an intrinsic need for self-realisation. In relation to green consumer behaviour and individuals' needs for social

acceptance only little empirical research has been set forth. However, there seems to be growing empirical evidence to support the inclusion of identity and norms in consumer behaviour (Bamberg & Möser, 2007).

### **1.3.1. Research Purpose**

Despite the extensive studies within the area, it is pertinent that there is a lack of knowledge in the understanding of motives underpinning green consumer behaviour combined with a need for a deeper understanding of the individual and social factors that influence these. Hence, the aim of this thesis is to contribute to a further understanding of the complexity in green consumer behaviour by examining *how* and *why* individuals prioritise values, personal norms and identity in green consumer behaviour.

The study ceases by introducing a conceptual model encompassing the above factors. The purpose of developing a conceptual model has been to provide a perspective that facilitates a discussion regarding how individuals' prioritise choices in green consumer behaviour. In order to advance an understanding as well as pertinent contribution on green consumer motives, this thesis is centred on elucidating the following research formulation:

- *How do consumers prioritise values, personal norms and identity for Green Fast Moving Consumer Goods?*

## **1.4. Choice of Theories**

The theories embracing the theoretical framework were carefully chosen after a comprehensive examination of literature within the field of consumer behaviour and more specifically, green consumer behaviour.

In this study, the general value orientation was considered using Schwartz's (1992) Value Inventory (SVI) as a theoretical foundation due to its applicability and comparability with other research conducted on consumer values. The value types that encompass the SVI represent motivational values, in the sense that they are goal-oriented and therefore applicable to consumer research. The SVI is a wide-encompassing framework, which can be applied to a variety of research purposes. According to Schwartz (1992) values are arrayed along two dimensions: openness to change versus conservation and Self-Transcendence versus Self-Enhancement. For this study, the Self-Transcendence versus the Self-Enhancement dimension was used to describe individuals' motives for engaging in green consumer behaviour. Self-Transcendence is seen to serve collective interests, whereas Self-Enhancement serves individual interests (Nordlund & Garvill, 2002). This bipolar dimension has become the area of focus, as several studies agree that individuals who give priority to Self-Transcendence values are more willing to engage in green behaviour, as compared to those individuals who hold Self-Enhancement interests. However, this study seeks to question if Self-Enhancement interests might also have great impact on individual's willingness to engage in green consumer behaviour.

In this regard, notions on identity theory have been included to account for how individuals can be motivated by an ideal state of mind, which can lead to green consumer behaviour due to Self-

Enhancement motives. Additionally, to contribute to a wider understanding of green consumers, personal norms were chosen as they serve as ‘activators’ of values in which the individual attempts to comply with standards that are perceived important.

## **1.5. Theoretical and Practical Contributions**

As set forth in the problem discussion, extant literature has indicated that there is a need for a more thorough understanding of the dynamism of green motives. This study is conducted for such a purpose with a constructionist approach, which embraces the multiple meanings that green consumers might represent. The findings and the conceptual framework that are brought forward in this thesis can be applied to future research on green behaviour as the approach taken is situation-free and therefore deals with the phenomenon on a more generic level.

Acknowledging and identifying the different motives for green behaviour is highly advantageous for companies promoting green products because it is pertinent to convey messages appealing to the true motivations of green consumer behaviour (Nordlund & Garvill, 2002). As consumers possess different levels and types of involvement in green behaviour, there is also a need for different communication and advertising strategies. A laboratory experiment from 1995 revealed that the less involved the consumer is in the environment, the greater effect the advertisements will have on them (Schuhwerk and Lefkoff-Hagius, 1995). Thus, if some green consumers engage in green behaviour dominated by self-expressive benefits, this consumer needs highly appealing advertisements. In this case, it can be assumed that product benefits and purely altruistic appeals are not sufficient. Consequently, the thesis aims to formulate recommendations for marketing and communication strategies that appeal to the observed motivations for green consumer behaviour.

## **1.6. Thesis Outline**

Due to the complexity that encompass green values and related theoretical concepts, the thesis follows an alternative structure as this has been assessed more suitable in order to facilitate comprehension. In line with the critical approach taken, it was necessary to treat a variety of theoretical concepts in order to arrive at a theoretical approach and methodology for the subsequent data production. The following outline briefly describes the constituents of each chapter as well as argues for its position in the knowledge production.

### **Chapter 2 - Theoretical Perspective**

The second chapter elucidates an overview of values from a traditional perspective with the purpose of facilitating a broader understanding of the term including the research embracing this, and to support the further choices of theory elaborated in the theoretical framework. The chapter distinguishes between general values and consumer values, and presents Schwartz’s (1992) Value Inventory in order to provide a full overview of all the motivational domains that are inherent in the model. Moreover, a further understanding of the constituents and systems of values are advanced through Rokeach’s (1973) pioneering value survey.

### **Chapter 3 - Theoretical Framework**

The third chapter sets forth the theoretical framework which serves as the basis for examining the empirical material. After having provided a broad overview of extant theories, the thesis turns focus towards examining one bipolar dimension of Schwartz’s Value Inventory, namely the Self-

Transcendence and Self-Enhancement dimension with the purpose of discussing green consumer behaviour. Additionally, theories on personal norms and identity are introduced and linked with the underlying values.

#### **Chapter 4 - Methodology**

This chapter aims at unfolding how the empirical data was produced. Firstly, the underlying philosophical assumptions will be clarified followed by arguments for the choice of research strategy and method. Subsequently, the data production including its procedures and analysis will be described. Finally, the chapter includes methodological reflections and evaluation of the chosen methods.

#### **Chapter 5 - Empirical Data and Analysis**

The empirical data consisting of thirteen in-depth interviews is introduced. With the theoretical framework in mind, the interviewees are presented, as interpreted by the researchers, according to their influence and priorities of values, personal norms and identity.

#### **Chapter 6 – Towards an Understanding of Green Value Priorities**

In this chapter the main findings of the empirical data are presented, discussed and related to pertinent concepts from the theoretical framework. Moreover, emergent concepts outside the theoretical framework are introduced and linked to supplementary theoretical constructs.

#### **Chapter 7 – Conclusion & Implications**

Based upon the discussion, conclusions will be made in relation to the findings of the study as well as an evaluation of the theoretical framework and its constituents. Moreover, practical implications are set forth as well as recommendations for future research.

#### **Appendix**

The appendix provided will give the reader additional insight to the topics discussed during the interviews; and furthermore present the general structuring of the interviews.

## | 2. Theoretical Perspective on Consumer Values |

*The following chapter aims to provide an overview of extant research on values in relation to consumer behaviour. Consumer motives are generated through underlying values which are both internally and culturally constituted, thus it will be elaborated how these affect green consumer behaviour. In order to set forth the theoretical framework, which the thesis is grounded on, it is perceived pertinent to discuss the following concepts and theories in relation to green consumer motives.*

### 2.1. Consumer Motives

In order to acquire a larger understanding of the term consumer motives, it is necessary to consider theory relating to the various factors that influence consumer behaviour. Kotler & Keller (2003) refer to consumer behaviour as the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use goods and services to satisfy needs and desires.

The following notions on consumer motives are set forth by referring to expectancy theory, which generally dominates consumer research literature (Feather, 1995; Solomon *et al.*, 2006). Such an approach regards motivation as being generated from the consumer perception of 'positive incentives' when engaging in green behaviour. As such, this view disregards biological factors and instead focuses on the cognitive processes that are inherent in consumer decision making.

In a general sense, values guide consumer motives, which subsequently lead to specific behaviours. Solomon *et al.* (2006) elaborate this perspective by describing the systematic creation of buying motives with values and beliefs as the preconditions. Firstly, consumers hold beliefs on certain subject matters. For instance, the green consumer holds beliefs about the environment, human conditions and other perspectives that serve as threats to the welfare of life in general. These beliefs are generated through the intrinsic values that the consumer has and they are often more retrievable than values as the latter often constitute rather subconscious elements. When these beliefs are activated the consumer experiences a need and subsequently seeks to fulfil them through consumption.

Solomon *et al.* differ between two main types of needs; *utilitarian* and *hedonic*. The former refers to the functional benefits that are sought, and these are often predominant in relation to Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) because they generally constitute low-involvement everyday items. Hedonic needs, on the other hand, involve more experiential based needs, in which the consumer desires something additional to functional attributes, such as the ability to enhance self-confidence and differentiation from others. In relation to green products, this perspective is likely to present a considerable importance as it is a differentiation factor. To elaborate, the majority of FMCG represent utilitarian needs in a traditional sense. For instance, the consumer experiencing a need for milk will often do so due to its utilitarian nature, such as level of fat, calcium etcetera and price will often be the main differentiator between the milk brands. Green products, on the other hand, often represent higher prices, and as a result they need other means to appeal to the consumer. Such appeals should address hedonic needs in order to differ from 'analogous' conventional products. Thus, the nature of the need, utilitarian or hedonic, respectively, will often determine the motive of the consumer. It should be stressed, however, that there is no clear-cut line between the two needs. Inevitably, the green FMCG will still serve a utilitarian need, as it otherwise is unlikely to even

reach a stage of consideration for the consumer; however the hedonic need serves to enhance consumer motivation towards the green product.

## **2.2. Consumer Values**

The concept of consumer values derives from the traditional axiological perspectives, which regards values as being one of the main pillars of human psychology (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987; Holbrook, 1998). Values from a consumer perspective have only received modest attention in consumer and management research (Holbrook, 1998). In the most profound literature on values, there is generally concurrence on the nature and meanings of the concept. According to these, values are inherent in all humans and similar everybody possess the same values; however to different degrees. The antecedents of values can be traced back to cultural factors as well as personality (Rokeach, 1973).

### **2.2.1. Cultural Values**

Solomon *et al.* (2006) define *core* values as being inherent in each culture. As such, the different cultures encompass a specific set of core values that all cultural members will hold as well. In addition, some values are assessed to be universal, meaning that all humans possess them. Examples of such are the desire to live a healthy life, wisdom and world peace (Solomon *et al.*, 2006). These values stay somewhat stable over time, however some values are modified over time in order to adapt to revolutionary changes. For example, Scandinavian cultures have experienced an adjustment of the traditional Scandinavian modesty of protecting private lives, towards more Americanised values of exposing these, which can be identified through participation in documentaries and big brother series (Solomon *et al.*, 2006), as well as an increased focus on collective factors in addition to individual (Cova and Cova, 2002). The latter will be elaborated in a later section as it is likely to be salient in relation to green motives.

Previous studies point towards green behaviour as a predominately western phenomenon (Karp, 1996; Nordlund and Garvill, 2002; Haanpää, 2007). The immediate explanations can be found in the material wealth and reserves of energy to be concerned about environmental threats, the latter perceived to be a consequence of technological developments in these societies. In order to facilitate an understanding of *why* green behaviour has gained popularity in western societies, there is a call for an insight into cultural values on a broad scale.

Hofstede (1996) provides profound insight into the cultural values of a large number of national contexts. His study was conducted with the purpose of revealing how values are influenced by national cultures. The unity of analysis for the study was global employees of IBM, however Hofstede's findings have been used as a basis for a vast amount of cultural studies encompassing numerous disciplines. The cultural dimensions that Hofstede sets forth consist of four primary dimensions in which countries are positioned as representing high versus low degrees of individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity. The dimensions are oppositional, which entails that a high degree of one of the values causes a low score on the oppositional. One important notion should, however, be made in relation to Hofstede's dimensions. They are not applicable for determining deep cultural values mainly due to the fact the dimensions represent national cultures, and as such they alienate individually hold values. Nevertheless, the dimensions remain effective guidelines for inquiring an understanding of overall cultural values from a macro perspective.

When contrasting Hofstede's cultural dimensions to green behaviour there seems to be a connection. Many western cultures are characterised by high levels of individualism (Hofstede, 1996), and this implies self-centred consumption activities. Individualism, in Hofstede's terminology, comprises the inclination to focus on being an individual 'detached' from other people. At first glance, this appears as a barrier for green consumer behaviour, which is generally assumed to derive from a concern for the welfare of other people or the environment. However, Vermeir and Verbeke (2008) delved into this paradox and found that cultures high in individualism and 'freedom in mind' often possess a high sensitivity towards social values and norms. Prior to this notion, Schwartz has set forth that individualistic cultures tend to place an almost equal emphasis on the societal values as well as the values of the closer social groups.

The *core* cultural factors are important in consumer behaviour as they guide overall consumption practices as well as generate consumer trends. In this light, it can be postulated that green consumer behaviour has emerged as a consequence of core cultural values such as preservation of the environment.

### **2.2.2. Individual Values**

In addition to cultural values, individuals also hold their own values. These are generated implicitly during the childhood, and when established they are difficult to change. Due to this early internalisation, values often remain unconscious; however retrieval is possible when the individual is faced with two opposing adjectives. Hofstede (1996:8) provides a clear explanation of this notion: "values are broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others [...] feelings with an arrow to it: they have a plus and a minus side". Examples of such include good versus evil, ugly versus beautiful etcetera. Hence, when the consumer is faced with a strong value like those just mentioned, he or she will intrinsically know the internal values, and these are subsequently used to generate beliefs on certain matters, which afterwards create consumer motives.

However, there are some additional notions on consumer values as opposed to values in its general sense. Holbrook (1998) sets forth a typology of consumer values, which has been created in a similar line of thinking as Rokeach's and Schwartz's studies that are elaborated in the following section. The typology represents a framework of eight different values that are particularly addressed to consumption. In the following sections, Holbrook's consumer values will be incorporated jointly with Schwartz's framework in order to elucidate concepts of values that are useful in determining how consumers prioritise green FMCG differently as well as *how* they use them to communicate something.

Holbrook (1998) describes consumer values as lying centrally in the consumption experience and not, as such, in the product itself. Moreover, he notes that various values emerge in an interrelationship and to various degrees in the consumption experience. Moreover, he acknowledges that values are structured in value systems, which the consumers draw from in various situations. In this light, Holbrook's typology of consumer values follows the same line of thinking as more traditional axiological contributions. However, it is created by a compilation of the contributions of scholars in various fields, and as such does not represent a thorough confirmed study on the different value types. Hence, it is useful in providing a more pertinent and consumer related perspective of values, however in order to reach a fuller understanding of the antecedents and

conditions of values it must be accompanied by more in-depth theory. Thus, Rokeach's Value Survey (1973) and Schwartz's (1992) Value Inventory are used as a basis for a more all-embracing perspective.

Due to the complexity and abstraction that seem to constitute values, comprehension is facilitated by dividing values into various categories. Values are difficult to retrieve as they are often grounded on a subconscious level of the consumer and hence by knowing the main mechanisms for green behaviour, the chances of retrieving results that represent consumer values are heightened. Hence, there is a need for a framework that encompasses common value categories that can be transferred to green consumer behaviour and values.

In order to clarify the perception of values dealt with in this thesis, a definition generally used in value research has been chosen (Schwartz, 1992: 4):

“Values (1) are concepts or beliefs, (2) pertain to desirable end states or behaviours, (3) transcend specific situations, (4) guide selection or evaluation of behaviour and events, and (5) are ordered by relative importance”

To elaborate this definition, values are in most circumstances identical to the concept of beliefs. In relation to the values of green consumers, the belief represents a prescriptive nature (Rokeach, 1973). In this light, the belief serves the instrumental purpose of guiding the consumer towards a preferred means of action based on what the individual believes is desirable. An assumption in relation to green consumer behaviour is that the consumer possesses a belief that environmentally responsible behaviour benefits the social sphere and human existence as such.

The desirable end states or behaviours refer to the degree that the consumer assesses the value as a motivation towards an existential or means-end method for reaching a final goal. For clarification purposes, these concepts will in this thesis be treated as *terminal* and *instrumental* values (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987; Schwartz, 1992). The former refers to the end-state that is the motivational aim for engaging in green behaviour. In most instances, these end-states appear as rather abstract and wide-encompassing values that can be reached through numerous means. In order to make these more accessible, the consumer uses instrumental goals, which concerns a more comprehensible and straightforward behaviour that the consumer can perform. In general, the instrumental goals can be regarded as representing adjectives, which direct the consumer towards the terminal goal. To exemplify, the green consumer can be assumed to value harmony and peace as terminal end-states in life. As these values are rather intangible and difficult to reach, the consumer needs more attainable and manageable means for reaching the desired state that the terminal value represents. Thus, green behaviour can become the means for achieving a harmonious and peaceful world.

The instrumental values represent a larger number than the terminal values. Rokeach (1973) estimates that the number of terminal values is less than 20, whereas the number of instrumental values is likely to be treble the amount. In this sense, there are various ways in which the consumer values that his or her behaviours are aligned to the terminal values. Although literature does not elaborate on the stability of terminal versus instrumental values, it can be argued that they differ to some extent. To elaborate, whereas terminal values by large are internalised during childhood (Rokeach, 1973; Hofstede, 1996), instrumental values represent various means for reaching the terminal values. These 'means' can change dependent of what the consumer assesses as the more effective or desirable way of reaching the end-state. For example, a consumer possessing 'a

peaceful world' as a terminal value might at first ascribe 'health consciousness' as an instrumental value and later turn towards 'responsibility' as a more dominant instrumental value. These do not necessarily alienate each other, however the priority that these are given will most likely affect consumer behaviour.

The notion that values transcend specific situations makes the distinction between values and attitudes clearer. The latter is situation-specific in that it is formed and changed as an effect of the situation in which a decision is made. Values on the other hand, are enduring and form the basis for a subsequent attitude. As such, various attitudes can be derived from the consumer's values; however they will always reflect these values, despite the fact that attitudes can be both negative and positive. To elaborate, the formation of buying motives somewhat follows a linear pattern as the process begins with the values and subsequently attitudes towards a certain object or situation is created by evaluating whether or not it is aligned with the values. The effect of this will be touched upon in a later section in which it is explained how different motives lead to certain consumer behaviours.

### **2.2.3. Value Systems**

Rokeach (1973) provides an extensive overview of the value systems, which encompasses the structuring of values. In the same line of thinking as in the rational choice theory, values encompass complex and wide-extending systems that are sought inquired into by simplifying them as well as developing somewhat organised systems in order to make retrieval less demanding (Rokeach, 1973). A similar concept dealing with these complex structures is 'bounded reality' (Simon, 1991). The idea lying herein is that consumers use heuristics during decision making in order to reach consensus. This process is not solely rational but also emotional as consumers rely on the intrinsic values and feelings.

Values are created at an early stage in life, and they are systematically structured into value systems where they are given different priorities. Some values are intrinsically assessed to be more important than others and are thus positioned higher in the value system. These priorities do not remain stable as they are rearranged in the total value system dependent on the individual as well as cultural factors (Rokeach, 1973).

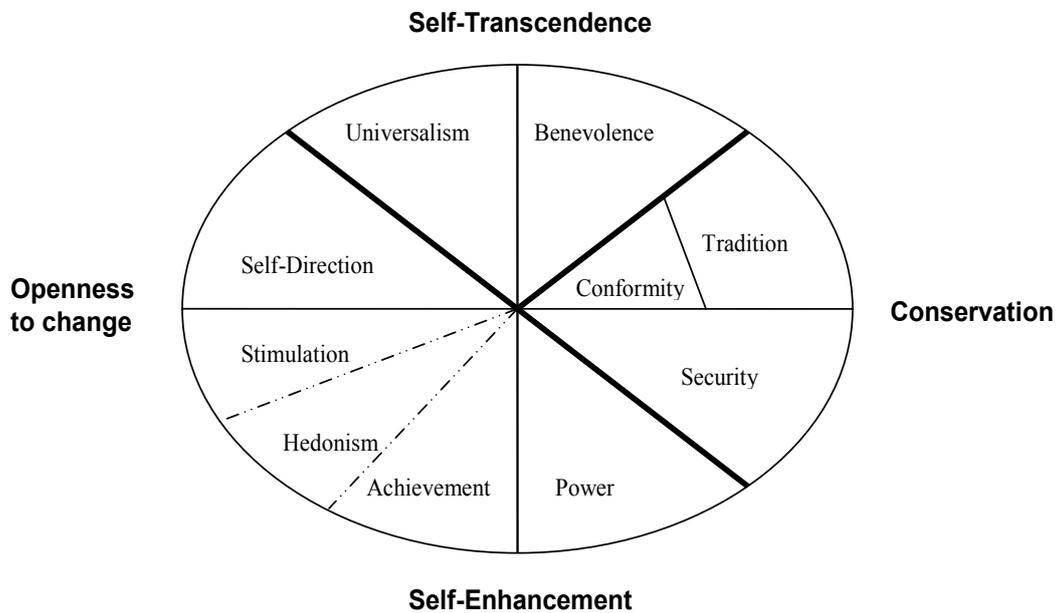
Having clarified the main determinants and factors of values, there is need for a further understanding of the social structures that influence them. This was only touched upon briefly above. Rokeach's (1973) contributions to value research facilitate a deeper understanding of values; it is however not an adequate in relation to consumer behaviour and social influences.

## **2.3. Schwartz's Value Inventory**

Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) extended Rokeach's Value Survey through an extensive study on the influence of values in national contexts by collecting data in 63 countries and with more than 60,000 participants. The focus of study was to examine how personal values are generated through, and affected by, social experiences, and moreover how these values subsequently affect behavioural choices.

A list of 56 different values were constructed by regarding the individual factors, such as biological needs as being an antecedent of values; however these are further shaped through social interaction

and demands, to which the latter represent norms. Respondents were asked to list the values they assessed as being ‘guiding principles’ in their lives, and the extensive research resulted in ten motivational domains positioned along two bipolar dimensions, coined the Schwartz Value Inventory (SVI). | Figure 2 | provides a visual representation of the SVI.



| Fig. 2 | Schwartz (1992) Value Inventory

In order to further clarify the constituents of the SVI, it is essential to differentiate between value domains and motivational dimensions. The latter is somewhat comparable with Hofstede’s (1996) cultural dimensions; however the distinction between individual and social values is more pronounced in the SVI. Firstly, there are ten value domains on an individual level in the framework. Each of these has an opposing value domain along the same dimension. To elaborate, when an individual scores high on a specific value domain it is most likely that the opposing value type is negative. This can be exemplified with two value domains from the SVI; people who value ‘Security’ as one of the dominant values will not simultaneously value ‘Self-direction’. Each of the value domains are positioned next to another and the majority is closely connected to the neighbouring domain. To exemplify, an individual who values ‘Achievement’ is also likely to hold strong ‘Power’ values. It is important to note, however, that not all value domains are equally connected. The dotted lines in the visual representation signify a very close relationship, the ordinary lines represent less strong relationship, and finally the bold lines represent value domains to which there is no direct connection between the nearest domains.

The ten value domains are moreover categorised into two bipolar motivational dimensions, which can be regarded as higher order value domains. The vertical axis is represented by the Self-Transcendence versus Self-Enhancement dimension and the horizontal axis relates to Openness to Change versus Conservation dimension. Similarly to the value domains, these dimensions present opposing values situated on the opposite quarter of the circle. The dimensions have been termed motivational as they guide all actions and behaviours (Schwartz, 1992). As such, the motivational dimensions can be regarded as end-goals for engaging in different behaviours. When the importance

of the different values has been determined for specific cultures, or individual consumers, it can subsequently be applied to assess consumer behaviour motives. Consumers who hold strong values along one of the motivational dimensions are likely to perform in accordance with these, and one of the means is through consumption behaviours.

In order to advance an understanding of the SVI, the following section will briefly explain the ten different value domains as well as the dimensional construct they belong to.

Firstly, 'Universalism' represents a concern for the welfare of the environment and all people. A person who holds strong universal values seeks social tolerance and peace. A closely related value domain is 'Benevolence', which regards a value of nurturing and preserving strong relationships in their closer social networks. These two value domains represent the upper side of the 'Self-Transcendent versus Self-Enhancement' motivational dimension, which in simple terms comprise unselfish motives. Their bipolar domains are 'Power' and 'Achievement', the former relating to values towards social status and prestige. In Rokeach's (1973) terms, these represent terminal values, and these are often catered to through dominance of others and of resources. 'Achievement' is a value that is centred on challenging one self and to excel other people. Closely connected to this is the 'Hedonism' value domain, in which people seek enjoyment and pleasure in life. Schwartz (1992) did not find a clear distinction between these two value domains and the distinction therefore remains somewhat blurry. The three former value types represent the 'Self-Enhancement' dimensional construct, which concerns more self-centred motives in the same line of thinking as egoistic motives.

Individuals who value 'Tradition' seek to preserve the current state and are reluctant to change. New habits or adjustment of consumer behaviour is thus unlikely for such consumers. Almost identical to this value type is 'Conformity', which concerns the value of obeying rules and common procedures. 'Security' is comparable to Maslow's need for safety (Solomon, 2006) as it is centred on maintaining harmony and welfare of one self and society. These three value types are positioned in the 'Conservation' dimensional construct, which broadly speaking refers to the motivation of keeping a safe status quo.

In addition to belonging within the 'Self-Enhancement' orientation, 'Hedonism' is also found in the 'Openness to change' versus 'Conservation' dimension. Herein is also the value of 'Stimulation', which, as the dotted line indicates, is closely connected to 'Hedonism'. The difference lies in the idea that the former is more extreme in nature, as an individual possessing this value seeks excitement through more daring means, such as extreme sports. Finally, 'Self-direction' is a value domain of independence and freedom. People who value this highly are strong characters who oppose following rules, as its opposing value type 'Security' indicates.

### | 3. Theoretical Framework |

*This chapter sets forth the theoretical framework encompassing this thesis. One dimension of Schwartz’s Value Inventories serves as the basis for examining green consumer behaviour, namely the Self-Transcendence versus Self-Enhancement dimension. Additionally, these are linked to notions on personal norms and identity to elucidate the complexity surrounding the chosen research area. These concepts are seen as closely related and share a common feature by having a dual dimension, namely personal and social. In this regard, the concepts are perceived as having an influence on green consumer behaviour, as green products can be purchased for both personal and social reasons.*

The motivational dimension of Self-Transcendence versus Self-Enhancement can be regarded as constituting orientations towards the benefits of others or the self. The Self-Transcendence interests do not necessarily represent purely altruistic motives, as an orientation towards others might actually be caused by an interest in self-fulfilment (Krebs, 1991). This notion is evident in the Self-Enhancement interests that generally centre on egoistic motives, however, in order for these to be actualised the inclusion of the social contexts is evident. In the elaboration on the dimension provided below, pertinent notions and theories from scholars in related fields have been added in order to reach a fuller understanding of the dynamism and complexity that comprise Schwartz’s (1992) framework. Clearly, the concepts are often intertwined and overlapping, however the following juxtaposes seek to shed light on the main similarities and differences of the various concepts in order to make the subsequent data analysis more manageable.

As described in the theoretical perspective, the SVI treats ‘Hedonism’ as a separate value type. In the following revised framework, the constituents of ‘Hedonism’ have been incorporated into ‘Achievement’ as they both constitute strong elements of self-expressions.

In order to facilitate an overview or the theoretical framework, an illustration of the bipolar dimension including the four motivational domains is provided in | Figure 3 |

Self-Transcendence	
<p><b>Universalism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Macro orientation</li> <li>▪ Concern towards <i>all</i> humans and animals</li> <li>▪ Terminal values</li> </ul>	<p><b>Benevolence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Micro orientation</li> <li>▪ Concern towards social relations</li> <li>▪ Terminal &amp; instrumental values</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achievement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual orientation</li> <li>▪ Focus on personal success</li> <li>▪ Esteem &amp; self-actualisation through status and aesthetics</li> <li>▪ Instrumental values</li> </ul>	<p><b>Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual orientation</li> <li>▪ Displaying social status through power relations (conspicuous consumption)</li> <li>▪ Terminal values</li> </ul>
Self-Enhancement	

| Fig. 3 | Overview of Self-Transcendent versus Self-Enhancement values

### 3.1. Self-Transcendence

It is important to distinguish between the various underlying motives for Self-Transcendence. In some circumstances, the consumer might not adhere to green behaviour due to a 'genuine' want to save the environment but instead buy green products in order to minimise distress (Lee and Holden, 1999). These concepts will be further explored in the following section as they are dependent on the universal and benevolent domains. In this thesis it is argued that these values do not occur in isolation as the consumer is more likely to possess some degree of both. As an example, the consumer will engage in green behaviour, such as buying a green product both with the purpose of helping the environment as well as to indicate social status. The degree of difference is however pertinent, as the product might appeal to the aspect that the consumer does not assess to be the most important.

#### 3.1.1. Universalism

The first value domain within the Self-Transcendent interests is Universalism, which is similar to prosocial behaviour in that green behaviour in the universal view derives from a concern for the larger benefits of society and social groups (Schwartz, 1992; Vermeir and Verbeke, 2008). To elaborate, prosocial behaviour refers to when an individual helps other people, or engages in green behaviour, for no other purpose than to benefit other people. In this sense, Universalism represents the macro social perspectives of green motives, such as encouragement reinforced by cultural or national demands. As Schwartz (1992: 12) describes; "the motivational goal of universalism is understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of *all* people and for nature".

Universalism often arises as a consequence of people being more informed about the current state and acknowledging the scarcity of resources on contemporary society. Oftentimes, this occurs in cultures or societies that are characterised by post-materialistic values (Dietz *et al.*, 2005) and in which consumers look beyond selfish needs. This view is more dominated by social justice and broad-mindedness. In a sense, it can be regarded as a value pointing towards an idealistic state of society and in which green behaviour is the means to reach that state. In parallel to Rokeach's (1973) line of thinking, green behaviour with underlying universal values are targeted towards terminal goals. To simplify, universalism represent the values that people possess when they believe that they can actually make a difference by engaging in green behaviour.

In line with Hofstede's (1996) cultural dimensions, individualistic cultures are more prone to engage in universal concerns as touched upon in an earlier section. Although this might at first glance appear as a contradictory notion, it might be explained by the idea that individualistic-focused cultures have higher emphasis on equality and unity with nature (Schwartz, 1992; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008). Moreover, Schwartz's (1992) study concluded that whereas collectivistic cultures tend to mainly focus on social values, individualistic cultures tend to value both perspectives equally.

Following Holbrook's (1998) notions, Universalism consists of active processes. Active processes represent the value effects that are derived from the pleasure incurred from the consumption itself. To elaborate, morality and justice can be motives for green behaviour simply for the reason that the consumer experiences an intrinsic reward when complying with these. These ethical considerations

derive from social expectations. In this light, they serve as codes of conduct towards a desirable behaviour. Often these factors have a great influence on the conduct of environmentally responsible behaviour, including purchasing green products, as these have become generally held normative beliefs in the larger society (Karp, 1996; Dietz *et al.*, 2005). Behaving in accordance with these covert guidelines often encompasses an intrinsic reward as the consumer obtains fulfilment by performing the task simply for the reason that he or she feels that these actions will benefit a larger good.

As the notion above points towards; Universalism is mainly terminal in its nature. As Holbrook (1998: 151) further notes; “the moment we stop pursuing it as a means to some ulterior purpose, it stops being ethical and partakes some other sort of value”. In this thesis, the view of ethics and Universalism being valued or performed merely for Self-Transcendent motives is being questioned. It can be argued that ethics include some degree of normative influences as well. In this light, green behaviour is not solely sought in order to comply with ethical values but moreover due to the “ought to” ethics. The intrinsic motive might not change considerably between the two aspects; however it is important to consider as there is a possibility that consumers might regard ethics and norms differently. The notion of norms will however be elaborated in isolation in the following chapter in order to facilitate a fuller understanding of the different concepts.

Inevitably, there are also extrinsic motivational rewards in the universal perspective. However, these would among other encompass the monetary rewards, such as deposits on bottles, and these factors are beyond the scope of this thesis. They are nevertheless important to acknowledge as they are likely to affect the level of Self-Transcendence. In fact, a study pointed towards a decrease in self-transcending motives as the amount of extrinsic rewards rose (Holbrook, 1998). A possible explanation for this tendency could be that consumers perceive these extrinsic rewards as being an immoral approach to a matter that should be driven by intrinsic motives.

### **3.1.2. Benevolence**

Concern for the environment is also evident on a micro-level, namely in the form of social networks, such as friends, family, peers and others in close proximity, with whom the consumer interacts on a daily basis. This perspective is supported by the notion that it is intrinsic for humans to gather in groups and thereby form an identity (Cova and Cova, 2002). Without delving too deep into the Latin school of thought, the central idea herein is that consumption centres on the linking value it creates between various social levels. As Østergaard and Jantzen (2000) note, consumers should not be regarded as merely stating individual needs, rather they engage in consumption in order to express symbolism of products. Green behaviour in this regard, is performed in order to facilitate and promote the social aspects in these groups by creating symbols representing shared values. An example could include family members who each individually purchase green products in order to strengthen the community link. To extend this view, it might also be an example of adults transferring their parents’ values of organic products to their own consumption behaviour. The consumption of green products in this sense does not solely represent *learned* practices; rather it represents the intrinsic inclination to transfer values through tangibles (Corrigan, 1997).

Inevitably, the above also includes some perspectives of Self-Enhancement as the motivation is to *communicate* a shared link with these groups. In this view, green engagement can be regarded as

somewhat superficial; however Self-Transcendent behaviour does not necessarily exclude egoistic motives. The rationale for utilising the terminology 'egoistic' is that it can be egoistic in the sense that it seeks to minimise other's anxieties, and thereby own distress.

Lee and Holden (1999) set forth three determinants of prosocial behavioural motives, which facilitate a comprehension of green buying motives for benevolent values. Firstly, an egoistic motive can be generated when the consumer identifies the needs of some in a social group, and subsequently assesses the benefits of contributing or being punished for not doing so. These benefits, or rewards, can be gained in the form of social group approval or acknowledgement. This notion contradicts Schwartz's (1992) view of benevolence alienating egoistic motives. However, it has been assessed that all 'genuine' motives will always entail some level of egoism. To exemplify, a consumer might experience a self-reward from the intrinsic pleasure of contributing in helping other people. Similarly, the consumer might also perceive punishment factors such as disapproval of social groups. Inevitably, this assessment is highly dependent on the situational factors; however they might also emerge as a general predictor of whether or not the consumer is sensitive towards social group pressure (Cialdini *et al.*, 1981). In the subsequent chapter, the affect of these factors are elaborated further in relation to personal norms.

Secondly, consumers might feel distress by the perception of other people in their social groups expressing environmental concern. This internal response constitutes an egoistic motivation as the consumer seeks to comply with these concerns for the purpose of reducing own distress. To elaborate, consumers that are exposed to distress from their social group are prone to be affected and experience distress for themselves (Lee and Holden, 1999). The implications for green behaviour can be assumed to include different buying behaviours depending on whether or not the consumer is accompanied by an environmentally concerned person, for example during the shopping situation, or during consumption of the products. Lee and Holden (1999) moreover note that distress might also lead to avoidance-behaviour. This might include rejection of the rationality of the other person's needs.

Thirdly, consumers can experience empathy with social group members expressing environmental concern. In this light, the consumer develops an altruistic or more 'genuine' motivation to engage in green behaviour. Oftentimes, such empathy, or sympathy is triggered when the consumer feels a close connection to the social group member that has expressed the environmental concern. Moreover, consumer motivation can be enhanced through sharing the environmental concern, as the perceived effectiveness of individual contributions is increased (Lee and Holden, 1999).

### **3.2. Self-Enhancement**

The Self-Enhancement interests refer to the degree to which consumers prioritise self-centred benefits over social values. Again, the division among the bipolar positions is not unambiguous, as the consumer is likely to assess values from both dimensional constructs when engaging in green behaviour.

Holbrook (1998) supports the Self-Enhancement interest through his notion that some consumption activities are performed for the sole purpose of self-orientation. This occurs when the product, brand or activity triggers a reaction in the individual consumer and often this is through the

functional benefits. To exemplify, the green consumer might regard some green products as merely constituting a personal beneficial factor in the case of organic lotion as a contributor to healthy skin.

### **3.2.1. Achievement**

The motivational goal that has been identified in the achievement category is personal success. This is obtained by demonstrating competence that meets certain social standards. An identical concept is 'Esteem' that is found in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Kotler and Keller, 2003). Maslow sought to explain why people behave in certain ways and which factors motivate them at certain times. The framework is sequential in that the lower level needs must be fulfilled in order to advance to the next level in the hierarchy. Referring to the current status of the western world, most consumers have fulfilled the basic needs and can hence concentrate on the higher needs such as 'esteem' and 'self-actualisation'.

In line with Holbrook's (1998) notions, this value domain is dominated by self-orientation as it centres on personal benefits. The rationale lies within the postulation that consumers aim for achievement for self-oriented purposes despite the inclusion of others. Ambiguity within the achievement perspective is evident due to two main reasons. Achievement is regarded as the individual's attempt to increase self-achievement through personal consumption and differentiation. However, in order to 'activate' achievement it must be contextualised through social groups. To elaborate, the effectiveness of the achievement factor can only be assessed by contrasting it to the factors that others in the social groups perceive as constituting achievement. Social approval is central for the achievement factor as engaging in green behaviour constitutes self-expressive factors that are important to the consumer in order to communicate a social or political stance. To support this argument it is necessary to delve further into the antecedents of achievement.

Holbrook (1998) treats two factors covering self-oriented and other-oriented values. Achievement can be self-oriented when the consumption of a green product centres on *aesthetics*. This perspective is identical to the egoistic factor that has been touched upon earlier in this thesis in relation to previous contributions on green behaviour. Ironically, the term aesthetics is not considerably narrower than the term achievement, however it is used in this context to represent extrinsic rewards such as beauty and health. It can be argued whether or not these are terminal or instrumental values, nevertheless they present manageable motives for green behaviour. A significant notion for the consumer who highly values aesthetics is that it might incur considerable differences in appeals for green products. As the consumer valuing beauty highly, an aesthetic appeal of the product is crucial (Wagner, 1998). Depending on the dominance of the aesthetic value, the consumer might prioritise the functional benefits or values of the product less due to the limitations of the value system as described above

The second element that also includes other-orientation is the *status* element (Holbrook, 1998). This designates an extrinsic reward by engaging in green behaviour for the purpose of receiving a positive response from others. An interrelated terminology in this perspective is impression management. When consumers engage in this type of consumption the main purpose is to communicate self-image and success. The means for communicating this is through the use of symbols, which green products can function as. The status element is pertinent in relation to this thesis as it represents the self-expressive factors that it is argued that consumers adhere to when

engaging in green behaviour. Status is rather closely related to power, however it differs in the sense that it can be regarded as an instrumental value aimed towards gaining power. A further explanation follows in the subsequent section.

### **3.2.2. Power**

It has been a common belief that humans possess intrinsic inclinations to engage in power relations and categorise themselves through authorities and wealth (Corrigan, 1997). As such, power represents a terminal value as it is an end-goal for humans to possess successful power relations. Social status and prestige are common denominators of this perspective and these are sought achieved by attempting to preserve a dominant position in the social network, for instance through the role as an opinion leader.

Power is comparable to conspicuous consumption as Veblen described it (Corrigan, 1997). In Veblen's point of view, humans have always sought to express wealth through consumption practices. In this light, the consumption becomes the means for expressing honour and superior social class. Veblen's notions were set forth during the industrialising period, in which power relations were expressed through excessive consumption. As briefly touched upon in the introductory chapter, modernised western societies are facing a shift towards post-materialistic values, which generally centres on valuing nature and responsible consumption. In a strict sense, post-materialist values seem to oppose the conspicuous consumption that Veblen described. Thus, in order to express wealth in the contemporary society, other means must be adopted. Green consumption is qualified as symbolising a return to more tranquil values of nature and cleanliness. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to contemplate on the deeper antecedents of this development, however they can be assumed to stem from the increased financial wealth and disposable incomes that have been observed in the modernised western world.

It should be stressed that the above notions do not point towards conspicuous consumption having turned covert. This would be rather misleading, as consumption still serves as a central means for expressing social stance and individuality to surroundings. It remains somewhat of a paradox that conspicuous consumption still seems to exist simultaneously to the movement towards more responsible consumption behaviours. Referring back to the belief that it is intrinsic to categorise oneself into social groups (Cova and Cova, 2002), this might help elucidating this ambiguity. Veblen noted that consumers always aim to express their social stance to people with whom they have no direct contact (Corrigan, 1997: 17). As such, consumption obtains a central position in the categorisation of social groups, as well as in displaying which group one does *not* belong to.

Finally, it should be emphasised that the above description should not be put on the same footing as universalism and benevolence, although they seem closely linked to these in terms of the social aspect. Power does not necessarily imply 'genuine' motives in the same sense as Self-Transcendent interests do. As there is a somewhat hazy distinction between these, they become even more important in the data production and analysis as the actual motives might prove difficult to reveal.

### 3.3. Personal Norms

The influence of norms on consumer behaviour, and particularly in relation to green issues, should not be neglected. It has been one of the major concepts in previous research on altruistic behaviour (Schwartz, 1977; Thøgersen, 2002) and in addition to values it is assessed to possess a major influence on motivations for green behaviour. It has been evaluated that neither legislation nor market incentives can substitute or make normative influence superfluous (Wiidegren, 1998). In this sense, norms serve to intrinsically balance 'ought to' behaviours in accordance with social standards.

Inevitably, norms cannot be completely isolated from values as they are said to reside in these and work in synergy in order to balance behaviour (Rokeach, 1973). In the same sense as values, personal norms are internalised at an early life stage and hence stay somewhat stable throughout life (Schwartz, 1977; Schwartz and Howard, 1980). The main difference between values and norms lies in the notion that norms, as opposed to values, do not transcend specific situations. Instead, they serve as a prescription on how to behave given a specific situation (Rokeach, 1973). By accepting this view, it can be assumed that norms help consumers categorising and structuring the value systems in regard to the situation or behaviour that is required.

Hofstede (1996) provides a rather clear-cut definition of the differences between the two concepts. Firstly, values can be regarded as representing the *desired*. In this light, values guide the consumer towards a desired behaviour. In opposition, norms represent the *desirable* as it imposes how people are expected to behave according to social standards. As Hofstede (1996: 9) philosophically puts it; "everybody is in favour of virtue and opposed to sin".

To further elaborate on the relationship between values and norms, Schwartz and Howard (1980) note that the effect of values becomes noticeable when they are activated by norms. When the values are activated they generate personal norms, which the consumer experiences as a moral obligation to perform certain behaviours. For instance, the green consumer is likely to feel obliged to buy certain green products and these normative influences might even be stronger than the values that the consumer possesses. As such, the influence of norms can be immense, particularly in relation to green behaviour as it is assumed to include a large amount of normative indicators.

Despite personal norms indicating that they reside in the value set of the individual, their influence by social factors is evident. In actual fact, they are generated from social factors and social norms in general (Thøgersen, 2002). When the consumer's value system is activated through norms, a strong emotional response will often occur. To elaborate, a consumer might be prone to a feeling of guilt when buying products that go against internal values and to which the norm is to not buy such products. To exemplify, a consumer might experience a feeling of guilt when buying ordinary light bulbs as opposed to energy saving light bulbs. On the other hand, the consumer might feel pride when complying with the norms, such as buying the energy light bulbs.

In order to further assess the influence of personal norms it is essential to delve further into the antecedents and constituents. In Schwartz's norm activation theory (1968: 356), he proclaims two conditions that must be met in order for normative behaviour to take effect:

- (1) the person must have some awareness that his potential acts may have consequences for the welfare of others;
- (2) the person must ascribe some responsibility for these acts and their consequences to himself

Several factors determine the relative importance of norms in relation to behaviour. Schwartz (1977) points towards the main factors encompassing the degree to which the individual perceives his or her ability to help and the moral consequences the individual ascribes his or herself or others. In relation to green motives these issues become pertinent as the individual's values and attitudes towards green behaviour is evident to be affected by how the person perceives that he or she can actually make a difference, or contribution by buying green products. Another important issue is how the individual consumer accepts the perceived norm or rejects it. To exemplify, the vast majority of consumers are fully aware of environmental issues and similarly remain aware of the social norms of showing responsibility towards the environment. However, some of these consumers engage in 'defensive denial' (Thøgersen, 2002) when they perceive personal costs as being more dominant than the social norms. Consumers that sometimes engage in green behaviour are likely to show such defensive denials in some situations as well. Not many green consumers can be regarded as being green in all aspects as this would impede a regular lifestyle. Instead, they presumably disregard some green behaviours when they assess that their personal needs are more important. The above notion is connected to the value systems that were elaborated in the former chapter. As the consumer possesses multiple values, and particularly instrumental values, different situations will call for different value priorities and thus behaviour might not necessarily follow a consistent pattern. As such the consumer might prioritise a certain type of green product and reject other types of green products when the value system priorities differently.

A final important notion on norms, particularly in relation to green products is that they often function as guiding habitual purchases (Stern and Dietz, 1994). As green FMCG often represent habitual purchases to which personal values might not always be processed as a rational choice, the importance of norms becomes evident. They can help explain why consumers choose certain types of products as opposed to others. In this light, the norm has been internalised to such a degree that the consumer might act in accordance with routines as opposed to further assessment of the product.

### **3.4. Identity**

Consumer motivation literature addresses several questions on how consumption-related behaviour commences, gets sustained and directed (Moisander, 2007). In the former sections it is argued that an ongoing debate exists concerning whether green consumer behaviour is motivated by altruistic or self-expressive orientations. This debate is furthermore complicated by the assumption that the underlying motives for green consumer behaviour often can be seen as multiple and conflicting (Lindenberg & Steg, 2007). Linking this debate to consumer identity, it positions green consumer behaviour in a social context in that sense that products have evolved into a non-verbal means of communication in order to express identity in the social world (Douglas & Isherwood, 1980; Corrigan, 1997;). It is widely acknowledged that consumer identities can be defined through consumption and consumers, in this sense, use products to express various identities (Sirgy, 1982; Corrigan, 1997; Haanpää, 2007). This focus on value-expressive attributes in consumer behaviour has also had an impact on green consumer motives, as environmental attitudes and behaviours are increasingly socially acceptable and attractive for consumers (Haanpää, 2007). Green products have specific sign-values which can be used to communicate a certain lifestyle or values which the consumer wishes to be associated with.

### **3.4.1. Identity Theory**

Identity refers to the different meanings attached to an individual by self and others (Hitlin, 2003). It positions an individual in the social world through the relationships implied by the identity. The core of an individual's identity is uphold and constructed through the underlying values. Thus, self-identity encompasses concepts and beliefs, and relates to aspired end states of behaviours, the so-called *terminal values* (Rokeach, 1973; Hitlin, 2003).

The self-identity is relatively stable, but is also dynamic in nature in that it can fluctuate due to various identities which, in the same way as values, can be activated at any particular time due to salient factors that becomes apparent in social situations (Stryker, 2007). Thus, personal identity is unique, but subject to social influences through the concept of values. As such, identity theory does not purely focus on the decision making of the individual but rather on how consumers are versatile and involved in as many identities as social networks they belong to (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stets & Biga, 2003). This complex and changing identity affects green consumer behaviour in the sense that consumers may vary in their purchasing of green products due to these shifts in identity caused by social factors.

Hitlin (2003) brings together aspects of identity theory and social factors and proposes that personal identity consists of a collection of identities that are often attached to different social roles and thus become salient when situations call for them. In this light, consumers both have a personal and social identity, which can be difficult to separate. Various theories on identity highlight the existence of individuals encompassing multiple and overlapping identities. Hitlin (2003) furthermore conceptualises personal identity as being based upon core values, which creates a relation between the two constructs of values and identity. According to Hitlin, personal identity is based on a system of unique value constructs which affect – and is affected by an individual's other identities and behaviour. Based upon this assumption, it can be argued that individuals become more committed to the identities that best enable them to express the most significant individual values.

### **Self-Congruity**

As previously stated, ambiguity can be related to identity. Contributing to this factor is the multiple nature of self-concept. Identity has been conceptualised as having more than one component, and in particular some researchers propose that identity constitute a dual dimension – the actual self-image and the ideal self-image (Sirgy, 1982). This relates to consumers' perception of themselves. The ideal self is defined as an individual's conception of how they would like to perceive themselves, whereas real self comprises a more realistic assessment of the actual qualities held. Self-congruity is related to the match between the ideal self-identity and the product image. Sirgy (1985) argues that self-congruity affects purchase motivation through the activation of self-consistency. In other words individuals are motivated to purchase products that comply with their ideal identity.

Johar & Sirgy (1991) took this one step further and postulated four different types of self-identities:

“(1) An actual self-concept, which is an image the individual has about him or herself (2) An ideal self-concept, is an image an individual aspires to have (3) A social self-concept, is beliefs about how others perceive the individual and (4) An ideal social self-concept, is the visualised image an individual seeks others to have of him or herself”

These concepts are especially important when compared to the notion of Self-Enhancement interests as introduced in the SVI, which suggests that values have vast influence on guiding consumer motives. According to this perspective, self-expressive benefits can be derived from consumer behaviour, and in particular green consumer behaviour due to their sign-value. Consumers valuing these self-expressive benefits can be seen as motivated by an aspiration to improve their ideal self-image and/or ideal social self-image. The ideal self can according to this perspective be considered as a form of self-regulation as well as intrinsic motivation which is manifested in a vision the individual encompass about how the person aspires to be (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006).

### 3.5. Linking the Theories to Green Motives

All the above descriptions of values, personal norms and identity serve as an iterative process for consumers' assessment of buying motives. In order to comprehend the effects of these three constituents or elements it is vital to look further into their interrelationship for the generation of green motives and concurrent behaviour.

To recapitulate, values motivate goal-directed behaviour. They serve as guidance towards preferred behaviours by regarding desired end-states and possible means for reaching these. From a motivational perspective, the terminal values are comparable with goals, which represent the ultimate benefit that consumers will achieve through certain products or behaviours.

A central motivational construct or determinant for green behaviour concerns the valence of the goal. As described earlier, consumers seek fulfilment of needs and wants through a desire towards something. This notion at first glance implies that consumers are attracted to positive end-states, such as buying a coke in order to quench thirst. As such, this goal entails an *approach* directed motivation where the product helps to satisfy the positive want (Solomon *et al.*, 2006).

In relation to green products the valence is likely to be characterised by a motivation to *avoid* specific outcomes. As touched upon earlier, a common terminal value is harmony and thus the consumer uses instrumental values to reach this goal. The instrumental value then becomes avoidance of certain behaviours and products that are perceived as conflicting with such values. Such conflicts can derive from Self-Transcendent or Self-Enhancement values. An example of the former could be a consumer who perceives conventional dairy products as constituting a threat to the welfare of animals. Therefore, this consumer opts for a green product in order to avoid harming the animal welfare. In addition, a consumer who is more dominated by Self-Enhancement values might avoid buying conventional milk and instead choose a green product in order to avoid the perceived harmful elements of the former due to health concerns.

A related concept to goal valence is cognitive dissonance. This concept was originally coined by Festinger and it has been widely applied in research on consumer behaviour (Harmon-Jones and Judson, 1999; Thøgersen, 2004; Solomon *et al.*, 2006). It is similar to the above approach-avoidance motivations as it centres on conflicts between beliefs and behaviours. The theory of cognitive dissonance is derived from the simple assumption that humans seek consistency and order in their lives. The conflict emerges when the consumer's behaviour does not reflect individual values or beliefs. Often this conflict is provoked when the consumer is faced with various options

which all include different benefits. A consumer holding the belief that an environmentally friendly washing detergent is preferable, but nevertheless opts for a conventional washing detergent, perhaps due to a preferred scent or favourable price, experiences inconsistency between beliefs and behaviours and consequently tension emerges.

Consumers might also experience cognitive dissonance as a consequence of incongruent identities. As explained earlier, consumers hold various identities that present dynamism in that they can be shaped in order for the individual to fit into various social contexts. As such, a consumer might have a self-concept of being green and thus seek products that comply with this. To support this claim, self-congruity theory proposes that parts of consumer behaviour are determined by the match between a product's value expressive attributes and the consumer's self-concept (Sirgy, 1982).

Several studies have provided support for the hypothesis that consumers purchase products that are congruent with their self-concept (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy & Johar, 1991). Among the considerations is the question of the chosen product communicates the right and/or ideal social self-concept. Thus, products are only bought if they enhance, or at least live up to, the conception consumers have of themselves (Pickton & Broderick, 2005). Self-congruity can thus be viewed as a psychological process in which the consumer compares the self-expressive attributes of a product with the consumer's self-concept.

In relation to cognitive dissonance, the relationship between values, personal norms and self-concept has also proved to be significant. The consistency of behaviours is dependent on the strength of the values held. The stronger these values are, or the more environmentally responsible the consumer perceives oneself, the greater consistency between green behaviours. Such consumers will moreover experience strong personal norms towards maintaining a consistent pattern of green behaviours. Logically, a consumer who possesses weaker green values is more likely to behave inconsistently. An explanation is that this consumer is not equally sensitive to personal norms of behaving green (Thøgersen, 2004).

## | 4. Research Design |

*This chapter will set forth the methodological reasoning for the thesis, commencing with the underpinning scientific philosophies. An overview of the research strategy will be presented including the research design as well as the considerations taken for the chosen approach. Lastly, the research methods utilised in this thesis are described and evaluated in terms of the validity and reliability of the data production.*

### 4.1. Methodological approach

In order to advance the theoretical and practical contributions of the thesis, it is essential to clarify and elaborate the methodological perspectives that are embraced throughout the theoretical framework as well as in the research design. The creation of an appropriate research designs entails elaborative scrutiny of social constructs, as well as the appositional means of inquiring into these (Easterby-Smith, 2002; Bryman and Bell, 2003).

The research design encompasses the proposition of the study and serves as a framework for the following analysis of data. Moreover, as Bryman and Bell (2003:32) note; “a choice of research design reflects decisions about the priority being given to a range of dimensions of the research process”. The selection of an appropriate research design demands a thorough reflection of the ontological and epistemological considerations as well as an overall research strategy that will guide the subsequent design.

Western philosophical traditions have been heavily dominated by positivism, but an occurring contrasting paradigm; social constructionism has entered the philosophical debate and it questions the assumptions of the positivist approach. The key idea of social constructivism is that ‘reality’ is not objective and external but rather social construed. Within this approach the importance of symbolic and subjective experiences is stressed, and it implies that individuals create meaning based upon unique and shared cultural experiences. According to this perspective, consumption is appreciated because the value individuals assign to products helps them create order in their lives (Solomon *et al.* 2006).

Due to the assumption that green consumer behaviour emerges as a consequence of various social actors, such as general society and other consumers as previously explained, the ontology of the thesis is centred on social constructionism (Bryman and Bell, 2003). In this view, the dynamic influences of various factors are acknowledged. Earlier studies sought to bring about clear cause-effect relationships of values, norms and behaviour; however this thesis argues that these simplified versions can be questioned in terms of internal validity (Bryman and Bell, 2003). To elaborate, these studies emphasised the relationships between various variables and somewhat excluded the effects of other factors, hence possibly neglecting important determinants. Through taking a different ontological position, a more open approach towards exploring these factors is advanced. Certainly, values, norms and social relationships as catalysts for green motives, constitute phenomena that are challenging to reveal. The aim of research is then to facilitate consumer contemplation and common-sense thinking and subsequently create meaning of this.

The epistemological stance assesses how knowledge is perceived. Oftentimes, natural sciences adopt a positivistic stance, in which the phenomenon is regarded as an external reality and the best way of providing an understanding is through objective methods rather than subjective interpretation (Easterby-Smith, 2002). As already touched upon in an earlier chapter, much of the existing literature within green consumer behaviour seeks to examine the phenomenon through quantitative methods. Oftentimes, taking such a stand in knowledge production implies a rather neutral role in the creation of data. In this view, it is assumed that the reality of the object of study is found as a separate entity, merely waiting to be uncovered by research. The role of the researcher in this sense is to reveal reality through a positivistic stance (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

The epistemology of this thesis is centred on interpretivism, in which focus is on *understanding* the constituents and causes of green consumer behaviour (Bryman and Bell, 2003). As Weber (1957:88) noted, this stance represents: “A science which attempts the interpretative understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects”.

Inevitably, the exclusion of one epistemological stance in this thesis is not clear cut. Since the phenomenon of green consumers have already been explored through previous studies, its existence has somewhat been accepted as an external reality. Hence, there is an element of positivism as the purpose is to arrive at an understanding of green consumer behaviour, which is subsequently applied to a general understanding of the various causes and constituents. The interpretive element is predominately used as guidance to consumer contemplation, as well as to make interpretive assessments as the subject matter is complex in nature. Similarly, the aim is to strengthen the link of causality between the intrinsic factors and provide a simplified overview, which implies elements of positivism.

## **4.2. Research Strategy**

Bryman and Bell (2003:25) defines research strategy as “[...] a general orientation to conduct business research”. As elucidated in the introductory chapter, the focus of this thesis is to gain further insight into how values, personal norms and identity are prioritised in relation to green consumer behaviour. Hence, in order to acquire increased understanding of these constituents it is appropriate to adopt a qualitative approach. Such research is centred on emphasising words rather than quantitative measures (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002; Bryman & Bell, 2003; Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). It facilitates a process through which a phenomenon can be examined in new contexts and thus assists in furthering the understanding of the phenomena in question. Qualitative approaches aim towards a consensus while remaining open towards new interpretations during data production (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

The task for the researchers is to appreciate different constructions and meanings that people assign to their experiences in relation to green consumer behaviour. The actions and meanings in their social context should be attempted to understand by focusing on what individuals are thinking and feeling, and how they communicate with each other, verbally and non-verbally (Silverman, 1993).

### **4.2.1 Critical Theory**

The reflection on ontological and epistemological stances was greatly influenced by the contemplative and reflexive theoretical approach that is advocated by critical theory. This somewhat radical method stems from the Frankfurt school, which broadly speaking is renowned for its critical views on society and traditional scientific methods (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). This approach has gained popularity within social science due to its focus on subjective human interpretation in addition to traditional scientific approaches.

Critical theory encompasses a qualitative approach to the object of study. Focus is on understanding different objects, contexts and phenomena through inquiring deeply into cognitive structures. This approach is derived from a constructivist ontological stance, which corresponds to the approach that was deemed pertinent for this thesis. An important prerequisite of a critical theoretical approach is that participants should be studied in isolation. Emphasis must be on understanding the individual participant as it is this individual's interpretation of themselves and the cultural reality they assign this (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). As such, critical theory alienates the use of some qualitative methods, such as focus groups and group interviews.

In particular, Habermas (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000) contributions to the field of critical thinking became a source of inspiration during the process of formulating the research question as well as the subsequent theoretical framework. Habermas treats a concept, which he refers to as the 'systems colonisation of the lifeworld' and ideas from this can be identified in this thesis. To elaborate; the idea of 'system' deals with aspects of society that have become somewhat detached from the immediate cultural context. This entails some elements of positivistic thinking and it is often inquired into through economic and scientific measures, which are dominant in traditional research on consumer behaviour and marketing. The 'lifeworld' on the other hand, relates to the interpretive aspects of humans and how these perceive the social sphere and in this aspect their consumption practices. In this light, the SVI and other related theories in the theoretical framework becomes the detached element and the data of this thesis becomes the means for gaining understanding on how individual consumers engage in this world through subjective cognition. Abstract concepts such as values, norms and identity cannot be understood without inquiring deeply into the individual cognitive structures that constitute comprehension of the detached element of consumer behaviour.

The essence of a critical theoretical approach is that it centres on interpretation and reinterpretation of existing empirical studies. In this regard, light is shed on the latter in terms of an incorporation of additional social contexts. In this thesis, the existing empirical research comprise of the SVI and similar studies on values, norms and identities, and the interpretation of these is facilitated by supplementing additional theoretical contributions from the fields of social science, such as consumer culture theory. The motivation for including such a variety of disciplines derives from the 'totality-subjectivity' concept that Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) set forth. The idea herein is that often existing studies focus too narrowly on one specific aspect and thus regarding the overall social context. As the problem discussion dealt with, the SVI provides an extensive framework for assessing existing values, however, a further understanding of its circumstances was identified.

In the creation of a research purpose, critical contemplation was also inherent. The discussion centred on the assumptions that consumers cannot always be regarded as merely idealistic subjects, on the contrary they can be assumed to represent some self-centred values that generate green

consumer behaviour. This notion lies at the centre of a critical approach, which generally focus on posing questions that infringe the normative frame of references in green consumer research.

Albeit being an important inspirational source, some of the elements of critical theory have not become of focus in this study. Power relations in the larger society often become scrutinized by critical theorists who generally hold an opposition to these structures. Taking such a stance demands extensive coverage of historical as well as political aspects in society, and these are beyond the scope as well as the research purpose. However, they have become an object for minor contemplation through notions on the value domains set forth in the theoretical framework.

#### **4.2.2. Iterative Process**

The majority of qualitative studies entail an inductive approach (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Often these studies take a starting point in the observation of an existing phenomenon. Qualitative data is subsequently produced in order to create new theories or apply it to existing theory (Bryman and Bell, 2003). In contrast, a quantitative approach is often characterised by a deductive approach emphasising the testing of a theory followed by confirmation or rejection in order to revise the theory. However, these general approaches to the relationship between theory and research are rarely clear-cut in nature, as both approaches in general entail some elements of the opposing approach. Alvesson & Skjölberg (2000) proposes an alternative approach referred to as *abduction*, which combines the approaches by shifting back and forth between theory and research. This approach is similar to what Bryman & Bell (2003) refers to as an *iterative process*. For clarification purposes the chosen term for this thesis will be iterative process.

The approach that this thesis is centred on regards the production of theory as an iterative process, in which both researchers and studied participants play an active role. Moreover, the catalyst of social factors in green consumer behaviour is viewed as dynamic processes that are produced both by consumers as well as marketers. As Moisander and Valtonen (2006:7) describe,

“the focus of interest is thus on the ways in which both marketers and consumers play a part in producing the cultural world, as well as on the institutional forms and practices through which this takes place”

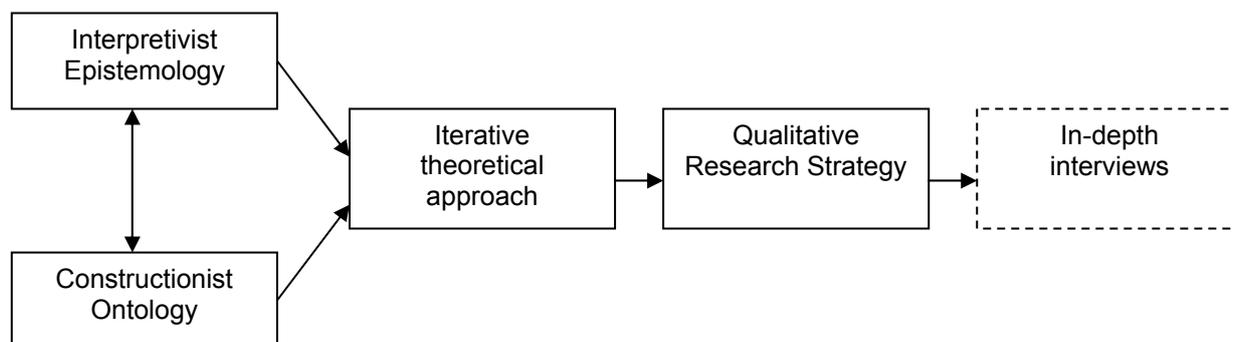
In this view, the object of study does not take a research stance from either a managerial and consumer perspective as the majority of research inclines to; instead these are regarded as being interrelated. To exemplify, norms are constructed through the ongoing processes of communication between marketers, consumers and institutions; hence the object of study can solely be understood by acknowledging these processes and their dynamism.

In line with critical theory, an analysis of extant theories and empirical data deduced in this study allows a reflexive approach to the object of study. This implies that theory and data remains reflexive towards adjustment and interpretation. Thus, for the purpose as well as methodological philosophy of this thesis, an iterative approach, which merges inductive and deductive perspectives, has been assessed as pertinent in order to pose justified merit to the research question.

Moreover, the advantage of taking such an approach is that flexibility in the research process is obtained, simultaneously to supporting reliability. Additionally, iterative processes facilitate

interplay between the production and analysis of data. To specify, analysis commence after some of the data has been produced and the insinuations of that analysis then forms the further steps in the data production (Bryman & Bell, 2002).

| Figure 4 | illustrates how the research design is connected by the philosophical traditions to the choice of method.



| Fig. 4. | An overview of the research design

### 4.3. In-depth interviews

The empirical data in this thesis was deduced through conducting in-depth interviews. Such a method has been deemed particular relevant when the purpose is to remain flexible and to allow a reflective approach. In accordance with the research question set forth, the objective of the interviews was to gain an increased understanding about subjective interpretations of green motives. Thus, there was no call for a large sample size as focus was on allowing enough time, focus and energy into each interview. A total number of thirteen interviews were conducted, and this was assessed as a sufficient number for the purpose and constructionist stance (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002). The interviews were conducted in Danish and subsequently translated into English.

From the interpretivist point of view, interviews not merely serve as a method for gathering data, but rather as a vehicle for generating cultural talk, which can be analysed in order to gain cultural knowledge about the marketplace (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). In this sense, interview participants are understood as actively involved in the process of creating meaningful accounts of social reality. This approach is preferred as the primary purpose of this thesis is to gain insight to individuals' experiences, and it has been assessed that the more appropriate method for obtaining this is by open-ended interviews, in which the participant has opportunity to elaborate on questions in a symbolic interaction with the interviewer (Silverman, 1993). From the interpretivist viewpoint, the social context of the interview in itself is intrinsic to understanding any data that are obtained. This is in coherence with the epistemological stance of interpretivism taken for this thesis, emphasising the understanding of green consumer behaviour and how different social and individual factors influence the motivations for engaging in this. As such, the researchers have attempted to interpret rather than manipulate the data production, as the thesis concerns capturing and understanding people's behaviour rather than testing any hypothesis. Within this orientation, it is assumed that the social world must be interpreted from the perspective of the people being studied.

Attempting to see through the eyes of the interviewees is in line with interpretivism in which the researcher attempts to explore beneath surface appearances (Bryman & Bell, 2003). By taking the position of the interviewees, they might be more willing to reveal things which an outsider could not have retrieved. Personal in-depth interviews offer the advantage of gaining a deeper understanding of green consumer behaviour and the factors influencing this rather than simply revealing a relationship between variables as often sought in quantitative data (Silverman, 1993).

#### **4.3.1. Selection of Interviewees**

As mentioned previously the focal point of this thesis was to examine consumer values as well as personal norms and identity in relation to their influence on green consumer behaviour. As these factors are highly cultural in addition to individual, a specific unit of analysis was necessitated. The focus on green behaviour in this thesis is mainly targeted towards individuals, however these have to be categorised in a cultural context in order to provide a valid result. Therefore, Danish consumers were chosen as focus for the data production. The immediate rationale is that such consumers represent a shared national as well as cultural context, which adds to the internal validity of the thesis.

The motivation for focusing on Danish consumers moreover derives from previous studies conducted either solely on this national segment or as inherent in larger cultural studies. Grunert and Juhl (1995) as well as Thøgersen (1996, 2004) supports the notion that Denmark represent an environmentally conscious culture, and as such is ideal for further investigation into green aspects. In relation to Hofstede's cultural dimensions Denmark represent a culture that scores considerably high on individualism. As elaborated in the theoretical perspective, such cultures often represent environmental values. Moreover, Denmark is characterised by a high level of post-materialism, which has also been deemed as one of the major constituents for green behaviour. A longitudinal study on the impacts of post-materialistic values supported this claim as Denmark proved to constitute the most post-materialistic country among nine advanced European societies (Inglehart, 1995).

The interview selection conditioned participants to be Danish consumers within the age group of 20-35 and with an interest in purchasing green products. The limitation of age-group was not considered particular imperative in terms of understanding green consumer behaviour; however it was preferred as it is argued that young consumers are more prone to the influences of social factors as well as self-expressive values (Solomon *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, this group is an attractive target-group for companies as consumers belonging to this group often use products to communicate certain lifestyles or values (Corrigan, 1997) and thus it can be postulated that they are more willing to seek products with a specific sign-value, for example green products. One thing that needs to be stressed that many of the interview participants belonging to this age-group were students, who may be reluctant to buy green products due to financial scarcity and thus regard this aspect as the main barrier for engaging in green consumption. Nevertheless, the participants were selected due to their previous consumption of green products, which was conditioned to include some level of consistency in their green behaviours.

### **4.3.2. Interview Procedure**

The subsequent section will describe the selected approach for data production as well as explaining the structure of the interviews and how participants were selected.

#### *Phase One: Pilot studies*

In order to evaluate the interview approach as well as the chosen question guidelines two pilot studies were conducted before the actual data production. The chosen test persons were persons within the chosen target group of the actual study in order to evaluate which information it was possible to construct from the questions posed. Furthermore, the pilot studies helped to clarify the nature of openness in the questions as well as addressing potential emerging problems during the interview. The interviewers also gained experience in conducting interviews, which could reduce the risk for interview bias caused by interference of interviewers (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

#### *Phase Two: Sampling*

To produce data, initial contact was made to a small group of individuals which were assessed as having an interest in green consumer behaviour. The initial interview-participants were chosen among acquaintances, which enabled a relaxed interview setting. This facilitated trust as the relationship between the interviewee and researcher was perceived to be equal. The purpose was to ensure that the interviewees were honest about their narratives as opposed to merely describing what they believed the researcher wanted to know (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002).

This contact with interviewees assisted in the further contact with the remainder of the participants. Bryman & Bell (2003) refers to this approach as *snowball sampling*, which entails developing research samples by getting assistance from participants to recruit future participants from their social networks. The snowball sampling technique enabled delimitation of relevant interviewees. Initial contact was made by telephone where the overall topic was introduced in order to facilitate reflection among participants prior to the interview to ensure profound conversations between the interviewee and interviewer. However, elaborative information about the interview themes were not presented as this could impede ingenuous explanations.

#### *Phase three: Data production*

The primary data production was generated within a time period of approximately one week. The average length of each interview was fifty minutes, which enabled in-depth data. During the interviews, the interviewer attempted to, in the widest possible extent, to take over a position of an understanding listener rather than an educating one. The purpose of this approach was to avoid putting social pressure on the interviewee, and attempt to uncover actual behaviour and honesty regarding underlying motives.

The interviews were conducted at the time and locations most convenient for the participants and settings were kept informal and relaxed, in order to facilitate a comfortable ambience. Approximately half of the interviews were conducted in a Danish café setting, and the remainders were conducted in interviewees' homes. All interviews were conducted by the authors of the thesis. Each interview was audio-recorded and subsequently summarised in writings within a short period of time in order to recall the interview-situation as accurate as possible in relation to the non-verbal elements expressed by the interviewee.

### **4.3.3. Critical Incident Technique**

When looking into the value structures and consumer cognition, two main interview approaches are dominant: enquiring into the intentions of future behaviour or actual, past behaviour (Wagner, 1997). Choosing the right approach is crucial as the result will differ greatly in the two interview types.

Research examining future or intended behaviour is also referred to as *hypothetical reasoning* (Wagner, 1997). As described in the introductory chapter, much research has identified a gap between intentions and actual behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980, 1985). Hence, it is postulated that consumers' intended behaviour might not always be conformed to actual behaviour. Moreover, these consumers might not be capable of imagining certain buying situations and which motives would trigger them in these. Wagner (1997) further notes that interviewees might feel embarrassed or intimidated by voicing non-green intentions during an interview on green behaviour.

The purpose of this thesis has been retrieval of consumers' experiences and behaviour in relation to the purchase of green products, thus inquiring into past behaviour has been chosen as the best suitable approach for this study. This approach is also referred to as *Critical Incident Technique*, and has been applied to a great deal of qualitative studies, especially in combination with in-depth interviews (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). One important notion in relation to critical incident technique is using material that can be substantiated due to the criticism of individuals' tendency to use perceptions when rationalising past-behaviour.

Consumer's knowledge about purchase motives and behaviours are developed through actual experiences. As such, these are more accessible and more likely to represent the actual circumstances. Wagner (1997) advocates for such an approach, which draws on *retrospective recall* in which individuals search their memory for recollections of their green behaviour. One of the advantages of choosing this perspective is that the interviewer does not interfere with the cognition and behaviour which occurred in the situation (Wagner, 1997).

Inevitably, there was a risk that consumers were not capable to retrieve past motives and behaviours as the object of study in this thesis is FMCG. These products often constitute habit goods, to which the consumer might not necessarily have applied thorough thought or assessment. In order to comply with this possibility it is imperative to optimise the chances of retrieval. Past behaviour represent more than one value judgements; prior to purchase and post-purchase (Oliver, 1998). The former refers to the desired or preferred values, whereas the latter refers to the evaluation. These two might not necessarily be aligned. For instance, if the consumer evaluates that the product does not meet expectations it causes incongruence between the value judgments. As a consequence, the consumer is more capable of retrieving information about this behavioural example. It is important to note, however, that retrieval is not exclusively possible if the consumer holds a negative evaluation. The rationale is merely that when the consumer can draw from both pre-purchase intentions, actual consumption and post-purchase evaluation, then there is a greater likelihood for a successful retrieval of data that can be linked to the underlying buying motives.

#### 4.3.4. Interview Structure

Albeit open-ended interviews with a minimal of questions was the preferred choice of method, it was perceived necessary to develop questions for direction to ensure retrieval of pertinent information in relation to the interviewees' green consumer behaviour. This choice is supported by Silverman (1993) who notes that posing too few questions might create an interpretive problem for the interviewee regarding what is relevant. Thus, a semi-structured interview guide was developed in order to facilitate subsequent analysis. This method is appropriate in order to comprehend the constructs the interviewee utilises as a basis for developing opinions and beliefs about a particular situation, and to understand the complexity of the behaviour (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). Additionally, the authors found this method most suitable for retrieving information that the participants might be reluctant to be truthful about, for instance by discussing the self-expressive benefits associated with green consumption.

One of the aims for the study was to maintain a critical perspective towards consumers by questioning their motives for engaging in green behaviour. These can be somewhat difficult to retrieve from interviewees, as these may be unconscious or the interviewees might be reluctant to admit these due to cultural or personal issues. For example *The Law of Jante*, which is an unwritten 'law' embedded in the Danish culture exceeding pressure on the level of self-expressiveness for Danish consumers, as it focused on the central theme: "*Don't think you're anyone special or that you're better than us*". This cultural commandment can to some extent be regarded as a social stabiliser in the Danish society as individuals do not wish to deviate too much from others both socially and economically. Consequently, there was a risk of participants being reluctant to admit buying green products for self-expressive reasons, and this barrier was taken into consideration by facilitating an open and informal interview approach.

##### *Interview Guidelines*

In the semi-structured interview format, the interview guidelines were used as a frame of reference, allowing variations dependent on the interviewee. To stimulate discussions, initial questions were kept open-ended. For example, participants were asked to give their definition of a green product. Using this technique, in which interviewees were encouraged to offer personal explanations of particular activities, enabled mutual understandings between the interviewer and the interviewee in order to arrive at the same conceptual meanings (Silverman, 1993). Moreover, this facilitated interviewees to raise important issues not contained in the guidelines, thus allowing a further understanding of the behaviour without imposing leading responses towards desired answers. The focal point was to allow participants to contemplate freely. (Silverman, 1993). In line with the interpretivist way of thinking, open-ended questions were preferred to allow participants to express themselves freely, as Denzin (Silverman, 1993:95) delineates it: "their unique way of defining the world".

Probes were used in order to facilitate elaborative descriptions and contemplations for the interviewees simultaneously to reduce subjective influence from the interviewer. Various probes were employed, such as the following:

- *Basic probes* were used to repeat initial questions when the interviewees were drifting away from the point.
- *Focused probes* were used to obtain specific information by asking questions such as: "What kind of green behaviour do you usually engage in?"

- *Explanatory probes* were used to make interviewees elaborate on vague statements by asking questions ‘how’ and ‘why’.
- *Reflecting or mirroring probes* were also used by repeating the interviewee’s own words to encourage him or her to reconstruct the answer in order to confirm initial interpretation.

During the data production period, it became possible to extort specific patterns from the interviewees’ answers and thus these patterns were used to explore other directions. This is in coherence with the iterative process, in which some analysis take place at the time of the study, and these understandings are incorporated into future interviews to examine developing ideas and understandings (Easterby-Smith *et al.* 2002).

In addition to the interview guidelines, the interview also comprised a structured list of possible green FMCG. The components of the list were inspired by an earlier study on green consumer behaviour by Wagner (1997:71). The motivation for including such a list was to facilitate retrieval of prior purchases. It was postulated that it could be difficult for participants to retrieve motives for engaging in green behaviour if there were no specific products exemplified. The rationale was deduced from the idea that FMCG in a general sense represent low-involvement processes as well as habitual purchases, and therefore motives would be difficult to reveal without such a list. Finally, it also served the purpose of facilitating subsequent analysis in relation to comparison of values and norms.

| Appendix 1 | provides an overview of the interview guideline including the list of green FMCG introduced to the participants.

As closure, the interviewees were asked to describe themselves as well as bringing in aspects of their upbringing in relation to family structure, family values what they could retrieve of memories in terms of habits or rituals which may had been internalised. The purpose of gaining insight to this information was to examine if any values or habits internalised through upbringing also became apparent in the interviewee’s current behaviour or values held.

#### **4.4. Methodological Reflexivity**

The decision of adopting a qualitative research method is dependent on the potential contribution by this method to solving the selected research problem (Wagner, 1997). In accordance with the ontological and epistemological stance, it was assessed that a qualitative research method was the best alternative for providing a qualified explanation of the research problem. Qualitative research, however, cannot be conducted without being somewhat influenced by subjective values and biases.

##### *Interview bias*

Interview bias is important to pay attention to, as the process of conducting interviews may influence the interviewees’ narratives and consequently affect the validity and reliability of the study. Easterby-Smith *et al* (2002) argue that in terms of in-depth interviews this might be somewhat different. Located in the social constructionist paradigm, in-depth interviews follows the assumption that there is no objective truth which can be revealed, and hence no biases affect the interview. However, there is a risk that interviewers may impose their own frame of reference on the participants during the interviews as well as during interpretation.

In order to reduce interview bias, probes were employed as an interview technique to improve vague statements by encouraging the participants to give a more detailed answer to a question and elaborate on the previous response (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). Probes were perceived useful for generating conversation e.g. if the participants did not understand the question(s) asked or if their answers needed elaboration.

#### *Interviewer's role*

The interviewers attempted to take on the role as participant in order to interpret the situation. Following the interpretivist approach taken in this thesis, interviews were considered as social events based on mutual participation between the interviewee and interviewer (Silverman, 1993). However, it should be mentioned that the researchers are not professionally trained in conducting interviews, which might have implications for the findings and the conduction of interviews. Generally, bias was attempted avoided by reflexivity, in which the researchers actively engaged in critical self-reflection about the predispositions one is likely to possess. Through this process of reflexivity, the researchers became more self-aware and consequently endeavoured to control their biases.

As interviews were conducted in Danish, it may have had minor interpretive distortions, as the thesis is completed in English. However, language and dialogue enclose elements of nuances which can be hard to contemplate when the language is another than the native language. Thus, it was assessed that interviewees would be able to express themselves more freely in Danish. However, to reduce this possible bias, interview summaries were cautiously translated into English in order to minimise the risk of misinterpretations.

## **4.5. Method Evaluation**

It is acknowledged that all research methods enclose advantages and disadvantages. Consequently, the researchers must acknowledge and identify the weaknesses of the chosen method and attempt to strengthen it within their capabilities. An appropriate method for evaluating this is by assessing research reliability and validity (Silverman, 1993; Wang & Minor, 2008). In general, it appears that there is some reluctance to apply concepts of validity and reliability to interpretive and constructionist research as this may imply an approval of a positivist reality (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). Nonetheless, as qualitative research is increasingly widespread, the magnitude is gradually more acknowledged as qualitative researchers need to develop power to persuade others that their results are of significance.

### **4.5.1. Reliability**

Reliability is described as the level of consistency within the data and to which extent the results are repeatable (Silverman, 1993; Bryman & Bell, 2003). Attempting to achieve reliability through interviews can be accomplished by various means. The methods adopted for this thesis encompassed pre-testing interview guidelines via pilot-studies. Additionally, the researchers prepared for the interviews by studying interview techniques to reduce risk of imposing bias.

Reliability can be assessed in terms of *external* and *internal* reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2003). External reliability refers to the extent to which a study can be replicated. This criterion is difficult to achieve within qualitative research, as it is perceived to be unfeasible to recreate the exact same social setting as the initial study. The degree of external validity for this thesis can thus be questioned as the data production consists of semi-structured in-depth interviews. However, the main questions can as such be replicated. Internal reliability can be enhanced by using more than one observer during the data production. This concept is similar to the notion of inter-observer consistency, emphasising that in situations where a great deal of subjective evaluation is required, the use of more observers can facilitate consistency in the findings (Bryman & Bell, 2003). In relation to this concept, this thesis is argued to have high internal reliability. This is postulated due to the notion of both researchers' presence during the time of conducting interviews to ensure a mutual understanding of the interviewees' narratives and behaviours during interviews.

#### **4.5.2. Validity**

A pertinent criterion of research is validity, which encompasses the integrity of the findings generated from research (Bryman & Bell, 2003). However, the issue of validity does carry some connotations of measurement, which is not considered to have wide occupation within qualitative research. This implies that there should be taken an alternative stance when assessing the validity of qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The underlying philosophical viewpoints are also important in considering what constitutes valid qualitative research. According to Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2003) being positioned within the constructionist viewpoint, validity is determined by examining whether the study clearly gains access to experiences of those in the research situation.

Similarly to reliability, validity can also be assessed through *internal* and *external validity* (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Internal validity is usually perceived as being the main strength of qualitative research. It deals with the congruency between the researchers' observations and the theoretical concepts that emerge. Findings were obtained by examining consumer motives via in-depth interviews, which ensured detailed information about values, personal norms and identity in relation to green consumption. Furthermore, by combining relevant theories with the findings, it is argued that this study has high internal validity (Bryman & Bell, 2003). By keeping an open mind while conducting interviews, the researchers were able to understand the interviewees in their social settings and thus enable a high level of congruency between ideas and observations.

One of the main disadvantages of qualitative research, which also applies for this study, is the level of external validity. It refers to the extent to which the findings can be generalised in other social contexts. Since the sample size of this study is relatively small compared to quantitative research; it is difficult to generalise the findings. In order for this study to represent external validity, the number of participants should be higher.

#### **4.6. Analysing qualitative data**

The production of data and subsequent analysis has followed an iterative process in which there is a constant interplay between interpretation and conceptualising theory (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002; Bryman & Bell, 2003). Thus, the analysis of data produced during interviews followed several processes. These processes were inspired by grounded analysis, in which data are categorised into

important emergent themes. The advantage of such an approach is that it facilitates openness to interpretations as well as allows a change of focus if data pointed towards new directions. Grounded analysis is also appropriate for capturing the complexity of contexts, which is particularly suitable for examining green consumer motives and their constituents (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Albeit, green consumer behaviour has been vastly studied, grounded analysis can provide foundation for an alternative view through its open-ended and interactive approach relating both to theory and data production.

## 4.7. Stages of the Analysis

### *Stage One: Coding*

Due to the limited time frame, interviews were composed into summaries directly from the audio recordings. Traditionally, audio recordings are transferred directly into full transcripts; however this is a very time demanding approach and not crucial unless there is a large amount of researchers who need access to the full data for the following analysis. The summaries entailed a level of analysis as 'dross' was discarded (Burnard, 1991). This process involves selection of relevant themes and exclusions of superfluous information, and as such the first stage of interpretation has commenced. As Bryman & Bell (2003) note, summaries assist in conceptualising ideas and thereby avoiding that researchers lose track of initial thinking on different subjects. This type of coding is focused on conceptualising broad categories derived from abstract meanings expressed by interviewees during time of the data production (Easterby-Smith et al, 2002). This can be described as *selective coding*, which entails selecting a core category and systematically relating it to other categories (Bryman & Bell, 2003). 'Consumer values' was chosen as a central category, to which related themes were subsequently connected.

### *Stage Two: Categorising data*

Important emerging themes during the interviews were categorised in relation to 'consumer values' to encompass a wider perspective. This approach entailed a 'funnelling' process, in which many themes were identified and included in order to keep an open mind towards the results (Burnard, 1991). After having conducted all interviews, the importance of these themes was discussed and subsequently delimited to constitute merely the pertinent themes in relation to the research purpose. The interviews showed additional significant themes that deserved extra attention, albeit not having received great attention in the theoretical framework.

The following analysis of the interviews consisted of additional headlines that were not treated in isolation in the theoretical framework. The rationale for dividing them into separate sections is due to the importance they were assessed during the initial stage of the analysis. In the analysis, the findings from the interviews were simultaneously connected to the theoretical notions that were set forth in the theoretical framework. Such an approach is suitable for a constructionist approach in which data and theory are treated as a dynamic process in order to present a more readable and manageable result (Strauss, 1987; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2002). Hence, it became possible to extract specific patterns and ideas from categories and thus exclude some categories from the findings.

### *Stage Three: Developing new concepts*

After having elucidated and categorised findings in relation to the initial stages of the analysis, it was necessary to advance to a deeper interpretation and new conceptualisations. Thus, a conceptual

model was developed which entailed a structure that was aligned with the new empirical constructs as well as applicable concepts from the SVI.

## | 5. Empirical Data and Analysis |

*This chapter introduces the empirical data in terms of presenting the interview participants according to their motivational values held. This was assessed pertinent in relation to the following analysis. Subsequently, an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data is set forth and connected to concepts from the theoretical framework.*

### 5.1. Presentation of Empirical Data

In order to facilitate comprehension of the values hold by the interviewees it has been assessed appropriate to include a brief introduction of the thirteen interviewees prior to the analysis. Their names are referred to in the subsequent analysis, which facilitates identification of the narratives and quotes that are brought forward. In addition to presenting the background the interview presentation also includes the dominant motivational values that were interpreted as representing each individual. These were deduced based on the narratives and descriptions the individuals expressed, as well as when they directly referred to motivational values such as ‘healthy’, ‘responsible’ etcetera.

#### | Gitte |

The first interviewee is Gitte who is 29 years old and works at a major Danish company within wind power solutions in Aarhus, which is a larger provisional city in Denmark. She lives alone in an owned apartment. She grew up in a small provisional town and describes her family values as comprising political activity and responsibility through deliberate choices. Her green purchases encompass numerous product types and she buys consistently within some of these categories. Gitte’s main motivational values have been identified as: ‘responsibility’, ‘animal welfare’ and ‘health’.

#### | Julie |

Julie is 25 years old, currently studying in Aarhus where she lives in an apartment with her boyfriend. She grew up in a smaller provisional town, which she describes as idyllic and where her family would often go to nearby small farms to buy fresh organic fruits. In addition to such practices, she does not regard her childhood as being particularly focused on green behaviour, however she was taught to behave responsibly through consumption. The main motivational values are: ‘health’ and ‘symbolism’, the latter refers to the symbolic use of green products to communicate a wiser choice as well as nostalgia – back to basics appeal.

#### | Freja |

Freja is 25 years old and lives in Copenhagen where she is currently on maternity leave from her studies as a nursery teacher. She grew up with politically active parents, who were rather idealistic and concerned about green behaviour. Her pregnancy has caused an increased focus on health issues and she is motivated to buy green products due to their perceived purity. In general, Freja’s motives centre on: ‘health’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘animal welfare’.

### | Lars |

Lars is 25 years old and studies in Aarhus where he lives in a single rented apartment. He grew up in a smaller provisional town and does not regard his childhood home as being focused on green responsibility and behaviours, other than turning off electronic appliances and minimise water consumption, but this was primarily due to the economic perspective. Lars represents somewhat inconsistent behaviours as he is very price sensitive, however, he does hold green values and is particularly prone to normative pressure. His main motivations derive from: 'Convenience', 'obligation', and 'status', the latter as a means for differentiation.

### | Lone |

Lone is a 25 year old student who lives with her boyfriend in a rented apartment in Aarhus. She was brought up on a farm and describes her childhood as posing great emphasis on animal welfare as well as natural products. In relation to the latter, she refers to an organic orchard her family had, and in which she enjoyed spending time. Lone's green purchases cover several product categories and in some of these she always buys the same green products. Lone's motivational values are described as: 'responsibility', 'health' and 'animal welfare'.

### | Janne |

Janne is 24 years old and studies in Aarhus where she also lives in a rented apartment with her boyfriend. She was raised in Aarhus in a joint family as her parents are divorced. She describes her mother's family as not focusing on green issues, whereas her concern is assessed as imposed from the father's family, which is more centred on green responsibility. Janne's green behaviours mostly involve normative purchases as she does not hold particularly strong green values. However she is concerned about her health, and as such her main motivations has been interpreted as being 'health' and 'obligation'.

### | Sanne |

Sanne is 26 years old and works as a social education worker in Aarhus where she also currently resides. She grew up with her mother in a smaller provisional town. She describes her childhood as being 'safe' and 'cosy' and in which responsibility towards the environment was highly valued. Sanne possesses a great concern for other people and this is expressed through Fair-trade purchases. Her main value motivations are described as: 'health', 'animal welfare', 'concern' and 'experience', in which the latter is obtained through Fair-trade products.

### | Josefine |

Josefine is 24 years old studying to become a nurse. She lives in Copenhagen in an apartment with her boyfriend. Her upbringing represented a large joint family in which green responsibility was in focus, however not excessively. She purchases green products within a few categories mainly due to concern about her health, but also in order to meet social expectations. The main motivational values are thus described as: 'health', 'concern' and 'managing relationships'.

### | Mads |

The youngest interviewee was Mads who is a 23 year old resident of Aarhus where he studies and lives in a single apartment. His family is described as being rather health conscious, and as such green products have been introduced to him at an early stage as they were perceived healthier than conventional products. Mads does not represent a particularly adherent green consumer, however he occasionally purchases green products in order to be healthy and feel good about doing a desirable

deed. His main motivations for buying green are centred on: 'health', 'responsibility' and 'obligation'.

### | Marie |

Marie is a 26 year old social worker currently living in Copenhagen. She was raised in a provincial city with her parents and two brothers. Family traditions were centred on cultivating fruit and vegetables and green behaviour was prioritised highly. Her green behaviours are mainly focused on being healthy and this is reflected in her purchases, which are dominated by additive free products. Her motivations to buy green products encompass feelings of: 'health' and 'expectancy'.

### | Louise |

Louise is a 25 year old student temporarily living with her mother and step-father in a smaller provisional city. Her upbringing is described as 'safe' and with considerable focus on eating healthy food. Currently, Louise mainly purchases green products because it is a family value, but in addition she actively seeks cosmetics that are additive free due to health concerns. Her motivational values towards green products are represented as: 'health' and 'safety'.

### | Nanna |

Nanna is 24 years old and studies in Aarhus where she lives in an apartment with her boyfriend. She does not retrieve any green values in her upbringing, which consisted of a nuclear family. Instead, Nanna assesses her green behaviour as being imposed by her boyfriend who is very concerned about the environment and health. She is motivated to buy green products due to: 'health', 'obligation' as well as for its 'sign-value' as she perceives green products as communicating reserves of energy.

### | Rikke |

Rikke is 34 years and currently on maternity leave with her five months old baby. She lives with her husband in a smaller provisional city. She grew up with health concerned parents who also took pride in cultivating own fruits and vegetables. Rikke regards green behaviour as 'trendsetting' and she admits to sometime buying green products due to their sign-value. However, as a mother she is also highly concerned about the welfare of her family, and as such green products are highly appreciated. Rikke's value motivations centre on: 'health', 'concern' and 'symbolism'.

## 5.2. Empirical Analysis

An insight into the minds of green consumers was advanced during the in-depth studies that this study comprised of. During the interviews some interesting patterns emerged, which had an impact on the subsequent analysis. In order to facilitate comparable aspects with the theoretical framework, the following analysis is structured correspondingly. However, the methodological approach entails flexibility, which allows an emergence of new perspectives. Therefore, additional interpretive findings have been incorporated below in order to set forth a more wide-encompassing picture of green consumer motives.

The structures of values, norms and identity that were identified during the interviews were generally supported by the theoretical framework. In order to comprehend, as well as communicate the complexity that constitutes these factors, it was necessary to adopt a structural approach, which

implies regarding value systems and structures as cause-effect relationships. This was advanced by interpreting the antecedents of the motivational values that were expressed during the interviews through such a stance. In order to enhance understanding about green consumer motives, the empirical analysis thus consists of the following main categories: (1) value systems; (2) internalised values; (3) situated green behaviours; (4) identity and (5) personal norms.

### **5.2.1. Value Systems**

During the course of the interviews it became palpable that merely determining the motives for green behaviour through the use of the contrasting value motivations of Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement was not adequate. The interviewees expressed various motives, which were dependent on the social and situational context, as well as availability of other products, such as conventional products as opposed to green products. Different motives were also expressed for various product types, and as such a general consumer motive could not be identified. A pattern that was identified in relation to this during the interviews was that participants turned to different value systems when determining the motivation for green products. As such, a negotiation between the values seemed to take place dependent on context. This is coherent with the concept of value systems that Rokeach (1973) set forth. To reiterate, such systems refer to the categorisation of priorities that people utilise to simplify their values dependent on the situations.

As touched upon in the methodology, interviewees were asked to describe the overall motives for engaging in green behaviour as well as, along the course of the interview, elaborate on the motives for valuing green products in certain contexts. These answers were interpreted into both terminal and instrumental values. Common for all interviewees was that they held strong terminal values of 'peace', 'welfare', 'righteousness' and a 'healthy life'. As such, there seemed to be no differentiation among the interviewees in terms of what they valued overall in life. In relation to the instrumental values, which to recapitulate, represent the means for achieving the terminal goals, there were some variations in these, albeit representing common themes. The most mentioned instrumental values were 'health', 'responsibility', 'sustaining good social relationship', 'concern' – towards others and animals and 'compliance'. The latter refers to norms as well as individual expectations. Additional instrumental values that were also referred to encompass 'status', 'symbolism', 'safety', and 'experience'. One of the interviewees expressed that he regarded green products as being a means for communicating status as he perceived it as being superior to conventional products, and as such he communicated that he had made a superior choice when opting for green products:

Lars:           When buying green products I show that I have made a choice and deliberately not chosen other products [non-green], I have rejected the easy and common product.

In a similar sense, two other interviewees regarded green products as representing prestige, which qualifies as one of their instrumental value motivations for buying green products:

Sanne:           There is some prestige in buying fair-trade products. It looks fancy when a person has such products in the fridge.

Julie:           Green products equal the best quality, in the sense that they express prestige.

In the following quotes Julie further supports this sign of prestige by indicating that she wants other people to regard her as representing a health conscious consumer, to which the green products become a symbol:

- Julie: I sometimes buy organic juice at café's...no additives and fantastically organic (laughs)...and in a glass bottle to look genuine...um, generally I tend to buy the rustic looking glass bottle, it looks cleaner than for example a Gatorade.
- Interviewer: Do you want to communicate something to other people?
- Julie: Yes, for sure... to show off a glass bottle, you can almost imagine it being wrapped in a brown paper bag, from a farm two km. out of town, instead of showing off a Gatorade; that is so much more preferable.
- Interviewer: What would you like other people to think?
- Julie: I do like that other people can see that I buy green [fruits], I think it looks healthy, and I think healthy is intelligent, so yes I like people seeing that.

In a general sense, the interviewees expressed that the above instrumental value motivations were dominant when buying green products, however when interviewees were asked to contemplate on past situations in which they were faced with the decision of purchasing a green product it was obvious that these instrumental values do not always dominate.

When explaining a situation in which they wanted to choose the green product, but finally opted for conventional products a common pattern emerged: the interviewees contrasted green products with alternative non-green products in order to reach a decision. For instance in relation to the above passage, Julie subsequently describes that although she holds symbolism as a motivation for choosing green products, her motivational value of 'taste' is more dominant:

- Julie: ...but then again, if I want a coke, then I want a coke and then I don't really care what other people think...I mean a coke is not particularly green (laughs)

This factor points towards the symbolic value, or the prestige factor being less important than taste. Later during this interview the factor reappeared in several situations, where Julie described that she would often choose the product that she thought was tastier, whether it was conventional or green, and in this sense alienates other desirable factors of an opposing product.

A shift in value priorities seemed to represent the majority of the interviewees, and particularly price was mentioned as being a more important conclusive factor in the buying decision. However, some of the motivational values seemed to have higher priority than others on a general level. For instance, 'health' was one motivational value that had higher priority for the majority of the interviewees. This can be explained by the indication that the interviewees were more involved in health issues and expressed to actively seek information about healthy products. One interviewee explained that she often reads scientific articles and thereby assesses which products she should buy. Such information has often led her to develop strong brand preference which is rarely changed. In this light, her strong preference for choosing products that benefit her health is more dominant than the barrier of price.

In relation to health, there was communicated a clear linkage to green products. Some interviewees assessed this by mentioning that they expected green products to contain fewer additives, which

were perceived as being harmful to oneself. As an example, Louise described her motives for buying green food products as being due to this health perspective:

Louise: “We [household] have just decided to buy ecological vegetables in order to avoid taking in various harmful additives etcetera and in this regard the environmental factors ‘only’ come second”

Moreover, this statement implies that health has a higher priority than does the environment. She later elaborated this perspective by adding that she regards additives as constituting a factor which is transparent, meaning that the perceived health effectiveness is higher than for conventional products. Such an evaluation is deduced by comparing green products with conventional products on the basis of additives and it presents a stronger differentiation factor to Louise than an ‘ecological’ label would have. The factor of transparency also served as an important factor for other interviews, for instance Lars supported his motive for buying ecological oats by saying that he perceives these as being raw ingredients and therefore comprising a more transparent product:

Lars: I buy ecological oats because, I think, that it’s a more natural product, so it seems a bit closer, I mean it’s more of a raw product.

Two factors seemed to serve an important factor on the prioritisation of the values; time and mood, respectively. In relation to the former, some interviewees expressed concern for a desire to gain more information about the green product before purchasing it. Moreover, time was linked to convenience and often green products were perceived as being less available than conventional products and therefore they were not actively sought. One interviewee described that in some periods where she is particularly busy she neglects green products. She connects green products to requiring the reserves of energy, both to look for certain green products, but also to have time to enjoy them. As such, her motive was also dependent on her mood as she sometimes does not possess the reserves of energy to consider environmental factors. The notion of mood also imposed an important factor for another interviewee who described his behaviours as being dependent on whether he feels like it on a specific day:

Lars: Often it’s just like; this type of product doesn’t necessarily have to be green...it’s more about what is in front of me at a certain time...

Interviewer: Can you explain what you mean...

Lars: Um...I mean it’s often a coincidence... sometimes the green products appeal to me, other times ...it’s like the more time I have; the more I think about buying green.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Lars: I think it is because I have more time to think about, like the broader picture.

In general, interviewees indicated that they purchased more green products when they had more time and felt good about themselves. As such, green products seem to require time for the consumer to be able to contemplate.

### **5.2.2. Value Priorities Based on Product Function**

There was also a strong indication of the Self-Transcendent and Self-Enhancement motives being dependent on the need that the consumer sought fulfilled. In the theoretical framework two main needs were set forth; utilitarian and hedonic. As already mentioned, two interviewees expressed stronger green motives for products that were closer to 'raw ingredients', namely vegetables and oats. As such, these products were perceived as being cleaner than conventional products, and due to their utilitarian need they were assessed as representing a better option. In this light, the interviewees did not assess any personal costs as being incurred and thereby evaluated the green product as an 'easy way to contribute'.

Some interviewees expressed Self-Transcendent motives; however these did not occur in isolation. A universal motive could be the motivational driver but in order for the consumer to actually buy the product it must meet certain standards. These standards were often set by comparing the green products to conventional products based on the ingredients in the products, such as additives. Thus, in order for the Self-Transcendent motive to become more salient, it must be accompanied by additional motives that the consumer feels contribute more to personal benefits, such as health. In the following passage the interviewee expresses such a condition, where her initial motive is based on universalism but subsequently supported by a more self-centred motive:

Gitte: I always buy ecological milk  
Interviewer: Why?  
Gitte: Because the cows have been treated better, they've had outdoor access...but also because I have read some studies that prove that there are some active ingredients and a higher concentration in ecological milk...and it's something I drink everyday so that also influences my choice...

Some products also seemed to appeal to more hedonic needs, such as a need for an experience or story. These were often generated from stronger universal motives as opposed to utilitarian products. The Self-Transcendent motives were mainly centred on Fair-trade products, which were required to tell a story about the processes behind the products, in order for the consumer to feel fully motivated to buy it. In the following passage, an interviewee expresses her need for a story in order for her utilitarian motive to be activated:

Sanne: In some way I feel that I do something, that I make a difference, even though I might not do so by buying organic rice cakes (laughs)...I just think it has become 'in', it's in to be an eco-consumer [...] kind of bohemian-style, back to the seventies [...] there's also eco-clothing, that is fantastic! Eco-cotton, where there's a story behind it, and I think that is important today...that there's a story behind the products we buy [...] I have just adopted an orang-utan in Borneo, symbolic adoption, but I have just received an adoption certificate and a picture of my little kid [orang-utan] and I get newsletters about how she's doing [...] to me it is important that there is a story behind it, that you know what has happened all the way, that you know how the products have been manufactured... so you don't just buy a product and you don't really know how it was produced...  
Interviewer: Does that give you a certain feeling?  
Sanne: yes, it makes me feel content...makes me smile!  
Interviewer: So you think about the whole process...

Sanne: I really hope that when I buy a Fair-trade product the workers have received a proper salary, like for instance the wine growers...I really hope so, but I can't be sure...but I buy them anyway because I hope it will make a difference in those countries...

The hedonism that was sought for some products thus seems to stem from a need to communicate a story as well as concern for others. The interviewees that expressed such concern linked this to a lack of transparency for many products. They described that they often perceived green products as being rather opaque and as such they did not have strong faith in their effectiveness or differentiation factor. Therefore, they sought a more emotional appeal, which they found more convincing than scientific facts.

### **5.2.3 Internalised Values**

Due to the complexity and unconscious structures that encompass values, interviewees were asked to describe their childhood and family values. Based on these descriptions comparisons to current behaviours were advanced and interpreted in order to reach a fuller understanding of the deeper values. This approach was chosen due to the theoretical notions that values are internalised at an early stage, and as such childhood and family values were assumed to still dominate.

Common for the interviewees was how they automatically drew comparisons from their childhood homes to current behaviours. These were often centred on habitual practices such as saving water while brushing teeth, turning off electronic equipment, but also general green purchases had been transferred to the present behaviours. As one expressed:

Julie: I don't think my mum really knows that she has transferred her green behaviour to me, just that often I hear my boyfriend say "so [mother's name]", because I behave like my mum all the time

In this example it is clear that the interviewee is convinced that her mother's behaviours have had a direct effect on her own current behaviours. She exemplified this with how she reuses rain water for watering outdoor plants and to avoid fabric softener. These factors were imposed early by her mother and have remained dominant in Julie's current behaviours. She also noted that she thinks that it is highly unlikely that these behaviours will change and that she expected them to become even more dominant when she has a house and garden on her own.

Another interviewee described how her childhood home values were to be responsible towards the environment and take a political standpoint in such matters. When she subsequently described how she presently ensures to turn off water while brushing teeth it is a direct transference from the family norms during her childhood. In a similar sense, Louise described her family values during the childhood to centre on being 'safe'. In her current behaviours this is reflected in her purchases of green products that are additive free and safe for herself.

Moreover, some interviewees described that in their childhood home there was no significant focus on green products, which may point towards an explanation of inconsistent behaviour as green consumer habits were not internalised during upbringing. For example Janne who was brought up in a divorce-family, explained that her mother did not focus particularly on green products as compared to her father's family who had greater interest in green products and behaviour. This

division between values might be interpreted as an indicator of her current inconsistent green behaviours.

In a general sense there seems to be a strong connection between the values and norms that the interviewees were brought up with and their current behaviours. This points towards that the stronger the focus on green issues have been during the childhood, the more stable and consistent green behaviours at present. In this regard, green behaviour is not performed as much as for contemplation towards the environment; rather they entail internalised habits that are rarely questioned. When delving further into this phenomenon some parallels to terminal and instrumental values can be drawn. All interviewees appeared to hold terminal values of wishing to preserve peace and a clean environment; however the instrumental values varied greatly. The interviewees that were brought up with a strong focus on the environment, such as Freja and Marie, maintained more Self-Transcendent values as means for achieving terminal values of Universalism. However, for the less committed interviewees, there seemed to be a move towards more Self-Enhancement motives for contributing to the environment. In this light, these consumers regarded self-centred behaviours as representing the means for preserving an ideal state. This might be explained by the lack of transparency they perceived as encompassing green products, and therefore they regarded individual health as a more manageable method for contributing.

#### **5.2.4. Perception of green products**

As set forth in the methodology, the purpose of asking interviewees to explain their perceptions of green products was to reduce subjective perceptions of the interviewers and moreover to examine if there was a relation between the various perceptions and interviewees' green behaviours. Findings indicated a commonality between the interviewees, who held rather clear ideas about what constitutes a green product. It also became clear that there was a strong connection between these perceptions and individual behaviours and values.

One interviewee described her perception of green products rather broadly, which was mirrored in her consumption habits, where she buys products that both possess ecological factors and animal welfare, such as milk and barn eggs:

Lone: A green product is something with an ethical thought behind it, not necessarily ecological but can also include fair-trade and considerations of animal welfare, and also it must be less harmful to the environment

Compared to Lone, Lars presented a narrower perception of green products. However, similarly to Lone this perception also reflected his green behaviours. He represented a less consistent pattern of green buying behaviours and this can partly be explained by his hesitation and doubt about what constitute green products. It is clear that although he sometimes buys green products it is not something he is a strong adherent to, nor does place great emphasis on it:

Lars: A green product? I guess it's something that observes some standards, such as not being Genetically Modified. I guess it should also be ecological...but it doesn't include working conditions [fair-trade]... I only think in terms of pollution factors.

In relation to the description of green products, Janne referred merely to ecological products without being provided with any clues from the interviewer. When the conversation continued and more issues were touched upon, she also referred to fair trade products and environmentally friendly products. However, the product groups revealed that Janne's green buying behaviour is mainly focused around buying ecological products. This could indicate that Janne is more likely to buy green products that are equivalent her perception of them, namely ecological products.

The connection between perceptions and the interviewees' behaviours or habits indicates that they seek to act in accordance with what they perceive as being green products. Albeit Lars does not behave green in a consistent pattern, such as buying the same kind of green products every time, it does correspond to his rather doubtful attitude towards green products. Moreover, he does not value fair-trade products, or other products that focus on fair working conditions, and this corresponds to his perception of green. As such, he implicitly justified not buying green products for the sake of helping other people through stating that he did not assess that to be an important factor. Although this perspective has strong connections to the concept of 'cognitive dissonance', it seems to present a different perspective. Cognitive dissonance refers to the intrinsic need to behave consistently with one's beliefs. However, the perception of green products does not necessarily represent beliefs; rather they indicate a delimitation of beliefs. It appears that the interviewees deliberately had chosen to delimit such beliefs in order to minimise cognitive dissonance. As such, the perception of green products indicates a resemblance with values as none of the interviewees mentioned perspectives of green products that did not correspond to the value motivations they held.

### **5.2.5. Situated green values**

During the interpretation of the internalised values, another interesting phenomenon emerged. As the interviewees in general regarded their current behaviours, and particularly habits, to be a reflection of what they were taught during their childhood, a gap between values at home and in other settings was identified. Whereas the values and norms that were inflicted during the childhood had a great impact on behaviours in the homes, it did not seem to represent a consistent pattern. When the interviewees were asked to describe how the values they held towards green behaviours in other settings than their homes there was a general tendency to 'neglect' or disregard the importance of being green.

Gitte, who described herself as being a consistent green consumer in relation to food products, admitted that when she is eating out she does not consider if the food has been prepared with green raw ingredients as she normally adheres to ensure when she is at home. She explained this as a lack of transparency and trust in the food she is being served when she is out. In a similar sense, Marie explained that she is not aware or prioritises green issues when being either at work or at a restaurant:

Marie:           Actually, I have never considered if the products at a restaurant were ecological now that we discuss this [...] I know that there are some ecological restaurants, but it is not that I deliberately go there for that reason

These inconsistent behaviours from different situated contexts indicate that green values are more evident in some settings than others. Namely, the *home* appears to be the centre for the expression

or valuing of green products as well as behaviours. Several of the interviewees explicitly expressed a feeling of content and gratification when utilising green products at home or the act of bringing them home subsequent to shopping:

Sanne: I feel good about myself when buying green products... when I come home and put the products in my cupboards, it's a great feeling... it brings a smile to my face; fair-trade, ecological, barn eggs, fantastic!

Gitte: I can get a kick out of buying really good green products and return home knowing that, yes now I am really going to spoil myself (smiles)

It is interesting to observe how the interviewees experienced a strong sense of self-fulfilment by returning home with green products and place them in the home. This might be explained by the assumption that concern for the environment or other people has been imposed in the childhood, and therefore the interviewees regarded the home as being the centre for such concern. In this light, the process of buying green products and achieving a state of content when bringing them home represents a *symbolic process* in that green products become the means for recreating the value settings that were internalised during the childhood.

The internalised values were also reflected in certain product categories, such as ecological eggs and milk, which had turned into a habitual purchase they barely considered. Freja even considered it as a general norm to buy barn eggs and described a situation in which she had to compromise with her internalised values. This caused a feeling of unhappiness as she felt it as conflicting with her internalised values. This feeling seemed to be reinforced as the situation took place in her home which went completely against her internalised values:

Freja: Eggs from battery chicken I think is just common that you don't buy this... We had a common breakfast the other day and someone brought a tray of eggs from battery chickens and now they are in my fridge... Of course we use them, but I am taught that this is another form of eggs. It's kind of silly, but this is how I feel. I don't feel good about them being in my fridge, they just have to go

Inevitably, this observation is not all-inclusive. Some interviewees described their childhood homes as not representing environmentally responsible values. As an example, Lars described his family home as not focusing on green behaviour, however emphasis was put on saving energy due to economical aspects. Moreover, he explained that some products that were bought served as habitual processes and were never questioned. Hitherto, Lars continuously purchases these products, which encompass a specific environmentally friendly washing detergent as well as barn eggs. Moreover, Lars justified some of his green behaviours as being centred on the economic perspective, such as saving costs by using energy saving light bulbs, and this motivational value was imposed at an early stage in the childhood.

### **5.2.6. Identity**

The purpose of asking questions such as 'What would you like to communicate through the green products you buy?' was to retrieve the interviewees' perception about their ideal social identity of themselves. As elucidated in the theoretical framework, an ideal social identity relates to a visualised image an individual seeks others to have of him or herself. As such, this does not

represent the real identity the interviewee holds, but rather relates to an ideal identity with whom they wish to be identified in social networks. This notion is interesting in this study because ideal identity can be seen as an intrinsic motivation to engage in green consumer behaviour. Hence, the individual engages in green consumer behaviour in order to move closer towards the person he or she aspires to be. This motivational function directs the behaviour, and thus when consumers engage in green consumer behaviour a deeper self-satisfaction can be achieved through the direction towards an ideal identity and awareness that the person is acting consistent with one's values. Drawing parallels from instrumental and terminal values, ideal identity can be seen as a terminal value where the consumer, through instrumental values for example green behaviours, attempts to move towards an ideal end-state or perception of identity such as a responsible person.

As expected, there was a general pattern among the interviewees that they would like their green behaviours to express health- and environmental consciousness to other people. The commonality between the descriptions of what they wished to express was centred on 'concern', 'care', 'health-conscious' and 'environmentally responsible' as the following quotes show:

- Lone: ...that I show concern, especially animal welfare and that I seem to be a person that have taken a stand and is responsible.
- Mads: I would like to show that I am a good person... Um...who cares about the environment and makes deliberate choices about this.
- Janne: That you are health-conscious... and environmental conscious and considers how the products you buy affect both yourself and the environment
- Nanna: I think that it signals that I look after myself and the environment... that I am a responsible person... and maybe that I am sort of a person with reserves of energy.

This notion should however not be confused as their real identity, but rather as an expression of how the interviewees wished to be perceived by others. The perception of real identity was not pursued elucidated from the interviews, as a core real identity is often unconscious and thus rather unattainable. Furthermore, in social situations individuals are likely to describe their ideal identity or ideal social identity, as this is how they wish to be perceived and thus by describing this they might feel more satisfied. This however leads to the notion of self-congruity in which the two concepts of real and ideal identity are the two driving forces. To recapitulate, theories postulate that individuals evaluate products using the perspectives identical to how they describe themselves. Interviewees seemed motivated by complying with their self-image or the image they would like to convey to others, and thus seek products which can assist in achieving this. In relation to this, the interviewees generally indicated that through their consumption of green products, they would like to express values such as being responsible persons with a genuine concern for environmental issues.

Consequently, it was interpreted that the consumers connected green products with self-expressive attributes relating to responsibility, health and protection of the environment. As a result, consumption of green products could be interpreted as a way for the interviewees to move towards their ideal identity.

Similarly, it was observed that interviewees tended to connect certain self-expressive benefits with the consumption of green products, thus these products could be used as a means to communicate

status in their social networks. As touched upon earlier, one interviewee utilised green products as symbols for a healthy life style, whereas another consumed them in order to communicate status through a smarter choice. Another interviewee, Freja, also admitted considering the sign-value associated with green products and explained that in terms of ecological and fair trade products, people are aware of the price difference and thus connect a certain status to it. Sanne also shared this view and admitted that she likes the idea of people noticing her fair trade products and organic rice cakes in the cupboard. These notions of sign-values are identified below:

Freja: Well, I think that it is very nice when you visit a friend and there is Max Havelaar<sup>1</sup> coffee [...] It is just that you notice that this is delicious.

Sanne: There is some prestige in buying fair-trade products. It looks fancy when a person has such products in the fridge.

Some interviewees related this notion of self-expressive benefits to the society and some believed that green consumer behaviour had become a trend in which people could demonstrate either political stance or health consciousness.

## Multiple identities

In the same sense as values can change due to salient factors, identity has also proven dynamic as individuals hold several identities which can be activated through salient factors apparent in different social situations. Some interviewees showed strong indications of changing their green behaviour according to which social situations they were in. One interviewee described that when shopping with environmentally concerned friends she is more prone to adopt a similar behaviour:

Janne: Some of my friends always buy ecological milk, and if I am out shopping with them and they choose ecological milk, I might also buy this, because you might also want to support this

This example illustrates how Janne is more likely to switch to other products dependent on the social situation she is in. Thus, when being around more environmentally concerned friends, feelings of obligation might become salient and consequently make her buy green products. However, this does not necessarily have to be caused by obligation felt towards the environment, but rather a need for complying with social peers. Consequently, in these specific situations Janne can be seen as more concerned about upholding her social image towards her friends than the environment.

Another interviewee indicated a similar behaviour by describing that she bought ecological cordial for an evening in the company of some of her friends, but actually rarely buys it for herself:

Josefine: I bought ecological cordial for some reason when we met... Maybe it's because I somehow find more delicious when I bring ecological cordial than something else

This notion is somewhat similar to the previous example. Josefine found herself buying a green product in a specific situation, which she admitted rarely buying for herself. This could indicate that

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<sup>1</sup> Max Havelaar is the Danish quality label for Fair Trade products, which ensures that the products have lived up to certain minimum demands regarding payment, working conditions, democratic development and environment. Source: <http://www.maxhavelaar.dk/FORSIDE.aspx>

she wants to communicate something towards her friends in order to obtain their approval. Thus, in these situations a more responsible identity becomes salient to comply with a perceived pressure from friends.

Yet another interviewee expressed a stronger indication of this kind of behaviour when she described her workplace. Her colleagues often engage in discussions regarding the 'greenness' of their behaviours, and here she held the belief that it was recognised to be a green consumer. In relation to these situations, Marie sometimes felt that there was a pressure on her to buy green products, in particular if she had to bring breakfast to work:

Marie: When people bring breakfast, then it's appreciated that it is ecological sausage and cheese... that is a bit better... And ecological bread, this is something people like. Not to say, that it wouldn't be eaten if it wasn't ecological, but it is a cut above. There is something with 'Mmmm, that's delicious'

Marie: Actually, I sometimes think about when I have to bring breakfast to work that it would be nice to bring something ecological because that would make people happy.

Naturally, this indication cannot be generalised, however in terms of this study, it became apparent that multiple identities were imposed by some of the interviewees according to specific situations. Relating this to ideal social identity, interviewees indicated a tendency to be motivated by enhancing their ideal identity in their social networks with the goal of either achieving social approval or avoiding social embarrassment.

### **5.2.7. Personal norms**

As described in the theoretical framework, personal norms serve to activate values in specific situations. In order to be able to assess the influence of norms, it was necessary to inquire into specific products and situations as they cannot be evaluated on a general level. The list of products that was introduced to interviewees during the second part of the interview served the purpose of revealing some of the normative impacts consumers are faced with when buying green FMCG.

During the interviews, two settings appeared to be dominant for the activation of personal norms; the home and the point-of-purchase, respectively. In relation to the former, this was identified through the internalised values that were toughed upon earlier. It can be assessed that these values were activated when the interviewees were confronted with two opposing choices. This idea was described in the theoretical section on individual values. The common denominator for the interviewees who were affected by personal norms were faced with such choices, for instance in relation to switching light bulbs, from conventional to energy saving or whether to utilise washing detergent or not. The rationale for creating a close link to internalised values is that these norms that the interviewees seemed to impose on themselves were directly linked to the values and norms they have internalised during childhood. For instance, Julie described her feeling of content when switching light bulbs in her apartment:

Julie: I feel good when I return home with a bag full of green products and then immediately switch the light bulb with an energy saving version, it's like you can

see how harmful the other light bulb was and I feel tranquil and good about myself when looking at the energy saving light bulb instead.

The tranquillity that Julie experiences derives from the accomplishment of meeting her personal norms. When asked to elaborate why switching a light bulb is capable of imposing a feeling of content, she explained that she feels that she has done a good deed by throwing out the 'harmful' light bulb with an 'environmentally friendly' version. As such, Julie has simplified the differences between the two options her choice between them becomes more straightforward and stronger as she already possesses intrinsic beliefs on the adjectives 'harmful' versus 'friendly'. Subsequently such a simplification facilitates a stronger response, which was also identified in the feeling of content that Julie experienced. Moreover, her conviction that the new light bulb is considerably better can be identified through her imagination that the new version enables conspicuous consumption through its 'environmentally friendliness'. As such, there is an indicator that the reason such a product has gained valence, as opposed to other products that Julie buys conventionally, is due to its visibility.

The other setting where norms appeared to have a strong impact was at the point-of-purchase. This type of normative influence has more of a social nature as it is often activated when the consumer feels directly pressured from other consumers. In the identity section it was described how one interviewee, Janne, mediates between multiple identities in a shopping situation with her friends. Her behaviour can also be interpreted from a normative perspective as her change in behaviour is also influenced by her knowledge of her friends' norms. This situation represents an attempt to reduce her intrinsic distress that will occur if not complying with the norms. Janne assessed the best option for reducing this distress would be to buy the product, albeit not holding considerably strong valence on the product. However, she is aware of the perception of her friends and she also believes that the product encompasses 'better' qualities. As such, this supports the notion that norms can be stronger than values as distress caused by opposing normative influenced is more dominant than the feeling of content that following the values can impose.

### **Norms as a barrier**

The influence of socially imposed norms also presented a new perspective during the interviews. A few of the interviewees implied that they sometimes reduce distress by justifying not to follow the norms or beliefs by stating that other people neither make an effort. To elaborate, the strength of the norm was reduced when the participant realised, or believed that other people were similarly not meeting the normative demands. The rationale for needing to justify lies in the individual's belief that the behaviour is desirable; however personal costs are assessed to be too high to meet the norm. In the theoretical framework, this concept was referred to as 'defensive denial' (Thøgersen, 2002). The pattern that was identified in this study was that such denials were often justified by transferring the obligation to other people and thereby reducing own distress of not behaving as 'ought' to. An example of such self-justification is found in one interviewee's awareness that he ought to reduce his consumption of electricity; however he perceives too many personal costs as being incurred for him to change his current behaviour. Therefore, he reduces his obligation by questioning how much of a difference he, as an individual, can make:

Mads: ...For the electricity invoice it might not make a big difference, but if everyone made an effort it would make a difference for the environment.

A similar justification is identified in another interviewee's behaviour when being in the supermarket, where she observes the behaviour of other consumers in order to assess if she should purchase ecological milk or not. Her example is similar to Janne's above, however the normative strength is less dominant for Julie, who actively seeks justification for *not* buying the green product by asking her boyfriend or friend with whom she is in the supermarket:

Julie: When I discuss green products [in the supermarket] it's more like; 'what do you think, ecological or not ecological milk?' I think it centres on the fact that we would all like to buy green, but sometimes we just don't want to pay for it...it's always there, we all want to do it, and then you start to feel guilty and need to hear that the other don't always buy green either and then it's okay.

It is clear that Julie is aware of the consequences for not buying the product, as she later in the interview mentioned that she perceives ecological milk as containing less harmful ingredients. However, she also described her doubts about the *actual* ingredients and their effectiveness. As such, she does not hold strong motivation to buy ecological milk; it does not present strong valence to her, which can also explain why she is more inclined to act according to norms and easily reject the importance if other people buy conventional milk.

Another interviewee who expressed 'defensive denial', however in a different sense, was Lars. In general he did not represent a very consistent green consumer as his perceived costs of buying green products are often perceived as higher than the benefits of buying green. However, he projected his concern about the environment to future behaviours. He sought to justify that he does not always buy green products by saying that in the future he intends to become greener. In the following passage, Lars at first focuses on his own failure to behave as green as he would like to, and subsequently he shifts focus to include his friends:

Interviewer: Who do think has influenced your green behaviour?

Lars: People?

Interviewer: People, media...

Lars: Um...I would say that if there's a cool person promoting it then I might buy more green products...but I think that the debate in the media has had a large impact too, you hear it again and again; green, ecological...we have to take care of our environment...so I think that's why I have started to think more about it [green behaviour/products]...

Interviewer: How about your closer network?

Lars: I wouldn't say it affects me that much...then again, if all my friends started buying green and they might say 'Lars, come on, buy green', then I'll probably start too...

Interviewer: Are there many green consumers among your friends?

Lars: No...I don't think so...well actually I think that there are many like me; we would like to buy green, but we don't do it as often as we should... I always think that whenever I start to make more money, then I will buy more green...we often talk about that when we get more money we will buy more green [referring to friends]...But if we actually will, I don't know...

It is interesting to note this shift of focus from merely including individual behaviours to later encompassing other people. This implies that there is a conflict between the values hold, namely between the desired, or desirable green behaviour and his inconsistent behaviours. It seems as if the general tendency for reducing such distress is to transfer responsibility to other people and thereby reducing the consequences of one's failed attempts to comply with the norms.

## Norms and Product Types

The list of product categories revealed that the interviewees often comply with perceived norms in relation to specific product types. Thus, in order to set forth the interpretation of such motives, the following will delve into the product types that the interviewees seemed more affected by in terms of normative influences. The rationale behind some products constituting more 'normative' has been induced through various factors. Focus on certain products has been imposed by the media and as such they have become an important factor in the minds of consumers.

As set forth in the theoretical framework, normative behaviours often become habitual for the products that represent less involvement. Such normative purchases can also be bound in a want to reduce distress for not consistently buying green products within all product categories. Such a factor was identified in Louise's purchases of ecological milk, and she described her motivation as being caused by a feeling of being able to contribute to the animal welfare in a way that does not impose considerable personal costs:

Louise: I always buy ecological milk

Interviewer: Why?"

Louise Um... I think it is because I want to support ecological products...and in relation to milk, there is not a considerable difference in price...and I guess I have thought that if I can make just a small difference... and I tend to tell myself that it tastes better too...um...yeah I just think that this is something I *have* to do, I feel bad if I buy ordinary milk, especially since the difference is so small

In a similar sense, Lars expresses his motive for buying ecological milk as being imposed by norms:

Lars I try to buy ecological milk as often as I can, I mean whenever I have the opportunity...it has become more of a routine...but it is also something that I feel that I have to buy because there have been so much focus on the welfare of the animals [in the media]...and I mean, this is an easy way to contribute

In addition to milk, eggs seemed to represent a considerable normative factor among the interviewees. A common denominator for the interviewees was that they perceived this as having been brought about by the media, which have focused heavily on battery hens during the later years. As referred to in a previous example, Freja refers to her consistent purchases of barn eggs as being an internalised habit, which derived from normative pressure. She described this as being internalised during childhood, among others due to an increased focus on battery hens in the media and society in general.

The overall pattern that was identified in relation to norms and specific products was that the smaller the perceived personal costs, the higher the normative influence seemed to be. This is a rather interesting phenomenon as the interviewees did not express normative pressure in relation to

other categories. The products that were mentioned as constituting normative pressure also represented the categories with the allegedly more consistent behaviours. In general, such products comprised utilitarian functions as the examples of milk and eggs also indicated. Moreover, there is an indication that norms have the capability to impose a great influence on consistent behaviours and habits.

## | 6. Towards an Understanding of Green Value Priorities |

*In this chapter the conceptual model of value priorities will be presented. It has been construed on the basis of the empirical findings and by referring to concepts in the theoretical framework. In line with the abductive methodology of this thesis, a reflexive approach is entailed and allows for subsequent comparisons with other studies in order to support empirical findings. Thus, this chapter discusses the implications and applicability of the conceptual model in a larger theoretical perspective.*

### 6.1. Linking Empirical Findings to Theory

As expected, the priorities of green consumer motives proved significantly challenging to elucidate. The analysis showed that consumer motives towards green FMCG vary considerably dependent on internalised values, product functions as well as social and situational contexts. However, some common patterns emerged during the data production and these can advantageously be applied to the theoretical framework that was set forth.

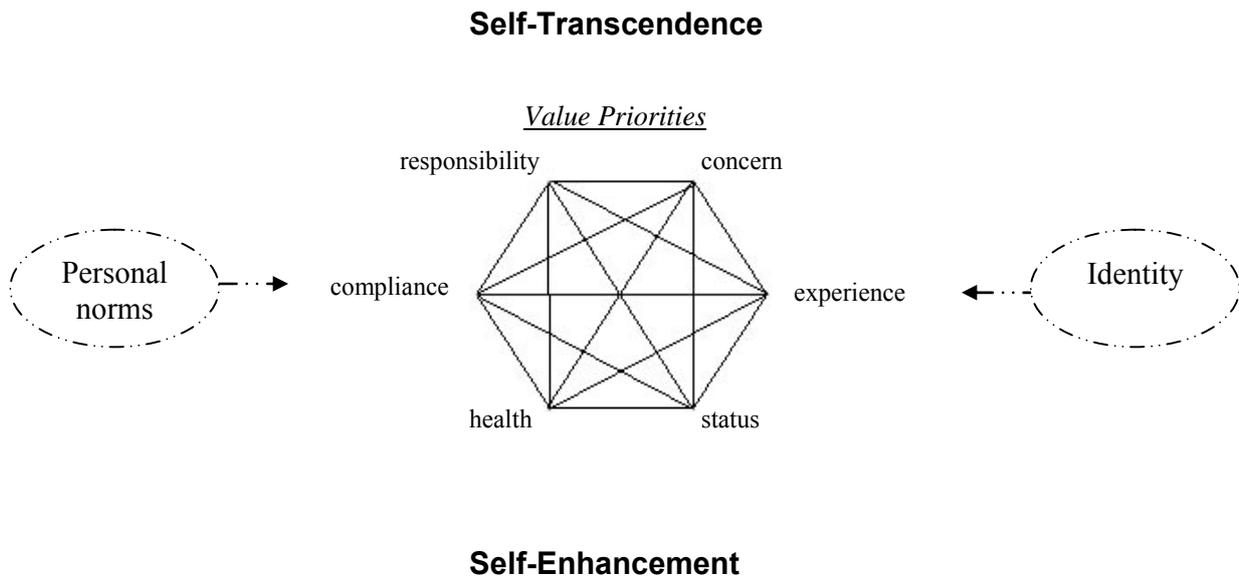
The interpretations of the interviews supported the initial assumption that green consumer motives cannot be categorised as either Self-Transcendent or Self-Enhancing, nor does green consumers engage in green behaviours merely on the basis of universal values. The findings did show, however, that consumer motivation often derives from such motivational values, but that they were accompanied by Self-Enhancement values, such as ‘personal health’ in order to fully motivate the consumer. As such, Self-Transcendent and Self-Enhancement values work in synergy and not as opponents as classified in the SVI.

The empirical analysis pointed towards hierarchical structures of values that are activated in various situations. As such, this process is comparable with value systems; however they are more dynamic and fluctuating than value systems. Thus, there was identified a need for a conceptual model that visualises and explains the complexity of the value priorities. In order to bring forward a strong model, a post-analysis enquiry into other studies that found similar dynamic value structures was advanced.

The food-choice model by Furst *et al.* (1996) became an inspirational source as the model focuses on the negotiation between various values that the consumer undergoes and how these result in specific buying strategies for the food consumer. The model is rather wide-encompassing as it treats the overall components of food choice processes, including a number of contextual factors that also influence the consumer. The main pertinent factor that has been drawn from for the purpose of this thesis is the negotiation process. However, it must be stressed that the hexagonal model in this thesis is not directly comparable with the food choice model. The difference is found in the distinction between negotiation and priorities. The latter entails a hierarchical process of values, meaning that one value is more dominant than the other. The term negotiation implies that the values do not represent an order of precedence, and this would be rather misleading for representing the green priorities, which is the purpose of this study.

## 6.2. Conceptual Model of Value Priorities

In order to provide a clear linkage to the SVI, the Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement motivational dimension has been included as it still serves major importance for the green consumer when prioritising between the different values for specific products and contexts. | Figure 6 | illustrates the conceptual model, and its constituents and dynamic processes are elaborated below.



| Fig. 6 | Conceptual model of Value Priorities

### 6.2.1 Overview of the model

The conceptual model is construed by regarding the SVI dimension of Self-Transcendence and Self-Enhancement as the catalyst for green motives. Despite the positioning of opposite axes as in the original framework, the hexagonal representation illustrates the dynamism that connects the concepts as well as the main consumer values that represent the dimension. In this light, the consumer might initially be motivated by one value but assess other values on the condition of product type as well as normative influence and ideal identity.

The six values, illustrated in the value priorities, have been deduced from a thorough scrutiny of the motives that the participants in this study referred to as being main motives for buying green products. Similar to the SVI, as introduced in the theoretical framework, these values also represent Universalism, Benevolence, Achievement and Power. However, it is important to note that these are not completely comparable with Schwartz's value domains as they can represent several underlying motives. To exemplify, 'health', which is positioned in the 'original' Power domain can also be dominated by Benevolent value motives for the consumer who buys healthy products out of genuine concern for other people. Nevertheless, in a general sense the positioning of the values is strongly linked to the Self-Enhancement and Self-Transcendent dimension. For instance, 'status' is

dominantly a Self-Enhancing value motive, whereas its oppositional motive is ‘responsibility’, which represents a ‘genuine’ universal concept.

The value motives of ‘compliance’ and ‘experience’ have been positioned in the centre of the model, and the motivation for this derives from their biased nature. They are difficult to characterise as either Self-Transcendent or Self-Enhancing as the empirical findings indicate that consumers refer to these in various senses. To exemplify, ‘compliance’ can both be a factor of seeking to comply with normative expectations for the purpose of reducing one’s distress, but on the other hand it can also derive from a more ‘genuine’ motive of complying with environmental demands for the purpose of advancing a cleaner environment.

Personal norms and identity have been positioned on the left and right side of the hexagonal representation. Personal norms have stronger influence on the value motives on the left side of the hexagon, whereas identity is more important for the consumers who value ‘experience’ and ‘status’. It should be stressed, however, that personal norms and identity influence *all* the motives, however they are more dominant for some motives.

In order to advance a fuller understanding of the dynamism and value motives, focus will be turned to each of the value motives to further elaborate and describe their underlying constituents. In the following section, the influence of personal norms and identity is described in each of the value motives.

### **6.2.2. Value Priorities**

The green consumer holds numerous motives for engaging in green behaviour. However, there are some general representative value motives that seem to characterise green consumers in this study. In line with Rokeach’s (1973) notion: “all men everywhere possess the same values to different degrees”. As such, the above green values might be representative of green consumers on a larger scale. It is difficult to assess how many motives that are activated when the consumer assesses green products; it depends on the situation as well as social context. However, the important factor is that each of these motives has higher or lower priority than the others. In a simple sense, it is a matter of a battle; one motive might alienate another motive or it might strengthen it. The main idea is that one motive on its own is rarely enough to push the consumer to purchase.

The process of the priorities is that the consumer will firstly evaluate the initial motive and subsequently turn to a less salient motive. Due to the low involvement that often constitute FMCG this process can be rather rational as well as habitual. However, as this study shows, there is an indication towards emotions representing a rather important factor for green motives. As such, the consumer is generally aware of his or her motives and which are more salient than others.

### **Responsibility**

The first value motive represents a Self-Transcendent value as it entails a ‘genuine’ intention to act in favour of the environment or other people. Responsibility can be targeted towards the environment, such as an opposition towards chemicals and other harmful ingredients that are perceived to inhere in many conventional products. Moreover, it can involve responsibility towards working conditions, which is often the focus of Fair-trade products. This value is often the catalyst

for green behaviour; however it rarely remains the only motive. Generally it is accompanied or strengthened by other motives. This is assumed to reside in the lack of transparency that the consumers often hold towards products that solely focus on environmental factors. Moreover, it is probable to represent a rather vague motive for the consumers, who do not perceive their efforts as being tangible or strong enough to merely engage in green behaviour for the environment. As such, it must be accompanied by more self-centred motives, which the consumers regard as more effective as they are closer to own benefits. For instance, 'responsibility' will often be accompanied by 'health', such as in the case of the consumer who buys ecological milk for the purpose of animal welfare but moreover due to personal health reasons. 'Status' is also probable to inhere in this motive as the consumer seeks acknowledgement of his or her actions. Finally, personal norms serve an important factor for the responsibility motive. Such norms often represent internalised processes of what the consumer perceives as being responsible means of conduct.

### **Concern**

The motive of concern is closely connected to responsibility, in the same sense as Universalism is to Benevolence in the SVI. As opposed to 'responsibility', however, concern is more targeted towards the closer social network, such as family and friends. This factor became evident in this study as many of the consumers expressed that their behaviours were influenced by the social context, such as buying green products out of concern for other people. This motive is interpersonal, as it is targeted toward enhancing social belongingness. In the perspective that was promoted by Cova and Cova (2002), it is intrinsic for humans to categorise in groups and also form an identity on the basis of this. Therefore, identity is an important factor for the 'concern' motive as the consumer assesses the ideal identity, which represents how the consumer wishes to be perceived by others. Thus, the 'concern' motive also entails Self-Enhancement as it is also generated on more self-centred motives such as to promote one-self. In this case, the motive will be accompanied by a second priority such as 'status', or 'compliance' when the consumer wishes to comply with the social norms of the group.

### **Experience**

Often green consumers are motivated to buy green products due to the 'experience' factor they are capable of offering. This derives from a want to achieve self-fulfilment and gratification when doing a 'good deed'. As such, this motive can be regarded as deriving both from a sincere concern for others as well as an achievement factor to promote one's contributions. Fair-trade products often becomes the means for fulfilling the experience motive as they are perceived as offering a story and a 'thought' to others in unfortunate positions, such as underpaid workers. Identity is crucial for this motive as it is all about communicating reserves of energy to contemplate about the world situation. In a general sense, the 'experience' motive is not likely to possess first priority for the green consumer. Often it derives from an other-centred motive such as 'responsibility'; however, in order for the latter to be activated it needs more self-expressive factors such as 'experience'.

### **Status**

This motive encompasses the conspicuous consumption that was dealt with in the theoretical chapter on 'Power' from the SVI. The core is to distinguish oneself through consumption, and the green products become a means for expressing knowledge and prestige often due to the higher

prices they demand as well as their perceived higher quality. Aesthetics are crucial for the status motive as the consumer prioritises the self-expressive benefits of the product considerably higher than the functions or thought behind the product. In this light, the 'status' motive represent the most egoistic motive among the six motivational values as it does not necessarily condition a deep concern for the environment or others. As such, the consumer who highly prioritises this motive can, in a strict sense, be regarded a exploiting the green wave as they are attracted to green products due to the prestige factor they are perceived as entailing. However, it is important to note that this factor rarely stands alone. In order for the consumer to perceive green products as being prestige an acknowledgement of environmental threats etcetera must be inherent as this motive would otherwise not occur initially.

## **Health**

The most dominant motive that was identified in this study was 'health'. Green products are in general identical to 'healthy' in the sense that they are perceived as constituting cleaner raw ingredients as well as manufacturing processes. Terms such as 'additive free', 'free from pesticides' 'not Gene Modified' and 'no antibiotics' represent the perceptions of green products and hence serve as sub-categories of health in this relation.

For many green consumers the health issue is a primary motive in a more self-centred perspective. It is positioned as a Self-Enhancement motive due to its dominance and because the health focused consumer is not inclined to transcend personal benefits on behalf of other motives. Health is subject to personal norms due to its strong internalised context; the perception of what is healthy often derives from early internalised habits and values. However, health is often accompanied by other more self-expressive motives, particularly due to the want to express a healthy lifestyle. As such, the healthy green consumer is likely to be secondarily motivated by 'concern' and 'status' to compensate for the higher prices that green products entail.

## **Compliance**

The last motive is compliance, which represent the most normative prone motive of the six value motives. It derives from a desire to decrease personal distress by meeting expected standards and norms. This motive can be assumed to be more dominant in the buying situation if the consumer is accompanied by others who possess stronger green values. Nonetheless, it is also likely to entail 'responsibility' as these are closely intertwined. 'Compliance' can both stem from intrapersonal as well as interpersonal values; the former representing the want to reduce one's distress and the latter for the purpose of meeting social expectations. Having said that, the consumer who is dominantly motivated by 'compliance' is unlikely to be further motivated by 'experience', as green behaviour is merely performed as *avoidance* behaviour. Therefore, no strong gratification or self-fulfilment is implied when buying green products on the basis of this motive.

### **6.2.3. Product Functions**

The positioning of the motives has also been advanced by taking product functions into consideration. Logically, consumers are not equally motivated by all green FMCG. The generation and prioritisation of the six motives thus heavily depends on the type product involved.

The left side of the hexagon includes 'responsibility', 'compliance' and 'health' and when these motives are dominant it is probable that the product comprises a utilitarian function. Along this half of the hexagon, the consumer is dominantly motivated by the 'immediate' benefits of the product such as quality, ingredients and other factors that does not always necessitate self-expressive motives. As such, facts about the products become the main focus as the consumer seeks a match between expectations and product functions.

On the contrary, for hedonic products, the demand for facts is less salient. In a general sense, the right side of the hexagon represents hedonic products, which needs more than a utilitarian function in order for it to fully appeal to the consumer. Particularly when the 'experience' motive is dominant, the product is sought for its hedonic function. As such, these motives advance a desire for aesthetics as well as non-factual elements such as stories. To exemplify, a consumer buying Fair-trade products can be primarily motivated by 'concern' and 'experience' and these often involve stronger emotional elements and therefore the consumer seeks stories and idealised descriptions of the product in order to experience the self-fulfilment that is also sought.

Finally, it is important to note that the positioning of the six value motives is merely an indicator of how the value structures and priorities of the green consumer are likely to function. As these consumers, as well as values in general, represent complex and dynamic structures, many other contextual factors are involved when the consumer prioritises and evaluates the motives for green products. Consequently, this conceptual model attempts to explain some of the most pertinent factors involved in green consumer behaviour.

## | 7. Conclusions and Implications |

This study has attempted to elucidate how green consumers prioritise values, personal norms and identity in relation to green Fast Moving Consumer Goods. The application of Schwartz Value Inventory as a theoretical foundation made it possible to contrast bipolar motivational values and thereby assess whether consumers are mainly motivated to buy green products due to Self-Transcendent or Self-Enhancement motives. The in-depth interviews that were conducted in order to gain a deeper insight into the minds of green consumers, confirmed that green consumers are motivated *both* due to a concern for other people and animals, but *also* due to more egoistic needs for self-expression. In contrast to Schwartz's Value Inventory that presents Self-Enhancement motives as being barriers for green consumer behaviour, this study present findings that point towards Self-Enhancement motives as being positively related to engaging in green consumer behaviour due to self-expressive attributes that some consumers ascribe green products as well as self-centred motives such as health.

The conceptual model created on the basis on the theoretical concepts and empirical findings, demonstrates how consumers prioritise between several values when assessing green products. The prioritisation is dependent on internalised values as well as the product function and the need that the consumer seeks fulfilled. The influence of norms appeared to be stronger for products that serve a utilitarian function, whereas identity is more important when the consumer is motivated by the self-expressive benefits of green products.

### 7.1. Practical Implications

The conceptual model that was a result of this study is useful for marketing practices as it shows the general values that consumers hold towards green products. Albeit the study was conducted on Danish consumers, values can be regarded as universal, however, the priorities and salience might differ in various cultural contexts as well as among individuals. The model shows how some values are more dominant for specific product functions and also how they relate to other value constructs. For the marketer this serves immense implications as it shows which aspects should be in focus when seeking to appeal to green consumers.

In relation to utilitarian products, the consumer will often compare green products with conventional products in terms of price and quality and this can be a barrier for green products. As such, this implies that Category Management, where green products are presented as a separate category, could be an effective means for dealing with this as the consumer cannot compare and contrast.

When the consumer seeks more hedonic products product comparison is rarer, however the consumer looks for story lines and self-expressive benefits. This consumer might not necessarily hold strong values towards the environment; therefore the product must focus on its signalling value such as story lines.

Finally, there is an indication that mood and time is crucial for green products. If the consumer is busy then he or she is more 'at risk' for choosing a conventional product as there is no time to

contemplate on the benefits or thoughts behind the green product. As such, green marketers could consider distribution channels that offer more tranquil environments than large retailers.

## 7.2. Suggestions for Future Research

Many interesting phenomena emerged during the analysis of the empirical data. Due to the scope and time frame of this thesis not all of these could be scrutinized and this creates opportunities for future studies on green values and motives.

In this study the method for elucidating green consumer motives was advanced by referring to self-reported behaviours. This was deemed adequate for the research purpose, which merely centred on the *motives* for buying green products, however it could be interesting to study the relationship between self-reported behaviours and *actual* behaviours, as the latter might indicate different value priorities as set forth in this study.

The implications of mood and time could also be interesting for future studies. There is an indication that when the consumer is faced with time constraints, a simplified heuristic process is followed in favour of conventional products. In such situations the consumer does not possess the reserves of energy to compare products and further contemplate on values, thereby giving in to habitual processes. In this thesis, this aspect was revealed through consumer narratives, however it could be pertinent to study the effects of 'available time' through observations in retail settings, as this would confirm or reject this perspective. Moreover, as the chance of purchasing green products might be higher when the consumer is not constrained by time, it could be interesting to look into *which* factors could persuade consumers into buying green products when fast decision making is required.

There was also an indication that the perceptions consumers hold of green products are reflected in their behaviours. Perspectives or product types that were not mentioned did not mirror the behaviour, and as such it seems that these consumers represent a 'psychic prison', which is their idealised world. This notion is somewhat comparable to cognitive dissonance, however it differentiates as it might include an additional factor. Cognitive dissonance refers to how individuals seek to act in accordance with their beliefs; however the psychic prisons that were identified in this study might entail a more deliberate exclusion of factors that the consumer finds opaque. As such, there is an indication that the consumer seeks to justify inconclusive behaviours by referring to a perception that matches behaviours. Future research could approach this issue by looking into if these perceptions represent *actual* perception or if they are merely used in order to justify behaviours.

Finally, as this study was constructed by a qualitative orientation, a quantitative study could be conducted by applying the conceptual model and its constituting motivational values, in order to confirm or reject if the value types that were presented in this thesis can be generalised in larger contexts. As the unit of analysis in this study was Danish consumers, a larger sample size from this cultural context is suggested.

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