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Clash of Beliefs: 'I want to be green but what about the Christmas tree?'

An Exploratory Study on the Role of a Sustainable Lifestyle
for Green Consumers during Christmas

A document by
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Abstract

Title	Clash of Beliefs: 'I want to be green but what about the Christmas tree?' - An Exploratory Study on the Role of a Sustainable Lifestyle for Green Consumers during Christmas
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Keywords	Christmas traditions | Identity project | Millennials | Sustainable lifestyle | Cultural context
Thesis Purpose	The research purpose is to explore potential inconsistencies and internal dilemmas that green consumers face during a special setting, in this case, Christmas.
Methodology	A qualitative research, adopting a social constructionism and relativist ontology stance, has been conducted. Furthermore, an abductive framework has been used. The interviews were semi-structured, whilst we used snowball and purposive sampling. The data was coded and analysed by means of data reduction, data display and verifying conclusions, as proposed by Miles and Huberman.
Theoretical Perspective	Sustainability plays an important role for modern Millennials in their everyday lives. Often, they form their identities around their sustainable lifestyles, which is likely to conflict with sticking to Christmas traditions as this season is commonly associated with excessive consumption and unsustainable practices. The consumer culture theory plays an essential perspective to understand the phenomenon. Additionally, two conceptual frameworks were used during the research, focusing on the process of influences, attitude, intention, and actual behaviour, and hence to understand arising inconsistencies along with the internal dialogue and dilemma green consumers face through conflicting sets of beliefs.
Empirical Data	The empirical findings comprise 19 interviews (thirteen Swedish participants and six British participants). Criteria were developed to validate the respondents' suitable participation for this study.
Findings and Conclusion	The majority of all participants try to stick to a sustainable lifestyle. The role of sustainable lifestyle has a significant role in every day of almost all respondents, however, Christmas traditions outweigh this. Hence, it can be said that the role of a sustainable lifestyle turns into a disregarded role during Christmas.
Practical Implications	Millennials represent a large market in the future. In general, the research showed that they are interested in sustainable alternatives during Christmas, though such alternatives are often not available or too expensive. The research can help practitioners to better understand and serve their customers and, in return, contribute to a sustainable development also during Christmas. Moreover, it can serve as a foundation for future research within social sciences.

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Table of Content

List of Abbreviations

CCT	Consumer culture theory
Ch.	Chapter
e.g.	exempli gratia = for example
H&M	Hennes and Mauritz
LED	Light-emitting diode
Sust.	Sustainable
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

List of Figures

List of Tables

1. Introduction

My best friend, she is British, has been a vegetarian for almost ten years now. About two years ago, she decided to only buy second-hand clothes to support a circular economy, so to speak. In July she wants to visit me by train, which is about 19 hours from where she lives at the moment. Flying, she mentioned, would be much cheaper and faster, but it was really important for her to take the train. Especially after she had just been to Thailand recently and was planning on going there again later this year. It would be nice if she came, especially because the last time I saw her was in December. I was invited for a late Christmas dinner at her mum's place, where her mother prepared a traditional Christmas goose and also my best friend ate from it, obviously with a guilty conscience. After the dinner, she defended herself that she only did that for Christmas as she did not want to disappoint her mother. The actual Christmas day she spent in Liverpool with her dad. She showed me pictures of the Christmas tree, which was surrounded by at least 50 presents. I could feel that she got a little contemplative while telling me *"You know, I got my dad a new watch and my sister new leather boots, she really wanted them. My nephew probably got around 20 new toys... I really don't want to contribute to this massive consumption, but that is just the way we always have done it".* This narrative is an example of the challenges green consumers face during the Christmas season.

Indeed, many Millennials are concerned about sustainable developments, and studies revealed that they are twice as likely to opt for sustainable alternatives compared to other generations (Cotton, 2019). Moreover, Millennials often referred to as 'Generation Green', are expected to shape the circular economy. Further studies revealed that 75 per cent of them would pay more to obtain a sustainable product. By 2025, they are assumed to present the dominant workforce in many parts of the world (Price, 2018). But how about holidays such as Christmas? How does this interfere with the Millennials' (green) identities? In postmodern consumption, consumers often face a dilemma as they seek to construct their identity through consumption. They can choose from many different products and services. Not only do the products' cores matter, but also the symbolic meanings they bear. Thus, consumers are confronted with both social- and self-symbolism (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 2015). Christmas, which in many cultural contexts is primarily connected to gift-giving and thus consumption, can evoke ethical issues. This can display a great challenge for Millennials as they may find themselves torn between the habit of gift-giving, imposed by for instance their relatives, and the desire to have a sustainable lifestyle (Johns, 2019). Consequently, the question evolves how Millennials deal with this contradiction, how their sustainable lifestyles are affected by Christmas celebrations, as well as what it does to their constructed green identity.

This is especially interesting when not only focusing on a certain generation but also when comparing nationalities. The United Kingdom spends the most money during Christmas compared to any other European country (Deloitte, 2019), nonetheless, their interest in sustainable developments is increasing as well (Johns, 2019). According to statistics from YouGov, the concern about the environment is rated amongst the top three issues which the country is facing according to its citizens (Carrington, 2019). For this research, the focus is not on the entire United Kingdom but solely on England, for which the reasons will be presented in Chapter 1.2. On the contrary, according to Deloitte's (2019) European Christmas survey, Sweden is not even amongst the top-five spending countries during the Christmas season, but the most sustainable country in the world (Schieler, 2018). Both countries celebrate either the Christian or modern Christmas and have established their own Christmas traditions (Countryeconomy, 2020). For Swedes, Christmas is a major family event. Traditions throughout the country might differ, though an overall homogenisation can be observed, which is partly a consequence of the uniform offerings of stores. Even though many local traditions have disappeared throughout time, Swedish families allege to celebrate in old fashion in their special manner. Moreover, having a Christmas tree, decorating the house, watching a cavalcade of Disney movies on Christmas Eve as well as specialities such as ham, pork sausages, herring salad or 'vörtbröd' for dinner form part of Swedish Christmas traditions (Swedish Institute, 2020).

Just like in Sweden, British people celebrate advent, which is defined as the four Sundays before Christmas, Christmas Eve on December 24th and Christmas Day on December 25th (Swedish Institute, 2020; Learn English Network, 2020). Among the most common British Christmas traditions are Christmas letters written to Santa Claus by children, stockings hung up for Santa to fill them with presents, paper crowns, the Queen's annual speech, as well as turkey, goose or chicken for dinner. Yorkshire Pudding and Wassail, being a hot, mulled drink, are two more typical specialities. Also, Boxing Day, following Christmas Day, is another official holiday (Brown, 2020). By comparing two countries, we intended to gain a great glimpse of the cause-effect why consumers behave the way they do. Additionally, the research aimed to provide valuable insights into the behaviour of green consumers from two different backgrounds and how this affects their behaviour. Lastly, it serves as a starting point for further research in case surprising and unexplained outcomes are discovered.

1.1 Problematisation

Sustainable Consumption
Due to the emerging concern about the environment, sustainable consumption has started to remain in consumers' mindsets and nowadays forms a prominent topic for them in their everyday lives (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010). The interest in a sustainable lifestyle and the growing demand for sustainable products is especially steered by Millennials (Adams & Raisborough, 2010). Millennials are the generation susceptible to peer pressure and socialisation process, which influences their behaviour as well as the degree of behavioural changes (Alexander & Sysko, 2012), and makes them the generation that most likely engages in sustainable consumption patterns (Thøgersen & Ölander, 2002). They seek to make environmental and social impacts with their lifestyle, consumption practices and choices (Lerro, Raimondo, Stanco, Nazzaro & Marotta, 2019).

The contemporary society is driven by diversity, freedom of choice and swift changes concerning social, cultural and economic aspects, which results in multifarious forms of social identities and lifestyles (Featherstone, 1991). When embracing sustainable consumption patterns, and hence a sustainable lifestyle (Gilg, Barr & Ford, 2005), consumers aspire to consume less, adopt certain diets, buy second-hand products, travel less or other similar activities that are considered pro-environmental (Mont & Plepys, 2007). Thus, sustainable consumption seeks everything that one yearly setting contradicts per se, being Christmas, which is often associated with excessive consumption (Thrift & Olds, 1996, cited in Farbotko & Head, 2013).

Christmas Season and its Traditions
Previous research about Christmas and its meaning to society have shown that traditions only have changed slightly since the Victorian Era, however, one factor has altered immensely; the consumption behaviour of consumers during the Christmas season as well as the demand for new and more products. When talking about traditions, for this research we defined the term as the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation or established and customary patterns of thoughts and behaviour. In recent years, one of the biggest critiques regarding Christmas was that it has become too commercialised and unsustainable. Each Christmas season, consumers are overburdened with commercials, sales campaigns and the pressure to purchase. Thus, the commercialisation process has put pressure on holiday rituals and is accused of changing them (Mortelmans & Damen, 2001). Every year in December, people around the globe come together to celebrate Christmas. It is a traditional festivity celebrated in many cultures, nonetheless, the traditions and rituals differ depending on individual preferences. However, some universal traditions can be identified such as gift-giving, having a Christmas tree, decorating the house with fairy lights or enjoying a festive and excessive Christmas dinner (Laing & Frost, 2015), but especially those traditions have been criticised recently due to their negative impacts on the environment (Klein & Whyte, 2018). Hence, sustainable consumption and excessive Christmas consumption lead to a first conflict as they do not go along with each other. For whom? For green consumers adopting sustainable lifestyles throughout the year.

Green Consumers

More precisely, this study does not only focus on Millennials as described previously but green consumers, being defined as individuals who act pro-environmentally and let their behaviour be influenced by environmental concerns (Shrum, McCarty & Lowrey, 1995). Their lifestyles revolve around sustainability, resource efficiency, waste minimisation, buying more sustainable products and finding happiness in less material ways of living (Mont and Plepys, 2007). Thus, green consumerism can be seen as a lifestyle-based expression of the concern for the environment (Haanpää, 2007). Millennials are often considered fitting that profile of green consumers due to their environmental consciousness (Sheahan, 2005, cited in Heo & Muraldiharan, 2017). Born between 1980 and 2000, they are the generation whose daily lives have been determined by sustainable concerns (Smith, 2010), yet they are also the ones immediately influenced by their parents' generation, the baby boomers (Bourdieu, 1986). Here, another conflict within their identity projects might arise. Identity projects form a vital part of this study and will be thoroughly discussed and explained in the course of this paper. Overall, for this research we conducted previous desk research and thus define the term as multiple elements which mutually constitute the individuals' identities and are actively used by them as means of identification and communication towards themselves and the environment.

Green Consumers' Identity Projects

Henceforth, we argue that we have spotted a potential dilemma for green consumers, in which the celebration of Christmas and its traditions might interfere with their lifestyles, consumption practices and decisions, and therefore create internal and social dilemmas. In that case, green consumers need to decide to either maximise their self-interest or the collective interest (van Lange et al., 1992, cited in Sen, Gürhan-Canli & Morwitz, 2001), which means either they stay consistent with their sustainable lifestyles or they participate in Christmas traditions, which might not align with an environmentally friendly lifestyle and hence leads to a conflicting internal dialogue and inconsistencies.

Within sociology, consumption has at least two purposes, first, to form one's identity and second, to communicate between members (Haanpää, 2007). Gabriel and Lang (2006 cited in Soron, 2010) argue that consumers do not only buy products because of what they can do for them, but rather because of the products' meanings to them and what they say about them. According to previous research and the consumer culture theory, which will be discussed in the Chapter 'Literature Review', people consume to create their identities (Arnould & Thompson, 2018). Identity can be described as labels individuals give themselves, which is influenced by personal motivations and social interactions (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Due to the fast-changing consumer environment, the narrative of self-identity must be shaped, altered and sustained constantly (Giddens, 1991, cited in Connolly & Prothero, 2008). Self-identity is used to either differentiate oneself from others or to confirm the values and beliefs of the social groups' someone belongs to (Christensen, Rothberger, Wood, & Matz, 2004). The desire for the former or latter might influence the consistency of one's attitude and behaviour, which is why it is important to consider one's reasoning when constructing the self-identity (Whitmarsh & O'Neill, 2010). All these elements and factors together add up to the generation and management of identity projects.

Consequently, many factors influence green consumers' identity projects and therefore their sustainable lifestyles. As main aspects, it can be identified that their behaviour is influenced by attitudes and social norms (Ajzen, 1991), but also intellectual, pragmatic and moral aspects influence their decision-making (McGregor, 2008). Moreover, families can be considered as rather influential when it comes to the adoption of behaviour and traditions because young individuals are expected to adopt the families' values and traditions (Rani, 2014). This is especially interesting for this research as Christmas is often associated with family traditions, however, the question is if these traditions and values support the creation of the green identity or block the identity project. Additional factors can be either personal, such as knowledge, motivation or attitudes, or situational, like social norms or economic power (Mainieri et al., 1997, cited in Gupta & Ogden, 2009). In the case of misbehaviour, green consumers are likely to face pressure, guilt or emotional distress (Steenhaut & van Kenhove, 2006). However, not only the mentioned internal and external factors matter, but so does the cultural context.

Cultural Contexts: England versus Sweden
According to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, people put different weight on certain elements based on their origin (Hofstede Insights, 2020). With that said, individuals might rate their role within sustainability differently but also is there a difference in Christmas traditions and their significance for different countries. Having England on one hand, with growing sustainable consciousness (Johns, 2019) but spending the most during Christmas among European countries (Deloitte, 2019), and having Sweden, being the world's most sustainable country (Schieler, 2018), on the other hand, gives room for an interesting comparison. In either context, green consumers and existing Christmas traditions can be found, though the question is how self-declared green consumers deal with the conflicting, lavish Christmas season compared to throughout the year. Do they adjust to Christmas traditions? Do they consume extensively? Do they seek excuses? Or are they inconsistent and stick to their sustainable lifestyles? Such issues arose based on previous research, but no comparable study has been conducted so far. Especially in the British context, research has been done with regard to Christmas, however, the main emphasis was commonly put on consumption rituals (McKechnie & Tynan, 2006), Christmas campaigns (Gurau & Tinson, 2003) or women's role during Christmas (Brewis & Warren, 2011). All previous studies we could find were exclusively focusing on the British context, without introducing any form of comparison. Hence, most research has been conducted in different contexts, which we certainly could learn from. Nonetheless, it positions this research as new and relevant.

Inconsistencies
While we were examining and reading academic papers, to establish a basic knowledge for the topic, we discovered that previous research has either only focused on celebrations of Christmas, the characteristics of green consumers or the construction of consumers' identities through consumption, yet not the three in combination. We have identified a potential conflict in which green consumers might reveal an attitude-behaviour gap and inconsistencies of their consumption patterns during the Christmas season. Based on previous research, it can be stated that there is a challenging gap between pro-environmental attitudes and green purchase behaviour (Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000 cited in Moraes, Carrigan & Szmigin, 2011) define the attitude-behaviour gap as when consumers have a positive attitude towards green issues, however, their consumption practices show conflicting patterns, which can easily lead to the accusation that green consumers are hypocrites due to their inconsistent behaviour (Higgins & Tadajewski, 2002). Though, the particular focus of this research is not on the phenomenon of the attitude-behaviour gap as such, but instead on the inconsistencies among green consumers which might result from this. The attitude-behaviour gap is therefore used in order to grasp and explain the phenomenon of potentially nascent inconsistencies as well as dilemmas and dialogues.

To conclude, this study aims to investigate how green consumers behave all year compared to the Christmas setting, as well as how this affects their identity projects. We intend to identify internal conflicts that green consumers might face due to traditions and other influential external factors. Speculatively, this might in return facilitate inconsistent behaviour, which can lead to internal dialogues and consequently to green consumers' dilemmas. They have to decide to be either consistent and contribute to sustainability or follow Christmas traditions as instigated by family and friends from childhood, which most likely results in unsustainable behaviour. Once having behaved inconsistently, we wanted to explore the dynamic of the consumers' internal dialogues and ways to cope with it.

After reviewing current and old literature, we identified a phenomenon which was analysed by taking different factors into account. To our knowledge, there has not been any research like this before that combined the factors of sustainable lifestyles, Christmas traditions, green consumers, identity projects, inconsistencies and cultural contexts. This offered the opportunity to create a new basis for further evolving research and hence led to the research question, which is presented in the next chapter.

1.2 Research Question and Purpose

Following the preceding problematisation, the research question for this study is defined as follows:

What is the role of a sustainable lifestyle* during the Christmas season** for individual green consumers'*** identities within different cultural contexts?

> ** Sustainable lifestyle mainly focuses on sustainable consumption and practices for this research. Sustainable consumption is defined by us as taking into account environmental, social and economic impacts when consuming. Sustainable practices are defined as activities which meet current needs without affecting the future negatively.*
> *** Christmas season is defined by us as the time from the first Advent until December 26th. It is referred to as both Christmas and Christmas season throughout this document.*
> **** With consumers, we refer to the target group (British/English and Swedish Millennials) as elaborated on below. The United Kingdom is the largest European consumer during Christmas (Deloitte, 2019). However, instead of focusing on the entire United Kingdom, we decided to only focalise on England due to the fact that it is the most populated country of the United Kingdom (Statista, 2018). In this research, respondents from England are referred to as British, Brits or Britons.*

On a macro-level, we desired to explore how green consumers' sustainable lifestyles are generally shaped and affected, which could refer to external forces such as friends or overall societal changes. As we were particularly interested in the role of this during Christmas, we planned to focus on external influences specifically related to the Christmas setting, and how this might manipulate the consumers' green behaviours. However, we argue that looking at the general sustainable consumption itself is not enough as previous literature has already discussed this and we intended to contribute to extended, in-depth knowledge on this topic. This is why we decided to also focus on a micro-level, which means, in this case, the role of the individual green consumers and their identity projects. In order to identify and understand potential inconsistencies and dilemmas of green consumers during a specific setting such as Christmas, we chose to focus on exploring the lifestyle during the year as well as Christmas. The aim was to understand the behaviour of green consumers and to explore which factors might influence them, which consequently could result in an attitude-behaviour gap. If that was the case, we aimed to discover how green consumers justify this gap. A more detailed description of how the research purpose was tried to be achieved can be found in the Chapters 'Literature Review' and 'Methodology'. Finally, when looking at the formulation of the research purpose, the words 'understand' and 'explore' are of paramount importance, which is in line with the exploratory research purpose defined for this study. This will be further elaborated on in the Chapter 'Methodology', too.

1.3 Sub-Questions

Based on the research question, we formulated two sub-questions, which together helped to structure the study and finally led to the answer to the research question. Both sub-questions are based on and related to the research purpose. Also, the sub-questions are linked to the literature and conceptual framework, though this will be discussed in the Chapter 'Literature Review'.

> 1. *How do the green consumers cope with a (potential) attitude-behaviour gap?*

Based on previous literature, and as discussed earlier, we assumed that there are inconsistencies with regard to green consumers' regular behaviour during the year and during Christmas. With inconsistencies, we refer to attitude-behaviour gaps. Hence, with this sub-question, we intended to identify such inconsistencies as well as how green consumers deal with them.

2. What social and internal dilemmas do green consumers face during the Christmas season?

The role of a sustainable lifestyle is assumed to be influenced by internal and external factors, in this case, referred to as social and internal dilemmas. Therefore, we aimed to identify how these dilemmas affect the identity of green consumers.

1.4 Limitations

Not only was it vital to define what was actually going to be researched, as can be found in the antecedent chapter, but also was it of utmost importance to define the research's limitations in terms of what was *not* going to be investigated. Firstly, this research focused more on a micro perspective instead of a macro standpoint. In other words, the focus rested on individuals' (green) lifestyles during the Christmas season and their perceptions as well as experiences and sense-making. Moreover, particular emphasis was placed on one single generation, namely Millennials. The decision for this was based on various aspects. On one hand, Millennials form an especially interesting target group with regard to the research topic as explained before in the Chapter 'Introduction' and further below in the Chapter 'Sampling'. On the other hand, this research was limited in time and a comparison of e.g. multiple generations was hence not feasible. Therefore, the decision was made based on the most appropriate demographics, attitudes and behaviours of a mere generation. Additionally, the research was limited to only one type of consumer, being the green consumer. Though, this was also in line with the research question and with regard to the fact that no comparison would have been possible timewise. Last but not least, the study was restricted to two cultural contexts, which proved of particular importance based on their Christmas spending and sustainability aspects as well as the considerable differences they represent according to statistics and literature and the excellent basis they provide for drawing comparisons.

1.5 Research Aims and Contributions

Christmas is a joyful time of traditions and rituals; however, consumers are becoming more aware of the environmental and societal consequences of their consumption practices (Buerke, Straatmann, Lin & Mueller, 2017). This research aimed to study how sustainable consumers behave during the Christmas season, if they are committed to their sustainable lifestyles or if traditions interfere with it. Moreover, due to the increasing interest in sustainability and the concern for the environment, traditional Christmas costumes might be challenged and changed. Hence, this research was important for further research on social behaviour, especially of Millennials who are green consumers and either from England or Sweden. Also, the change of consumption practices and interests might be of importance for businesses since their marketing campaigns and product portfolio can be adjusted to the consumers' demands and needs.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The following Figure 1 shows the outline of the thesis.

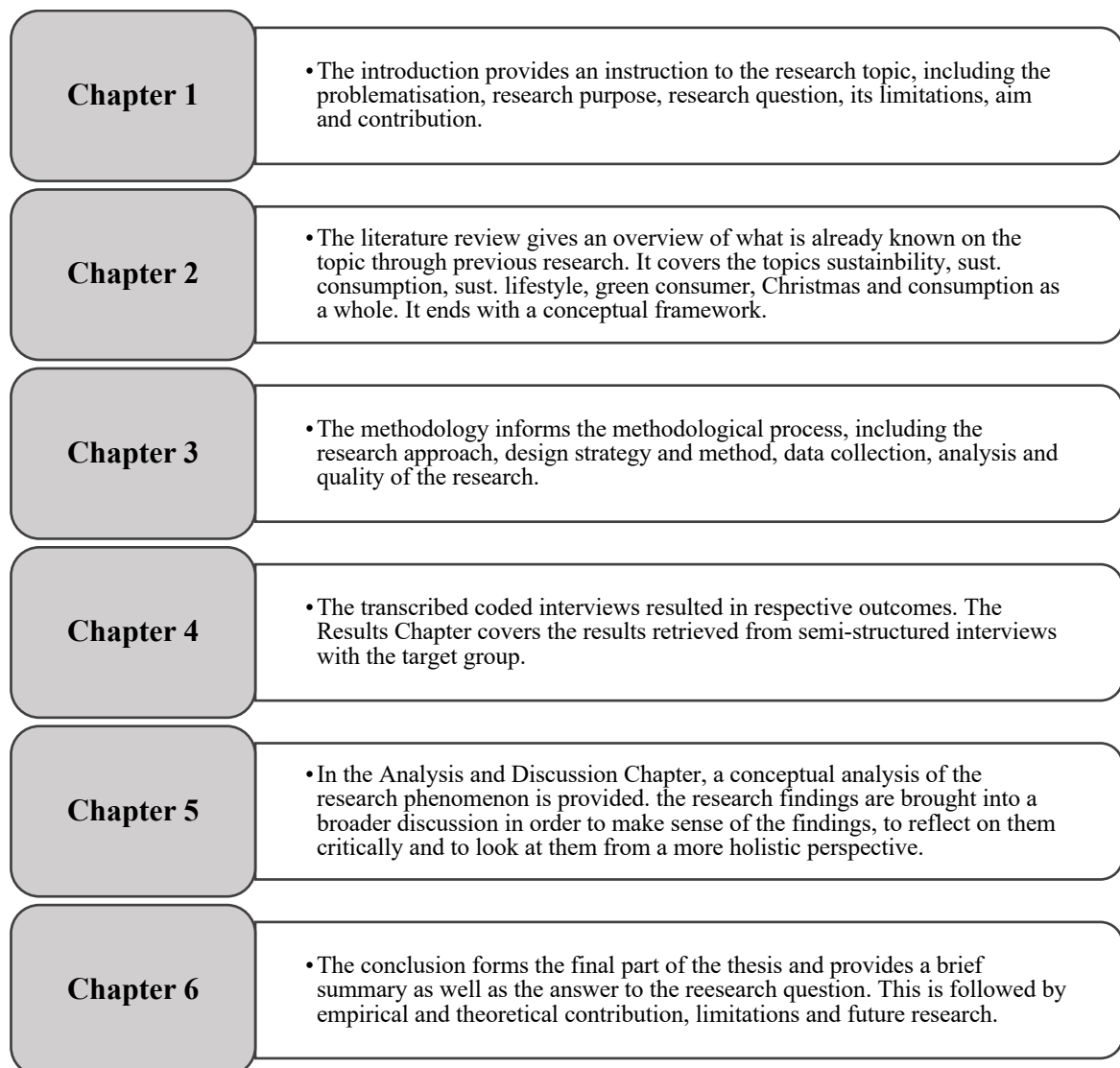|	
Chapter 1	• The introduction provides an instruction to the research topic, including the problematisation, research purpose, research question, its limitations, aim and contribution.
Chapter 2	• The literature review gives an overview of what is already known on the topic through previous research. It covers the topics sustainbility, sust. consumption, sust. lifestyle, green consumer, Christmas and consumption as a whole. It ends with a conceptual framework.
Chapter 3	• The methodology informs the methodological process, including the research approach, design strategy and method, data collection, analysis and quality of the research.
Chapter 4	• The transcribed coded interviews resulted in respective outcomes. The Results Chapter covers the results retrieved from semi-structured interviews with the target group.
Chapter 5	• In the Analysis and Discussion Chapter, a conceptual analysis of the research phenomenon is provided. the research findings are brought into a broader discussion in order to make sense of the findings, to reflect on them critically and to look at them from a more holistic perspective.
Chapter 6	• The conclusion forms the final part of the thesis and provides a brief summary as well as the answer to the reesearch question. This is followed by empirical and theoretical contribution, limitations and future research.

Figure 1: *Thesis outline*

2. Literature Review

To put this research into context, we address the most prominent topics shaping the research question and sub-questions in the following literature review. Hence, sustainability forms the very basis as both sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption are based upon it, and green consumers often use it to construct their identities around it. Contributing to sustainability induces the first set of beliefs that green consumers hold; however, it might clash with traditions such as Christmas, which are often newly interpreted in the contemporary world. The question arose how sustainable lifestyles are influenced during Christmas and how this affects green consumers' identity projects. Modern Christmas traditions are often characterised by excessive consumption as e.g. expected by relatives (Johns, 2019). Various forces impinge on green consumers' identities and during the Christmas season, a second set of beliefs around the importance of traditions might come up, different from the first set that mainly focuses on a sustainable lifestyle. Therefore, the subsequent literature review was taken as an opportunity to reveal what was already known on the topic, to learn from what other authors have found out before and to identify what remains unknown, hence, to define the knowledge gap and position this research within the scientific world. The two sets of beliefs that possibly cause inconsistencies and dilemmas among green consumers' identity projects will be illuminated from different angles and in the end, be brought together in the Chapter 'Conceptual Framework'.

2.1 Sustainability and Sustainable Lifestyles

Sustainability as the Starting Point
To better explore the research topic, it was pivotal to understand what sustainability means and comprises in terms of modern sustainable lifestyles. A sustainable lifestyle is therefore important as this research aimed at understanding the role of sustainability for consumers during special occasions, which in this case refers to Christmas. To begin with, the big challenges of the modern world are often seen to be the European debt crisis or terrorism, though it must be considered that those challenges are only part of a bigger, more challenging and complex picture, assuming that human existence is possible at all. Through long-term exploitation of the earth and the ignorance of corresponding consequences, the awareness of this crucial existence being at stake increased significantly throughout the twenty-first century. Consequently, the term sustainability came to the fore with regard to contemporary challenges (Ekardt, 2020). Starting in the 1970s, sustainability has gained increasing attention up until now. Many different definitions are available, yet all of them somehow focus on the well-being of humans, the environment and economy (Jones, Clarke-Hill, Comfort & Hillier, 2008). Callicott and Mumford (1997) for instance define sustainability as *"meeting human needs without compromising the health of ecosystems"* (p. 32). A more recent definition is provided by McCann-Erickson (2007), terming sustainability as:

> "...a collective term for everything to do with responsibility for the world in which we live. It is an economic, social and environmental issue. It is about consuming differently and consuming efficiently. It also means sharing between the rich and the poor and protecting the global environment while not jeopardising the needs of future generations" (p. 6).

Seven years lie between the two definitions and still the focus is on long-term well-being for both humans and the environment, amended by economic health. It was important for this study to understand this terminology as it gave rise to contemporary sustainable lifestyles.

Sustainable Lifestyle
Overall, lifestyle is understood as the aggregation of social practice which shows a distinct way of living and hence forms an integral part of an individual's identity as well as his/her self-actualisation (Giddens, 1991). More precisely, a sustainable lifestyle is defined as *"the inevitable choice for mitigating global climate change"* (Cheng, Long, Chen & Yang, 2019, p. 1). In other words, people in their everyday

lives actively decide to become a driving force towards the achievement of sustainability goals to deliver on long-term well-being for people, planet and profit. The individual's determination of contributing to sustainable developments forms the first set of beliefs green consumers hold as it will be outlined in the conceptual framework (Ch. 2.5). The first set of beliefs is influenced by both internal and external forces, as will be discussed later on, and is likely to collide with people's second set of beliefs during the Christmas setting, and therefore leads to an internal dialogue (Figure 3). Similar to sustainability, sustainable lifestyle comprises different terminologies. Longo, Shankar and Nuttall (2019) argue that the first step for a sustainable lifestyle is the provision of information to individuals in order to change their consumption accordingly. People are assumed to have internalised behaviours, attitudes and intentions, influencing their decision-making process. Therefore, providing them with information on sustainable matters is intended to straddle the gap between intentions and behaviours, as it is also illustrated in the Chapter 'Conceptual Framework'. Generally speaking, the attitude-behaviour gap relates to the discrepancy between people preferring pro-environmental choices and their actual, non-environmental purchases (Gupta & Ogden, 2009). Cheng et al. (2019) further add to this by defining the lifestyle as something embodied within and lived through each person's behaviours, characteristics and activities. Moreover, the authors conceptualise a sustainable lifestyle as an:

> "...ecological concept of harmony and common development between humans and nature, making green consumption, green travel, and green living into conscious actions so that people can fully enjoy the convenience and comfort brought about by social development while fulfilling their environmental responsibilities and living in a natural, environmentally friendly, frugal, and healthy way" (p. 2).

Hence, it is all about making people conscious about sustainable matters and to encourage them to integrate sustainable behaviour in their everyday lives, thus their lifestyle. When further defining the adoption of a sustainable lifestyle, individuals should follow the 5-R principle in order to be considered as such. The five Rs consist of reducing, re-evaluating, reusing, recycling and rescuing. Reducing as such can be related to saving resources, whereas re-evaluating refers to making pro-environmental choices. Moreover, reusing is the repeated usage, recycling the preservation of an ongoing cycle and rescuing pertains to nature protection (Cheng et al., 2019).

Internal and External Drivers for Sustainable Lifestyles
Both internal and external factors can be drivers for adopting a sustainable lifestyle. As mentioned earlier, individuals must be provided with information (Longo, Shankar & Nuttall, 2019; Cheng et al., 2019), yet this does not come without criticism concerning people's ability to process data. Information overload can potentially lead to overwhelmed consumers and thus might cause confusion instead of clarity. Even though knowledge is key for turning consumers into conscious, pro-environmental and socially responsible buyers, it must be taken into account that they are not rational decision-makers. Decision-making procedures are rather subject to biases. Why knowledge is so important has different reasons (Longo, Shankar & Nuttall, 2019). While some argue that knowledge can facilitate sustainability through increased confidence and ability to reach desired results (Bertrandias & Venette, 2012) or being perceived as an informed consumer (Ryan et al., 2008), others claim that it can act as an obstacle due to information overload and incomplete knowledge (Alba & Hutchinson, 2000).

Looking at this from the CCT perspective, this can also be related to Bourdieu's habitus which is situated within his social distinction theory from 1984. The field of CCT is defined as *"seek[ing] to unravel the complexities of consumer culture"* (Arnould & Thompson, 2018, p.4) as well as it views culture as a heterogeneous system. The habitus concept's underlying idea is that a person embodies cultural capital, being demonstrated in behavioural routines. It further assumes that everyone possesses deeply rooted dispositions and habits which are formed based on life experiences. In other words, the habitus is something a person learns at an early age, wherefore it also determines one's taste regarding e.g. food later on in life (Bourdieu, 1986). Such learning can be facilitated through the knowledge and information aspect as discussed above, through which light is shed on an internal factor influencing consumers' sustainable lifestyles (Cheng et al, 2019; Longo, Shankar & Nuttall, 2019; Bertrandias & Venette, 2012; Ryan et al., 2008; Alba & Hutchinson, 2000). However, the question remains what other, potentially external factors drive consumers to act upon sustainable matters.

Social interaction, which relates to the dynamic exchange between individuals and/or groups within society through information diffusion, is an external consideration that affects behaviours as well as decision-making processes. It adds that consumers' decision-making is not a mere rational process but influenced by desires and interests (Cheng et al., 2019). Bourdieu's (1986) social distinction theory further suggests that the habitus is a routine behaviour that is shaped by socialisation and external elements. As the words habit and routine imply, it is something that someone does automatically, however, it is possible, although difficult, to change the habitus through practice. We believe that this concept was therefore valuable for this research as consumption and gift-giving during Christmas are rooted in many people's routines. The Chapters 'Traditional Christmas Celebrations in Contemporary Europe', as well as '(Over-)consumption' will elaborate on this. Also, this early adopted habitus might clash with people's adopted sustainable lifestyles, which then challenges green consumers' identity projects and sustainable consumption choices alike.

Sustainable Lifestyles in Everyday Life and Inconsistencies
Now that a better understanding has been obtained on what sustainability and sustainable lifestyles imply, as well as what internal and external drivers contribute to its shape and adoption, the question remained how a sustainable lifestyle is compatible with consumers' everyday lives. Still, there is much discussion on what a sustainable lifestyle means for each individual and lifestyle changes are interpreted independently by every person, too. Also, the media contributes to increased complexity and ambiguities about the meaning of sustainable lifestyles. A sustainable lifestyle depends on available options and sustainable choices, but also on people's commitment to sustainability. The main social practices with regard to sustainable lifestyles usually refer to food, recycling, travelling, consumption, and means of transportation. Therefore, sustainable lifestyles are often associated with changes people decided to make in their everyday lives, such as adopting a vegan diet or reduced consumption. As a consequence, the change in one domain might facilitate the change in another, wherefore the sustainable lifestyle can be seen as a continuous process (Evans & Abrahamse, 2009).

Nevertheless, the long-term adoption of changes depends on people's reasoning and engagement, and inconsistencies are likely to occur when individuals face tensions. Such tensions can, for instance, relate to an individual's simultaneous desire for a sustainable lifestyle and a familiar mainstream lifestyle (Evans & Abrahamse, 2009). Especially with regard to consumption embedded in a sustainable lifestyle, a paradox becomes apparent. People often consume as they expect well-being in return, together with satisfying friends, community and others (Jackson, 2008). What remained unexplored though is how all of this affects people's identity projects, as well as how special occasions such as Christmas stand in relation to sustainable lifestyles and exceptions made by consumers during this time. This partial gap identified here generated relevance to this research, which aimed to understand the role of sustainable lifestyles during Christmas among green consumers. Consequently, a clear understanding of the terms sustainability and sustainable lifestyle was crucial in order to apply it later on. It further helped to derive characteristics and criteria for this research's respondents. Also, it enabled us to put sustainability and sustainable lifestyles into context with identity projects, Christmas traditions and (over-)consumption as a whole, as to arrive at a more holistic and complete research gap, which was to be investigated in the course of this study.

2.2 Sustainable Consumption and the Green Consumer

Sustainable Consumption
Some scholars argue that sustainable consumption must be placed within the broader context of the development of sustainable lifestyles (Gilg, Barr & Ford, 2005), as it was discussed in the previous chapter. As do Amaral Junior, de Almeida and Klein Vieira (2020) explain, sustainable consumption comes alongside with sustainable production and sustainable development, which are embedded in various fields of research. Genus and Thorpe (2016) highlight the importance of the economic and sociological point of view. From an economic perspective, consumption is crucial for growth, whereas the sociological aspect rather looks at consumption as part of identity and distinction, which hence

relates to Bourdieu's (1986) social distinction theory and habitus. Given this research's purpose, the focus was on sustainable consumption from the sociological viewpoint. Overall, sustainable consumption refers to pro-environmental purchasing behaviour such as buying organic food, conserving water, recycling and so on (Gilg, Barr, Ford, 2005; Jackson, 2005; Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, 2006; Stål & Jansson, 2017). There are various definitions on the terminology and no consensus has been reached yet. For this research, however, the definition of sustainable consumption is drawn from Mont and Plepys (2007):

> "The notion of sustainable consumption is often used as an umbrella term for issues related to human needs, equity, quality of life, resource efficiency, waste minimisation, life cycle thinking, consumer health and safety, consumer sovereignty, etc. [...] The debate centres on whether it is sufficient to change consumption patterns or there is also a need to reduce consumption levels. Either way, the vision of sustainable consumption requires individual action in changing consumption habits and adjusting lifestyles in line with the principles of sustainable development [...] this implies not only buying more environmentally sound products [...] but also finding happiness in less material ways of living" (p. 532).

Simply put, Mont and Plepys (2007) focus on consumers' sustainable consumption patterns in terms of consuming less and more consciously, adopting e.g. a vegan diet, second-hand shopping, reduced purchases of non-essential products, which then, in return, leads to a sustainable lifestyle. Thereupon, sustainable consumption for this research is strongly embedded within the previously described sustainable lifestyle. To specify further, the focus for this research was on people who consciously decided to change their consumption patterns towards being more sustainable and how Christmas traditions affect these changes.

What gave rise to sustainable consumption is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations, which provides an action plan for sustainable developments focusing on people, planet and profit, but also peace and partnership. Withal, Sustainable Development Goal 12 relates to the encouragement of sustainable consumption and production (United Nations, 2020). Bengtsson, Alfredsson, Cohen, Lorek and Schroeder (2017) outline different approaches to the achievement, which, amongst others, comprise consuming differently or shared usage of products. The topic of sustainable consumption was primarily addressed during a United Nations Conference in 1992 and up until now, it has received increasing attention, which can e.g. be seen by the contemporary movement 'Fridays for Future', where people, especially pupils, all around the globe protest against the lack of action on the climate change (Maier, 2019).

Marketing often intends to contribute to it by normalising green behaviour. While some scholars discuss the often-claimed incompatibility of sustainability and marketing (Jones et al., 2008), others see an obvious connection on how marketing can advance the normalisation of green consumption (Rettie, Burchell & Riley, 2012). According to Jones et al. (2008), sustainability can offer marketing increased reputation and the attraction of sustainably conscious consumers, whereas marketing can offer sustainability enhances awareness and the ability to influence consumer behaviours. This is where Rettie, Burchell and Riley (2012), take it up, by arguing that sustainability marketing provokes improved sustainable consumption through turning sustainable choices into commodities.

Drivers for Sustainable Consumption Patterns
Moreover, it was important to take into account what drives consumers to adopt sustainable consumption patterns. Overall, the adoption process can be seen as slow, yet by understanding consumers' motivations the overall process can be speeded up (Rezvani, Jansson & Bengtsson, 2018). According to Steg and Vlek (2009 cited in Rezvani, Jansson & Bengtsson, 2018), there are three main motivators for pro-environmental behaviour; gain, normative and hedonic. First of all, personal gain refers to the fact that consumers are more likely to adopt sustainable consumption when the advantages seem to outweigh the anticipated costs. Secondly, the normative aspect is related to ethicality, thus when consumers perceive something as morally correct, they tend to be more likely to act in favour of sustainable consumption. Thirdly, hedonic motivation deals with consumers' feelings, which they aim to improve through their purchases. In addition, Hanss, Böhm, Doran and Homburg (2016), add that beliefs, norms

and purchase intentions play an important role, as well as consumers' perceived ability to contribute to sustainable developments through their green consumption choices. However, they argue that daily purchases are often subject to habits, which is also in line with Bourdieu's (1986) concept of habitus. This is pretty much related to commodity products, but how about non-commodity products?

Electric vehicles are an often-discussed topic as their adoption requires more than the purchase of a simple organic food alternative due to its significantly higher price segment (Jansson, Nordlund & Westin, 2017; Rezvani, Jansson & Bengtsson, 2018). While the motivators of gain, normative and hedonic are still assumed to be pivotal (Steg & Vlek, 2009, cited in Rezvani, Jansson & Bengtsson, 2018), social influence, as well as personal and social norms, are key aspects alike. Two types of norms are identified; personal and social. Personal norms are defined as internalised shared beliefs, whereas social norms are based upon perceived expectations of an external group. Furthermore, the ecological attitude counts towards the adoption of sustainable consumption patterns, just like the influence of opinion leaders (Jansson, Nordlund & Westin, 2017). Again, these drivers formed large parts of the conceptual framework as they contribute to the formation of the green consumers' first set of beliefs. What has remained largely unexplored so far is how sustainable consumption and gift-giving during Christmas are interrelated. Little attention has been given to how both affect each other and what driving forces there are, that lead consumers to remain socially responsible consumers, or not.

Green Consumption and Christmas Gift-Giving
Broadly speaking, gift-giving spans a huge part of contemporary Christmas traditions. As it will be further elaborated in the next chapter, gift-giving during Christmas can be seen as a social practice (Levi-Strauss, 1993, cited in Farbotko & Head, 2013), and also is Christmas a celebration of enormous economic relevance (Thrift & Olds, 1996, cited in Farbotko & Head, 2013). Furthermore, Farbotko and Head (2013), raised the question of whether sustainable consumers are also sustainable gift-givers, which concerned a large share of this research. Mauss (2002), claims that gift-giving is part of identity projects, yet this goes both for the giver and the receiver who might in return end up with the obligation to give something back, which thus can lead to a social burden. Moreover, he argues that gifts are used in order to build and strengthen social relationships (Mauss, 2002), which is also supported by other scholars (Osteen, 2010; Yan, 2005) and further elaborated on by Waits (1993 cited in Farbotko & Head, 2013), who assumes gift-giving in times of mass production to be an attempt to maintain relationships among contemporary industrial society members.

A previous long-term study by Farbotko and Head (2013) amongst 16 Australian households revealed that the majority of respondents, despite being self-declared green consumers, did not necessarily stick to their green consumption patterns around the Christmas time, and reducing the number of gifts to less or even none was mostly not an option. Nevertheless, what this study did not investigate was the role of the individual, referring to the green consumer, within this contradiction and how it affects their identity projects. Also, investigating the Australian context is much different from the European one. Apart from this, only little further research has been conducted on this topic in recent times. Some research is available on sustainable gift-giving as a whole (Green, Tinson & Peloza, 2016; Ward & Broniarczyk, 2011; Sherry, 1983), but not much attention has been paid to the Christmas context in combination with green consumers' lifestyles as it was specified for this research.

Green Consumer
Specially linked to this research is the green consumer, as already mentioned heretofore. The green consumer forms the target group of this study, wherefore it was key to clarify the exact meaning. Similar to previously described terminologies, there is not one single definition for green consumers, however, for the purpose of this study, we define a green consumer as *"anyone whose purchase behaviour is influenced by environmental concerns"* (Shrum, McCarty & Lowrey, 1995, p. 72). Hence, the term 'green' can be used interchangeably with the term 'pro-environmental' and it is often the consumers who declare themselves to be green instead of fixed criteria (Shrum, McCarty & Lowrey, 1995; Young, Hwang, McDonald and Oates, 2010). What is important to mention is that we were particularly interested in individuals' green lifestyles with regard to consumption, rather than seeing green consumption and green consumers as holistic terms.

Young et al. (2010), claim that when individuals choose to adopt a sustainable lifestyle, they simultaneously employ an increasingly convoluted decision-making process. Thus, each decision they reach can lead to either more or less pro-environmental consumption patterns, whereby individuals are actively involved in the decision-making since they evaluate benefits as well as potential trade-offs. Moreover, a consistent change towards sustainable consumption is rather facilitated through environmental considerations than behaviour, which is driven by monetary stimulus, as it might otherwise lead to an attitude-behaviour gap (Dobson, 2007). In other words, deeply rooted attitudes, beliefs and values are more important than financial incentives when it comes to individuals' green consumption patterns. What is often neglected to be addressed is how traditions such as Christmas impact green consumers' behaviours. Therefore, it must be clearly understood what drives them to be a green consumer, as well as what causes the contradiction between such lifestyles, identities and the existence of Christmas traditions.

The Green Consumer through the Lenses of the CCT Perspective: Habitus and Self-Identity
Relating the previous theory to the CCT perspective, this can, on one hand, certainly be traced back to the habitus depending on the cultural capital and cultural context given to the individual through background and origin (Bourdieu, 1986). In general, green consumers commonly face contradictions between their sustainable beliefs and actual experiences and practices, which is often down to individual challenges and depending on differing circumstances and can eventually lead to individuals finding themselves being stuck in unsustainable consumption patterns. Besides individual characteristics, influence by peers and society as a whole is particularly significant (Longo, Shankar & Nuttall, 2016; Salazar, Oerlemans & Stroe-Biezen, 2013). Hence, individuals' decision-making is often shaped by social groups which they are part of or desire belonging to (Merton & Rossi, 1949, cited in Salazar, Oerlemans & Stroe-Biezen, 2013). Goods are no longer simply bought for their functionality or in order to satisfy needs but to strengthen social relationships or gain status (Veblen, 1899, cited in Salazar, Oerlemans & Stroe-Biezen, 2013).

Looking at this through the glasses of CCT, habitus is part of one's identity, and so is the self-presentation according to Goffman (1959). In his work 'The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' from 1959, the sociologist defines self-presentation as a planned, concrete part of identity. Moreover, self-presentation implies intentional behaviour to transfer information about oneself, wherefore such a presentation refers to people's behaviours once they enter society. In his work, Goffman (1959) further examined the behaviour of people and made a direct comparison how actors perform onstage. When presenting oneself in everyday life, people are assumed to apply some form of impression management (Goffman, 1959). This theory was considered useful because we intended to study inconsistent sustainable lifestyles during Christmas and what it means for consumers' identity projects. Identity was a key measure as it forms a crucial part of the arising contradiction.

Green Identity Projects from the CCT Perspective: The Extended Self
As discussed earlier, many people construct their identities around e.g. a vegan lifestyle, which they might not always be able to follow due to special occasions and which thus results in inconsistencies. As they present themselves as a vegan in everyday life, this can potentially lead to conflicting situations concerning their self-presentations. Moreover, consumption can be seen to play a key role in identity projects and expression. It is further assumed that consumers use consumption in order to communicate their identity or, in other words, what they are (Schau, 2018). One scholar who contributed to these assumptions is Russell W. Belk with his theory on the extended self from 1988. The theory's focus lies on consumer behaviour and not, unlike in many other cases, buyer behaviour. Hence, consumers give meaning to possessions, while people's brand choice is interlinked with their self-concepts. Usually, the extended self refers to objects, however, there are also some extraordinary cases. This could, for instance, be self-extension through money or other people. People could relate to family or friends, often chosen based on the potential to be reflected favourably through this person (Belk, 1988).

Belk (1988) also glimpses on the extended self in relation to gift-giving, which, according to him, has not yet received enough attention within consumer culture. He argues that with gift-giving, people, for example, merge their kids into their extended self and justify it as an act of courtesy. Nonetheless, Belk adds that people are not merely considerate to do good for others, but rather is it connected to their well-

being. Furthermore, the gift-giver makes the one receiving a part of his/her extended self (Belk, 1988). We believe that the theory on extended self was valuable as we wanted to study how consumers' sustainable lifestyles change during Christmas. As consumers e.g. use second-hand shopping to illustrate their sustainable lifestyles or commitment to reduced consumption, this can also be seen as an extension of self. Ultimately, they use it to construct their identities, wherefore the question remained how the Christmas season affects this identity.

Green Identity Projects and Motives from the CCT Perspective: The Ego and the Id
Subsequently, green consumers construct their identities around sustainable lifestyles, though motives remain to be explored further. For example, it can be related to Freud's theory on multiple identity levels, also referred to as the ego and the id (1962). According to Freud (1962), the identity levels consist of three elements; the superego, ego and id. The model explains *"the intentionality of will and simultaneously provide[s] an explanation for why people are not always aware of exercising their will"* (Freud, 1962, cited in Schau, 2018, p. 28). Moreover, the id refers to intuitive stimulus, whereas the superego relates to ethical behaviour. Thus, the ego bridges the differences between the two concepts through inflicting rationality. The three levels can conflict with one other and can cause clashes within one's identity. Furthermore, the theory represents the complexity of human personality as well as that there is more to it than one mere constituent (Freud, 1962). Hence, this theory could help to understand and explain the complexity of human behaviours with respect to sustainable lifestyles during the year compared to Christmas and the inconsistencies stemming from it.

Green Identity Projects and Social Factors from the CCT Perspective: The Linking Value
Finally, Cova's (1997) linking value constitutes another CCT theory, more oriented towards the end of the twenty-first century, and it deals with the role of community in consumer behaviour. Previous theories such as Bourdieu's habitus are more directed towards the individual, though often influenced by social aspects. We were interested in identity projects and how they are affected by (sustainable) lifestyles throughout Christmas. Nevertheless, social aspects such as gift-giving or sticking to family traditions played a crucial role here, too. Consequently, social impacts had to be taken into account and the focus now shifts towards the community and its relation to consumption. According to Cova (1997), some researchers had already sought to incorporate aspects like communitas, however, in his paper, he dug deeper and introduced a product's linking value. In postmodern times, the linking value is used in the marketing field as a concept emphasising people's interest in a product not because of the object itself, but rather the social relations that are linked to it. In other words, products must facilitate the interaction with like-minded users in order to be of relevance for individuals (Cova, 1997).

For this research, the link could not be made to a specific product. Still, we considered the theory as relevant in terms of understanding the role of sustainable consumption, or consumption in general, during the Christmas season in relation to communities, in this case, referred to as family and friends. Traditions of gift-giving could be related to some sort of linking value for consumers, wherefore conflicts might evolve within their identities. The question might arise whether to stick to identity projects or to drop them for a special occasion. Certainly, these are just our own thoughts that arose in the cause of consulting diverse literature and had to be verified over the course of this research.

Millennials as Green Consumers
"Millennials are known for their environmental consciousness" (Sheahan, 2005, cited in Heo & Muralidharan, 2017, p. 423), as well as they constitute a peculiarly important target group for the modern world as they represent a large part of the contemporary workforce and hence command high spending power. In this respect, they can be seen to outpace the generation of the baby boomers (Fry, 2015, cited in Heo & Muralidharan, 2017). Moreover, Smith (2010) adds that Millennials are not only more likely to adopt green consumption patterns, but also do they tend to promote such green behaviour to both family and friends, which refers back to social influences. Family, and especially parents, however, are an important catchword at this point as they are especially influential when it comes to self-declared green consumers' attitudes, behaviours and their decision-making processes. They can act as either supportive of a sustainable lifestyle, though the opposite is also possible, which then might lead to an attitude-behaviour gap.

The Decision-Making Process and the Attitude-Behaviour Gap

According to social psychological theories, it can be added that attitudes have a great impact on behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen (1991) states that attitudes, social norms and perceived behavioural control affect people's actual behaviour. When analysing sustainable behaviour, it does not automatically mean if one has a positive attitude towards sustainability that it results in sustainable choices. One possible explanation for this could be that social norms and perceived behaviour have too much control and interfere with the process of translating attitudes into behaviours (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014). The decision-making process concerning pro-environmental behaviour can be categorised as a complex process since it involves intellectual, moral and pragmatic components (McGregor, 2008). Moreover, McGregor (2008) argues the higher the morality of a consumer, the likelier they let themselves be guided by their inner moral compass when consuming. Also, consumers are greatly impacted by their surroundings, which means they behave in a way that conforms the societal norms around them in order to be socially accepted (Fisher, 1993). Family is one of the most influential social factors regarding an individual's behaviour. When growing up, some families create an environment where one feels safe and accepted. Moreover, individuals tend to adopt values from their parents and traditions, which have often been inherited down through generations (Rani, 2014), such as Christmas celebrations. Those forces influencing the decision-making process were of special interest for this research as they put additional pressure on the green consumer's internal dialogue and thus he/she finds him-/herself stuck between whom to do justice to; their own sustainable beliefs, traditions demanding gift-giving or friends commanding a green lifestyle. The options are manifold.

Connolly and Prothero (2008 cited in Moraes, Carrigan & Szmigin, 2011), view consumption as an activity which is linked to social relations and norms. Once those are shifting, consumers are more likely to change their attitude and behaviour towards a topic (Jackson, 2005, cited in Moraes, Carrigan & Szmigin, 2011). Social interactions are of importance to consumers since their self-image is impacted by other people's perceptions. Consequently, when consumers try to convince others from their attitudes and behaviours, they, in fact, try to convince themselves that what they do is correct (Baumeister, 1982). The decisions taken by green consumers are based on evaluations about what is right or wrong. Here, moral obligation often plays a notable part as it concerns the extent to which one feels a sense of responsibility to act correctly. Once a green consumer behaves incorrect, e.g. buys products that harm the environment, it can easily lead to a feeling of guilt and emotional distress (Steenhaut & van Kenhove, 2006). However, the more consumers care about the environmental consequences of their behaviours, the more likely they are to purchase environmentally friendly goods (Kilbourne and Pickett, 2008). According to Vermeir and Verbecke (2008 cited in Johnstone & Lindh, 2018), the intention to purchase sustainable products depends on personal attitudes, perceived social influences, consumer effectiveness, and availability. If consumers have high confidence in what they believe and do, they are more likely to not let themselves be influenced by other factors (Johnstone & Lindh, 2018). Notwithstanding, consumers might not always behave as it is expected from them. Two potential factors influence the relationship between environmental attitudes and behaviours, either positive or negative. Firstly, personal factors like knowledge, motivation or attitudes and secondly, situational factors such as social norms or economic constraints (Mainieri et al., 1997, cited in Gupta & Ogden, 2009). When actually occurring, the previously described attitude-behaviour gap results in inconsistencies among green consumers, which is further elaborated on in Chapter 2.4.

Lastly, based on discussed literature, we intended to focus on Millennials as the target group for this study since they are assumed to be in a special dilemma with regard to the tension between green consumption patterns, identity projects and traditional Christmas celebrations. Extraordinary consumption and gift-giving during Christmas are rooted in many people's habitus, as stated earlier. Certainly, this is subject to individuals' respective backgrounds. Thence, British and Swedish Millennials were chosen, for which reasons are specified in the 'Introduction' and 'Methodology'. Whereas Millennials generally show increasing awareness for sustainability, their parents, the baby boomers, may differ in their attitudes. Socialisation, and hence parents, play a detrimental role in forming the habitus (Bourdieu, 1986), which might come into conflict with the Millennials' identities.

2.3 Traditional Christmas Celebrations in Europe

The History of Christmas: Setting the Scene
In order to understand how the respondents celebrate Christmas and how significant traditions might be, the history and the contemporary Christmas celebrations in Europe are introduced.

As stated by Miles (1912), since human history, it has been an instinct reaction that people have given certain days a meaning or the honour to become a feast. Hence, it can be said that many traditions have vanished throughout the centuries due to the constant need of establishing new special celebrations, one, however, survived. Nonetheless, there is great uncertainty about the history of Christmas. Some might say the first recordings of celebrating Christmas started with the Christian celebration of the birth of Christ during the middle of the fourth century in Rome (Miles, 1912). Others say Christmas is an old pagan festival, which was later adopted by the church (Momen, 1999) or that it was a celebration to worship the sun because people believed the sun is the reason for life on earth (Hutton, 1996). The definitions of how and why Christmas was celebrated have evolved through the centuries, though it can be said that the Victorian Era embossed the contemporary Christmas and its customs the most (Horton, 1991). Throughout the Victorian Era, Christmas has been associated with generous acts rather than just conviviality. This has been greatly impacted by the novel 'Christmas Carol' by Charles Dickens, in which he tells a story about a man who discovers the benefits of helping others. He points out that Christmas is a time of forgiving, public utility and pleasures. According to Horton (1991), the Victorian Christmas involved exchanging presents, attending the church service and having a festive meal with the family.

Back at the beginning of the nineteenth century, people did not buy material gifts but additional or exotic food for the entire family. The starting shot for material Christmas shopping was set by the American department store Macy's in 1874 when the store displayed imported dolls in their shopping windows (Snyder, 1985, cited in Miller, 2001). Due to the creation and fast expansion of department stores, the intensity of consumption began and hence, changed the consumption patterns around Christmas (Connelly, 1999). By 1890, Christmas was acknowledged as a national holiday (Belk, 1989) and by the end of the nineteenth century, the phenomenon of Christmas shopping had arrived. It was also the century where the modern toy industry was introduced and largely advertised amongst consumers (Connelly, 1999). Since then, companies have started to understand the financial potential of Christmas and the great influence of advertising on consumers' minds and have begun to invest heavily into more advertising every year (Connelly, 1999). This was the start of Christmas becoming a global festivity but even though it is a global celebration, traditions and rituals are established and adjusted domestically and individually (Miller, 1993, cited in Laing & Frost, 2015).

Christmas Today: The Church versus Commercialisation
Despite all the meanings and traditions around Christmas, according to Laing and Frost (2015), Christmas has become over-commercialised and is used as an excuse to consume and push the original meaning into the background, in contemporary times. As mentioned before, Christmas has different origins, but the most commonly supported and celebrated one stems from the church. Originally, the 25th of December constitutes Christ's birth, who shared and conveyed very different values than the myth figure 'Santa Claus'. According to the Bible and history, Christ brought love and salvation to earth and was concerned about necessities and health for his people. During traditional Christmas services, priests remember the history of Christ and his birth and instruct people to be thankful for what they have (Belk, 1987, cited in Belk, 1989). Due to the modernisation, societies have seen changes, one of them being the decreasing importance of religion compared to past centuries. This could be because people seek religious practices rather when they are confronted with situations, they cannot control such as a crisis, where they seek more refuge in religious powers than compared to when they are doing well. Most people in contemporary Western society do not rank religion as one of the most important factors in their lives anymore (Riesebrodt, 2014). However, although there is a decrease in religious significance, it can be said that Christmas religious rituals have a powerful effect in maintaining common values in society (Barnett, 1954).

Christmas Traditions, Gift-Giving and an Emotional Rollercoaster
There are several globally known Christmas traditions, for instance, decorating the house with lights, which is justified as creating a sense of togetherness and enjoyment especially for children, or putting up a Christmas tree, which is for most families an important element of their Christmas celebrations (Laing & Frost, 2015). According to Hirschman and LaBarbera (1989 cited in Kasser & Sheldon, 2002), there are typical activities during the Christmas season such as spending time with family, participating in religious activities, maintaining traditions like decorating the house, spending money on gifts, helping others and enjoying sensual aspects of the holidays like good food.

Gift-giving has always been a part of Christmas, however, nowadays it goes beyond what it used to be (Laing & Frost, 2015). According to Waits (1993 cited in Laing & Frost, 2015), gifts can be seen as a symbolic message about the relationship between two people who exchange them, which is also why it can easily lead to high pressure finding the most suitable gift, as well as financial anxiety (Laing & Frost, 2015). In addition to that, C.S. Lewis (1970 cited in Laing & Frost, 2015), argues that due to the commercialisation of Christmas and more frequently offered discounts from shops, individuals feel another form of pressure. In order to be part of society or the desired social group, they feel that every friend and not just family members should receive a gift. The process of buying gifts can be either an enjoyable experience, yet it can also easily become unpleasant when questions arise such as what to buy, for whom and how much to spend (Swilley & Goldsmith, 2013).

Aligned with the emerging trend of sustainability, two trends towards being more sustainable at Christmas have been observed. Some consumers feel like they want to give presents which have a meaning, especially in times of mass production and consumption (Farbotko & Head, 2013). Therefore, a trend to purchase ethical presents that neither harm the environment during their production, nor do they require energy-intensive transport or generate lots of waste, has been started (Klein & Whyte, 2018). Furthermore, some believe that there is an ethical and sustainable issue with the number of presents each person gives and receives each year because the number increases constantly, which is why some propose the game 'Secret Santa'. This is also known as 'Kris Kringle' in Sweden, where everyone draws one name out of a hat and buys one relatively expensive gift, instead of several ones for everyone. Yet, this has also been criticised for taking away the joy of gift-giving.

For some people buying gifts is an essential part of their Christmas tradition since this ritual is crucial for their self-worth and the creation of their identity (Laing & Frost, 2015), as well as it strengthens social bonds with others (Yan, 2005). According to Miller (1993 cited in Laing & Frost, 2015), Christmas is the time where families get together, which therefore makes the family the axis of Christmas rituals. Overall, the season is known as an emotional time, where several feelings can be experienced from happiness and joy to depression and loneliness (Löfgren, 1993, cited in Laing & Frost, 2015).

Capitalism, (Over-)Commercialisation and Consumption
Christmas traditions have been invaded by commercialisation and have turned the December holidays into a commercial character. According to Belk (1978 cited in Mortelmans & Damen, 2001), Christmas has not merely turned into a festivity of abundance and affluence, but also into celebrating consumption. In addition, critics argue that Christmas is used as a tool to celebrate capitalism, which promotes materialism and unlimited consumption. Belk (1993 cited in Mortelmans & Damen, 2001) further argues that many elements of Christmas such as 'Santa Claus' and 'Rudolph the reindeer' were solely invented with the marketers' intentions to increase brand awareness and sales. The Christmas season accounts to be the most profitable time for retailers since it makes up a great part of the annual retail sales. Moreover, it has been observed that consumers show the tendency to spend more during that period than any other annual time (Swilley & Goldsmith, 2013). As consumers spend more during Christmas compared to the rest of the year, Bryant (2010), argues that capitalism highly depends on it.

Since companies are aware that consumers tend to spend more money at Christmas, they invest heavily in marketing and advertising during that time as they know it to be profitable. This can be seen as exploitation of Christmas and the vulnerability of consumers since, even though Christmas shopping is a decision that is taken freely and individually by individuals, it comes with indirect social pressure

(Mortelmans & Damen, 2001). The increasing demand to purchase can also be supported by the fact that materialism has gained importance in contemporary society (Srikant, 2013).

Environmental Matters
Not only the consumption and celebration practices have changed, but also the time frame of the Christmas season. The original dates of Christmas were Advent Sunday, Christmas Eve and the First Night of Christmas (Connelly, 1999), however, nowadays the season starts when the Christmas shopping season starts around the end of November. The starting shot is one day after the American holiday 'Thanksgiving', the so-called 'Black Friday', which is a globally known day for shopping discounts, and which has reshaped and supported the retail industry greatly (Shay, 2015; Thomas & Peters, 2011, cited in Lennon, Minjeong, Lee & Johnson, 2018). However, even though consumers appreciate discounts and care about gift-giving, the anxieties about environmental impacts have increased, which prompts towards sustainable consumption practices (Farbotko & Head, 2013).

The Christmas season is known to be magical, nonetheless, according to studies, the magic is more and more disappearing and the behaviour of people during the Christmas season is strictly observed and criticised. As mentioned earlier, the Christmas tree is an essential tradition for many, but having each year a freshly cut tree does not come without a cost. Many of the Christmas trees just end up in landfills after the tree was only used for a short time as a decoration for Christmas. What is even worse is that pine needles take a long time to decompose compared to other trees, which results in emitting quantities of greenhouse gases (Kartey, 2018*)*. However, artificial trees are yet not a better option because most of them are made from non-renewable plastic and need to be shipped long distances, which results as well in environmental damages (Klein & Whyte, 2018). Many people appreciate and automatically associate Christmas with houses beautifully decorated with Christmas lights. Notwithstanding, when looking closer at the costs for having these lights, it becomes clear that they need plenty of electricity and therefore, if consumers are of the opinion that they are necessary, they should consider using LED light bulbs and timers to be more energy-efficient (Klein & Whyte, 2018). Lastly, another Christmas element constitutes the wrapping paper. Each year consumers spend heaps of money on wrapping paper to make it festive and to make gifts seem special. Yet, at the end of Christmas, the wrapping paper ends up in the trash and cannot be recycled because, as of right now, the majority of wrapping paper is coated and is made out of plastic (Klein & Whyte, 2018).

Now that a better understanding of contemporary European Christmas traditions has been obtained, we have set the scene for the research topic. On one hand, green consumers are constructing their identity projects around sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption patterns, while on the other hand there is overconsumption, often facilitated through Christmas traditions as described here. This is likely to lead to inconsistencies, which constituted the main phenomenon of this research along with internal and social dilemmas and ways to deal with it. To gain an even better insight into the research topic at hand, closer attention needed to be paid to overconsumption.

2.4 (Over-) Consumption as Threat to Green Consumers' Identity Projects

The Transforming Role of Consumption
In order to be able to understand and research consumer behaviour, general consumption must be defined. As there are several ways to define and categorise consumption, different definitions will be introduced in the following paragraphs. Consumption has always been a meaningful activity and element for society throughout history as it demonstrated rich meanings, social importance and political and religious dimensions (Stillerman, 2015). A few centuries ago, consumption was mainly linked to religious ceremonies, however, nowadays consumers purchase more than merely necessities, they purchase in order to create an individual identity (Stillerman, 2015). As a result of globalisation and improving communication technologies, consumers have the possibility to choose from diverse goods (Stillerman, 2015). Due to the easy accessibility and convenience of the internet and mobile/digital

technologies, the consumption behaviour of many consumers has changed and has moved from physical stores to online sites and stores (Dey, Yen & Samuel, 2019). Moreover, consuming has become more personalised and the focus has shifted. Nowadays, it is more focused on the lifestyle and personal expression of the consumers rather than just focusing on demographic categories such as age or gender (Stillerman, 2015).

Types of Consumption
Consumption is categorised as something that has an impact upon and belongs to someone (Warde, 2017). According to Campbell (1995 cited in Pellandina-Si*mánya*, 1998, p. 20), "*consumption is defined as the selection, purchase, use, maintenance, repair and disposal of any product or service*". From an economical perspective, consumption refers to a simple process intending to satisfy needs (Bauman, 2007). Some argue that there are two main types of consumption; the first one is simple consumption which includes necessary, elaborated and indulgent consumption, where consumers purchase the basics for survival. These consumptions are necessary, and people consume those to maintain material existence. Secondly, there is the complex consumption, which is divided into conspicuous and symbolic consumption. Complex consumption offers consumers the possibility to choose and involves the so-called non-essential and elective necessities (Ransome, 2005). According to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982 cited in Andrews & Drennan, 2007), consumption includes symbolic, subjective or hedonic meanings.

Furthermore, Holt's typology of consumption practices (1995 cited in McKechnie & Tynan, 2006) captures different consumption behaviours and the transferred meanings through consumption. He uses four metaphors to describe the consumption practices; consuming as experience, integration, play and classification. These metaphors help to understand the phenomenological dimensions underlying individuals' experiences with products and services via the chosen consumption practice. Consumption is more than simply making a purchase, it says a lot about a person, based on what they buy, why they consume, when they consume and where, for instance, if online or at physical stores (Warde, 2017).

According to Belk (1985 cited in Miller, 2001), there is the belief that having possessions is the most important source of satisfaction. CCT aims to understand and address the dynamic relationship between consumer actions, the marketplace and cultural meanings (Arnould and Thompson, 2018). It emphasises the importance and role of consumption when constructing an identity. There are two types of values which consumers attach to their consumption. Firstly, the symbolic value refers to positive consumption meanings to oneself or communicated to others (Rintamäki et al., 2000, cited in Catulli, Cook & Potter, 2016), whereas secondly, the functional value expresses the evaluation of the outcome of the consumption (Babin and James, 2010). Consumer culture does not focus solely on the consumption of material products, but rather on the practices, identities and symbolic meanings given and established by individual consumers (Arnould & Thompson, 2018).

Consumption and Identity Construction
As explained earlier, people consume to construct their identity. Therefore, the self-concept has become an important element as consumers do not have a single, coherent identity anymore, but rather a multidimensional, divided and complex one. However, this is not always easy to accept for consumers and leads to issues when creating their identity. Hence, Herman and Kempen (1993 cited in Dey, Yen & Samuel, 2019), established the dialogical self-theory, which clusters the self into three levels; the meta-self, the I-positions, and me's. The framework includes six relationships between selves at I-positions; compassion, compartmentalisation, negotiation, coalition, opposition, and domination (Dey, Yen & Samuel, 2019). The contrasting set of beliefs between green consumption and regular or even excessive consumption, for instance during Christmas, leads hence to the discussed inconsistencies within individuals' green identity projects. This is further brought together and illustrated in the Chapter 'Conceptual Framework'.

Criticism of Consumption and Overconsumption
There are several critiques about consumption, where consumption is condemned to promote hedonistic materialism or that through consumption, societies produce an excessive amount of waste (Warde, 2017). Thereby, overconsumption can be defined as excessive, problematic and too large consumption.

According to Princen (2002 cited in Håkansson, 2014), consumption turns into overconsumption when it directly harms an organism. With regards to science and social scientists, it can be said that resource consumption is contributing to environmental damage (Brown & Cameron, 2000).

Not just that overconsumption harms the environment, it also leaves negative traces on the well-being and happiness of consumers since they feel a constant pressure to consume, which leads to a culture of overwork, haste and instantaneous gratification (Humphery, 2010). The constant need to buy new things can be categorised as an addiction; an addiction to purchasing. Consumers feel like they need to buy more in order to feel good and they cannot stop, there is no end in sight since there are so many possibilities to choose from. Companies are aware of the fact that consumers want more, which is why they lure consumers with special offers, often for things they might not even need. However, since it indicates a discount, consumers let themselves be influenced to complete impulsive buying (de Graaf, Wann & Naylor, 2014). Due to the indefinite want for more, complete satisfaction is avoided and leads consumers to continue to consume (Bauman, 2007).

The issue of excessive consumption is not novel, but since consumption is linked to consumers' achievement of personal satisfaction, the barrier to stop this behaviour can be difficult to cross (Elkins, 1991, cited in Brown & Cameron, 2000). For this research, overconsumption is deemed relevant as it constitutes the opposite of green consumption through which green consumers identify themselves. Hence, overconsumption relates to excessive consumption during Christmas among green consumers as, in return, it possibly leads to inconsistencies and hence causes dilemmas for how green consumers construct, present and justify their identities. Based on previous definitions and the research purpose, we further define overconsumption as consumption that exceeds the green consumers' regular consumption due to a special setting. Overconsumption, in this case, can still be less than what overconsumption would mean for regular consumers, thus it is aligned to and measured by green consumers' reduced standard consumption. In addition, it is important to mention that overconsumption only represents one facet of inconsistent green lifestyles during Christmas. It can e.g. be related to overconsumption through gift-giving. Another form of inconsistency could refer to inconsistent behaviour in the form of consuming differently, not necessarily more, which could, for example, be linked to a green diet. Be that as it may, such inconsistencies trigger a specific behaviour and usage of countering strategies among green consumers, which is to be investigated through this research.

Inconsistencies and Neutralisation Techniques for Inconsistent Behaviour
According to consumer behaviour literature, values can be seen as types of intentions. As an example, self-transcend intentions are most likely to influence social-oriented behaviour such as recycling (McCarthy & Shrum, 1994, cited in Pinto et al., 2016). Schwartz and Bilsky (1987 cited in Pinto et al., 2016), illustrate values as beliefs about desirable outcomes, hence which guide behaviour. In order to protect the connections to higher societal values and norms, consumers make use of different strategies to neutralise and rationalise their behaviour (Sykes & Matza, 1957). The cycle model describes the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable consumer behaviour. It aims to explain the complexity and mechanism involved during the decision-making process. Consumers' attitudes are most likely aligned with societal values and norms, nonetheless, sometimes consumers show contradicting behaviour, which leads to the attitude-behaviour gap as discussed previously. In order to resolve the thereby accrued inner conflict, consumers make use of neutralisation strategies (Gruber & Schlegelmilch, 2014). There are six common techniques used by consumers to justify their inconsistent behaviour.

1. *The defence of necessity* argues that due to different external factors such as globalisation, consumers have no possibility to act sustainable, however, if they could they would act differently (Minor, 1981, cited in Gruber & Schlegelmilch, 2014).
2. *The claim of entitlement* refers to the right of each individual to engage in any desired behaviour without considering the possible consequences of their behaviour (Coleman, 2005).
3. *The claim of relative acceptability* argues that others behave even worse than oneself, which makes their behaviour acceptable (Henry & Eaton, 1999).
4. *The claim of individuality* assumes that consumers do not care about others or their problems, which is why they do not see a reason to act for the collective (Henry & Eaton, 1999).

5. *The denial of responsibility* states that one consumer should not be held accountable to act sustainably since one person cannot change the world (Sykes & Matza, 1957).
6. *The appeal to higher loyalties* depicts a conflict which consumers might face. They share societal values but also belong to smaller social groups with different values, whereas the latter usually influences consumers more than collective societal values (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

These neutralisation techniques are especially interesting for this study since we investigated what the internal dialogue among green consumers looks like with regard to opposing sets of beliefs. As suggested in the literature, people use techniques in order to justify their inconsistent behaviour. Inconsistent behaviour is indeed an aspect that might result from the internal dialogue that the green consumers face due to the Christmas season. Being aware of such neutralisation strategies could, therefore, help us to understand the respondents' answers better and thus to categorise and position them within those pre-defined strategies, but also to potentially highlight additional strategies.

To conclude, the first two Chapters of the 'Literature Review', dealing with sustainable lifestyles and sustainable consumption, proffer the first set of beliefs that green consumers have internalised and which they base their respective identity projects on. The third Chapter on traditional Christmas celebrations captures a snapshot in time and provides the setting for this research. Overconsumption, which is discussed fourth and is often associated with contemporary Christmas celebrations, forms the opposing set of beliefs through which self-declared green consumers often find themselves being stuck in a dilemma with regard to their green identity projects. Inconsistencies arise due to different sets of beliefs and therefore lead to an internal dialogue, which is further shaped by both internal as well as external drivers. However, what this inner dialogue exactly looks like for each individual and what it results in remained the question and was to be explored in the course of this research. Consequently, the discussed theories are bundled in the next chapter in the form of two complementary models.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Since the focus of this research was on individuals' identity projects, which, however, are to a great extent influenced by large-scale processes, we decided to put this study into the context of both a macro- and micro-level and to shed light on the phenomenon from both perspectives. Within sociology, the micro-level relates to interactions of either individuals or small groups as well as it emphasises individuals' identities or motivations. The macro-level, on the other side, rather focuses on large-scale procedures, wherefore the macro environment can both facilitate or impede the actions of individuals on a micro-level. As a consequence, there are situations where the macro- and micro-level intersect (Sternheimer, 2011). Applying it to this research, the impact of the decisions of many self-declared green individuals to not stick to their green identities during the Christmas season contributes to increased consumption, which in this context negatively affects the environment, as well as it can serve as an excuse for others to justify their unsustainable behaviours, too, and, on a micro-level, it leads to internal and social dilemmas among green consumers due to inconsistencies.

Micro- and Macro-Level
The conceptual framework for this research consists of two adjuvant models, one on a more macro-level and the other on a more micro-level, though neither one of them can solely be allocated to one single side. Together they intend to illustrate how consumers' identities are shaped as well as how differing beliefs within these identities might clash and enter into a conflicting dialogue with each other. On a more macro-level, we identified the 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' (Terlau & Hirsch, 2015), which is based on Balderjahn (2013), Carrington et al. (2010) and Vermeier and Verbeke (2006), whereas the micro-level is rather represented through the 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' (Puchalska-Wasyl & Oles, 2013). Both models were adjusted by us as in line with what the theoretical material in this chapter revealed as well as the research purpose. The original models can be found in Appendix 1 and the modified version in this chapter (Figures 2 and 3). In the following paragraphs, both models are explained in relation to the study.

The Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption

The original 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' (Figure 8) implies that there is a contradiction between traditional economics and sustainable consumption. According to Terlau and Hirsch (2015) *"beliefs lead to attitudes, which in their turn derive intentions"* (p. 3). The decision-making process towards sustainable consumption is further influenced by individual, social and situational factors (Terlau & Hirsch, 2015). All three of these factors were important for and applicable to this research as the study aimed to explore the role of sustainable consumption during the Christmas season for individual green consumers as well as their identity projects. Therefore, it was vital to understand what different kinds of forces drive them to adopt such sustainable consumption patterns in order to subsequently identify what keeps them from doing so during the Christmas season and how this potentially leads to both a contradiction and dilemma for the individuals. Forces can be of both internal and external nature, as it was discussed in the literature review. Based on previous literature, the model has been modified in line with the purpose of this research (Figure 2). For internal drivers, we identified, for instance, the habitus, personal values or cultural capital. Moreover, external forces can be social norms, media or social pressure, just to mention a few. Both identified internal and external factors were combined with the in the 'Decision-Making of Sustainable Consumption' model featured three categories of factors. What, however, remained an open question was the actual behaviour in such a situation, both throughout the year and during the Christmas season.

Individual Factors
- Socioeconomic factors
- Habits / Lifestyle / Routines (Habitus)
- Cultural capital
- Personal values
- Needs / Wants / Desires / Interests
- Reasoning / Engagement
- Personal gains
- Id

Social Factors
- Social environment (family, friends etc.)
- Social norms
- Social pressure / Expectations
- Cultural context
- Normative gains
- Hedonic gains
- Media
- Ego / Superego
- Linking value

Situational Factors
- Information provision
- Availability
- (Christmas) Traditions

Attitude → Intention → **Actual Behaviour (Sustainable Lifestyle)**

Year

Attitude → Intention → Actual Behaviour?

Christmas

Figure 2: Modified 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption'

The model is positioned on a more macro continuum as it relates to external forces, which then shape the individuals' identity projects on a micro-level. The individual, social and situational factors are adapted by each person, yet they are derived from overall geographical contexts and cultural backgrounds. The contemporary Christmas tradition as such is the requirement and prerequisite for this study to be conducted. The decision of many people to assume Christmas must constitute the exchange of many gifts contributes to excessive consumption and inconsistencies within green identity constructions. Hence, the macro-level of this model mostly refers to the setting and timeframe within which the research was positioned. On a more micro-level are the attitude, intention and actual behaviour that self-declared green consumers evince.

Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness

The modified internal and external factors outlined in Figure 2 represent stimuli that influence sustainable lifestyles as a whole. This can be applied to all types of consumers, though the focus is on green consumers as they are more likely to adopt a sustainable attitude and form an intention that consequently leads to sustainable behaviour. However, with the second model (Original model see Figure 9), we funnelled down the perspective from a macro- to a more micro-level, focusing increasingly on the individual's dialogue between different sets of beliefs, facilitated through the above-mentioned individual, social and situational factors.
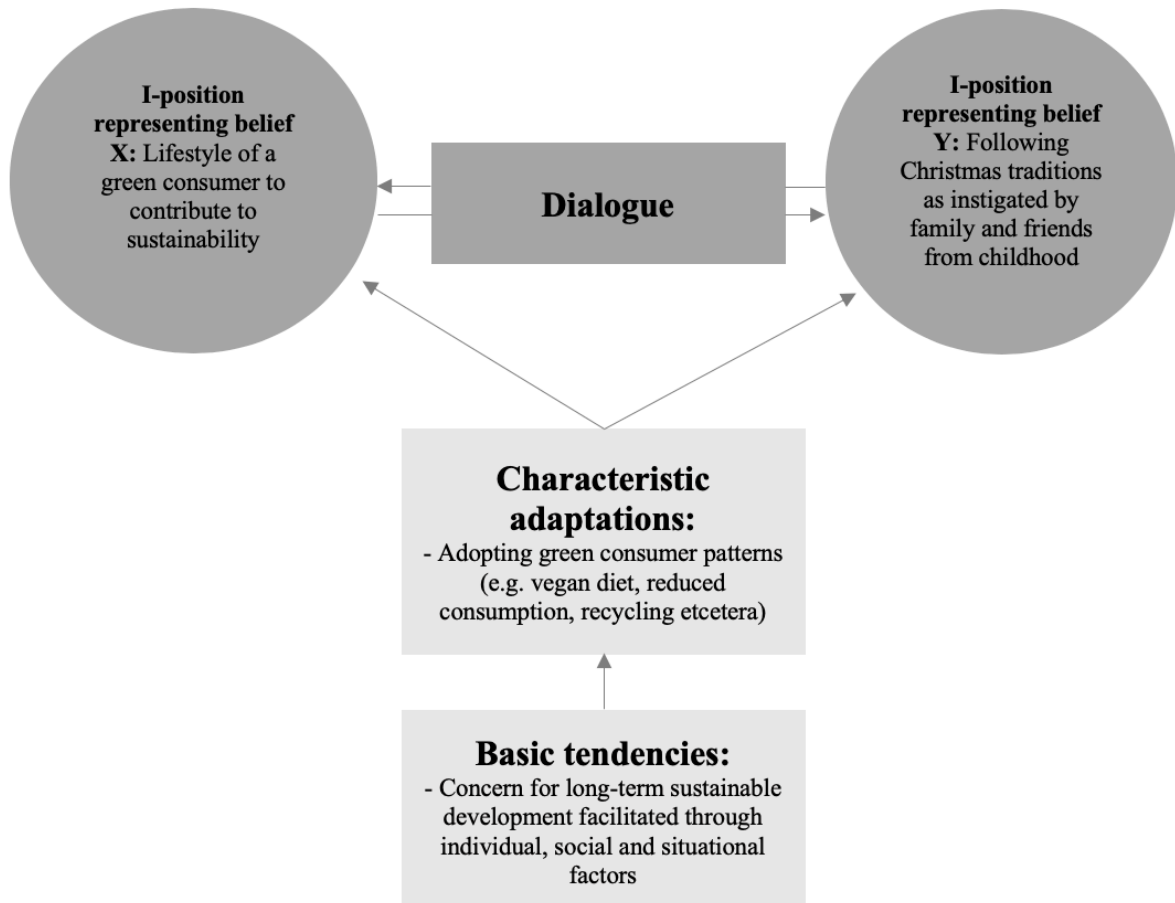
Figure 3: *Modified 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness'*

What Puchalska-Wasyl and Oles' (2013) original 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' implies is that individuals are in constant doubt about themselves, which also concerns the identity. Moreover, internal conflicts emerge through opposite ideas, which is further facilitated by the contemporary globalising world, and consequently can lead to multivoicedness and inconsistencies for the self. Typically, doubts stem from differing beliefs, what in return provokes an internal dialogue (Puchalska-Wasyl & Oles, 2013), and which can be applied to the contradiction between sustainable lifestyles and Christmas festivities. The respective I-positions represent the different beliefs that enter into a dialogue with one another, though neither one of them exists in isolation. This means that all sets of beliefs are influenced by characteristic adaptations, which in turn is headed by basic tendencies. Doubtfulness is facilitated by uncertainty, which is depending on the character. An ethical doubt, for example, may encourage identity dialogues through which individuals intend to find out what is of personal importance to them (Puchalska-Wasyl & Oles, 2013). Puchalska-Wasyl and Oles' (2013) identity dialogue is only one amongst different types of dialogues, yet it is the most appropriate one for this study. Moreover, the 'basic tendencies' as presented in the 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' can be connected to and derived from the individual, social and situational factors implied by Terlau and Hirsch (2015) in Figure 2, and can be further seen as the attitude of a green consumer to contribute to sustainable developments. Through the resultant 'characteristic adaptation', the green consumer adopts a sustainable lifestyle and forms the intention to act accordingly. Nonetheless, the attitude-behaviour gap, as discussed in the

literature review, might occur here due to juxtaposing beliefs, induced by Christmas. Therefore, it leads to an internal dialogue, and inconsistencies in the green consumers' actual behaviour are the result and phenomenon at hand. Again, based on previous literature, the model has been modified as in line with the research purpose (Figure 3). To sum up, the model is located more on the micro continuum as the focus is on individuals and their internal dialogues.

The Conceptual Framework in Relation to the Sub-Questions
The two established sub-questions for this study are relevant as they helped to structure the investigation, as well as to answer the research question. At the same time, both of them are related to the models of the conceptual framework, as discussed below. This allowed us to capture the essence of both models, which in return aided the answer to the sub-questions and finally the research question.

With the first sub-question '*How do the green consumers cope with (a potential) attitude-behaviour gap?*', we pertained to elements of both models. Firstly, the modified 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' (Figure 2) focuses on attitudes, intentions and behaviours, which together serve as the basis for the arising attitude-behaviour gap. Secondly, from the modified 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' (Figure 3), it could be assumed that, based on several influential factors, individuals form two opposing sets of beliefs, in this case referring to the regular green consumer identity and the role of sustainability during Christmas. Since both attitude and behaviour were expected to develop differently between the two contexts, an attitude-behaviour gap, also referred to as inconsistencies in this research, was anticipated to occur, which results into an internal dialogue and thus determines the way consumers cope with the inconsistency. In order to answer this sub-question, we had to look into attitudes, intentions and actual behaviours during the year compared to during Christmas, as well as how they deviate and in which way green consumers justify such discrepancies.

Moreover, with the second sub-question '*What social and internal dilemmas do green consumers face during the Christmas season?*', we looked into influential factors as stated above. Both internal and external elements were considered, hence this relates to the individual, social and situational factors as implied by the modified 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' (Figure 2). Based on that, internal and external dilemmas were assumed to arise, with which the green consumers were believed to deal in their internal dialogues. Accordingly, this relates to the modified 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' (Figure 3). Besides, the internal dialogue was assumed to be informative to understand the green consumer identity, how it is affected by dilemmas and how the identity possibly changes between settings. To answer this sub-question, we had to explore what influences there are according to the respondents and how they affect the behaviour, identity and respective counteractions.

3. Methodology

The following chapter will provide an outline of how primary data has been gathered for this study. Also, chosen methods will be described and an explanation on why which method has been chosen will be presented. All methods and techniques have been selected in accordance with the research purpose and question. After discussing both the research philosophy and design, it will be explained how data has been gathered, from whom and why, as well as how the data has been analysed. Lastly, the quality of the conducted study will be discussed in terms of its validity, reliability, and transferability.

3.1 Research Approach

The purpose of this research was to explore how self-declared green consumers handle the contradiction between their sustainable lifestyles and Christmas traditions. Contemporary Christmas traditions in Europe are commonly associated with excessive consumption as it has already been explained in the literature review, which in return conflicts with green consumers' identity projects. In order to gain a deeper understanding of this matter, the information had to be collected from individuals. Moreover, the data collection had to be put into a proper setting in accordance with the research philosophy, strategy and design, which is discussed in detail in the upcoming chapters.

3.1.1 Research Philosophy

Management and business research underlie philosophy which is vital to take into account when approaching research within social studies. There are different philosophical assumptions, two of them being defined as ontology and epistemology, each of which comprises various forms. While ontology concerns the nature of reality, epistemology refers to the nature of knowledge. On one hand, ontology moves from realism, assuming that there is a single truth, to internal realism, arguing that there is a truth which is obscure, further to relativism with the assumption that there are many truths, and finally nominalism, claiming that there is no truth. This can also be related to the nature of facts. Realist ontology sees facts as existing and possible to be revealed. Moreover, internal realism assumes facts as existent but not directly accessible. Furthermore, relativist ontology understands facts as depending on the observer's point of view and finally, nominalist ontology means that facts are primarily created by humans. On the other hand, epistemology holds two contrasting viewpoints. There is positivism at one end of the spectrum and social constructionism on the other extreme. Positivism assumes knowledge as only being of importance when it is premised on external observations. Social constructionism relates to how people comprehend the world through common experiences with other individuals as well as the meanings they give in their everyday lives. There are different levels of constructionism and the more pronounced it is, the greater the belief that there is no extant reality at all. When linking both ontology and epistemology, positivism matches realist ontology, whereas constructionism goes with nominalist ontology (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

From the ontological view, this research is positioned within the *relativist ontology* dimension because it is assumed that there are many truths, depending on each individual's interpretation. The focus on individuals' stories and points of view was crucial for this study since the goal was to explore their respective handling of the given contradiction. Each individual was assumed to deal with this in their way, hence not only one truth could be observed. From the epistemological perspective, this research is placed within *social constructionism* since human interests can be seen as the main driver of science. Also, the observer can be seen as part of the observed to gain deeper knowledge of the social phenomenon at stake. Rich data has been gathered from a small sample, chosen based on specific criteria (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). For instance, we defined the criteria for green consumers (Table 1) that the respondents had to fulfil in order to be suitable. These criteria were further based on the work of previous authors, which is explained in the Chapter 'Literature Review'. Moreover, we conducted in-depth interviews that lasted between 40 and 65 minutes in order to gather the rich data that

is part of the epistemological approach. With a total of 19 respondents, out of which 13 were Swedes and six Britons, the sample was also rather small, though the focus was on deep insights rather than quantity or numerical data.

Since relativist ontology fits constructionism, specific methodological implications follow naturally from this with regard to this study. As in line with what Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015) defined, the research had the underlying aim of convergence and questions as the starting point. The design was further subject to individual cases since individual green consumers were also interviewed, and the data mainly concerned literal sources instead of numeric origins. Moreover, the overall outcome referred to theory generation rather than theory testing. Together, these pre-given methodological implications provided the basis for the subsequent research strategy and design.

As a matter of fact, research philosophies affect the respective research design. From an epistemological point of view, there are two extreme positions with regard to research styles, reaching from positivism to constructionism research design. Each quadrant in the matrix has an underlying set of typical methodologies, depending on the level of detachment or attachment, yet not every method can be assigned to one single quadrant since some are positioned somewhere in between (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). We focused on *engaged constructionism*, implying a high level of intuition and pragmatism. In this case, the existence of prearranged theories shaping knowledge is not accepted as such, but neither does it agree to the individuals' ability to construct their truths. This means that engaged constructionism assumes that all kinds of meaning must be derived from lived experiences. Hence, this study is in line with engaged constructionism because we were interested in investigating individuals and how they deal with the contradiction between green lifestyles and Christmas celebrations. The focus was on lived experiences in different contexts and how this shapes identity projects. Being located within the constructionist research design, which is linked to relativist ontology, we started from an assumption based on previous literature and observations from our social surroundings and were then tasked with highlighting the various truths (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). The assumption for this research was that the Christmas setting leads to some kind of internal dialogue, potential inconsistencies as well as internal and social dilemmas among green consumers due to the disruption between a sustainable lifestyle and contemporary, commercialised Christmas traditions. Indeed, inconsistencies could be identified during the research, yet the reasoning was different amongst respondents and different truths could be highlighted as presented in the results.

Certainly, it was important to take into account the strengths and weaknesses of these different research philosophies. Whereas both relativism and social constructionism come along with numerous advantages like efficiency, the possibility of generalisations, flexibility and the opportunity to understand meanings and processes better, there are also some downsides which must be considered. For instance, constructionism is often accused of being difficult to access and also it is seen as time-consuming (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Still, the research design seemed most appropriate given the topic and purpose of this research, because of this it was important for us to be aware of potential disadvantages and to keep them in mind throughout the research process in order to keep them as limited as possible. The time-consuming aspect, for instance, was tackled as we worked in pairs and complemented one another with both disparate and overlapping competencies.

3.1.2 Research Design, Research Strategy and Research Methods

The research design can be seen *"as the process of building a structure, or plan, for your research project"* (Leavy, 2017, p. 8) and, according to Leavy (2017), consists of five major approaches to research design; quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based and community-based participatory research. De Vaus (2006) adds that the research design must be structured in a way so that it enables answering the research question. Hence, researchers must be clear about what kind of data needs to be collected in order to do so. De Vaus (2006) further highlights the importance of the research design, which must under no circumstances be neglected. While the research design serves as a clear plan on how to answer the research question(s), the research method can be seen as a strategy that is adopted in order to implement that plan. Both the design and method are interrelated, yet they are two

distinct things. Research methods can, for instance, be observations, interviews, surveys, focus groups etcetera, depending on the research purpose as well as the research philosophy and research design applicable for the study (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2017). The research design, strategy and method relevant for this study are discussed below.

Abductive Framework
Inductive, deductive and abductive frameworks are important to consider in research methodology as they form the approaches to theory development (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019), as well as they, facilitate the choice for suitable research design, strategy and methodology. In other words, the respective research purpose must be embedded in one of those frameworks. Both the deductive and inductive approach form the dominant frameworks, whereby the abductive approach is rather a compromise between the two. Deduction, on one side, works towards theory development, which is then tested through numerous propositions. On the other side, induction starts with conducting the actual study in order to get a grasp on what is going on. Since research can often not be assigned unambiguously, a middle ground has been found with abduction. While induction ranges from data to theory and deduction from theory to data, abduction goes backwards and forwards, which is frequently used within business studies. The exemplary structure of abduction begins with noticing an interesting fact. Furthermore, a theory is figured out which could serve as an explanation for that fact (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

The framework applicable to this research is *abduction* because we monitored a surprising fact in contemporary society, which refers to green consumers' identities and their often not so green behaviours during Christmas. Therefore, we needed to gather rich data in order to explore and explain the phenomenon as well as to illuminate themes and patterns with respect to the contradiction and potentially arising conflicts for individuals. This explanation was intended to be incorporated in a general conceptual framework, which was tested by using proof from existing and new data. What made the study also of abductive nature was that it constituted a continuous interplay between theory and the initial empirical observation.

Qualitative Research Design
Concerning the methodological choice, also referred to as the research design, qualitative and quantitative research can be considered to be the most commonly used research approaches. What mainly distinguishes them is the type of data that is being gathered and the inductive, deductive and abductive frameworks alike. While quantitative studies rather measure quantities such as the number of behaviours in order to verify relations; qualitative research is about collecting descriptive knowledge, which is usually expressed in linguistic stories (Landrum & Garza, 2015). For this study, a *qualitative research design* has been adopted. In qualitative research, individuals' perceptions, as well as understandings, are important. Also, it helps investigators to reach a better understanding and explanation of social phenomena, whereby the researcher often plays a subjective role as he/she makes use of individual experiences when it comes to interpretations (Stake, 2010).

Furthermore, qualitative research enables researchers to collect in-depth knowledge on a topic due to the possibility to ask follow-up questions and to dig deeper (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). When talking about 'in-depth' knowledge, we defined the terms 'in-depth' and 'deep' as something obscure, something which cannot be accessed or seen directly and where a researcher must go beyond the surface in order to reveal the different truths. As a consequence, the qualitative approach fitted this study best since we intended to explore how individuals experience the contradiction between their green consumer identities and Christmas celebrations. It is essential to understand that we were not interested in the role of sustainable lifestyles during Christmas as a whole, but that the focus was on individuals and how they make sense of this phenomenon. Also, we desired to collect individuals' stories as well as to incorporate experiences they made during Christmas with regard to gifts they exchanged, traditions in terms of Christmas trees, decorations, food etcetera. Hence, we needed to immerse ourselves into the research insofar that we directly talked to respondents and therefore had the opportunity to ask deeper follow-up questions. How exactly this was going to be carried out in terms of data gathering will be elaborated on in the Chapter 'Data Collection'.

Exploratory Research

Regarding the purpose of the research design, there are four different ones, being exploratory, explanatory, descriptive and evaluative research. The study is designed to fulfil either one of them or also a combination of these purposes. Also, the purpose is subject to change throughout the process. Firstly, exploratory studies help to discover what is going on, and research questions tend to begin with 'What' or 'How'. Secondly, explanatory studies relate to establishing causal relations among variables and questions commence with 'Why' or 'How'. Thirdly, descriptive studies aim to arrive at a precise profile of people, situations etcetera. Here, research questions typically include 'What', 'Who', 'Where', 'How' or 'When'. Lastly, evaluative studies intend to reveal how good something works. 'How', 'What' or 'To what extent' are likely to be used (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The purpose of this study was defined as *exploratory* since we sought to explore a social phenomenon and to gain a better understanding of it. As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) further define, exploratory studies can be best investigated through in-depth semi-structured interviews with individuals or focus groups, which also constituted the method we used for this research. One of the benefits of exploratory studies is their level of flexibility. Besides, it helps to expand knowledge on a particular issue or phenomenon, which is in line with what we aimed for: Understanding the role of a sustainable lifestyle for green consumers' identities during Christmas. Indeed, we managed to gain deep insights into how green individuals consume throughout the year, compared to during Christmas. We further explored factors influencing this behaviour by asking in-depth interview questions, which then in return helped us to understand the rising conflict within the consumers' inner selves.

Semi-Structured Interviews

After having chosen the research design, and therefore having made a clear plan on how to answer the research question, we had to decide on the research strategy in the form of the research method. This method usually flows naturally from both the research philosophy and design within which the study's purpose is embedded (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). As in line with the previously defined relativist ontology and social constructionist research philosophy, wherein this investigation is positioned, as well as the chosen qualitative research design, we decided to use *semi-structured interviews* in order to explore the social phenomenon at hand. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), semi-structured interviews serve to collect primary data. With this method, the researcher follows a list of pre-set key questions and themes, whereby the order is subject to change. The authors further argue that every type of interview follows a specific purpose and both unstructured and semi-structured interviews are frequently used to collect and analyse qualitative data. Since the purpose of this research was exploratory; semi-structured interviews came into handy. Also, they helped to provide background information as well as contextual data.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews could be conducted one-to-one and one-to-many and they offered the possibility to probe while conducting the actual interview. As a result, we selected semi-structured interviews as it aided us in gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, but also to understand the reasoning behind the respondents' answers. Another important aspect was the possibility to probe, meaning that we could ask follow-up questions. This helped us to understand meanings, which interviewees accredited to the phenomenon, too. Besides, we did not ask about inconsistencies per se, but rather did we ask about sustainable practices during the year versus Christmas in order to determine potential gaps. Once such gaps were identified, we used follow-up questions to specify the inconsistencies as well as the internal dialogue and dilemma. Additionally, semi-structured interviews allowed the collection of rich data, while still offering a good balance between flexibility for adjustments and the possibility to steer the conversation in order to prevent it from being distracted from the initial purpose. Next to having predefined questions, we were still able to adjust the order of the questions due to the adopted method. This further helped us to adjust the set of questions to each individual and their respective stories and thus facilitated more profound insights.

What is more, we made use of the laddering technique as described by Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2015). The authors distinguish between laddering up and down, whereby laddering up aids to disclose the individual respondent's true value base. This is commonly achieved by the researcher by asking 'Why' questions to dig deeper. Yet, the application of susceptibility and sound judgment are key factors. Moreover, laddering down aims at attaining both illustrations and examples of events.

Especially the laddering down technique came in handy for this study as we planned on gathering image material of the respondents' typical Christmas celebrations, such as favourite gifts, the Christmas tree, typical meals and more. Indeed, the respondents provided two to three pictures of their last Christmas celebrations. However, rather than using them in the actual analysis as observational material, they were used as an icebreaker and to start off the conversation. Also, they were used by us to get a first idea of the respondents' typical celebrations and hence to see whether there are obvious similarities or differences among participants and cultural contexts. Furthermore, we used the images as a basis for letting the participants describe their typical festivities. Nevertheless, the image material was not used for, as said, analytical purposes, as well as illustrative means within this document, which is also related to privacy reasons. Thus, the pictures merely facilitated the interviews without being further included here. Besides, the decision was made because we assumed to not gain any further valuable insights by directly including the images in the research paper as no significant differences or similarities in the image material could be observed at first glance.

Besides many advantages, qualitative research interviews come with drawbacks, which must be addressed in order to be avoided (Kvale, 1994). Often the method is accused of not being scientific, though it can be countered that science is subject to individual interpretations. The same applies to objectivity because qualitative interviews are sometimes said to be subjective. Furthermore, bias is a common point of criticism, however, this can be prevented through thoughtful interviewing techniques. What is more, qualitative research interviews depend on interpretations of meanings, which may differ among interpreters and their lived experiences, wherefore results can be seen as subjective. Nonetheless, this can be tackled through professional work. By taking on different perspectives, the meaning's interpretation is rather holistic than one-sided, which can be seen as a strength. This is especially applicable for a social constructionist research philosophy and relativist ontology, applicable to this study, as it was our task to illuminate diverse truths. Also, we worked in pairs and thus could tackle subjectivity issues, too. Another point of critique is the limited possibility of generalisation, though it must be said that qualitative research facilitates obtaining overall knowledge (Kvale, 1994). Rather than generalising, researchers are enabled to transfer knowledge into further contexts (Geertz, 1973, cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011). The level of transferability for this study is described in the Chapter 'Quality of the Research'. Kvale (1994) further claims that qualitative interviews are particularly appropriate when the study intends to apprehend the world as lived by someone, but also is it a great way to explore beliefs, attitudes or motifs (Richardson et al., 1965, cited in Barriball, 1994). This applies to this study as the focus was on individuals and how they handle the contradiction between their green identities and Christmas traditions. Having addressed the pros and cons helped us in an attempt to increase the research's quality through thorough reflection.

Cross-Sectional Time Horizon
Next, we had to decide on the time horizon of the study, which naturally depends on the research question. The two potential time horizons are either longitudinal or cross-sectional. Firstly, longitudinal studies equal a diary or several snapshots over a specific period. Secondly, cross-sectional studies focus more on a particular moment in time, hence one snapshot. Even though cross-sectional studies are typically used in quantitative research, they can also be applied in the course of qualitative research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Given the restricted time for this study, we decided to go with the *cross-sectional horizon*. Thus, the results are based on interviews that were executed during a brief period and focused on a particular snapshot. Although longitudinal studies can also be carried out over a shorter period, the cross-sectional approach proved to be more suited here because we focused on a specific time of the year, being Christmas, and monitoring the respondents over a longer period would not have contributed to any additional knowledge. This is especially the case since the research was not conducted during the Christmas season itself but during spring.

3.2 Techniques and Procedures

Next, it will be explained how the data for this research has been gathered and analysed.

3.2.1 Data Collection

After having decided on the research design, strategy and method, the first step in collecting the data was the definition of the sampling. Since it is usually not possible to study all potentially available data due to e.g. time or money restrictions, it is important to select a sampling method that is also in line with the respective research question and purpose (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). In the following paragraphs, both the sampling and interview setting for this research will be described.

Sampling

Firstly, the importance of sampling is that it must be both representative and precise. Whilst representativeness means that the characteristics of the sample need to represent those of the overall population, precision deals with the sample's credibility. In other words, the sampling proportion must be in line with the entire research population (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). Overall, it is distinguished between probability and non-probability samplings. Within the probability sampling, each case has an equal chance of being selected and it is commonly used for survey research. Consequently, non-probability samples make it impossible to know the likeliness of every case being chosen from within the target population (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Given the research question, not everyone was suitable to consider but specific characteristics amongst respondents were required in order to arrive at an answer to the research question. Hence, *non-probability sampling* was being used, more specifically a combination of *purposive and snowball sampling*. Purposive sampling is often associated with the usage of grounded theory and works with criteria to identify appropriate respondents. As in line with the abductive research approach, we started with a rough idea on required criteria (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019), which was based on the discussed literature on green consumer identities and sustainable lifestyles. The *criteria* for this study can be found in Table 1.

Table 1: Criteria for respondents by categories and supported by authors of previous research within the field

Category	Source
Sustainable Lifestyle	
Consumers having a sustainable lifestyle, meaning that they choose to mitigate global climate change. They decide to be a driving force towards sustainable development for people, planet and profit.	Cheng et al., 2019
Preference for pro-environmental choices	Gupta & Ogden, 2009
Conscious actions towards green consumption, green living etcetera.	Cheng et al., 2019
Reducing (resources), re-evaluating (pro-environmental choices), reusing (repeated usage), recycling (preservation), rescuing (nature protection).	Cheng et al., 2019
Planning of the long-term adoption of behavioural changes	Evans & Abrahamse, 2009
Sustainable Consumption	
Pro-environmental purchasing behaviour (e.g. organic food, recycling and others)	Gilg, Barr & Ford, 2005; Jackson, 2005; Sustainable Consumption Roundtable, 2006; Stål & Jansson, 2017

Individual action in changing consumption patterns as well as the conscious reduction of consumption levels	Mont & Plepys, 2007
Green Consumers	
Self-declared green consumers	Shrum, McCarty & Lowrey, 1995; Young et al., 2010
Purchase behaviour influenced by environmental concerns	Shrum, McCarty & Lowrey, 1995
Outwardly lived a sustainable lifestyle (in relation to the communicated identity projects)	Schau, 2018
Demographics	
British* green consumers due to their comparably high Christmas spending in Europe, but an increasing sustainable interest (Millennials). *Here it is important to mention that the survey of Deloitte covers the entire United Kingdom, however, we have decided to only focus on England due to the time limitation and the fact that England is the most populated country from the UK.*	Deloitte, 2019; Johns, 2019
Swedish green consumers due to lower Christmas spending and being the world's most sustainable country.	Deloitte, 2019; Schieler, 2018
Demographics	
Millennials from both England and Sweden as they are known for their environmental consciousness and due to their higher spending power	Sheahan, 2005; Fry, 2015, cited in Heo & Muralidharan, 2017
Celebration of either Christian or modern Christmas	Countryeconomy, 2020

The cultural comparison emerged from our interest in comparing individuals from different contexts in order to explore similarities and differences. Besides making use of the purposive sampling, we chose to combine this with snowball sampling in order to compensate for the detriments of the former. With snowball sampling, we started with an individual who met the criteria and asked him/her for referrals who also fitted the defined profile (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). When talking about the downsides of purposive sampling, we refer to the situational circumstances of the study. The initial idea was to gather data from British and Swedish Millennials, whereas the original plan intended to locate those Millennials at either Lund University in Lund, Sweden or by travelling to England for several days. However, due to the pandemic crisis ruling over the world throughout 2020, this plan could not be executed. Instead, we decided to start with British and Swedish Millennials we had got to know during our studies and met the criteria, and from there we worked with the snowball strategy by asking them for referrals. Obviously, this had also an effect on how the interviews were conducted, namely via online platforms such as Skype, Facebook or FaceTime, instead of face-to-face, as initially planned. This will further be described in the section 'Interview Setting'.

Moreover, we initially intended to conduct five to ten interviews per country, depending on the saturation level. Unlike quantitative research, it is difficult to determine the exact saturation of qualitative research. According to Fusch and Ness (2015), saturation is reached once an acceptable level of data has been gathered in order for the study to be valid and replicable. Reaching a common consensus on when the saturation level is reached is challenging, though there are some general guidelines. For example, the saturation level is assumed to be reached when there is no new information, no new insights and topics, or no new coding/categories. Thus, we adhered to this definition and ended up conducting 19 interviews. At this point, the answers became increasingly repetitive and therefore no new insights

were assumed to be found. Having said this, what was of particular importance for this research was that the saturation level had to be equally reached for both nationalities. For Swedish participants, this was the case after 13 interviews, for British respondents already after six. Also, we meant to include a similar number of males and females within the study in order to make the sampling heterogeneous and therefore increase the level of transferability as defined further down. An overview of all respondents including origin and gender is presented in Table 4 (Appendix 3). Even though the saturation level has been reached, the study sample cannot be generalised to the entire population, however, this research indicates a certain extent of transferability, which will be explained in Chapter 3.3.

Interview Setting
Preparations before the Interviews
Since this research underlay an abductive approach, we sought to find potential explanations for the observed social phenomenon in order to draw logical inferences (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). It was thus made use of both primary and secondary data. Especially secondary data helped to make a first attempt on defining categories and hence served as the basis for the interview questions. The theoretical sampling refers to a chain search as defined by Bryman and Bell (2013), implying that the study is founded on prior scientific theory instead of trawling all accessible material. One advantage coming along with this is the saving of time. This research was mainly imbued by course literature of the Master programme 'International Marketing and Brand Management', which we, the researchers, followed, as well as the consumer culture theory. Moreover, data was commonly obtained from the online library database of Lund University and Google Scholar. This ensured the collection of exclusively preponderant scientific data. The focus when searching literature was on academic journals, preferably of reviewed nature. The researched topics and keywords comprised, amongst others, *sustainability, sustainable consumption, sustainable lifestyle, Christmas traditions, green consumers, identity projects* and *(over-)consumption.* Moreover, relevant literature in the form of books was consulted in the field of management and business research. In order to produce empirical data, semi-structured interviews, with a defined target group, were conducted.

The Interview Questions
As mentioned already, the interview questions were partly based on previous literature (Ch. 2), the conceptual framework (Ch. 2.5) and both sub-questions (Ch. 1.3), as they are all interrelated. Furthermore, the interview questions were divided into five main topics, revolving around *attitudes*, *intentions*, *sets of beliefs*, as well as the *actual behaviour among green consumers throughout the year* and *during the Christmas season*. Questions on attitudes comprised basic tendencies, influenced by individual, social and situational factors as presented in the two models of the conceptual framework. Moreover, questions on intentions focused on overall characteristic adaptations, in other words, the actual adoption of a green lifestyle. Together, these two categories led to the sets of beliefs that green consumers hold with regard to a sustainable lifestyle and contemporary Christmas traditions. Defining these beliefs, and hence the internal dialogue arising from this, formed an immense part of the answer to the research question, along with the actual behaviour of green consumers during both the year and a snapshot in time, Christmas. Each topic was complemented with relevant interview questions.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the course of this research in order to gain the required in-depth information, like recommended by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019). As further suggested by these authors, the interview questions were formulated in an easily understandable and open manner, so that they allowed informative responses as well as deeper questioning. Closed questions were tried to be avoided in the best possible way as they might not have led to the desired in-depth understanding. Also, the questions were formulated in a way to avoid bias, prevent socially desirable responses or to steer the respondent in a certain direction. The interview guide, forming the outline of intended questions (Adams, 2015), can be found in Appendix 2. All interview questions are connected to either one of the sub-questions or even both, as well as to the conceptual framework.

When conducting semi-structured interviews, it was also important to take into consideration the role of the investigator. Generally speaking, researchers must be aware of potential obstacles and implications, wherefore this has already been discussed earlier. When conducting the interviews, we aimed to be as

knowledgeable about the topic as possible through prior research, but also did we inform ourselves about distinct types of biases in order to prevent this from happening (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019; Adams, 2015). Also, different cultural contexts had to be taken into account since we come from a different cultural background. We, the authors, are from Germany, whereas the interviewees are from Sweden and England. We prepared for this by considering the various cultural dimensions according to Hofstede (Hofstede Insights, 2020). Also, in line with Adams' (2015) recommendation, the interview questions were tested beforehand in a pilot study with fellow students.

Interview Questions and Challenges
As already stated, the interview questions were partly derived from two rather complex models, the 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' (Figure 2) and the 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' (Figure 3). How the complexity of the models was generally handled is explained in Chapter 3.2.2. However, the complexity also affected the interview questions and brought along challenges. When developing the interview questions, the main categories were the attitudes and intentions of green consumers towards a sustainable lifestyle during the year and Christmas, but also the beliefs they eventually form based on this. At all times, we were aware of the similarities of attitudes, intentions and beliefs, and hence the challenges in keeping them separate. In order to capture all minor aspects, and to keep the categories as discrete as possible, we worked with strict definitions. 'Attitude' is a general tendency to react in a specific way to a particular situation, idea etcetera (WebFinance Inc., 2020). The 'intention' takes the attitude one step further as it is defined as something one plans and wants to do (Cambridge University Press, 2020). Moreover, the term 'belief' can have different meanings, also towards more religious aspects, though for this research we defined it as a conviction or opinion (Dictionary.com, 2020).

Having these definitions in mind helped us to partly separate the three concepts, nonetheless, this was not entirely possible as meanings overlapped. Hence, the general definition that we worked with was the assumption that the attitudes form the very basis, influenced by different kinds of factors, which the intentions are built upon. As a consequence, this leads to beliefs and altogether it directs towards a specific behaviour. The interview questions were therefore developed within those categories, however, it must be added that the main categories were formed by attitude and intentions, whereas the beliefs formed part of the results found out through the former divisions. Consequently, questions from the 'attitudes-set' focused more on the respondents' ideas of sustainability and Christmas traditions, while the 'intentions-set' included more concrete aspects, such as, for instance, the respondents' thoughts and willingness towards giving sustainable presents. All in all, not being able to separate meanings entirely proved to be a challenge, but since we conducted a qualitative study, and hence it was not our intention to test models or measure variables, it finally helped us to gain better insights into the research topic. Also, our research question required understanding thoughts, feelings and processes that green consumers face and go through, therefore, this can be seen as something rather gradually and overarching, which is in line with the overlapping concepts of attitudes, intentions and beliefs.

Finding the Respondents
Based on the chosen sampling methods, potential respondents were at first selected from within our network and contacted beforehand via online platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Henceforth, we contacted two Swedish and one British green Millennial from our direct social environment that fitted the criteria and from there we worked with referrals until reaching the saturation level. A major challenge proved finding British respondents since our immediate network was not as big as to base the snowball method upon it entirely. Also, some potential connections turned out unhelpful as individuals did not match the criteria. Consequently, we mobilised all acquaintances to look out for potential respondents, as well as we contacted Lund University's international office and a professor from a British university. Finally, we managed to find enough British respondents mainly through our indirect network and from there we worked with further referrals. Following Adams' (2015) suggestion, we formulated a precise but clear cover note that was sent online to them in order to request their participation. The note included information on the research topic, without revealing too much information yet, as well as information on the confidentiality of the study and overall conditions such as expected time horizon and so forth. Appointments with the participants were made and planned via various online platforms due to the previously mentioned pandemic.

Conducting the Interviews

Once connected with the respondents, we sought to create a comfortable but professional atmosphere through small talk and a brief introduction to the research topic (Adams, 2015). As in line with the laddering down technique, pictures prepared by the respondents were incorporated into the research and used as an initiator to the dialogue (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). All interviews were conducted in English as it was the sole common language between the respondents and us. As further suggested by various scholars, the confidentiality aspect was addressed in a clear manner (Adams, 2015; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2015). As said, all interviews had to be conducted virtually in the presence of both researchers. It is often suggested to conduct interviews rather face-to-face than through online-mediated tools (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019), however, online interviews also offer benefits when used appropriately. Aside from potentially associated risks such as technical failure or the lack of trust between interviewers and interviewees, online interviews allow greater flexibility and better geographical reach. As a consequence, researchers have the possibility to incorporate respondents in the research who would otherwise be out of reach and thus make the study more valid, reliable and transferable (Bryman, 2012). By taking into account potential pitfalls, we aimed to overcome the challenges and outweigh the disadvantages in order to arrive at an equal research quality than expected through face-to-face interviews.

There are certain essential ethical principles which need to be considered to ensure the protection of the research respondents and the integrity of the research. We informed the participants beforehand about the research and always asked them if there were any questions before starting the interviews. The respondents were ensured that their data is treated with confidentiality and we received the consent of each participant that they had been recorded, so we were able to transcribe the interviews, which provided full transparency to the research. All interviews were recorded by both of us, the researchers of this thesis, in order to ensure a proper backup. Also, while both of us were present during the interviews, only one of us asked questions in order not to confuse the interviewee. In the meantime, the other researchers took additional notes on the responses in an excel file. At the end of the interview, everyone was given the chance to ask additional questions, so no queries remained unanswered or doubtful. Since the thesis is not depending on the respondents' identities, we decided to anonymise all respondents.

3.2.2 Data Analysis

After collecting the data, we needed to apply the most suitable method to make sense of the gathered information. According to Kvale (1996 cited in Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2015), there are seven stages when working with interviews for qualitative studies, which can be seen in Figure 4. The framework by Kvale can be considered as guidance throughout the research process. Within this chapter, the focus lies on the fourth and fifth step; *1) the transcribing process*, which is an essential stage and creates a foundation for the *2) data analysis*.

Figure 4: *Seven stages for qualitative research interviews (Kvale 1996 cited in Rennstam & Wästerfors 2015)*

Coding and Analysis

Before the gathered data can be analysed, relevant information should be put into a systematic format (Easterby-Smith, Jackson & Thorpe, 2015). In order to study the collected data, we transcribed the audio recordings word for word. The recordings proved to be a supportive tool since we were able to re-listen to different parts without being distracted by external factors such as writing notes (Stuckey, 2014). Transcribing should not only be seen as a mundane task, but it should also be viewed as an important element of the research process because it is editing the gathered data (Skukauskaite, 2012). It is important to have a clear structure when transcribing so no misinterpretations arise (Stuckey, 2014). In

order to present pure and unbiased research, the transcript must include exactly what has been said during the interview. If parts of the recording are unintelligible, researchers should not make them up but instead, indicate in the transcript that words are missing by using for instance {??}.

Moreover, most of the time the interviewees do not speak in fully formulated sentences, repeat themselves or speak with a jargon. When this is the case, researchers are allowed to edit phrases if they are used as quotes, but they should not be paraphrased (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Consequently, we made use of these suggestions to analyse as precisely as possible. For instance, we indicated longer breaks or repetitions and used this non-verbal communication later on in order to make sense of the vocalised parts. Also, non-verbal communication was noted down and incorporated in the Chapters 'Results' and 'Analysis' as it often was an indication for the respondent to feel uncomfortable or insecure. It could e.g. be recognised that the respondents often used laughter to cover inconsistencies. Once the transcripts were written, the coding process could be started.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), grounded theory is derived from data, which is systematically gathered and analysed and implies a clear collaboration between the method, data collection and the analysis. In grounded theory, different types of coding are recognised. Coding is a key process, where the data is separated into different elements. When talking about codes in qualitative studies, it usually refers to a word or short phrases, which describe a portion of data (Saldaña, 2016). According to Richards (2015), data passes through three general stages of coding. First, the data is descriptively coded, which refers to information about a source, then topic codes are created and lastly, the data is analytically coded, which connects the individual data. Creswell (2015 cited in Elliott, 2018) argues that coding is important as it makes sense of dense data. Besides, the logic behind coding is that it can be used to explain a phenomenon, reveal a concept or connect data from various studies (Yaghi, 2018).

As shown, there are different ways of approaching and analysing data, depending on the language used by the grounded theorists. Hence, for this research, we chose to partly make use of the strategy proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). They adjusted the original constructivist grounded theory by Strauss to include their relativist position and to be able to demonstrate their belief that researchers should construct theory through the interpretation of the respondent's stories (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). Grounded theory studies' main epistemological interest is in predicting and explaining behaviour in social interactions (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019) and aims to guide the researcher in developing theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Grounded theory is mainly used when researching a phenomenon which lacks theoretical foundations since the goal is to develop theory. In order to emerge theory from the gathered data, the data must be coded (Vollstedt & Rezat, 2019).

As a matter of fact, this is in line with this research's relativist ontology and social constructionism point of view. Also, the strategy suggested by Strauss and Corbin seemed suitable for this research as we intended to construct new theories by interpreting the individuals' stories. Hence, we strongly focused on gathering stories from individuals. However, rather than serving as a way to guide the actual analysis, storytelling was used for this research mainly as a means to gather data as well as to structure the presentation of the results. Quotes from the interviews were included for illustrative purposes. At the same time, working with stories, in this case, proved to be a great success as the respondents took it up successfully to share their overall consumption patterns throughout the year as well as the Christmas season. Both being convinced green consumers and the apparent feeling of nostalgia around the Christmas setting proved to be an ideal setting for storytelling among the respondents.

Now after having gathered and transcribed rich data, it had to be coded in order to be analysed, for which there are also different approaches. One approach is Miles and Huberman's (1994) edited 'Interactive Model' for qualitative data analysis by Punch (2009) (Figure 5). According to the author, the three major components, after having collected the data, are *1) data reduction, 2) data display* and *3) drawing/verifying conclusions*. Punch (2009) further assumes that these components constantly interact throughout the analysis process. The main purpose of data reduction is to reduce information without losing any relevant data. Moreover, through data display, information is condensed and arranged into e.g. graphs or tables in order to identify similarities, differences, trends etcetera. Both data reduction and data display help to facilitate drawing and/or verifying conclusions.
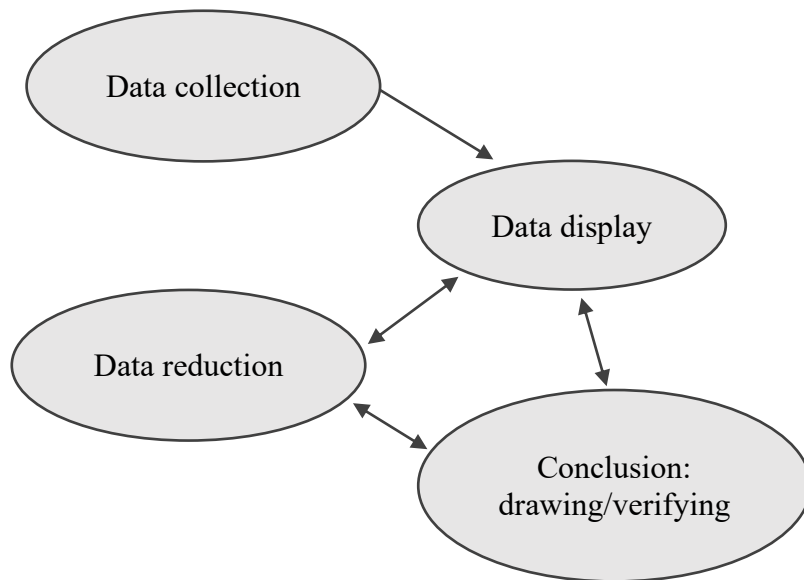
Figure 5: 'Interactive Model' for qualitative data analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994 edited by Punch 2009)

The following step after having collected the actual data is data display, which was conducted through categorising and labelling the gathered information. The topics that the data was categorised into were based on the two models from the conceptual framework (see Figure 2 and 3), which at the same time are linked to the two sub-questions. For each topic, keywords and phrases were highlighted within the transcripts by using different colours. What further facilitated this process was making additional notes during both conducting and transcribing the interviews, so we could get a first overview of outstanding topics, categories, potential differences and similarities. Simultaneously, we worked with an excel sheet where we put all interview questions and corresponding answers given by the respondents per question, so that helped us to keep a good overview, too. Accordingly, we used colour coding to highlight the different categories within the interview questions according to the conceptual framework. This belongs to data display as it helped with the overview, but also partly to data reduction since it aided us to not lose any relevant information. Here, the interaction between the various components of the 'Interactive Model' became clear, too.

The next step, data reduction, was further performed to identify patterns, trends, similarities and differences. This was especially relevant in the case of this research because we made two comparisons: 1) Between the behaviour of self-declared green consumers throughout the year and during Christmas, and 2) the cultural comparison between the Swedish and British context. Thus, this second step was carried out by condensing the data into an excel chart, sorted by the identified categories according to the conceptual framework. Each category was complemented with the respectively coloured extracts from the interviews.

Additionally, it is important to mention that going back and forth between the various steps, especially data display and reduction, enabled us to capture all relevant categories from the rather complex conceptual framework. Also, it helped us to determine whether the categories stemming from the conceptual framework covered everything essential that was stated during the interviews. Moreover, the relationships between the individual categories were revised to spot overlaps. This was especially important for this research as there are deceptive similarities between e.g. attitudes and intentions, which had to be considered. Moreover, as we made a cultural comparison, and hence had double data, it had to be considered that all vital data from both parties were represented equally within the categories.

Based on this process, four core categories have been outlined for this research, that form the structure of the Chapters 'Results' and 'Analysis'; *Green consumer identity, Christmas identity, the contradicting behaviour of green consumers* and *the role of sustainable consumption during Christmas*. These core categories mirror the conceptual framework as well as the sub-questions and core of the collected data. At the same time, they were formulated in the form of a storyline which relates to what Strauss and

Corbin (1998) suggested. Birks and Mills (2015) define storyline as a strategy to integrate, construct, formulate and present the findings of the research. Also, it conceptualises the core category, whereas it constructs a story along with the established categories and its theoretical propositions (Chun, Birks & Francis, 2019). In the case of this research, it was used to illustrate the respondents' thought processes from an everyday sustainable lifestyle to their actual behaviour during Christmas. Within these core categories, 13 codes (Appendix 4) were identified as relevant for answering the research question. Each code is allocated one of the four core categories, and they are presented in the Chapter 'Results'.

Lastly, the third step, drawing and/or verifying conclusions, was carried out with the aid of the two former steps, both of which helped us to conclude the gathered data. Also, the last step included answering all research questions in accordance with the empirical findings of the conducted research and the subsequent analysis.

Application of Conceptual Framework

After conducting in-depth research and comparing different models, we decided to work with the following two models; the 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' (Figure 2) and the 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness*'* (Figure 3) because, with these two in combination, several factors could be considered when analysing the behaviour of the participants. These models might seem quite complicated, however, they proved to be very supportive since they have been used as a guideline when formulating and establishing the interview questions, as well as when all the collected raw data from the interviews were clustered and structured. When we analysed the findings, seven topics (Ch. 5.1.1-5.1.7) have been established, which are linked to the conceptual framework, in order to prepare the readers for the following discussion. Lastly, the conceptual framework has been included and adjusted to the research in the discussion of the results and analysis, where the framework is used as a supportive tool to discuss the findings, to compare it with literature and to explain the relationship between individual factors.

3.3 Quality of the Research

In order to prevent the criticism of having research which lacks trustworthiness, and that is biased, the research needs to show that the topic researched is relevant, timely, significant, interesting and of high quality, which can be assessed by different criteria. While reliability and validity are essential when assessing the quality of quantitative data, qualitative research can make use of others as well, such as credibility, transferability or trustworthiness (Healy & Perry, 2000, cited in Golafshani, 2003). The following paragraphs will shortly describe the most suitable criteria for this research, which are in this case: reliability, validity and transferability. Also, it will be discussed in which way, as well as to what extent, this research fulfilled the given criteria and hence argues for its reliability, validity and transferability. The research is thus reflected on and specific actions and examples are presented.

3.3.1 Reliability

There are two distinctions within reliability but in general, reliability focuses on the extent to which a study can be replicated or/and the consistency of measures (Kirk & Miller, 1986). External reliability describes the degree to which a study can be replicated, and internal reliability focuses on the agreement of several research members about what they see, hear and read. The former can be challenging when conducting qualitative research because social settings change constantly, which makes them more difficult to replicate (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In order to reassure credibility, it is necessary to record and transcribe the gathered data (Easterby-Smith, Jackson & Thorpe, 2015), which was also made use of for this research. Even though choosing semi-structured interviews limited the possibility of replicability, we identified this method as the most suitable one considering the purpose and aim of this research. Potential researcher bias was further tackled through using follow-up questions in order to ensure the right interpretation, as well as by having both researchers present during the interviews.

3.3.2 Validity

Validity refers to the truth of what is being observed, identified and measured by a researcher (Mason, 1996). In like manner, validity can be allocated into internal and external dimensions. The internal validity measures the alignment of the researcher's observation and developed theoretical ideas. According to LeCompte and Goetz (1982), qualitative research, which takes place over a long period, is more likely to ensure internal validity. External validity, on the other hand, concentrates more on the generalisability of the findings across social settings, however, LeCompte and Goetz (1982), argue further, that this can be more difficult to achieve with qualitative research due to the sample sizes and constantly changing social settings. In order to obtain reliability, validity is not needed, however, on the contrary, validity is only possible through reliability (Kirk & Miller, 1986). For this research, the internal validity might be considered as quasi low since both identity and feelings were involved and their interpretations might differ among different individuals. Though we tried to avoid such interpretations, or at least to limit them as much as possible, by asking follow-up questions during the interviews, but also by discussing conflicting understandings throughout the data analysis process. The same applies to external validity. Since only 19 individuals were interviewed, the result is not representative for the entire population, however, a certain level of transferability could be reached by keeping the sample as heterogeneous as possible, as well as by ensuring that those who were interviewed fulfilled the criteria and consequently were part of the target group full-on. This was further supported by using a combination of both purposive and snowball sampling.

3.3.3 Transferability

Since qualitative studies typically focus on smaller groups or individuals who share their feelings, thoughts and opinions, the outcomes tend to be more personal than the outcomes from quantitative research, which makes it challenging to gather similar insights in another or even the same context. Geertz (1973 cited in Bryman & Bell, 2011), argues that researchers should establish a thick description with comprehensive details of a culture. This description can be used by others as a measure to identify if it is possible to transfer the findings into another context (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As mentioned already, we intended to ensure transferability by choosing a diverse group of respondents that all fitted the specific criteria for potential interviewees. Although respondents might have been quite different from one another, and each individual had his/her own experiences, still certain similarities could be found which could be transferred to other contexts. All respondents were asked the same set of questions, interview settings were identical, and already after a few interviews, we could observe clear tendencies throughout the answers with regard to similarities and repetitive responses.

4. Results

The following chapter covers the most relevant empirical research findings, which were structured according to the Chapter 'Conceptual Framework'. First of all, it will be clarified what people from the two different cultural contexts do to be sustainable throughout the year. The participants' green identities will be introduced, which involve attitudes, intentions, beliefs, external influences and as a result the sustainable behaviour of the respondents during the year. This is to give the reader a first overview through stories we gathered. The second part focuses on Christmas celebrations, which, in this case, means how the participants behave at Christmas regarding their sustainable lifestyles, as well as the importance of Christmas traditions and how this might impact their behaviour and green identity. Consequently, participants might face an internal dilemma because they show an inconsistent behaviour during Christmas, which will be outlined in the third part, as well as the potential internal dialogue individuals face when having to choose between their green consumer identity and following Christmas traditions. Lastly, the fourth part is concerned with the role of sustainable lifestyles for green consumers during Christmas and is divided into three themes: '*I do not care about my sustainable lifestyle during Christmas*', '*I try to stick to my sustainable lifestyle during Christmas, though it is difficult*' and '*I stick to my sustainable lifestyle during Christmas*'. At all times, the results pertain to both Swedes and Brits, which eventually helped to provide a comparison, and which will be further elaborated on in the Chapters 'Analysis' and 'Discussion'. Altogether, 13 codes (Appendix 4) were revealed and interpreted based on the gathered data, which are accumulated within the four core topics (Ch. 4.1-4.4).

The research comprised 19 interviews, out of which 13 were conducted with Swedish and six with British green consumers. Although each individual had its own set of personal characteristics and traits, according to the criteria from Table 1, they all shared a self-declared sustainable lifestyle.

4.1 Green Consumer Identity

In order to understand how respondents create and see their green consumer identities, we asked particular questions during the interviews which focused on the attitude, intention, and behaviour of the respondents concerning a sustainable lifestyle. As mentioned already in the Chapter 'Methodology', attitude, intention and behaviour are closely interrelated and may overlap from time to time. Therefore, we decided to keep the description of the participants' attitudes and intentions short since the main focus lies on the participants' behaviour. Nonetheless, it was of significance for us to gather information about the participant's attitudes and intentions to understand the context and their reasoning.

Swedish Participants
Previous literature has suggested numerous definitions on the term 'sustainability', wherefore we aimed to gain insight into how the respondents themselves interpret this terminology. For this reason, we started the interviews by asking the participants what they do to be sustainable, as well as what being sustainable means to them. Among Swedish respondents, the understanding of sustainability was relatively similar. The main keywords mentioned were: valuing things, making conscious choices, taking an active stand for the environment, enabling coexistence of humans, animals and nature, working together, making decisions that one can stand behind, and not wasting any resources.

When the participants were asked why they have changed to a more sustainable lifestyle, the most common responses were increased awareness about global warming and the impacts of one's behaviour on the environment. What became clear throughout the interviews is that the green consumer identity is something that evolved during the last years as society has changed, which especially relates to the targeted Millennials. The major driving force of the participants is self-reflection, which is supported by an increased interest in a sustainable lifestyle. Three of the respondents felt particular internal pressure to adopt a sustainable lifestyle, one specific reason for this was commonly referred to as guilt, as it can be seen in the following quote:

> "I feel [...] a lot of guilt of having a very, very privileged lifestyle and [...] I kind of see that we won't be able to live like this and a lot of people are suffering because of how many people that are living like I do, so (I) try to make the most to [...] help them somehow in the long run."
> - Participant 7

But not merely guilt seemed to be a driver for many respondents to create their green consumer identity, but also did it turn into an actual belief, at least this was specifically mentioned by three participants. One of them said:

> "[...] I believe in that, so I want to try to be as sustainable as I can, which means that I want to."
> - Participant 3

Moving away from their parents and starting their own lives was mentioned as another facilitator by one of the respondents for this green development. He/she started to reflect more upon his/her behaviour and chose to do things differently than the parents. Similarly, another participant stated that when he/she was growing up, his/her family ate most of the time meat and travelled a lot, however, since he/she has moved out and started studying, he/she has become vegetarian and is trying to minimise flying and travelling far away.

Another important factor for creating their green consumer identity was said to be external pressure by three respondents. Not flying due to 'flight-shaming' or adopting a vegan diet due to the chosen study programme are just two examples of such social pressure. In general, it can be said that half of the Swedish participants have felt social pressure to be greener in their everyday lives. Sustainability is a big subject in Sweden and many, especially younger people, including the ones which have been interviewed, show a great interest in global issues such as climate change and how one can make a positive impact. According to the participants, the Swedish society exerts influence on its population towards a more sustainable lifestyle, but in a positive way. Recycling is something that all participants categorise as a basic element of their everyday lives because they have grown up with it. One of the most influential external factors, according to literature, is the family since many behavioural actions are passed onto the next generation. For instance, recycling is something that almost every participant has learned at home. Another example would be from one participant, who shared that he/she does not really care about brands and that this is something which was passed down by his/her parents. When he/she was growing up, and still today, his/her parents never cared about the brand, but rather about the quality of the product. Several Swedish participants stated that their parents are in general open to change and are conscious about their behaviour, nonetheless, they would e.g. not sacrifice travelling to be more sustainable. Also, not all parents behave sustainably yet. For example, when Participant 11 is at home, he/she encourages his/her father to be more conscious and to recycle since it is of great importance to him/her and he/she would like the people in his/her close environment to behave sustainably. In order to persuade his/her father, he/she tries it over and over, as it can be seen in the following statement:

> "I've had been arguing with him quite a few times about actually doing his recycling, which is kind of annoying and not throwing food away, because he does that a lot, buys too much and throws it away." - Participant 11

Furthermore, the Swedish participants rank their friends as quite influential, especially regarding behaving more sustainably. Nine of the thirteen participants stated that their friends share the same values and interests in environmental issues, which can, according to them, be drawn back to the fact that they all shared the same education and established friendships with fellow students. Nine participants studied environmental engineering, which, according to them, had a great influence on their behaviour. This can be seen by the fact that many changed their diet after the first courses and also altered their philosophy of life, which they said was because of increased awareness through their education and also due to influences of fellow students, who were more environmentally conscious.

Owning a car is, according to the Swedish participants, not something that they need, and it is also something they rather disdain. Only when living in the countryside, they could imagine owning a car or when, for instance, having children in the future. However, when living in the city, they clearly do not

see the need for having a car since all participants use public transport or their bicycles instead. In case they do want to make use of a car or need it, they would utilise the welcoming alternative of 'carpooling'. Not only do many of the respondents tend to make green choices when considering their everyday transportation means, but also when it comes to more extraordinary scenarios such as travelling. The way the Swedish participants' value travelling has changed in recent years since 'flight-shaming' was introduced in Sweden, which is a movement that encourages people to stop taking flights to lower their carbon footprints (Patel, 2020). The participants stated that they cogitate more about taking holidays. They have started to reflect more upon the mode of transportation and if there are alternative travel destinations close-by. Nonetheless, most of the participants stated that they love travelling and that it is very difficult for them to travel sustainably, but they are trying to minimise their flights and adapt other styles of travelling. Four participants mentioned that they were actively trying to avoid flying. However, at his point, it is not always possible for them to stick to this, especially as travelling was mentioned as a 'guilty pleasure'.

Having sustainable nutrition was mentioned frequently by all participants. It seems to have a very special and big role in many respondents' lifestyles. Three participants claimed to stick to a strict vegan diet, and they seemed to like everything about it as well as they identify themselves with it:

> "I've been a vegan for three and a half years [...] and that was pretty much for environmental reasons from the beginning. I had been a vegetarian for a while, but then [...] me and my family started reading books and articles and sharing information with each other and we all realised that [...] the way we consume food is pretty insane." - Participant 9

Interestingly, none of the respondents claimed to stick to a purely vegetarian diet, but instead, eight of the respondents mentioned that they at least live as much vegetarian as possible, while at the same time having reduced their meat consumption immensely, and in some cases, like Participant 11, to almost nothing. What became apparent is that the almost-vegetarians never decide to eat meat by themselves as it is not a constant within their everyday life.

From the beginning, it was obvious that all of the participants try to avoid consumption. The participants were asked if discounts lead to more consumption, as well as pressure to consume. Almost all agreed that they are definitely affected by marketing and they tend to buy more when seeing discounts. Yet, most of them also stated that they try not to consume things which they do not need, even when these products are on sale. Buying second-hand, either clothes or furniture was perceived as a common activity among six respondents, which is due to two reasons; firstly, it is cheaper and secondly, it is more environmentally friendly because products are getting fixed or reused and not thrown away and replaced with new products. When the participants were asked if they buy sustainable brands, a clear difference between students and workers was identified. In general, most of the participants are buying second-hand clothes, however, when they do not, they try to invest into a more expensive and sustainable brand, if they have the economical capital to do so. One respondent shared his/her struggle about buying sustainable brands:

> "[...] preferably it should be cheaper to be green. But it's not always and that's, I think, the biggest issue because people follow their wallet [...]" - Participant 11

The participants who are students stated that they would like to buy more sustainable brands, but it is too expensive for them, which makes them either purchase second-hand clothes or fast-fashion brands such as H&M, Lindex or Monki. Nonetheless, in general, it became clear that they value quality instead of quantity.

With regard to reducing plastic consumption, one respondent brought up the usage of plastic-free shampoo as the respondent *"started to only buy shampoo in soap [...instead of...] any shampoo bottles, same for conditioner and soap and everything"* (Participant 3). What also seemed important to the respondents was making conscious choices, as three of them in particular mentioned. Here, it further became obvious that making sustainable consumption choices forms large parts of green consumers' identities, as well as it determines their everyday lives to a certain extent. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> "Countless hours spent in the grocery store, trying to [...] make [...] the equation for 'should I buy the ecological tomatoes from Italy or should I buy the greenhouse-grown tomatoes from Sweden'." - Participant 9

The importance of being a green consumer in everyday life, as well as the fierce determination was also expressed by Participant 4, who used to work as an ambassador for Fairtrade and *"[...] printed out all the red-listed [...] products and so on and put them on the fridge"* when he/she was a child.

Lastly, we asked the participants about barriers which hinder people to be green and the most commonly used keywords were: missing education, costs and routines. Additionally, one of the participants argued that not just external factors hinder people to be green, but rather the individuals themselves, as he/she explains in the following quote:

> "[...] I also think that people might like to say that there are external factors that make it difficult to live sustainably, but, as a matter of fact, I think it's mostly inside every person that those struggles are a bigger problem than from outside actually, because living sustainably today, it is kind of easy." - Participant 8

What became apparent during the interviews is that all Swedish participants were quite convinced about their green consumer identity, which is illustrated in the following statement: *"The food part that's all me [...] I'm 100% convinced, I don't want to change that at all"* (Participant 8). However, they are also quite critical with themselves when it comes to their sustainable actions since four of them particularly mentioned that there is always more that can be done:

> "I would describe myself as sustainable compared to other people but still a long way to go to live a sustainable lifestyle. I am doing a little bit of everything but not full-on." - Participant 3

British Participants

Like the Swedish respondents, all British participants showed similar understandings concerning sustainability, however, their answers were slightly less diverse compared to the Swedes. The keywords that popped up in the course of the interviews were: doing little things within one's ability, not being excessive, not making too much of an impact, and being friendly to the environment. This is particularly well illustrated by one respondent's answer:

> "I think [it] means trying as much as you can to live a life that doesn't damage the planet, or that you are making as many small steps as you can towards trying to help the environment. And so, it differs for different people in the amount that they feel that they can do [...] but within your budget, or within the realm of possibility that you feel, trying to limit how much you damage the planet by your consumer practices." - Participant 19

Three of the British participants identified their green consumer identity by making little contributions, so to say as much as they can because *"every little helps, and hopefully by being one very small cog in a very small wheel, hoping to create a sort of more sustainable world in the future"* (Participant 17). Another factor is the increasing awareness, for instance, two respondents mentioned the negative impacts on the environment of meat consumption. Another two respondents felt a growing responsibility concerning sustainable matters for their generation. For other respondents, however, creating their green consumer identity assumed a habit, hence something they had grown up with or started doing at a very early age, such as using a cotton bag instead of a plastic bag (Participant 17) or buying second-hand: *"It's kind of normal in our family that we buy second-hand as much as we can"* (Participant 15). One of the only sustainable practices that respondents had been grown up with though, which are perceived as normal within their family and contributed to their habit, seemed to be purchasing second-hand and partly recycling. Further habits, such as reducing food waste, were said to come from within the respondent him-/herself, as explained here:

> "I have a new year's resolution to not waste food, and [it] actually had a big impact and I stuck to that, and that really changed how I do my cooking habits and I'm a bit moderately aggressive about not wasting food." - Participant 17

What initially started as an experiment for the respondent, consequently turned out as an internalised habit and therefore forms an integral part of his/her temporary identity. Not only internal drivers have an impact, but also external forces that encourage respondents to act more sustainably. Rather than seeing it as a force, however, Participant 17 experiences it as *"encouraging that there is a growing community of people who are conscious about consumption"*.

Additionally, three participants felt encouraged in creating a green consumer identity as it gave them the feeling of being in power, as well as the urge to act upon it. Here is an insight into the thoughts of one respondent: *"[...] being in power to try to make it better rather than opposed to making it worse"* (Participant 14). For those three respondents, it is further important to not contribute to unsustainable practices and one respondent took her green consumer identity even one step further by leading a green committee at work and thus encouraging his/her colleagues to act greener (Participant 17).

The participants had a common view on the importance of trying to reduce their consumption and being more conscious when consuming. Behavioural practices that were mentioned in particular constituted for example *"having the heating down"* or *"turning off the lights"* (Participant 17). Apart from this, two participants actively mentioned reducing their consumption, especially plastic, as much as possible, for instance through making things themselves. Also, no matter which particular behaviour it concerns, all participants value conscious decisions. Participant 15, for instance, said that he/she would go for the organic version if this was available, or one of the participants mentioned that he/she is more likely to buy a product when he/she knows that it can be recycled or that it has sustainable credentials. With regard to food, another respondent mentioned that they *"g[o]t a vegetable box delivered"* (Participant 19), whereas Participant 14 shared his/her thoughts with us concerning meat consumption, saying that *"if I was buying meat, I definitely try and get the best meat I could"*. Besides the food aspect, buying cleaning products that are more environmentally friendly also seemed an important behavioural aspect for one respondent. Moreover, four participants mentioned buying second-hand clothes whenever it is possible, or at least it is something two of them had been considering more recently. What became apparent here is that even though the respondent explained multiple times to really enjoy second-hand shopping, he/she does not entirely stick to this behaviour. One reason to explain this can be identified as a convenience, another one as availability or accessibility. The same participant further mentioned that he/she sometimes buys clothes at Nakd, a Swedish brand, but still tries to stick to second-hand shopping. The attitude of the British participants towards consumption, and in particular buying sustainable brands, is similar to the Swedish respondents. They tend to not buy much and if so, second-hand or rather a more sustainable brand, where they know the clothes will last longer because they value quality before quantity. Nonetheless, just as the Swedes, the British participants agreed that they are affected by marketing, but it does not always lead to purchasing products, it is more that they are aware of them and only use them for products they wanted to buy anyway.

Despite trying to be a green consumer with regard to second-hand shopping, Participant 15, who is British but lives in Sweden, mentioned that his/her behaviour changes pretty much as soon as he/she is home. For instance, he/she said that back home, they *"consume a lot [...] we buy a lot of food"*. Again, this can be linked to the context, but also the social surrounding, maybe even pressure and partly the habitus when being back home within the familiar environment. Three of the six participants said that their parents are not that conscious and could probably do more towards a more sustainable lifestyle. Participant 18 states in the following quote why he/she thinks this might be:

> "My generation, our generation feels like there is a responsibility to protect the planet [...] and probably because there isn't the societal pressure that you mentioned, like their friends, judge them for not recycling enough, or for taking a flight." - Participant 18

Nonetheless, half of the participants stated that even though their parents behave more traditionally, they would be more or less open to change.

Again, recycling proved to be the most common sustainable practice as it was mentioned by all respondents, along with using the bicycle and public transport instead of a car, if possible. Also, the reduced usage of flights due to alternatives was mentioned by two respondents. The participants stated that there has been a change in the way how people look upon travelling. One of the participants mentioned that especially the image of weekend-trips has changed. A few years ago, his/her friends would brag about their frequent weekend getaways within Europe, and nowadays his/her friends and also him-/herself do not do that anymore and try to be more responsible and travel less or more consciously. On the other hand, another participant claimed that the choice of transportation depends on where you live, whereas if he/she would still live in England, he/she would probably still take flights, however, now he/she lives in the Netherlands, were travelling by train is easier and more accessible than in England, which is why he/she makes more use of it.

All of the interviewed British participants live in big cities, which might explain why none of them owns a car. Anyhow, they would not be interested in having a car, similar to the Swedes, only when living in the countryside. In contrast to Sweden, public transportation in England is rather expensive and also many smaller towns are not very well connected, which often gives people no other option than taking the car, which is illustrated by the following quote:

> "[...] In the UK for instance, it is that expensive to go by train [...] I would never, or I would try to avoid it because it's just so expensive." - Participant 11

Similar to the Swedes, nutrition plays an important role in British green consumers' everyday lives. While three participants mentioned that they try to reduce their meat consumption, two of the respondents stick to a vegetarian diet and one participant is vegan. Nonetheless, the level of determination with this regard was much lower among British respondents in comparison to the Swedish participants. For the ones trying to reduce their meat consumption, this seemed to be an integral part of their lives, as well as in the case of the two vegetarians. As Participant 16 mentioned:

> "And so, they introduced me from a very young age to vegetarian sausages and vegetarian burgers for example." - Participant 16

Thus, this can be linked back to the habitus, something that has been learned by the participant at a very early age, certainly imparted by the closest family. Besides that, environmental concerns form part of the reasons for either reduced meat consumption or the vegetarian diet, especially among one participant as he/she mentioned that: *"I would only ever buy eggs when they have [...] the best level of the animal happiness"* (Participant 17). Hence, he/she sticks to a vegetarian diet, even though he/she can be seen as having a vegan tendency as he/she does not blindly consume other animal products. The one participant who claimed to be vegan, however, turned out to be a vegan by chance. Even though the participant mentioned that he/she enjoyed embracing the vegan diet and loved cooking vegan at home, it is quite difficult for him/her to stick to this at all times. Eating out, for instance, can pose a problem as he/she told us.

Moreover, the friends of the British participants are described as conscious of their actions, which results in rethinking travelling and instead of taking a flight, taking the train. According to one participant, he/she feels that there are slight gender differences regarding acting green, whereas he/she thinks his/her female friends are more consistent and more influential upon others. However, generally, the participants perceive no pressure to be green from their friends, but it is rather self-inflicted through reading articles or looking at content on social media, showing how to behave better. Interestingly, only one of the Swedish participants mentioned social media, whereas, in contrast, half of the British participants stated that social media impacts their attitudes, intentions and behaviours greatly. Here, an example of how Participant 18 absorbs social media is presented:

> "If you follow certain people on Instagram who talk about the impact of anything or plastic use or kind of show oceans that are full of litter [...] and so that did make me change my behaviour a bit, or as much as I felt they could." - Participant 18

Lastly, the British participants were asked as well about barriers which hinder people to be green. According to the participants, there are three main barriers, being unwillingness, costs and

unavailability, e.g. referring to public transport. The following quote shows some thoughts of Participant 18 regarding being green and higher costs associated with it:

> "A lot of the places here that are packaging-free shops are quite expensive or are pitched to prestigious rigorous society." - Participant 19

To sum up, the overall behaviour throughout the year with regard to sustainability seems to be quite consistent among both British and Swedish green consumers. The Swedish respondents seemed slightly more determined throughout the interviews, though this can probably be attributed to the fact that Sweden is declared the most sustainable country worldwide. With rising awareness also taking place in England, the respondents seemed to be quite in line with this development. It can be said that the Swedish participants showed more large-scale contributions compared to the British participants. The British respondents feel more restricted in their possibilities to act green and face more barriers, hence they try to do small things to be more sustainable. Moreover, it became clear that the Swedes are greatly impacted by their friends, societal norms and their education to act sustainably and that the Brits are mostly influenced by education or social media, which is more due to self-interest and not, as in Sweden, laid out by the society.

4.2 Christmas Identity

Sustainability throughout the year, in general, seems to comprehend diets, reduced and new ways of consumption, means of transportation, and it is commonly perceived as something accepted and rather normal among both British and Swedish respondents. In order to understand how this might change around the Christmas season, it was also important to gain insight into how the respondents celebrate Christmas. The participants were asked to share pictures of their last Christmas before the interview, which was then used as a foundation for the conversation. We asked them to elaborate on these images and tell us how they and their families usually celebrate Christmas, as well as what Christmas means to them personally. Previous literature has outlined numerous typical Swedish and British Christmas traditions already, however, it was important to understand the individuals' understandings such as which traditions are actually followed and valued by them. Moreover, we asked the participants about their sustainable lifestyles during Christmas. Investigating this thoroughly helped us to reveal and understand inconsistencies, and hence internal dilemmas and the internal dialogue alike, which will be outlined in Chapter 4.3.

Swedish Participants
When being asked the Swedes about what celebrating Christmas means to them, the keywords were spending time with family, togetherness, quality time, and relaxing. A keyword that stood out was keeping Swedish traditions but making them more sustainable. Generally, all respondents' understanding of Christmas circulated around the aspect of being with their family. The way the Swedish participants value Christmas traditions is quite miscellaneous, for some traditions are of high importance whereas others do not practice any traditions anymore. To put it into comparison, one participant stated the following:

> "I love the getting together and celebrating, in a way that we always have." - Participant 3

On the other hand, one of the participants who does not value traditions feels like that:

> "Can't be missing during Christmas? Well, I would say nothing on that, I mean I don't feel, I don't have such a specific tradition or nothing that I would very much want to hold on to." - Participant 13

One behaviour that unanimously all participants mentioned was spending much time with their families. Therefore, all of them would travel back home to their families, three also mentioned that they usually gather in their countryside or summer houses or go up north to ski. Indeed, travelling seemed to be a common activity around the Christmas time among Swedish green consumers, even though it must be

added that this often occurs by train if it is within the country. Here, it is important to mention that the aspect of sustainable travelling is of significance to the respondents because according to them, travelling home for Christmas accounts to be one of the most unsustainable elements of Christmas but is most likely inevitable since people want to spend this time with their families, which is why the mode of transport is important. Despite their overall aversion towards travelling by plane throughout the year, two respondents mentioned travelling by plane as a Christmas activity.

Again, and as already mentioned previously, food plays an essential role when it comes to Christmas traditions, too. According to six participants, their Christmas celebrations evolve around plenty of food, often more than what can be consumed. A traditional Swedish Christmas meal contains plenty of different types of meat, which according to most respondents are dished up regardless of whether there are vegetarians or vegans in the family. The Christmas food, to be specific the Christmas flavours, no matter if with meat or meat-alternatives, is of high importance to almost all participants. One participant tried to explain why Christmas food is of such significance to him/her as follows:

> "When you were young, it was like the happiest day of the year. So maybe you have some kind of connection going on there with the food and that being [...] it's like so tasty." - Participant 11

Moreover, only two respondents claimed to stick to their vegan diet entirely, and even have their *"own [vegan] Christmas table"* (Participants 6 and 8), whereas sticking to a diet is perceived as difficult by two others due to either laziness or the tendency to stick to traditions:

> "But also, nice to keep some traditions. I would like to skip the ham and meatball stuff, but like the usual things on the Christmas table, so I would [...] say it is still nice to still have those traditions." - Participant 3

One of the most acknowledged elements of Christmas celebration in Europe is the Christmas tree. The participants were asked if they have a Christmas tree and how much they value having one. All of the Swedish participants confirmed having a Christmas tree, while most of the respondents see it as an integral part of the tradition. They appreciate the shiny lights and festive decoration too much to give up on it, even though having a tree is potentially unsustainable. When asked if they could imagine not having a Christmas tree, one of the participants said:

> "You wouldn't get the whole feeling or you would lose some of the Christmas feeling, definitely, I guess that is the same thing since ever, when I was born there was a Christmas tree, so it kind of adds up to the 'best time of the year feeling'." - Participant 11

Similarly important seemed the Christmas decoration, the decorative lighting of the otherwise dark and dull time in Sweden during the Christmas season. Particularly Participant 5 suggested that this does not necessarily need to be unsustainable as they *"have like LED string lights [...] where you can keep a timer when you have it on for a long time without like being [...] very bad…"*.

When we asked about unsustainable elements of Christmas, all participants agreed that the way people consume nowadays, especially during the Christmas season, is the most unsustainable element of Christmas. By using the term 'make sick'*,* one respondent clearly expressed his/her reluctance towards the massive consumption and how this contradicts with his/her green consumer identity. The keywords regarding consumption during Christmas, which were most commonly mentioned during the interviews, are overconsumption, unnecessary, exaggerated and consumption pressure, which is as well illustrated in the following quote:

> "I think it's kind of crazy [...] it's like, so every year you need to buy something more expensive and that's a measure of how good the gift is." - Participant 1

Another, and probably the most obvious topic around consumption and Christmas, was presented by the gift-giving tradition. Overall, it can be said that all of the respondents receive and give gifts, solely the number of gifts varies from one participant to another. Therefore, we asked the interviewees about how many gifts they exchanged last Christmas. Taking these results into account, a general tendency towards three to five presents could be perceived, while some participants received more and others less. The

maximum number of gifts received and given, however, was six amongst the Swedish respondents, whereas they all received and gave at least one. Furthermore, it became apparent that there seems to be a close connection between gift-giving and the age of the receiver. It can be stated that all participants agreed on the fact that when they were children there were many presents, and the older they become, the less it gets. Although the respondents are grown-ups, and usually do not expect as many presents anymore, it often seemed to be the relatives who did not consider this. This is illustrated by Participant 1: *"I receive more [gifts] than I give because people still think that I'm a kid."* Almost all participants still exchange gifts because for most families, gift-giving is part of their Christmas tradition. For instance, for Participant 6 gift-giving is an important part of Christmas traditions, as he/she stated:

> "So, we have the tradition that we give presents to each other, and it is like a thing my family does at the end of the evening and it is super cosy." - Participant 6

On the contrary, six of the participants would not miss giving and receiving presents at Christmas. The following quote of Participant 13 explains why they stopped giving gifts:

> "It was just because all of us felt that it's mostly, it's stress finding something very well, it's usually also pretty useless and then it's a waste of, it's just a waste of energy for everyone and the results are not sustainable." - Participant 13

Nonetheless, an overall observation could be made that most respondents generally do not mind the presents they still received, notwithstanding their claims of not caring too much about Christmas gifts.

As another means to reduce the number of gifts, a Christmas game, also referred to as 'Secret Santa', was introduced by eight of the participants. The rules of 'Secret Santa' indicate that every person only buys and receives one present. Again, the interviews showed that for many respondents this game displayed more of an addition to usual presents, rather than a replacement, as it was also described by the following respondent:

> "This year we played when you buy like two or three gifts, everybody at the table buys two or three gifts [...] And we play it really different from me and my friends because we play the same but actually something that you want to give to someone, here [with the family] it's just kind of for fun." - Participant 7

And even if it is used as a replacement since most respondents could not imagine not having gifts at all due to tradition, the desired effect of 'Secret Santa' is often missed due to the presents' quality:

> "It is kind of a way to decrease the number of presents, but kind of also evolved into shittier presents, which you kind of do not need." - Participant 3

Regarding giving ethical gifts, it became clear that only four participants take it into account, however, it is of significance to the participants to give gifts with meaning as otherwise, it is a waste of money and resources. Yet, there is some sustainable thought involved when thinking about gifts. During the interviews, it became obvious that many respondents enjoy giving experiences as gifts, but also donations are a welcome alternative to conventional presents. One participant mentioned that he/she *"get[s] super happy when [...] getting [his/her] presents as a donation"* (Participant 6). The following quote illustrates an ethical gift:

> "I got my mom a bee wax bag [...] And it's also [...] from a friend's company. She [...] started it and sells those things. So, it felt kind of nice to [...] it's my friend who did this and she's running this. So, it becomes like a connection there." - Participant 11

Moreover, three participants mentioned having tackled the number of gifts actively, though they experienced it as difficult and faced certain barriers. Mothers, or the family as a whole, seemed to play a crucial role in this as Participant 2 explained: *"[...] but then my mom gets too crazy and buys a lot of things."*

When the Swedish participants were asked if they do any sustainable practices during Christmas, most of them could not think about anything especially sustainable they do, besides the 'basic elements'. With basic elements, the participants referred to e.g. keeping up with their nutrition or recycling. Conscious choices did not seem to play as an essential role as during the year, which is, for instance, shown by the fact that only two respondents mentioned the usage of either recyclable paper or newspaper to wrap gifts.

British Participants
Celebrating Christmas for British respondents means, in general, family, food, being at home, listening to one another, reconnecting, and showing affection and appreciation. During the interviews, it became apparent that this appreciation is often shown in the form of gifts, as it was specifically mentioned by one respondent:

> "Getting closer to family once again like reconnecting with them, showing them that you've appreciated their support over the last year, showing them that you know them by giving them gifts that they care about." - Participant 19

Family gatherings during Christmas were mentioned as important by all respondents, but with a slightly bigger emphasis on materialistic aspects and consumption in comparison to Swedish respondents.

For the British participants, traditions such as having a Christmas tree seem like an integrated part of their Christmas celebrations. Five participants mentioned having a real tree and one respondent claimed to have a plastic tree. When the British participants were asked about the criticised aspect of having a Christmas tree, one mentioned that he/she, in general, agreed that having a Christmas tree only for a short period is rather unsustainable, however, his/her family has a fireplace at home and his/her dad dries the tree each year and transforms it into firewood, therefore it is not just wasted. Moreover, another respondent even mentioned that they were intending to rent a tree last Christmas, a new initiative where customers buy a tree in a pot and bring it back after Christmas, so it gets replanted.

Having either Christmas dinner or lunch together is an important part for the respondents and cannot be missed. One respondent even labelled Christmas food as something special and more luxurious compared to the day-to-day dishes. As mentioned previously, the typical British Christmas involves lots of food and drinks, which is similar to what the Swedish respondents explained, too. Going back to what Participant 15 described in his/her comment with regard to having three different courses, he/she added that *"it's ridiculous, so to say"*. Still, having these large amounts of food seems to be an integral part of their tradition, wherefore a possible reduction came across as rather unlikely among the respondents. Participant 19, for instance, added to this that the consumption was mostly due to his/her parents, as he/she said: *"Certainly my parents, I think, waste more food around Christmas"* (Participant 19). This caused some level of annoyance for the respondent, how this, however, is supported by him-/herself when being home for Christmas, or in which way this causes inconsistencies or internal dilemmas, will be elaborated on in the Chapter 'Inconsistent Behaviour'.

"Meat like turkey, pigs in blankets [...]" (Participant 14) further illustrate the meat heaviness of traditional British Christmas meals and, as Participant 14 added, the family often *"end[s] up eating turkey for the next days"*. That this tradition is rather meat-heavy is also shown in the following quote:

> "The classic British Christmas dinner... So, they're not vegetarian or vegan, they will have turkey. The turkey is from a local butcher, so that's probably better than buying it from the supermarket, you know, that it's free rein, and it probably is organic. I'm not sure on that." - Participant 18

Consequently, sticking to reduced meat consumption seemed quite unusual, perhaps even unimportant, during the Christmas season after having spoken to all the participants. Though it must be added that for the one vegan respondent, at least a vegetarian option was a given. He/she mentioned that:

> "The meat eaters in the family will have turkey and ham [...] and the vegetarians have nut roast." - Participant 19

Next to the food, presents play a huge role at British Christmas. It was mentioned by all respondents that excessive consumption, and therefore presents, still weigh heavily in British Christmas traditions and large amounts of gifts usually accumulate around the Christmas tree. Strikingly, but not surprisingly, all participants give and receive gifts, and not just a few. Participant 14, for example, said to have received between 14 and 15 gifts last Christmas and gave away between eight and ten. In comparison, Participant 15 mentioned that he/she probably received about 20 gifts and gave around seven presents, and Participant 18 added to this trend by making the following statement: *"So, I maybe gave [...] 20 or 25 presents, and probably received about the same amount".* Even though there is a difference in numbers, compared to the Swedish respondents' average, the British respondents seem to put much more emphasis on this aspect. This is also in line with what previous statistics have revealed. However, Participant 16, for instance, mentioned putting some sustainable thought into his/her presents by making presents by him-/herself. Nonetheless, when asking him/her about his/her favourite gift, the following statement was made: *"I received two years ago a pair of Nike Airmax and they are amazing [...] I am still wearing them and I have them now for one and a half years"* (Participant 16). So, materialism seems to be important, at least to some extent.

Only one of the Britons mentioned that they were now doing *"a family 'Secret Santa', where everyone gets one gift each rather than buying for everybody" (*Respondent 19), whereby his/her mother had hard times accepting it as she *"really like[s] to kind of everyone getting gifts and everyone having a stocking [...] because she sees Christmas [...] as a time to buy lots of things for people she loves and that's kind of how she shows her love"* (Respondent 19). Hence, this relates to what was initially said. For all British respondents, Christmas gifts seemed quite important as they are assumed to convey love, affect and appreciation. Nonetheless, what also became obvious is that a few respondents keep the sustainable thought of their everyday lives within Christmas and indeed are aware of the enormous consumerism and as a result seek to discourage it. This was especially made clear in the following quote:

> "My mum really likes to, kind of, everyone getting gifts and everyone having a stocking [...] and she used to get lots of plastic stockings, so, you know, silly Christmas games and things we try to, me and my siblings, we try to discourage that." - Participant 19

For four of six participants, gift-giving is a typical Christmas tradition, which they wish to keep because without presents it would not feel like Christmas and it would make them feel sad. On the contrary, two participants particularly mentioned that consumption elements should entirely be removed from Christmas. One participant envisions the future as the following:

> "My idea of Christmas would be a Christmas where nobody buys a present for anybody, because that is not really what it is about, I think it is just about being together [...] I feel that is kind of a weird relationship people have in a way with gifts and money and it is like I spend something on you, which means I like you." - Participant 16

One respondent shared that he/she has been committed to behaving more sustainable during Christmas, which can be seen by his/her actions such as wishing for bars of soap without plastic packaging, buying ecological meat for the Christmas meal or using recyclable wrapping paper. Two participants stated that they researched about the negative impacts of wrapping paper since it cannot be recycled, which influenced them to change their behaviour. Both used solely recyclable wrapping paper last Christmas and one stated his/her intention for this year:

> "You can wrap presents in material, and then you know, you can reuse it every year. And that's something that I was thinking I might do next year, for example." - Participant 17

A general finding amongst the British participants was the importance of giving gifts with a purpose, not just something that can be thrown away. Having said this, it is not that important to the participants that the gifts are ethical since they think the people who will receive the presents, in this case, most likely parents and siblings, do not care about or appreciate the ethical background of their gifts.

Regarding consumption during Christmas, the British participants have a clear stand and agree that it is too much and people tend to overbuy and buy more than they need. One of the participants concluded that once people are encouraged to buy more, they are also encouraged to waste more, which is

supported by statements of the participants regarding the increased food waste during Christmas. They labelled food waste as one of the most unsustainable elements of Christmas since many people always end up buying too much food, which, in many cases, will get wasted. The participants generally perceived certain traditional elements as rather unsustainable, such as the traditional British Christmas stockings, Crackers, the gifts or the non-recyclable wrapping paper around them. Despite agreeing on the fact that Christmas Crackers are accounted as an unsustainable element of Christmas, the respondents agreed upon Crackers being a typically British tradition, which cannot be missed.

One of the participants also argued that one behaviour could work as a 'domino effect', once you over-consume you also do other unsustainable practices, which he/she explained in the quote below:

> "People buy plastic toys, which come in a plastic box, and even though people might recycle the boxes and the bits of plastics, there is a lot of chance that [...] you don't put everything into the recycle bin." - Participant 16

Interestingly, only one participant from both nationalities mentioned that he/she and his/her mother are attending the midnight service in their local church, while not any other participants even mentioned religion interrelated to their Christmas celebrations.

To sum it up, family gatherings seem to be the main and most important aspect during Christmas for all participants, both Swedish and British. The same applies to food and also gifts play a crucial role, even though the contexts may differ. Thus, in this direct comparison, it can be seen that the meaning, especially of gifts, differs between Swedes and Brits, yet celebrating Christmas without any presents at all seems to be difficult to imagine by most of the respondents from both parties. All in all, it can be said that traditions are still of importance for the Swedish participants, however, some of them also try to convert them towards more sustainable Christmas traditions. On the other hand, the British participants seem to value their Christmas traditions more than the Swedes and find it hard to deviate from old traditions, not to mention even changing them into more sustainable traditions. Sustainability during Christmas seems to get more of a raw deal among both sides. Even though there is some trend towards having a more sustainable Christmas among the interviewed Millennials, such as playing Christmas games, a vegan Christmas table or using recyclable wrapping paper, there seems to be a large gap still. After having discussed both the behaviour during the year and at Christmas among self-declared green consumers, it can now be moved on to the next element of the conceptual framework: Inconsistencies and the consequential internal dialogue, as well as the dilemmas.

4.3 The Contradicting Behaviour of Green Consumers

Identifying inconsistencies presupposed the assumption of the everyday behaviour as being the norm and the behaviour around Christmas as being the exception, so to say the snapshot in time that is zoomed in for comparative purposes. Inconsistencies relate to *what* the respondents do differently with regard to their self-declared green consumer identity than what they claimed based on the green lifestyle. Inconsistency did not constitute an individual interview question as such, but it was more something that we intended to find out by asking about attitudes, intentions and behaviour during the year and Christmas, as well as the two sets of beliefs. Often, inconsistencies came up in the course of the conversation and were asked for in more depth.

4.3.1 Inconsistent Behaviour

Inconsistencies amongst Swedish Participants
Among the Swedish respondents, the most prominent topics for inconsistencies were identified as; sacrifice, accessibility, convenience, social pressure, pleasure, rewards for oneself, compensation and interrupted routines/old habits.

Firstly, two participants claimed to be inconsistent in their sustainable behaviour during Christmas as they value the tradition and it would mean too much of a sacrifice for them to stick to their green

consumer identity entirely. One participant, for instance, mentioned that he/she knows that in theory he/she should be a vegetarian as this is better for the environment, but at the same time he/she felt that this *"might sound selfish but it's like too much of a sacrifice for [me] because I love food"* (Participant 1), and especially the typical Swedish Christmas meals mattered to the respondent. Another participant made this standpoint clear by saying the following: *"You don't want to make that kind of, let's say, give something up for it"* (Participant 4).

Another reason for inconsistent behaviour was said to be accessibility. For example, Participant 1 explained that he/she would enjoy buying presents from more sustainable brands, however, such brands are often either not available in the immediate environment or they are outside the budget. Thus, he/she often ends up buying presents online or in stores like H&M, which is also partly related to the next point, convenience.

Five respondents mentioned that they act less sustainable during Christmas for convenience reasons. Participant 2, for instance, who tries to stick to a vegetarian diet as much as possible and would prefer not having gifts during Christmas, explained that his/her mum was mostly in charge of Christmas preparations. When Participant 1 comes home, it is common to eat meat and not to follow a vegan or vegetarian diet. Thereupon, the respondent does not want to cause too much extra work during Christmas, specifically for his/her mum. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> "Especially my mom, I guess it cannot be too difficult or, I do not know, it has to go fast and quick and be efficient for her." - Participant 2

Furthermore, social pressure plays a role in the respondents' inconsistencies. Here, four participants mentioned that especially their families impacted this and also Participant 1 made a point: *"We're a meat eating family, it sounds horrible [laughing]"*. When making this statement and laughing at the same time, we could feel that this was not necessarily considered to be the respondent's norm. Sometimes, as Participant 4 suggested, it is also simply easier to pursue social influences, following the stream so to say, instead of questioning it. Especially against traditions, he/she added, it is particularly difficult to compete with. What also came up repeatedly during the interviews was the role of children. Many of the respondents mentioned that for them changing the traditions to some extent would be fine since they are not children anymore, where keeping traditions makes Christmas magical. Also, a certain trend towards reduced gift-giving was revealed, however, it can be assumed that this development might not be lasting. At the present moment, none of the respondents has children, though their attitude towards e.g. gift-giving became apparent when having children involved during Christmas:

> "Like when it comes down to the happiness of my kid versus the sustainability of earth, I would probably go for happiness for my kid until he or she is a little bit older to understand." - Participant 9

Besides convenience, four participants are inconsistent in their behaviour due to pleasure. Despite being a self-declared green consumer, Participant 1 mentioned the importance of a Christmas tree, irrespective from being sustainable or not. Here are some thoughts the respondent shared:

> "It is also quite selfish [...to have a tree...], but it feels more like Christmas with a real tree, I'd say." - Participant 1

Also, consuming more in terms of cooking, baking and giving each other gifts is considered a pleasure for Participant 4, and Participant 7 made his/her priority for pleasure during the Christmas season clear with the following statement:

> "I would prioritise as this is something I choose not to be my most possible sustainable because it's [...] a pleasure for me." - Participant 7

In other words, Participant 7, who is a vegan, buys second-hand as much as possible, recycles, takes public transport, does not buy anything he/she does not need and is very concerned about the environment, sets priorities and clearly being sustainable during Christmas is not one of them.

Moreover, the 'Secret Santa' tradition was introduced by many Swedish respondents and their families, often with the idea of reducing the overall consumption of, especially presents. On a closer look, however, often the exact opposite is the case because the presents bought for the game are in many cases not sustainable at all, as this respondent demonstrated when talking about the Christmas game:

> "[It] is not at all good in a sustainable way. You buy like a, I don't know, like a fun little thing that, you know, is gender-neutral and you put it in a tile, and you have two dice and you roll the dice [...] This year we played with one [...] because we had so many gifts." - Participant 7

Another striking result is the exceptions people make. Participant 7, for instance, who claimed to be a strict vegan for several times throughout the interview, admitted to eating chocolate with his/her mum during Christmas now and then. Though the respondent added that he/she would not confess this towards friends and family in order to avoid critical comments. Another aspect of waiving consistent behaviour in favour of pleasure seems to be the value of gifts, as the following comment shows:

> "So, that was a really good present because that's expensive [laughing]. I also think we've been on a few trips during Christmas and so the trip has been a Christmas present." - Participant 8

Again, this quote stems from a respondent who claimed to be very concerned about the climate change throughout the year, does not travel if not needed, as well as he/she believes that veganism is *"the way we can save the planet"* and that *"the biggest problem is within everyone inside" (*Participant 8).

Another element to pleasure is; reward. One respondent mentioned this as a particular reason for inconsistencies since the environment is important but so is the individual well-being. Here is an insight into his/her train of thought: *"[...] but the things that actually are [...] rewarding to yourself and your well-being, I think [...] you should be able to keep doing them"* (Participant 1).

Additionally, people act inconsistently during Christmas because they feel like compensating by being sustainable throughout the entire year, at least according to three respondents. The comments on this topic all revolved around food or, more explicitly, the respondents' particular diets. Participant 7, for example, feels like he/she *"compensates a lot with being vegan",* while Participant 4 said that he/she *"can [...] forgive [him-/herself] for eating meat during Christmas, compared to what [he/she] did before".*

Moreover, interrupted routines or habits turned out to be causes for inconsistencies. For instance, Participant 5, who is Swedish but moved to the USA in 2018, mentioned that for him/her it is a struggle to be as consistent in his/her new home than it used to be in Sweden. Firstly, he/she mentioned the new surroundings making it difficult for him/her to stick to his/her sustainable lifestyle due to certain things not being available or possible. But also, he/she tries to adjust to the new environment, as well as his/her husband's American family. This is illustrated in the following quote:

> "Yes, it's definitely that I feel it's a struggle [in the USA]... because I have so many, like, my routines and, when I've been in Sweden it was just so natural... but then here, it's just, I have to kind of raise it all, it feels like I'm taking steps back." - Participant 5

Inconsistencies amongst British Participants
The identified key topics for British respondents' inconsistencies are: obligation, interrupted routines/habits, convenience, pleasure and compensation.

To start off, one participant mentioned inconsistencies around Christmas due to the feeling of obligation towards family and friends. As other respondents mentioned alike, Christmas presents in England are given great significance since they are often used as a means to show love, affect or appreciation. Even though the respondent him-/herself would potentially not mind exchanging fewer gifts, he/she feels restricted here, which is shown in the subsequent quote:

> "But I kind of did the kind of false generosity of just buying lots because you kind of feel some obligation to false generosity." - Participant 14

Moreover, interrupted routines or habits often seem to provide grounds for inconsistent behaviour during Christmas. Two respondents mentioned that they are less sustainable when being at home for Christmas, which could be due to the *"lack of control when home for Christmas"* (Participant 19).

A rather large opponent to consistency constitutes convenience. Four respondents mentioned that convenience, e.g. in the form of taking the plane to go home for Christmas or saving money through Black Friday shopping, triggered inconsistencies in their behaviour. For example, Participant 19, who is a vegan, buys sustainable cleaning products for the environment's sake, and would not mind reducing the number of gifts, is lured by Black Friday offerings as he/she made clear in the following comment:

> "I think I try to plan, maybe, towards the end of November. So, I try to remember that Black Friday is happening and do this, kind of specific for big gifts." - Participant 19

Moreover, the same respondent admitted to not stick to the vegan diet during Christmas as well as he/she likes exchanging sustainable gifts, such as plastic-free shampoos, however, only if convenience allows it. Putting too much effort into such a sustainable present would not be something for him/her to consider, as he/she explained in the below statement:

> "I think to be honest [...] I couldn't see myself, like, making my own shampoo because there wasn't a shampoo bar available for example [...] I think the [...] fact that you can get cleaning products that are better for the environment and they're on the shelves of the supermarket means it's quite an easy choice to buy them, but maybe if they weren't there, I wouldn't be aware of things and impacts the cleaning products have and I would still want to clean, so I might choose things over that sustainable." - Participant 19

Certainly, this statement is not solely related to inconsistencies during Christmas, yet it makes the respondent's point clear.

In conclusion, inconsistencies can have many diverse reasons and forms for both Swedish and British respondents. The main overlapping parts though are compensation, pleasure, convenience as well as interrupted routines/habits.

4.3.2 Internal Dialogue and Dilemma

Having clarified the inconsistencies, hence the *what*, the internal dialogue relates to *why* the respondents act the way they do. The internal dilemma, which is linked to this, is consequently *how* the respondents deal with it or justify it for themselves.

The Swedes' Internal Dialogue
The main topics identified for why the Swedish respondents act the way they do are a *guilty pleasure*, the *'I do good compared to others' mindset*, *ignorance*, *external forces and social pressure*, *burden*, the *'I want to do good, but did not consider that...' mindset* and *tradition*.

Firstly, two respondents justify their inconsistent behaviour with a guilty pleasure they enjoy too much to give up on. The Christmas tree, for instance, constitutes such a guilty pleasure as it was explained by Participant 3. Moreover, Participant 9 mentioned the food, which according to him/her is *"the issue during Christmas",* the meat-heavy part in particular as something he/she could not imagine missing.

Another striking finding is the mindset that three participants expressed. All of them felt like they are doing good in comparison to others, wherefore minor inconsistencies during Christmas could be justified according to them. What follows is an insight into the thoughts of Participant 7, who believes to compensate his/her inconsistencies by being a vegan usually:

> "I know I could make even better choices [...] in my life, but I don't. And for myself, I try to justify… well, this is just as bad as a vegetarian [...] that does not buy this, so we're equal." - Participant 7

Participant 8 further added that he/she sometimes reminds him-/herself of buying so little compared to others "*so then usually [he/she] can say [...] it's okay to buy new things once in a while*" (Participant 8). In what ways this compensation/comparison is a healthy attitude remains questionable at this point.

Also, others seemed simply ignorant and justified their inconsistent behaviour in that very same way. Two participants particularly did so, whereat Participant 4, who claimed to be against presents previously, felt that:

> "We can at least give, as I said, experiences or something small or do something [...] so I think that has changed maybe…I don't think in how much I do to make a green choice."
> - Participant 4

The general thought of "*I don't think in how much I do to make a green choice*", as it was stated above, seems to be common though, as also Participant 7 made a similar statement by saying that "*it's not like I'm going into Christmas like thinking I'm going to be sustainable*". Generally, this is not a reprehensible thought, however, it is in a sense for someone who otherwise claims to have a thoroughly green lifestyle. Furthermore, the ignorance seems to go so far as to disregard own remarks as in the case of Participant 7, which has already been discussed earlier. With his/her claim to not "*make exceptions*" in his/her veganism, the respondent contradicted him-/herself when admitting to eating chocolate during Christmas. The internal dialogue became apparent when the respondent further stated to not tell this to anyone, such as friends or extended family, to avoid condemning comments.

Another part of the internal dialogue displays external forces and social pressure, where the respondents find themselves torn between living up to expectations and inner beliefs. Participant 7, for instance, found him-/herself being stuck between doing a loved one a favour and the belief to not contribute to unnecessary consumption. The favour won, which consequently caused an inconsistency. The 'why' is illustrated in her statement below:

> "So, I bought her Kylie Jenner make-up, all the way from the USA... that's not the favourite in the sense of my pride, but she was very, very happy." - Participant 7

The internal dialogue is further led by the burden, so to say the energy that is often assumed to be needed to constantly make green choices. Also, self-declared green consumers need to mobilise this energy and for them, it seems energy-draining, too. Thus, being in order with not always having this energy, for instance during Christmas, is how they justify their inconsistencies within themselves. Participant 8 made this clear by saying: "*I don't have the energy or [...] I don't want to say the interest, but to look into every brand and track down the environmental impact of everything.*"

Additionally, two respondents got into the mindset of 'I want to do good, but I did not consider that…' when it comes to their internal dialogue. Even though they often are aware of the more sustainable choice, there are times that they feel restricted or where it seems simply difficult to take the green option. This can further be related to either ignorance, plain unawareness or even real limitations.

Also, green consumers might find themselves stuck between doing good and not considering the wider impact like in the example of Participant 8. The respondent got the entire family a t-shirt for Christmas, saying 'powered by plants'. While being torn between doing something seemingly good and not wanting to contribute to consumption, the respondent decided to purchase the gift to make his/her relatives happy. The internal dialogue the respondent led, however, resulted in the awareness that "*they're still bad and they're probably made somewhere where someone has very bad pay*" (Participant 8). The resulting inconsistency eventually ended in a feeling of guilt as "*the message of the t-shirts went against the consumption parts*" (Participant 8.)

Lastly, the tradition seemed to play a huge role within the internal dialogue of two respondents. This is particularly interesting as the focus of this research was largely on traditions and how they affect sustainable lifestyles. "*Getting together and celebrating, in a way that we always have*", as it was stated by Participant 3, illustrates quite well why green consumers tend to become less consistent around Christmas. When we asked Participant 9 whether he/she would make exceptions concerning sustainable consumption during Christmas, the answer was a clear yes.

The Swedes' Internal Dilemma

Once the internal dialogue has been identified, the internal dilemmas, which each person has to deal with individually, will be outlined. Based on the Swedish respondents' answers, there are three main matters when having an internal dilemma, being the feeling of guilt, shame and rationalising, which refers to justifying one's inconsistent behaviour through diverse reasoning.

Guilt is largely what green consumers face based on the described inconsistencies and internal dialogues, as it was shown by four respondents. Participant 5, for example, who recently moved to the USA, feels like having taken a step back in this sustainable lifestyle: *"I feel a little bad that I can't [...] do as good as I did in Sweden and I feel like [...] the footprint is bigger here."* Also, the other respondents feel bad when not making sustainable choices and have a feeling *"like it is wrong"* (Participant 17) when buying more than necessary.

Shame is another feeling provoked by inconsistencies and the subsequent internal dialogue, as it was brought up by one respondent. Here is an insight into the thoughts of Participant 11: *"I noticed like if it is with meat. I do feel a bit ashamed and I think that's it"*.

Another element of the internal dilemma constituted rationalising as two of the participants commonly do. Rationalising, in this case, means to find an excuse for oneself, hence, to justify the inconsistency for oneself. One participant who made this point really clear is Participant 9, who repeatedly mentioned that he/she *"only [has] one life"*. This sentence followed an inconsistency the respondent tried to fight and discuss within him-/herself. The same respondent mentioned that it made him/her feel guilty when travelling to Colombia for Christmas, yet *"at the end of the day [he/she] has [his/her] own life and [...tries...] to be happy"* (Participant 9).

The Brits' Internal Dialogue

The main reasoning within the British respondents' internal dialogue comprised the following topics; *comparison*, *guilty pleasure*, *necessity*, *no choice*, *external forces*, *social pressure* and *tradition*.

Firstly, the mindset of doing good in comparison to others became apparent among one respondent, stating that: *"So, sometimes I try to justify my own unsustainable decision making by reminding myself of others' unsustainable decision-making"* (Participant 16).

Moreover, one respondent showed an internal dialogue when being torn between reduced consumption and having a pair of Nike shoes as a favourite gift. The pleasure of the shoes ultimately prevailed a guilty pleasure, so to say. The internal dialogue of the respondent became obvious in his/her statement:

> "Receiving Nike shoes for Christmas, best present ever. Probably, this is going to undo everything I have just said about not being a consumer. This is a very hypocritical response but I'm going to say it anyway because it is the truth." - Participant 16

Another aspect brought up by one respondent was the feeling of necessity. For instance, Participant 17 lives in Amsterdam for work. Originally, he/she comes from England where his/her family lives, with whom he/she celebrates Christmas. Hence, going home for Christmas either implies taking a long train ride or flying. The respondent usually chooses the flight despite having a green lifestyle:

> "It was kind of the same [...] where [...] I took a flight, I feel really guilty, but I had to take [...it...]." - Participant 17

Moreover, the internal dialogue is often triggered by not having any other choice, or at least having this feeling of no choice, as it was mentioned by two respondents. The internal dialogue circles around being aware of the 'right' green choice, while at the same time feeling restricted in making this choice due to various reasons. One of those 'no choice' moments can, for instance, occur when being home with parents for Christmas, as illustrated in the following comment:

> "I guess it's difficult because I go to my parents' house for Christmas and there's only so much control that I can have about the way that people are consuming things." - Participant 19

The level of frustration, and subsequently the dilemma became obvious here.

Furthermore, external forces have the potential to oppress green consumers concerning the internal dialogues. Especially one respondent mentioned this with regard to his/her vegan diet, which he/she tries to stick to, though this turns out to be difficult, or almost impossible when being home for Christmas. The respondent ended up being inconsistent and the internal dialogue he/she holds is illustrated when looking at one specific quote: *"I think when I first moved to a vegan diet, I tried to be very strict, but it didn't work"* (Participant 19). Acceptance is what further occurred here.

Again, and as in line with this research, tradition and social pressure constitute a large part regarding the internal dialogue. Four participants appeared to face this as there seems to be a general tendency of the interviewed British Millennials to reduce the number of gifts in the long run, however, this is where the role of tradition comes into play. Torn between sustainable lifestyles and showing love through presents, as expected by relatives, the internal dialogue seems really strong and conflicting here. Tradition appears to win the dialogue, especially for the sake of others, which is also in line with the thoughts of Participant 17: *"I think that's when it gets difficult again, because I think tradition is kind of more important. Especially if you have kids. And then you kind of want to have a Christmas tree and it's really exciting for them and you want to give them presents".* Also, Participant 19 does not want to upset his/her mother, wherefore he/she would not insist on removing gifts.

Summing up, the most overlapping topics among Swedes and Brits with regard to internal dialogues are: comparison with others, guilty pleasure, external forces, as well as tradition and social pressure.

The Brits' Internal Dilemma
Based on the British respondents' answers, there are three main matters when having an internal dilemma, being the feeling of *guilt*, *accepting* it and *rationalising*.

One side of the dilemma is certainly guilt, as it was shown by three respondents. It is, for instance, guilt for throwing away food that was obviously bought too much for Christmas or guilt towards the immense number of presents, and hence the knowledge to be part of it. The feeling of guilt that results from inconsistencies and subsequent internal dialogues is illustrated in the following quote:

> "And when you unwrap presents, my mum puts all the old wrapping in this big bag, and just seeing it grow... That made me feel really guilty because [...] the wrapping paper in there was not sustained, like was not recycled. And it's going to be bad for the environment."
> - Participant 18

The dilemma here is that the respondent must deal with the feeling of guilt and is not really able to break out of it unless he/she breaks traditions that might be overly valued by beloved relatives.

Another element of the internal dilemma can be rationalising, hence at least two respondents justify their unsustainable behaviour by otherwise sustainable behaviour, thus by making an equation. This can be observed very well in the following statement: *"And rather than trying to abstain for one day, whereas I could be doing the same amount of damage any another day of the year"* (Participant 18).

Last but not least, two respondents make use of acceptance when facing their internal dilemmas. One example is provided by Participant 16, who has already been mentioned previously in conjunction with the Nike shoes he/she received and considered as a favourite gift, as well as the subsequent statement: "*Probably this is going to undo everything I have just said about not being a consumer. This is a very hypocritical response but I'm going to say it anyways because it is the truth*" (Participant 16). In this example, the respondent reached a level of acceptance and admits the truth. Also, Participant 19 reached this level by placing his/her mother's will and tradition over his/her own belief and therefore sticking to the excessive gift-giving tradition.

In conclusion, both Swedish and British respondents overlap in their feeling of guilt and the rationalising aspect. They differ in shame, for the Swedes, and acceptance, for the Brits. Shame might be an indication for the established sustainable consumer behaviour in Sweden, whereas acceptance might point out the yet higher position of consumerist Christmas traditions within British society.

4.4 The Role of a Sustainable Lifestyle during the Christmas Season

In total, 19 participants, whereas 13 are from Sweden and six from England, were interviewed with the aim to understand the role of a sustainable lifestyle during the Christmas season for the individual green consumer. Based on the interviews, we were able to allocate each green consumer into one of the following categories.

1. The green consumer, *who does not care about a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas.*
2. The green consumer, *who tries to stick to a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas.*
3. The green consumer, *who shows consistent behaviour and sticks to a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas.*

4.4.1 'I do not care about my sustainable lifestyle during Christmas'

The Role of a Sustainable Lifestyle amongst the Swedish Participants
Only one of the Swedish participants showed that he/she does not care about sustainable consumption and practices during Christmas, which is based on his/her behaviour and attitude during the Christmas season.

The Role of a Sustainable Lifestyle amongst the British Participants
Two of the six British participants showed a behaviour and attitude which can be categorised as not caring about sustainable consumption and practices during Christmas. One participant openly admitted that he/she is not at all consistent with being sustainable when he/she is at home celebrating Christmas, which he/she explains with the following argument: "It's more like convenience [...] I find it quite difficult to act kind of sustainable here" (Participant 15). Furthermore, another participant shows a very consistent and sustainable lifestyle throughout the year, but during Christmas not at all, whereas, for instance, he/she receives about 20 to 25 gifts and he/she does not stick to his/her regular nutrition.

4.4.2 'I try to stick my sustainable lifestyle during Christmas, though it is difficult'

The Role of a Sustainable Lifestyle amongst the Swedish Participants
The majority of the Swedish participants are trying to stick to their sustainable lifestyles during Christmas. Out of the seven participants who try to be consistent, four show an inconsistent behaviour regarding their nutrition, as they claim to be vegetarian or vegan all year long, but on Christmas, they eat the traditional Swedish meals, consisting of heaps of meat. It can be said that the participants do not receive more than seven gifts for Christmas, moreover, there is a distinct shift towards giving and receiving experience gifts. And actually, two of them solely receive money and not any material gifts. All of the participants shared that they do not consciously think about sustainability during Christmas. Here is a statement of one of the participants:

> "No, I think there are a lot of things during Christmas, which are not really sustainable, where I do not really reflect upon because it is Christmas and it is how we have always done it."
> - Participant 2

When the respondents were asked if they give ethical presents, most of them said that they do not do it yet because the recipients mostly do not care about that and for them, it is more important that the present will be used and is wished-for than it is sustainable. However, for instance, Participant 1 reflected upon it during the interview and might change his/her behaviour:

> "I haven't done it but of course that's good because, then you, in a fun way, you encourage them to become more sustainable. So, it might be a good way to also lower the barrier to try something new and like, 'Oh, I got it from my daughter, then I try it'." - Participant 1

The Role of a Sustainable Lifestyle amongst the British Participants
Two of the British participants try to stick to sustainable consumption and practices during Christmas. As an example, Participant 19 only gives and gets one gift since they do 'Secret Santa', and he/she sticks strictly to his/her vegan diet, however, also he/she says that his/her behaviour changes at home, which is explained by him/her in the following quote:

> "[...] That's probably more food waste in the house and more kind of plastic packaging and things like that. So, I think probably I'm less consistent during the Christmas season [...] I guess it's difficult because I go to my parents' house for Christmas and there's only so much control that I can have, about the way that people are consuming things [...]" - Participant 19

4.4.3 'I stick to my sustainable lifestyle during Christmas'

The Role of a Sustainable Lifestyle amongst the Swedish Participants
From the thirteen Swedish participants, five showed a consistent sustainable behaviour during Christmas. Four of the five participants adhere to their diet and have introduced vegetarian and/or vegan dishes for Christmas amongst their families. One participant gave the example of having a 'positive family pressure' to be sustainable, which keeps them behaving sustainably:

> "Since my entire family are like this [...] it's hard not to be, because everyone just… we're thinking the same way and if someone might think in an unsustainable way, there are four people who say against that person [...]" - Participant 8

Furthermore, two participants shared that their families are giving donations as presents rather than materialistic gifts, which is highly valued by both participants and sustainable.

> "I think I would rather donate the money, instead of buying something [...] I get super happy when I get my presents as a donation." - Participant 6

The Role of a Sustainable Lifestyle amongst the British Participants
There are two of the British participants who showed a high interest in a sustainable lifestyle and are consistently living out their sustainable lifestyle all year long and during Christmas. Even though both participants show consistent behaviour, differences can be named. Participant 16 emphasised self-made presents for Christmas and would not even mind having no presents at all, whereas Participant 17 gives regular presents without a sustainable background and would not want to give no gifts whatsoever. Yet, basic elements, according to them, such as recycling and trying to use as little plastic as possible, are practised by both. Compared to other participants, Participant 16 argues that he/she is more sustainable at home, which he/she justified in the following quote:

> "I am definitely more sustainable because my dad, he is quite a warrior when it comes to the bins." - Participant 16

Participant 17 was asked how he/she imagines the future and how he/she would celebrate Christmas in the future when having his/her own family. His/her answer reflected his/her sustainable attitude and intentions very well:

> "I can also imagine an ideal world, say in ten years' time, and it might be a lot easier to be sustainable. So, it might be easier to get to buy sustainable presents. And I could definitely imagine myself having a vegetarian meal for sure. I would hope that there are sort of better ways to do like [...] have an environmentally friendly Christmas tree." - Participant 17

All things considered, it can be said that when comparing the number of participants for each category, the Swedish participants are more likely than the British participants to show consistent behaviour all year long, including Christmas, or try to be more consistent at least, than the British participants.

5. Analysis and Discussion

The following chapter comprises the analysis, based upon the previous empirical findings, along with a subsequent discussion that leads to the answer of the research question.

5.1 Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis, where a comparison between the Swedish and British cultural context concerning the role of sustainable lifestyles during Christmas has been made. The comparison is structured based on the main elements comprising the research question, as well as it is discussed in relation to existing theory as presented in the Chapter 'Literature Review'. Considering the research question and key findings, the identified topics are *green consumer identity* versus *Christmas identity*, which then leads to *inconsistencies*, followed by *social dilemmas*, as well as the *internal dialogue and neutralisation strategies*. From the results, *traditions as a neutralisation strategy* emerged and will follow next. The chapter concludes with a *cultural comparison*, complemented by a table.

5.1.1 Green Consumer Identity and Facets in Everyday Life

In accordance with the definition on sustainable lifestyle by Cheng et al. (2019), this thesis adopted the perspective that a sustainable lifestyle strives for common development between humans and nature, as well as it assumes conscious actions, positive social developments, and environmental responsibilities. Looking at the respondents' definitions on a sustainable lifestyle, especially the one of the Swedish respondents proved similar as they mentioned enabling coexistence or taking an active stand for the environment. The understanding among the British respondents was similar, too, however, it seemed more small-scale as they are focusing more on doing little things within one's ability. Following previous literature, we defined our respondents as anyone concerned about the environment within their consumer behaviour (Shrum, McCarty & Lowrey, 1995), which corresponds to both cultural groups and hence confirms their suitability for this research.

In fact, the green consumer identity forms one dimension of the conceptual framework and so represents the consumers' first set of beliefs. According to Rezvani, Jansson and Bengtsson (2018), the adoption process for a sustainable lifestyle is a slow procedure. Similar findings were made during this research among both Brits and Swedes. For Swedes, the adoption process is closely linked to the context in which they had grown up. Hence, it can be interpreted as an integral part of their identity from the very beginning, but also can they be assumed to have facilitated access to the adoption of such lifestyles. Conversely, the Brits emphasised little contributions everyone can make, which also reflects the slowly emerging awareness in terms of sustainable matters within their culture. We understand from this that British green consumers need to put more effort into developing a green consumer identity than Swedes. From this, it can be further interpreted that British green consumers are more committed since it comes from within them and is not solely facilitated by external factors such as parents.

Drawing this analytical standpoint from the data, it can be further assumed that the overall willpower to stick to sustainable lifestyles is higher among Brits compared to Swedes. This was illustrated in the example of the Swedish respondent who had recently moved to the USA and abandoned most of his/her sustainable habits for convenience reasons. Also, this example demonstrates Sweden's superb preconditions. Nonetheless, this assumption stands in contrast to some Swedes' overall expressed internal beliefs, which were defined as a belief to be sustainable as well as a visceral interest in sustainability from an early age, growing over time. This can also be related to Jansson, Nordlund and Westin's (2017) personal norms and further leads to our understanding that the Swedes' willpower to be green equals the self-convinced Brits, as long as it comes from within and forms part of their norms. Considering these findings, it can be supposed that the more committed the respondents are in their everyday lives, the more consistent they are in their sustainable lifestyles during Christmas.

Interestingly, several types of green consumer identities, or facets, can be interpreted from the data. As already mentioned, there are those considering it basic as sustainability formed a large part when growing up and affected their habitus (Bourdieu, 1986), those who keep following it for convenience reasons and the increased availability of diverse information and offerings (Longo, Shankar & Nuttall, 2019; Cheng et al., 2019), those sticking to it since they internalised it as personal norms, and those who developed a strong personal interest from within themselves, often facilitated through overall societal change (Cheng et al., 2019). Furthermore, the participants from both contexts, but foremost the Swedes, commonly mentioned friends, their lifestyles, the importance of having a common ground as well as pressure to live up to their expectations. Thus, this is believed to portray another facet of the green consumer identity, the socially influenced one that is driven by social norms as it was also suggested by previous literature (Jansson, Nordlund & Westin, 2017). Though, this can also be looked at from an internal angle, being identified as the ego (Freud, 1962), which was commonly observed among participants who e.g. distinguished themselves through their diet. This perspective provides a rather selfish view and stands in contrast to the respondents' initial agreement with what being sustainable means to them. Henceforth, it provides grounds for questioning the respondents' steadfastness concerning their sustainable lifestyles. What is also intriguing is how these diverse identity facets vary, yet they are all united in their outcome; a sustainable lifestyle. The reasoning for such a lifestyle differs among green consumers but eventually leads to sustainable practices in their everyday lives. What remains questionable though is what other potential facets, or even different types of identities, are triggered during exceptional settings such as Christmas. To further analyse this, the green consumer identity had to be put into the Christmas context and from there be opened up.

5.1.2 Christmas Identity and Facets

The green consumer identity might have been described as an integral part by all respondents, yet when discussing their lifestyles during Christmas, the participants' thoughts were interpreted to demonstrate a sense of improvidence. We arrived at this interpretation since the participants tended to describe a much different lifestyle in this setting compared to what they had said before. Certainly, the gap in behaviour between the two settings did not appear to be equally big among all respondents. While few still expressed having the intention to stick to their green lifestyle during Christmas and e.g. introduced a vegan Christmas table, others seemed to disregard their principles utterly. Among the latter, it was often expressed that they did not think much about sustainability during Christmas.

When comparing Swedes and Brits, it could be observed that Swedes put slightly more thought into their sustainable behaviour during Christmas, albeit not always successfully, whereas Brits often expressed a rather unsustainable lifestyle during that time, including massive meat consumption, numerous gifts reaching up to 25 per person etcetera. Even if there have been vague attempts to turn their Christmas celebrations into a more sustainable event, we received an impression that those efforts frequently appeared ambiguous, or even half-hearted, like in the example of the vegan participant who eats chocolate during Christmas with his/her mother, yet keeps it a secret towards others. This can be further interpreted as a try to hide such behaviour both in front of others, but perhaps also for themselves in order to keep the illusion of determined green consumer identity. Considering this, the empirical findings of this thesis indicate the existence of a second, opposing identity, which in this context can be referred to as the 'Christmas identity', where one identity is used in alternation with the other, depending on the setting. This can also be linked to the second set of beliefs illustrated in the Chapter 'Conceptual Framework'. Within this opposing identity, again various identity facets could be observed.

Green Adjusters
When asking respondents about their typical Christmas celebrations, they depicted activities such as spending time with family, maintaining traditions like decorating the house, buying gifts and enjoying sensual aspects such as food, similar to suggestions of previous literature (Hirschman and LaBarbera, 1989, cited in Kasser & Sheldon, 2002), but sustainability was largely left aside in this description. Only after specifically asking the respondents about sustainable behaviours during Christmas, they mentioned a few practices, some participants more, some less. Among the former, an honest interest in maintaining their sustainable lifestyles under any circumstances could be observed, though this was only applicable

to a small number of the total respondents and solely to Swedish participants. Those few participants, however, had introduced sustainable practices in their families such as vegan alternatives or 'Kris Kringle'. They can be seen as the 'green adjusters', people who intend to integrate their sustainable lifestyles within all extraordinary circumstances. Nonetheless, it could also be observed among those few participants that they have a strong supportive family background concerning sustainability, where it is greatly accepted, or even encouraged to e.g. eat vegan or exchange fewer gifts, and which prompted us to assume that this is another act of simplicity that is provided by superb preconditions in Sweden. It can also be related to what has been described previously, although it must be added that the effective goodwill to contribute to sustainability among those participants cannot be precluded or deduced from this sole simplicity aspect.

From Hypocrites to being in Compliance with Social Norms
Among the most important practices during Christmas food and gifts were found, elements which were also mentioned in relation to making Christmas more sustainable. Other unsustainable practices, such as wrapping paper or the Christmas tree, were commonly forgotten until the moment that they were specifically mentioned by us. As a matter of fact, it can be interpreted that the participants simply put not much thought into sustainability when it comes to their Christmas celebrations. What stood out, however, was the apparent significance of food and gifts, both of which were mentioned excessively throughout all interviews. In this context, some sustainable approaches could be identified with the introduction of e.g. Christmas games. This idea was particularly put forward within the Swedish context, though it turned out to be an addition to usual presents rather than a real alternative for replacing them. Thus, we understood from this an inaccurate attempt to incorporate sustainable lifestyles during Christmas successfully. Their admittance that this game often ended up being a sheer amendment can further be interpreted as acceptance of unsustainable practices for the sake of an elementary tradition. However, this contrasts with what the Swedish participants initially had claimed, namely that gifts constitute a petty aspect of Christmas to them. Consequently, it indicates a correlation between the respondents' desired green behaviour and the importance of tradition, which then leads to the invention of seemingly green alternatives that, first, help the green consumers to defend their sustainable lifestyles and, second, contribute to the preservation of traditions. Having said this, those participants who have introduced the game 'Kris Kringle' can be assumed to gloat over their sustainable lifestyle by being the ones to bring this 'sustainable' alternative to their families. Whereas on the one side it might help them to increase their ego (Freud, 1962) as well as to maintain their superficial green identity, on the other side it identifies their behaviour as hypocritical while being fully aware that 'Kris Kringle' often achieves the opposite effect. Having an additional game might lead to even more consumption, which seems accepted due to the green thought behind it.

In contrast, the British respondents showed different behaviour in that respect. Whilst none of the participants mentioned an alternative Christmas game, they also made no secret of the fact that up to 25 gifts per person is not an exception but rather is it a normal part of their Christmas celebration. Whereas this is in line with both previous research and official statistics, the respondents' behaviour can also be interpreted to show resemblance with what has been described earlier regarding the still less advanced sustainable development in England compared to Sweden. Since giving numerous presents was frequently described as normal among Brits, or even expected, it can be further construed that they are not under such pressure like the Swedes to stick to their sustainable lifestyle during Christmas as it is not so much anticipated by their families or other social surroundings. Thus, it can be assumed that they do not feel in need to come up with green alternatives, unlike the Swedes who feel obliged. Finally, the identity facets that can be identified based on the previous, as well as this paragraph, are, first, the hypocritical consumer, trying to cover up unsustainable practices with ambiguous alternatives and, second, the one acting in compliance with social norms, yielding to expectations.

Being Trapped in the Extended Self
From the participants' descriptions on the role of Christmas gifts, it can be understood that they adopted their families' ideas of a traditional Christmas. This primarily complied with the British context and, given the empirical findings, can be traced back to the fact that especially British Millennials experience increasing sustainable consciousness, though this trend is not so much spread among their parents. Therefore, this can be related to Belk's (1988) description of the extended self, where parents merge

their children into their extended self through gift-giving and justify it as an act of courtesy, whereby it is rather an act of making oneself feel better. What can be interpreted from this is that British Millennials might find themselves locked in this generational issue, which hence forms part of their Christmas identity and conflicts with their opposing green identity. The British participants' pictured presents as a way to show love and appreciation, perhaps not for themselves but at least for their parents. Accordingly, the British respondents were interpreted as having hard times fighting this excessive gift-giving since they do not want to hurt their relatives' feelings.

Interestingly, Swedish respondents did neither describe such pressure of endowing their relatives massively nor the urge to give back when being made a present. This was illustrated in the example of one respondent who receives presents from the brother each year, however, never gives anything back. Comparing this to the British context, it seems inconceivable for Brits and hence represents a major difference between both cultures. What is striking is the fact that Swedes still claimed to exchange gifts, albeit not to the extent of the Brits, although they uttered the wish of abolishing this tradition for the environment's sake. Mentioning later on that they would not want to miss presents entirely as it is still part of the tradition shows a clear attitude-behaviour gap. Also, it could be interpreted as the Swedes' actual desire to exchange gifts, even if it does not correspond with their green identity. However, since they kept expressing their lack of interest regarding Christmas gifts throughout the interviews, but mentioned the traditional aspect at some points, this can be understood as an indication that also in this context families are influential. As a consequence, the identity facet is determined by the extended self in which the participants are incorporated.

Gifts as an Integral Part of Identity Projects
Another Christmas identity facet could be outlined by gifts as an integral part of identity projects and their overall perceived ability to strengthen relationships likewise. The results showed that this is more the case for the British context due to the gifts' general symbolic meaning, but also amongst Swedes. One reason why we arrived at this interpretation is that the participants expressed their attachment to gifts due to tradition and childhood memories with which they had grown up. Interestingly, this stands in contrast to what the Swedish respondents had described regarding their green consumer identity when saying that having a sustainable lifestyle is something they had grown up with and which had come naturally to them. Hence, a conflict can be assumed here as it displays two opposing values that they had been raised with and potentially have never even been aware of. Thus, this could be one potential explanation for why consumers unconsciously develop multiple identities between which they alternate depending on the situation. Coming back to the assumption that gifts form part of someone's identity, another reason for this assumption is that the participants expressed the desire to put meaning into their gifts. This became obvious when the Brits claimed to typically give gifts that the receiver wishes for, similar to the Swedes' statement that it otherwise is a waste of energy and money. Consequently, it can be interpreted that both parties attempt to put meaning into gifts, especially in times of mass production and consumerism as described in previous literature (Farbotko and Head, 2013). By giving presents that appear thoughtful to the receiver, gift-giving is used to strengthen social bonds. Brits do this obviously, Swedes rather hidden. The particular example can be further linked to gifts' categorisation as a symbolic message about the relationship between two people (Yan, 2005).

Lack of Appreciation for Green Gifts
Nonetheless, considering the participants' green identity and their desire to give thoughtful gifts, it could be assumed that green consumers are also green givers. Within both contexts, however, this supposition proved to be rather false. Indeed, the participants intend to give thoughtful gifts, though this does not necessarily comply with sustainable gifts. While some respondents claimed to consider sustainable gifts, others expressed not having considered it yet. This can be interpreted as contradictory since the green consumer identity seems so relevant to the participants and one should assume that considering sustainable gifts hence comes naturally to them, but this is not the case. Regardless of the perspective though, considering green gifts or not, the overall implementation turned out to be sparse. As it transpired during the interviews, one major reason for not considering sustainable gifts is the limitation the participants face through the receivers and the lack of appreciation. Therefore, and as previous literature has equally suggested, green consumers are not automatically green givers (Farbotko & Head, 2013), but what has been additionally learned through this study is that external factors, the receivers in

this particular case, constitute a barrier. The positive effect of giving a green gift indeed gets lost when the receiver does not use it. With this regard, the behaviour of the participants can be interpreted as green or at least they put a sustainable thought into it. Yet, it remains open whether this is the sole true reason for not considering sustainable gifts or if there are also internal drivers.

We came to this extended interpretation based on further empirical findings such as the fact that most participants perceive traditions like gift-giving as essential, which is also in line with Laing and Frost's (2015) description of the universal traditional Christmas elements. However, what can be added to refute this assumption is that at least among those respondents who consider sustainable gifts, the expressed external barrier seemed sincere. This is especially applicable to the Swedish context and is based on our observation of desperate attempts to advance reduced consumerism while ending up buying an overpriced make-up from the USA as this is what one respondent's sister had wished for. The identity facet here refers to abandoning the idea of sustainable gifts due to a lack of appreciation.

The Lack of Control
The lack of control is another facet within the consumers' Christmas identity that could be interpreted from the collected data. More specifically, this lack of control was mentioned in conjunction with the Millennials visiting their relatives for Christmas and was equally observed amongst Brits and Swedes. At this point, it is interesting to mention that the most inconsistent behaviour could be observed regarding nutrition. Only five Swedish interviewees claimed to stick to their diet, whereas the number proved to be even lower among Brits. The respondents emphasised that this behaviour is particularly encouraged by staying with their families because they do not have a say in certain things. For instance, most of the time parents do the food shopping, meaning that the respondents cannot control what and how much is bought. Again, the participants pointed out those external barriers irrespective from their nationality. This is particularly interesting with regard to the Swedish context as they described sustainability as something that comes naturally in Sweden, which thus leads to the assumption that the preconditions for a sustainable lifestyle should be equally well developed when being home for Christmas. Though, in many cases, this did not seem to be applicable. Indeed, some respondents demonstrated serious efforts in making their family Christmas more sustainable by e.g. introducing 'Kris Kringle', but as already mentioned, this often fails to achieve the intended outcome. Within the British context, the preconditions look slightly less predestined compared to the Swedish.

Still, most participants from both contexts try to stick to their sustainable lifestyles, at least with regard to the things which are in their control. As the word 'try' implies, we understand from this that the respondents do what they can, hence what is within the realms of both possibility and convenience. Thus, everything that seems to be out of reach is shrugged off as acceptable, even if unsustainable. The similarities that were highlighted between both contexts further led to the interpretation that it is rather a question of convenience whether to stick to a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas or not, which is often passed on to external barriers like parents. By doing so, the participants make it easy on themselves to accept the basic message of 'trying to stick to their sustainable lifestyle'.

Being Trapped in Modified Traditions
Another interpreted similarity among both respondent groups was the discussion around the term 'tradition'. What is interesting to consider in this light is the original meaning of Christmas traditions, which initially started as a Christian celebration (Miles, 1912). It is deeply rooted within the Christian church, as well as it is closely related to the Victorian era and implies a time of forgiving, exchanging gifts, attending church service and so on (Horton, 1991). Thus, the participants' behaviour can be interpreted as picking out some traditional elements like exchanging gifts, while neglecting others such as attending church service. This assumption stems from the fact that only one respondent claimed to go to church during Christmas, yet this is striking as the religious aspect actually gave rise to all other elements. Based on these findings, we further interpret that traditions are often ranked more important than sustainability during Christmas without even considering the tradition's totality. Not only that, but the tradition can commonly be assumed to have lost its actual religious meaning. Instead, it was assigned a materialistic new meaning with gifts, food and pleasure at the core. This can further be assumed to be a rather egocentric point of view, though it must be considered that the evolving meaning of Christmas traditions cannot be solely attributed to the individual, hence the micro-level, but it should be looked at

from macro-level and general societal development. Consequently, focusing on aspects like gifts, food and pleasure is not so egocentric anymore when considering it from a holistic perspective, and thus the individuals seem rather trapped in this traditional angle. The identity facet can be identified as facilitated by a modified form of tradition.

Considering the analysis so far, the role of a sustainable lifestyle for green consumers per se can be interpreted as generally consistent, even though the reasoning might differ among the participants and is not necessarily aimed merely at sustainability, even if claimed. On the contrary, looking at the role of a sustainable lifestyle during the Christmas season evinces many inconsistencies among both cultural contexts, compared to their everyday lives. Conflating both the green consumer identity, which forms the first set of beliefs within the conceptual framework, and the Christmas identity, comprising the second set of beliefs, we arrived at the interpretation of various inconsistencies in the participants' behaviour. The identified inconsistencies as well as the way the participants deal with them both internally, in the form of an internal dialogue, and externally, through the formulation and implementation of diverse neutralisation strategies, further determines the role of a sustainable lifestyle during the Christmas season for the participants and is discussed below.

5.1.3 Inconsistent Behaviour

To begin with, inconsistencies relate to deviations from the sustainable lifestyle, in this case during Christmas. Specific examples of deviations have already been described and analysed previously. So far, the focus has been on the deviation between everyday life and the Christmas setting, now it will be further zoomed in on the inconsistency per se because inconsistencies formed an integral part of the empirical findings. What we have found out as yet is that the role of a sustainable lifestyle is certainly a different one during everyday life than compared to during Christmas. This applies to both cultural contexts alike. Since we, however, were interested in the *role* of a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas, we intended to investigate the nature of this differing role thoroughly, thus what is beyond the surface of the plain fact that the role deviates. In order to analyse the inconsistencies, it was first looked at from the other ending of the spectrum; the consistency. Considering the empirical material, the meaning of and obstacles to consistency could be identified and interpreted from specific inconsistent behaviours and the respondents' reasoning. Understanding consistency in the first place facilitated the grasp of inconsistencies and why they occur in return. Based on the findings, four topics with regard to consistency have been interpreted by us: *Consistency requires no excuses, consistency is demanding, consistency is required to define the personality and identity* and *consistency is challenging in times of extraordinary circumstances*.

Consistency Requires No Excuses
Consistency has been identified as something that the participants do regularly with respect to sustainability. As it was found out during the interviews, this could range from recycling to second-hand shopping, it is following principles such as the desire to contribute to a healthier future, and to remain the same throughout. When discussing with the participants their everyday lifestyles, the previous delineation was interpreted as pretty much appropriate by us. When proceeding with the interviews, the subject was changed to the Christmas setting and the respondents were asked to describe their lifestyles in that sense. What became apparent was that once an inconsistency in their behaviour had been described, an almost immediate excuse was brought up by the participants. For instance, one Swedish, vegetarian respondent claimed to enjoy the meat-heavy Christmas meal and that he/she would rather be a vegan all year than forgoing meat-eating on Christmas Day. The excuse the participant added was that he/she has *"just one life"* (Participant 12). Similar findings could be observed among the British participants, commonly explaining to succumb to their families' meat-heavy and excessive Christmas festivities in order not to hurt anyone and since it has always been done like this.

Hence, the excuses submitted can be interpreted as a clear signal for an occurring inconsistency, as well as that the participants seemed to be well aware of doing 'wrong'. By making excuses, they revealed large parts of their inner selves to us as they engaged in impression management. As it has already been described in previous literature, with impression management individuals act upon planned behaviour

when being in public (Goffman, 1959). From this, we could assume that excuses are used as a means to satisfy the rationale of the green consumer identity even in times of switching to the less sustainable Christmas identity.

Consistency is Demanding
Consistency is demanding as it represents the contrary to nature and exceptions, which could be interpreted from the participants' seemingly inner fight between their everyday lives and doing justice to this green lifestyle during the Christmas season alike. For some, it seemed more of a struggle than for others, but overall it can be interpreted from the data that for the Swedes it is generally easier to win this battle due to the societal circumstances, whereas for the Brits losing the fight seemed less of an issue due to the still present significance of tradition and gift-giving in their culture. Nonetheless, both parties showed a strong interest in living a sustainable life, which is why they still tried to be consistent in their behaviour. Whilst this can, on one hand, be traced to an inner drive, on the other hand, it can be related to the inner ego which participants desire to push (Freud, 1962). Considering it from this perspective, striving for consistency can be interpreted as less of an altruistic act, as well as it alters the meaning of demand. Firstly, being consistent can be either demanding for participants as they really pursue a green consumer identity that they do not want to abandon during Christmas, or, second, it can be demanding as participants represent a green identity which they are likely to abandon due to tradition, though they do not want to confess it to others. Following previous findings, it can be assumed that the demands are likelier to be overcome by those participants who generally showed more conviction regarding a sustainable lifestyle as it requires effort to overcome hurdles and meet demands.

Furthermore, that consistency is demanding could be observed in relation to availability and commitment (Evans & Abrahamse, 2009), as they represent relevant factors for sustainable lifestyles. Availability and sustainable options apply to both cultural contexts, whereby especially the Swedes seem to be privileged due to many sustainable alternatives. Hence, being consistent for them can be interpreted as less demanding, which, however, was debunked when asking them about their lifestyle during Christmas. Most of them came across obstacles such as intransigent families that do not want to adjust the Christmas meal to specific diets or keep insisting on the exchange of gifts. What happens is that most of the participants become inconsistent in their behaviour as they are not able to meet the demands.

Another demand of consistency that could be identified was that the actions of participants should always be in line with their values, though this was not the case when buying Christmas trees for the Christmassy feeling, using regular wrapping paper for the beautiful shiny look or eating chocolate as a strict vegan for pleasure. Moreover, principles must be stuck to in all kinds of situations as it was explained by the participants when talking about their everyday lives, yet they were unable to do so when finding themselves within the Christmas setting. Interestingly enough, another demand for consistency could be interpreted as meeting the expectations of others. This is intriguing as two types of 'others' could be highlighted in this context: The regular social surrounding and the social surrounding during Christmas, in this case, the family. Both sides showed to have opposed expectations, reaching from boycotting consumerism to exchanging numerous gifts. Consequently, the actions of the participants reveal their values, which during the year are clearly related to sustainable matters, however, those values appear mostly forgotten within the Christmas setting.

Consistency is Required to Define the Personality and Identity
Moving from values to identity, which values are also an integral part of, consistent sustainable lifestyles is what the respondents claimed to pursue. Consistency can therefore be put in relation to habits, or as described by Bourdieu (1986) the habitus, as it comprises certain actions that are done frequently while shaping lives and thus the personality. This is also what the participants showed to communicate to their social surroundings to e.g. nurture relationships as they, for instance, mentioned the importance of having a common ground with friends or earning respect through being the better sustainable person that stands out through a vegan diet or second-hand shopping. Based on these specific examples, it can be interpreted that the communication of a consistent identity is a key driver for staying consistent, yet it interferes with the identity that many respondents exhibited when being in a different social setting

such as Christmas. In this situation, their Christmas identity is revealed and commonly results in inconsistencies, which, conversely, challenges the green consumers' main identity.

Consistency is Challenging in Times of Extraordinary Circumstances
Being consistent is not only demanding, but participants face a special challenge when being outside their regular habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). Consistency during Christmas would entail continuing a lifestyle as always, though this is where the role of tradition arms conflicts. Especially in England, there is a general perception of limited control around Christmas due to family tradition, which often proved to affect the respondents' behaviour negatively as they rather stuck to traditions than to sustainability. According to Ajzen (1991), this behaviour can be linked to the theory of planned behaviour, claiming that there is an attitude, social norms and a certain level of perceived control which eventually affect the actual behaviour. Furthermore, it can be interpreted that the will of many respondents was not strong enough to impose their sustainable practices, or perhaps it was also out of respect. Anyhow, this can be associated with morality.

According to McGregor (2008), the higher the morality, the more likely individuals follow their inner compass. Consequently, the level of morality among most respondents during Christmas appeared to be low compared to the year. Though it must be added that we are not fully able to differentiate the level of morality among all consumers as this was not the study's main concern and requires further research. Nonetheless, a tendency can be construed that those participants who are more consistent during Christmas pursue a higher level of morality, both Swedes and Brits. Those with the lower level of morality hence seemed likelier to follow Christmas traditions as implied by older generations and thus tended to inconsistencies. Whereas it is the Millennials' social norm to be sustainable, the Christmas setting is much influenced by tradition, wherefore they partly adjust. Also, this can be linked to Jackson's (2005) claim that when social norms shift, consumers are likely to change their behaviour, too. The interpretation resulting from this is that specific virtues and norms value more (Fischer, 1993), which in this case relates to the family (Rani, 2014).

As a matter of fact, inconsistencies occur when facing tensions, for instance between a sustainable and a mainstream lifestyle (Evans & Abrahamse, 2009). In this case, this can be related to the consumers' everyday lifestyles and lifestyles during Christmas. However, not all participants seemed to face this tension equally strong. Whereas some still tried to contribute to a more sustainable Christmas, others surrendered without much resistance. This could be similarly observed among both Swedes and Brits, though Brits seemed to face increased tension due to family obligations. Though, what in almost all cases followed was the feeling of guilt. Due to their chosen lifestyles, the respondents seemed to feel a moral obligation which hence led to the feeling of guilt when not being able to stick to it and when taking unsustainable decisions due to e.g. tradition. The point of guilt is also what authors like Steenhaut and van Kenhove (2006) claimed as a consequence of moral obligation.

5.1.4 Social Dilemma

Another major finding is represented by social dilemmas which participants face due to inconsistencies. Next to the internal dilemma, discussed hereafter, social dilemmas represent part of a more external perspective and dialogue that participants conduct with immediate social surroundings. Overall, the respondents experienced a trend towards more awareness and felt a sense of responsibility to act upon it, which is in line with what Millennials are said to be: environmentally conscious consumers (Sheahan, 2005, cited in Heo & Muraldiharan, 2017). However, this relates primarily to their everyday lives in which they actively communicate their sustainable lifestyle through specific behaviour such as reduced consumption. Social dilemmas occur when being outside of that everyday life. We understood from this that the everyday sustainable lifestyle, and hence the green consumer identity, is facilitated by habits, which the participants miss in the Christmas setting. Thus, the sense of responsibility towards sustainable matters is largely dependent on the context, whereby the real social dilemma is faced when being in a different context and having to admit inconsistencies.

Since the respondents present themselves as green consumers in everyday life, while simultaneously being connected to family Christmas traditions, they find themselves in a dilemma as they are no longer able to maintain the intended green identity. This was shown in the empirical findings in the example of the respondent who claimed to keep it a secret to eat non-vegan food during Christmas since he/she wants to avoid being denounced by friends. The example illustrates well the dilemma between tradition and green impression management, as described in previous literature (Goffman, 1959). Hence, looking at it from this perspective, impressing friends seems to prevail the real sustainable interest de novo. Again, this can be related to the ego as presented by Freud (1962), because at times it seemed like many Swedes acted in order to increase their ego when e.g. introducing 'Kris Kringle'.

Another element of social dilemmas that could be found was the gifts' symbolism. Despite the communicated rejection of mass consumption, the participants still exchange gifts as presents are assumed to facilitate the interaction with like-minded people, which in this case relates to relatives. Even though the respondents perceived this as false generosity, especially the British participants expressed to stick closely to traditional gift-giving. Also, this can be related to Cova's (1997) theory on the linking value, where a product is considered the facilitator of relationships, and which leads to the interpretation that the role of gifts is more important than sustainability if this is in line with the gift receiver's anticipated expectations.

5.1.5 The Internal Dilemma, Dialogue and Neutralisation Strategies

Inner and Outer Impression Management
Being in a discrepancy between green identity, Christmas identity and impressing social surroundings, Goffman (1959), suggests that with self-presentation, individuals act upon planned behaviour when entering society. They perform impression management, so to speak. Inter alia, this is illustrated in the example of the interviewee who claimed to be vegan but consumes chocolate during Christmas. Eating chocolate as such is not the point of conflict, but the fact of hiding it towards friends in order to avoid critical comments made this an act of impression management. Apart from this, impression management cannot only be seen as an external management tool, but also can it be interpreted as part of the internal dialogue that people engage in. Thus, respondents were perceived to not just manage their identity's impression for others, but also for themselves. From this, we understood that it is an indicator of the participants' inner conflicts, faced when committing inconsistent behaviour. In order to justify this, they develop sundry identity facets, as explained before, between which they alternate.

Neutralisation Strategies
Once an inconsistency has occurred, people are assumed to resolve inner conflicts through neutralisation strategies (Gruber & Schlegelmilch, 2014). Five of six strategies, as suggested by the literature, could be found within the empirical findings. Firstly, the Swedes complained about a lack of accessibility during Christmas. Green goods are either too expensive or inconvenient to get, through which they justify Black Friday shopping. For the Brits, it was more the lack of control when being home for Christmas, but also taking the plane to get there for convenience purposes. Consequently, they defended their inconsistency through necessity (Minor, 1981, cited in Gruber & Schlegelmilch, 2014). Thus, the necessity among the Brits can be interpreted as stronger due to traditions that they feel like having to commit to, whereas for the Swedes the convenience element seemed prominent. Secondly, it can be understood that participants claimed entitlement (Coleman, 2015). When claiming to only have one life or seeing it as too much of a sacrifice to renounce the tree, the Swedes made use of this strategy. Moreover, the Brits felt entitled to enjoy their guilty pleasures in the form of e.g. new shoes. Hence, this can be interpreted as fairly selfish views. Furthermore, both parties repeatedly said to have the feeling of doing good compared to others, as well as to compensate by, for example, being vegan. This can, therefore, be related to the claim of relative acceptability (Henry & Eaton, 1999). Denial of responsibility, meaning that one person is not able to change the world alone (Sykes & Matza, 1957), was another used strategy among both contexts. While the Swedes experienced it as energy-draining, and at times even a burden to always having to make green choices, the Britons commonly held the view to not causing big damage when being inconsistent for one day. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, both groups expressed to feel social pressure as well as an obligation towards the family to stick to

certain Christmas traditions, which consequently can be related to the appeal to higher loyalties. With this strategy, individuals share societal values, in this case, the sustainable lifestyle, but also do they belong to a smaller group with divergent values. Usually the latter wins (Sykes & Matza, 1957).

Internal Dialogue and the Role of Tradition
By being able to recognise almost all of the neutralisation strategies, it can be interpreted that there is a clear inconsistency and subsequent inner dialogue and dilemma among both cultural contexts when it comes to green lifestyles during Christmas. This analysis further leads to the assumption that the deviation in behaviour during Christmas can be attributed to typical motives such as obligation, accessibility or convenience. Especially obligation in the form of family traditions became apparent during the research and can be interpreted as an acceptable reason for inconsistencies among green consumers. However, the fact that participants e.g. do not want to sacrifice too much can be understood as immature and we received the impression that those were ostensible excuses rather than valid reasons. Though it must be added that another vital element has not been considered within literature yet; the tradition per se.

We defined the internal dialogue as the voice within the participants that annotates everything around them by applying their reasoning to specific situations. Based on the empirical results, the respondents' internal dialogue can be assumed to look as follows: *"I am vegetarian for the environment's sake. Last Christmas, I ate meatballs as it is part of my family's tradition. This is okay since I am a vegetarian all year."* The first sentence highlights the green consumer identity, while the second clause illustrates the Christmas identity but also brings in thoughts of a third party, namely that the family expects the participant to eat meatballs. The last phrase underlines the neutralisation strategy. This is just one possible example, but what can be interpreted from it is that even if e.g. relative acceptability is applied as strategy, it is additionally supported by bringing in the traditional aspect for neutralisation purposes.

5.1.6 Tradition as Neutralisation Strategy

Even though having a Christmas tree, regardless of being real or plastic, has been accused of having negative environmental impacts (Kartey, 2018), all participants claimed to have one and would not want to sacrifice this. This could be because putting up a Christmas tree is a centrepiece for children at Christmas (Laing & Frost, 2015), whereby childhood memories were also mentioned among participants. The Christmas tree tradition, but also others, have been criticised to be rather unsustainable (Klein & Whyte, 2018) and even though the participants are aware of this, most of them agreed that sometimes traditions are more important to them than being sustainable, which is supported by the fact that almost all participants expressed to not even think about sustainability during Christmas. Based on the empirical findings and the previous analysis, but also since tradition indeed seemed to play a crucial role for the participants to act differently than planned, sticking to tradition as a neutralisation strategy could be added as an emerging finding from this research.

It can be said that almost all participants expressed a clear stand towards consumption during the Christmas season, which aligns with Belk (1978 cited in Mortelmans & Damen, 2001), who describes the contemporary Christmas as the celebration of consumption. The participants stated the intention to avoid overconsumption and act more responsible during Christmas, hence, to maintain their green identity. Nevertheless, as it was shown in the results, a clear attitude-behaviour gap could be observed (Ajzen, 1991). The participants' described behaviour during Christmas can be interpreted to show resemblance with Ajzen's (1991) delineation of such a gap since the sustainable behaviour during Christmas deviated by far from the everyday life norm in most respondents' cases. Various reasons for such inconsistencies have been highlighted throughout this chapter, reaching from parents' expectations to convenience. Since the participants, however, expressed to present themselves as convinced green consumers and often attributed this development to overall positive societal changes within their cultural contexts, it could be interpreted that it is not only the significance of tradition to the participants' families but potentially also to themselves. Conversely, this could be interpreted as the participants using their parents and other external factors to justify their inconsistent behaviour.

The expressed feelings resulting from inconsistent behaviour can be informative in this case. The Swedish participants expressed guilt, shame and rationalising. Similarly, the Brits mentioned guilt and rationalising, too, and added acceptance. Whilst guilt and shame can be interpreted as indicators for bad conscience, rationalising and acceptance could be understood as and allocated to less committed green consumers. We arrived at this assumption since the feelings of guilt and shame can be construed as drivers towards more sustainable behaviour as both feelings were perceived as negative among the respondents and it is in their interest to overcome them. Overall, acceptance and rationalising imply emotions that are less driven towards change, thus it can be interpreted that participants expressing these feelings are less likely to work towards a more sustainable lifestyle during Christmas. Relating those feelings to traditions as a neutralisation strategy, it can be further assumed that guilt and shame implicate true despair among the respondents as they feel torn between being green and meeting other's traditional expectations. On the contrary, emotions like acceptance and rationalising could be assumed to be a hint for using tradition as an excuse and means to hide behind.

5.1.7 Concluding Cultural Comparison: Differences and Similarities

Lastly, Table 2 on the following page illustrates the main findings that resulted from the empirical results and the analysis. The table is structured according to the conceptual framework, as well as the structure of both 'Results' and 'Analysis'. The estimated level of sustainability, marked with either a green, yellow or red symbol, is subject to the overall impression based on the findings and hence, what the majority of respondents answered. The segments printed in bold type *within* the table highlight the similarities between both cultural contexts. Also, the first two rows, focusing on attitude, intention and behaviour throughout the year, ensure the respondents' overall qualification for being part of this research as all categories are marked with a green symbol. However, the sole usage of green symbols starts to change when moving forward to influences and reasons behind it, as well as the actual behaviour during Christmas.

Moreover, the table comprises two main findings of the analysis. Firstly, there is an obvious deviation in sustainable lifestyles between green consumers' everyday lives and Christmas among both cultural contexts. Secondly, the British respondents seemed more pressured to stick to Christmas traditions because e.g. gift-giving is assumed to be an act of appreciation among their families. Thus, they cannot easily make changes as it might hurt their relatives' feelings. Slightly less pressure from the family's side seemed to be experienced by Swedes, though not all of them stick to sustainable lifestyles during Christmas either. For many Swedes, it seemed like an individual pleasure to stick to unsustainable Christmas practices, which they tried to hide behind imposed family traditions. Because of this, it seemed that there are two opposing groups within the Swedish cultural context: Those really sticking to their sustainable lifestyle also during Christmas, hence almost no gift-giving involved or having a vegan Christmas table, and those formerly mentioned, taking Christmas traditions as an excuse for inconsistencies. Among the Brits, such opposing groups did not become apparent during this research.

	Sweden	Sust. Thought?	England	Sust. Thought?
Belief I: Green Consumer Identity				
Attitude and Intention in everyday life	- Valuing things - Making conscious decision - Enabling coexistence - Taking **active stand for environment**	✓	- Doing little things within one's own ability - **Being friendly to the environment**	✓
Actual behaviour in everyday life	- **Vegetarian/vegan diet common** - **Recycling** - **Second-hand shopping** - **Reduced travelling** - **Buying green products** - **Using public transp.**	✓	- Reduced meat consump., some vegetarians/vegans - **Recycling** - **Second-hand shopping** - **Reduced travelling** - Saving energy - **Buying green products** - **Using public transp.**	✓
Influenced by	- **Easier access, acceptable price** - Habitus (superb preconditions in Sweden) - Only acceptable lifestyle - Do as good as green friends; increase ego - Impression management	— — ✓ ✗ ✗	- **Easier access, acceptable price** - Feeling of being in power and act upon it - Single convinced individuals - Self-taught habitus	— ✓ ✓ ✓
Belief II: Celebrating Christmas and Traditions				
Gift-giving	On average 3 to 5 gifts each Alternative: Secret Santa But: Often solely addition to usual gifts	—	Many gifts (approx. 15 to 20); more materialistic	✗
Christmas food	Overall meat-heavy, but some vegan Christmas tables	—	Very meat-heavy	✗
Other Practices	- **Recyclable wrapping paper** - **Recycling** - No food waste - **Christmas tree** - Consider giving sust. gifts, do not necessarily do it though	✓ ✓ ✓ ✗ ✗	- **Recyclable wrapping paper** - **Recycling** - Flying home for Christmas - **Christmas tree** - Do not consider giving sust. gifts as not appreciated	✓ ✓ ✗ ✗ —
Importance of tradition	- **Childhood memories** - Gifts not most important, but would not want to miss it - **Spending time with family is essential**	— ✗ ✓	- **Childhood memories** - Gifts as symbol for appreciation, love - **Spending time with family is essential**	— — ✓
Influenced by	- Reduced social burden to give gifts (in return) - **Little influence at home** - 'Always done it that way'	✓ ✗ ✗	- Family seeing gifts as way to show love, act of courtesy; gifts as part of identity - **Little influence at home**	✗ ✗
Inconsistencies	- Partly low morality - **Adjust to social norms** (buy at least some gifts, adjust diet) - Slight **tension** among family		- Low morality - **Adjust to social norms** (buy many gifts, eat meat) - High level of **tension** due to family	
Dialogue (Justification and Neutralisation Strategies)	- Convenience (e.g. shop on Black Friday) - 'Just one life', not sacrificing too much - **Compensating** (via e.g. being vegan) - Energy-draining to always be green - **Shared values with env. (tradition)**		- Lack of control, necessity to adjust to fam. - Guilty pleasure once in a while okay - **Compensating** (via e.g. eating less meat) - Single inconsistency not causes damage - **Shared values with env. (tradition)**	
Internal Dilemma	- **Guilt** - Shame - **Rationalising**		- **Guilt** - **Rationalising** - Acceptance	

✓ Sustainable Behaviour — Moderate Sustainable Behaviour ✗ Unsustainable Behaviour

5.2 Discussion

The previous analysis serves as the basis for the following discussion, which aims to reflect upon the study's key findings. Furthermore, this will lead to the answer of the sub-questions and, along with this, the research question. Lastly, the conceptual framework, and hence the two models, will be amended with the research findings. The entire discussion will be related to the previously discussed literature. Thus, the discussion's focus will be on what has been known before, what new findings have been made through this research and whether these findings were expected.

5.2.1 How Green Consumers Cope with the Attitude-Behaviour Gap

As stated in Chapter 1, this research comprises one research question and two sub-questions. The main research question focuses on the role of sustainability during Christmas for green consumers per se, whereas the first sub-question concentrates on ways to cope with inconsistencies. The second sub-question focalises social and internal dilemmas and what they mean for green identities. The following presents the first sub-question:

How do the green consumers cope with a (potential) attitude-behaviour gap?

Previous literature has already discussed the attitude-behaviour gap from various angles. Hence, it is known that attitudes have an impact on the actual behaviour, though this is dependent on aspects such as personal factors, social norms (Mainieri et al., 1997 cited in Gupta & Ogden, 2009), or societal values, whereby especially families are considered important (Fisher, 1993). The significance of family can be explained by the fact that young individuals are expected to adopt the families' values and traditions (Rani, 2014). The attitude-behaviour gap can also be explained by Ajzen's (1991), where he assumes that the attitudes, social norms and perceived behaviour affect the actual behaviour. Therefore, a positive sustainable attitude does not necessarily translate into green behaviour when e.g. social norms have too much control (Juvan & Dolnicar, 2014). This illustrates that much is happening from attitude until actual behaviour, which gave rise to the assumption that this is even encouraged by opposing settings, comprising contradictory beliefs, as it was the case for this research with everyday life versus Christmas. Also, previous literature on the attitude-behaviour gap has led to our initial presumption that this will be a finding within this study due to the differing settings. From this, the question arose how green consumers cope with this gap since this has remained largely unexplored.

What has been found out through this research, and therefore contributes to the answer of the first sub-question, is that indeed inconsistencies occurred in the green consumers' behaviour when being exposed to the Christmas setting. The level of inconsistency was deemed unequal among all participants, though for the majority it can be said that green consumers did not want to let go of their Christmas tree, vegans turned into vegetarians, vegetarians into meat-eaters and those usually abstaining from excessive consumption ended up buying gifts anyways. This finding led to the attitude-behaviour gap as specified in previous literature and can be attributed to the important role of families' values and traditions as discussed by Rani (2014). The participants cope with this by making excuses, not remaining resilient towards demanding consistency and they redefine their identities or at least adjust them to diverse settings, they justify the gap by extraordinary circumstances, but foremost they make use of neutralisation strategies. As suggested by Gruber and Schlegelmilch (2014), the participants deployed five of the already known strategies such as necessity or claim of entitlement. Besides, we ascertained another major finding with tradition and family as a new neutralisation strategy, which can be added to the existing literature on this topic. In conclusion, green consumers cope with the attitude-behaviour gap by excusing their behaviour and applying neutralisation strategies rather than actively addressing the gap. Hence, the gap is rather bridged than it is closed.

The findings were expected insofar that we anticipated identifying inconsistencies, however, the major role of tradition and family was not expected to this extent. Also, we did not expect to identify this as a new, seventh neutralisation strategy that can be added to the theory of Gruber and Schlegelmilch (2014).

These findings are considered relevant as they enhance the research purpose's fulfilment as well as they comprise the answer to sub-question one. Also, by understanding how green consumers cope with inconsistencies, it is easier to understand internal and social dilemmas, but also how the different identity types are composed. Consumers were also seen to develop different identity types based on the setting, whereby the identities' compositions are further determined by inconsistencies and applied strategies to cope with it. This posed another unexpected, yet relevant research finding.

5.2.2 What Social & Internal Dilemmas Green Consumers Face during Christmas

Moreover, this study aimed to answer the following second sub-question:

What social and internal dilemmas do green consumers face during the Christmas season?

Based on previous literature, we entered this research with the knowledge that both internal and external factors affect consumer behaviour, which can be explained through the CCT perspective. Green consumers are assumed to have identity projects, based on which internal and external dilemmas arise. However, such dilemmas would not be expected to arise if the respective identity project was not facing a new, contradictory setting. Typically, internal dilemmas emerge once the consumer is not able to stick to his/her habitus anymore (Bourdieu, 1986). Moreover, internal dilemmas are anticipated when individuals are unable to stick to the motivators gain, normative and hedonic (Steg & Vlek, 2009, cited in Rezvani, Jansson & Bengtsson, 2018), which aim at a sustainable lifestyle on condition that costs are perceived to be outweighed, that it seems morally correct and helps to improve the feelings of the sustainable actor. Furthermore, the fulfilment of personal norms, hence internalised beliefs (Jansson, Nordlund & Westin, 2017), is considered important with regard to potential internal dilemmas. Besides, such internal dilemmas are assumed to be encouraged by the individual's inability to perform consistent impression management as they need to alternate between various identities (Goffman, 1959), but also when the superego to make ethical choices clashes with the intuitive id that desires pleasure, and thus the ego faces issues in coping with it (Freud, 1962).

On the contrary, social dilemmas are known to occur when consumers are unable to stick to social norms as they are implied by their regular social surroundings (Jansson, Nordlund & Westin, 2017). In the specific context of this research, it is further suggested by previous literature that gifts form part of the identity and often lead to a social burden when feeling the urge to give back (Mauss, 2002) since presents are also assumed to strengthen relationships (Waits, 1993, cited in Farbotko & Head, 2013). Lastly, the decision-making of individuals is said to be shaped by the group they desire to be part of (Merton & Ross, 1949, cited in Salazar, Oerlemans & Stroe-Biezen, 2013). The issue can be understood to arise when consumers are part of different groups with opposing beliefs, which is where this research comes into play.

What has been found out in the course of this study is that both internal and external, also referred to as social, dilemmas are faced by the participants. It can be said that the participants struggle with the fact of not being able to be consistent in their behaviour when being home for Christmas. A major issue for them is that they represent themselves as someone else during everyday life, compared to how they commonly act during the Christmas season. As many of them claimed to try to stick to sustainability during Christmas, however, faced difficulties, an additional internal dilemma can be highlighted with the fact that the participants potentially entertain an own desire to stick to Christmas traditions themselves. Though, they feel like not being able to admit that fully as it conflicts with their green everyday behaviour as well as it works against their regular impression management. Based on this internal dilemma, they feel in need to find justifications through which they e.g. blame their parents and their willingness to stick to unsustainable Christmas traditions. With respect to social dilemmas, green consumers find themselves being stuck between their green consumer identity and doing justice to their family's interpretation of Christmas traditions. This is difficult for them as they do not want to hurt any feelings, neither those of their relatives nor those of their friends with which they regularly share their green beliefs. What is new about these findings is the focus on opposing settings, which in that way has not been discussed yet, and consequently makes this study relevant. Also, we focused on what such

internal and external dilemmas particularly mean for green consumer identities. In former literature, internal and external dilemmas, as well as green consumer identity, have largely been discussed separately from each other instead of how they build on one another and what they result in.

Therefore, based on internal and social dilemmas, green consumers develop diverse identities, in this case, the green consumer identity and the Christmas identity, and therein various identity facets. Thus, this led to the identification of Christmas identity facets such as green adjusters, hypocrites, those being exposed to their family's will regarding traditions or those feeling a lack of control when being home for Christmas. The different identity facets, as they were presented in detail in the analysis, illustrate miscellaneous ways in which the identity of green consumers can evolve through accrued internal and social dilemmas. Often, these facets are also combined and consequently lead to the development of a new identity of the green consumers, adjusted to the novel, specific setting.

We had expected to find internal and external dilemmas among the green consumers, which was confirmed by the fact that many of the mentioned dilemmas could be related to and explained by existing literature. Yet, we did not expect to find new identity facets that the participants create based on the dilemmas.

5.2.3 The Role of Sustainable Lifestyles for Green Consumers during Christmas

This study aimed to answer the following research question:

> ***What is the role of a sustainable lifestyle during the Christmas season for individual green consumers' identities within different cultural contexts?***

Based on the results and corresponding analysis, the overall role of a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas for green consumers can be defined as inferior compared to during everyday life since an obvious deviation could be observed among the participants. Consequently, the role of tradition, and therefore the focus on family, can be seen as more important than sustainability in this particular Christmas setting. The identified role also comes along with ramifications for the green consumers' identities, as it was addressed in the research question. For the identity, the revealed role means facing different types of dilemmas, as it was highlighted in the answer of the second sub-question. Whilst the consumers are torn between their regular green behaviour and sticking to Christmas traditions, inconsistencies occur, leading to an internal dialogue which is influenced by internal and external factors. By assuming the role of Christmas traditions to be more important than the green consumer identity, green consumers develop strategies in order to tackle the arising inconsistencies and their upcoming bad conscience. Nonetheless, it must be added that the role is not equal for all green consumers, but rather depends on how sustainably committed someone is in his/her everyday life. The more committed the consumer is, the higher is his/her expected level of determination in the Christmas setting. Regarding the cultural context, the role of Christmas traditions seemed slightly more significant among British participants as they experience higher pressure from their relatives, wherefore it is difficult for them to stick to their green consumer identity. On the contrary, Swedish green consumers face not as much pressure from their relatives' sides due to the overall societal change with regard to sustainability that is happening in Sweden. Surprisingly, they often stick to Christmas traditions anyhow. Besides that, no major differences could be identified between the two contexts. Among all green participants, the role of a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas can be illustrated by taking the example of a scale. Whereas for a few cases the role between sustainability and Christmas seemed balanced, the majority showed a tendency towards imbalance in favour of Christmas traditions.

It can be concluded that the role of a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas encourages the adoption of an opposing Christmas identity, including diverse identity facets, rather than encouraging the green consumers to stick to their green lifestyles. This is interesting as it went against our expectations. Yet, this can be elucidated by the finding that green consumers are exposed to two opposing beliefs that they can only cope with employing neutralisation strategies. Somehow, they seem to entrap themselves in those strategies, which results in the fact that it is more acceptable to make unsustainable exceptions

because of Christmas. Based on the literature, we assumed to find greater differences between Swedes and Brits, however, the differences turned out to be less than expected. An unexpected finding, however, was the Swedes' behaviour. Based on statistics and previous literature, we anticipated the role of sustainability during Christmas to be much bigger for them than it actually turned out.

5.2.4 Extended Conceptual Framework

Based on the empirical findings, the two models of the conceptual framework have been extended. The thesis results showed that green consumers face tensions with regard to the impression management (Goffman, 1959) between their green consumer identity and behaviour during Christmas, referred to as the Christmas identity. This results in an attitude-behaviour gap as attitudes, social norms, as well as perceived behavioural control are not in line within both settings. During Christmas, the attitude might still be green, though the social norms in the family include e.g. gift-giving or a Christmas tree, wherefore the perceived behavioural control is low due to the lack of appreciation for sustainable practices. The gap, and respective internal dialogue, result in inconsistent behaviour as the research illustrated. Hereby, the level of inconsistencies is further dependent on the participants' level of morality (McGregor, 2008), but also internal and social dilemmas that the green consumer faces. Hence, these elements are interrelated and define the neutralisation strategy the individual applies.

The major adjustments in the extended 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' (Figure 6) were made with regard to the behaviour resulting from a green attitude and green intention in the Christmas context. As the research showed, two opposing behaviours occur despite the initial green attitude and intention. This can be traced back to various influential factors, both internal and external. The presented contradiction between green behaviour and behaviour during Christmas further illustrates the attitude-behaviour gap with which green consumers must cope. It is further zoomed in on this specific part of the model with the help of the second model, the 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' (Figure 7), which was also extended based on the research findings.
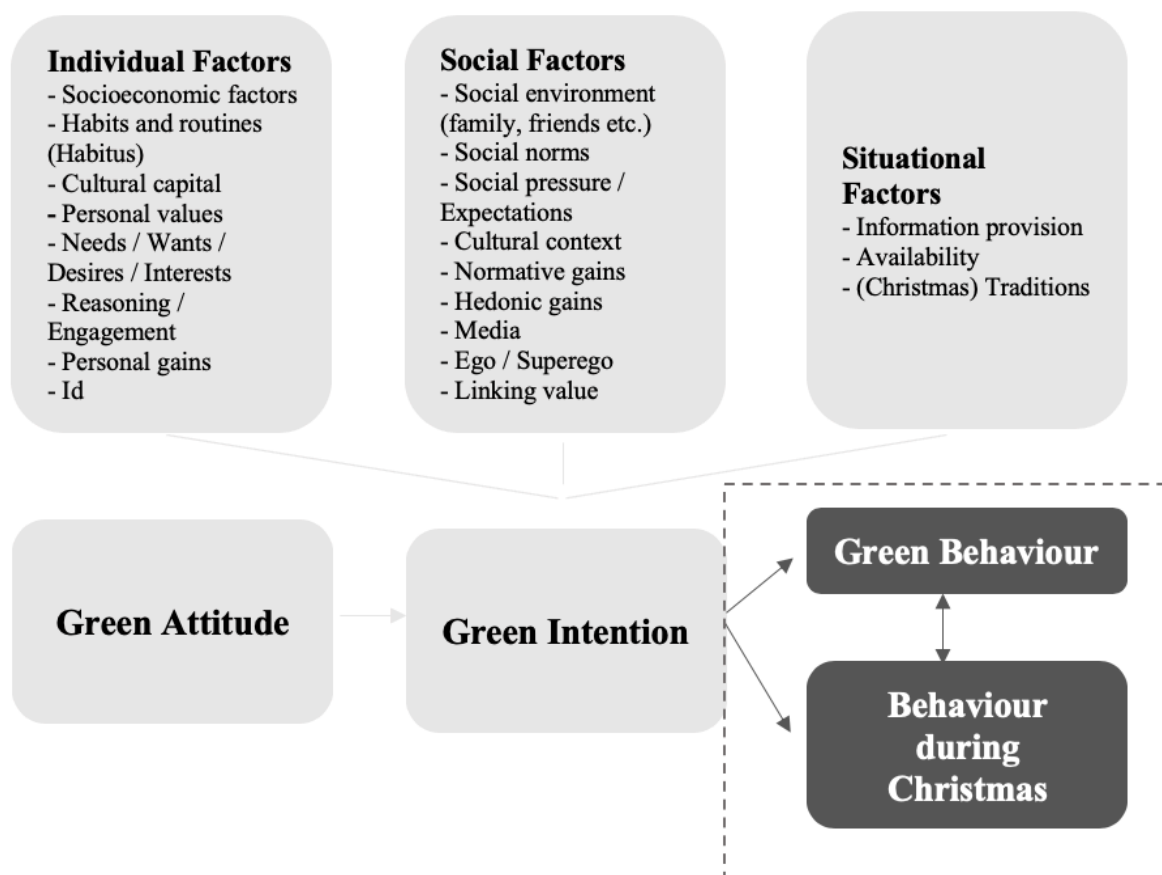

Individual Factors
- Socioeconomic factors
- Habits and routines (Habitus)
- Cultural capital
- Personal values
- Needs / Wants / Desires / Interests
- Reasoning / Engagement
- Personal gains
- Id

Social Factors
- Social environment (family, friends etc.)
- Social norms
- Social pressure / Expectations
- Cultural context
- Normative gains
- Hedonic gains
- Media
- Ego / Superego
- Linking value

Situational Factors
- Information provision
- Availability
- (Christmas) Traditions

Green Attitude → **Green Intention** → **Green Behaviour** ↕ **Behaviour during Christmas**

Figure 6: Extended 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption'

The focus of the extended 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' (Figure 7) is on the upper area, marked in dark grey. This is where the main findings of this research lie and what finally led to the answer of the sub-questions and research question. At least two types of identities, including underlying identity facets, have been identified with the green consumer and Christmas identity. As both identity types are not compatible with one another, the consumers conduct an internal dialogue that leads to the actual attitude-behaviour gap. Due to the incompatibility of both identities, this involuntarily results in inconsistencies if the consumer possesses a low level of morality. Hereby, the inconsistencies can be considered as deviating behaviour from the green consumer identity perspective. Concerning the social dilemma, green consumers are confronted with ambiguous values and expectations emerging from different settings, but also with dubious impression management. Within the internal dilemma, the consumers develop emotions such as guilt, shame, rationalising or acceptance, with which they cope through neutralisation strategies. An outstanding neutralisation strategy within this setting, and which was identified in the course of this research, is tradition as a neutralisation strategy.
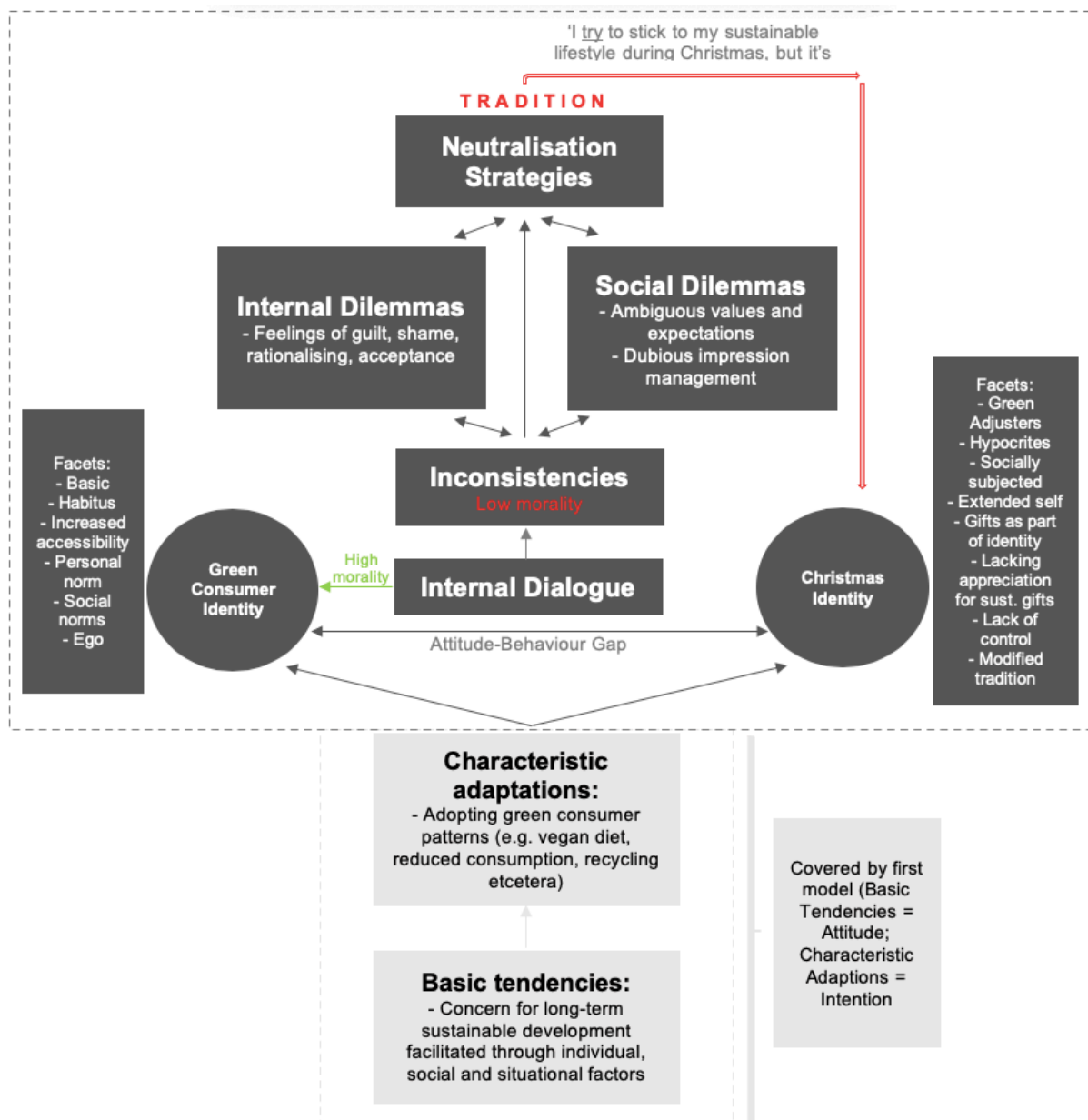

Figure 7: Extended 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness'

6. Conclusion

The final chapter presents the conclusion, which includes a summary of the main findings and the final answer to the research question. Furthermore, empirical and theoretical contributions will be named. Lastly, the limitations of the research are stated and recommendations for future research are proposed.

This research was executed with the intent to explore the role of a sustainable lifestyle for a green consumer during a specific setting, in this case Christmas. As stated in the beginning, the purpose of the research was to understand the behaviour of green consumers, as well as how they justify their behaviour and potential inconsistencies. Based on this, the following research question was formulated:

What is the role of a sustainable lifestyle during the Christmas season for individual green consumers' identities within different cultural contexts?

In order to be able to answer the research question and add value to the research, we established two supportive sub-questions:

1. *How do the green consumers cope with a (potential) attitude-behaviour gap?*
2. *What social and internal dilemmas do green consumers face during the Christmas season?*

Moreover, we made use of two models; the 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' and the 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness', which have been adjusted before the research with the assistance of the literature review. During the research process, these two models assisted to formulate and establish the interview questions and to structure and cluster the raw data we assembled. In the end, we extended the models with new insights from the research, which was explained in the chapter before. This research was mainly focusing on the micro perspective, which emphasises individuals, in this case individual green consumers. However, the macro-level was as well involved as we explored the environment of the participants, which, in this case, refers to external influences such as the family, friends, traditions and beliefs, what constituted very important elements of this study and its outcome.

During the interviews, the participants were asked how they behave all year, regarding a sustainable lifestyle, and how they behave when being home for Christmas. It turned out that almost all participants behave inconsistently, which results in facing internal and social dilemmas. When the participants were asked why they think they behave inconsistently, neutralisation strategies were used to justify the misbehaviour. Interestingly, none of the participants mentioned that they are consciously thinking about sustainability or being sustainable during Christmas, only after we had asked them about it they commented on it. Thus, it can be said that even though the participants try to act sustainably all year, during Christmas sustainability seems to be lackadaisical. The results emphasised that once respondents are surrounded by other green consumers, they are behaving more consistently and stick to their green lifestyles. Consequently, it can be said that the setting is of significance and influences one's behaviour. Due to the fact that the individuals are easily able to adjust their behaviour to the setting, it indicates that their (green) identities are rather unstable and adaptable.

After all, no major differences were found between the Swedish and British participants, however, it can be stated that the Brits face more barriers to be green and that the Swedes behave green almost naturally due to the Swedish society and its norms. Nonetheless, no matter the nationality, both parties showed inconsistencies.

We established three categories which describe the significance of the role of a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas for the individual green consumer from low to high. Based on the interviews, each participant was allocated to one of those three. The allocation depended on the micro- and macro-level, as well as the stability level of one's identity. The more stable someone's identity is, the more likely the individual will be committed to being sustainable all year, including Christmas. The most identified role amongst the participants was 'I try to stick to a sustainable lifestyle during Christmas'.

Concluding it can be said that the sustainable lifestyle has a significant role in the everyday lives of almost all respondents, however, during this specific setting, Christmas traditions outweigh the thought and the act of being sustainable, and other factors seem to be more important such as the family and traditions. Hence, it can be said that the role of a sustainable lifestyle turns into a disregarded role during Christmas and encourages the development of different identity types and corresponding facets.

6.1 Empirical and Theoretical Contributions

Empirical Contributions
Through this research, we revealed that self-declared green consumers tend to behave inconsistently during a specific setting due to external and internal factors. The respondents were asked to tell us about their everyday lives and Christmas, with the focus on sustainability. In addition, they were asked about potential barriers people face when wanting to be green. Companies could benefit from this valuable insight because once a company knows the struggles and demands of its potential customers, campaigns, products and services can be adjusted and established to meet those. This is especially the case since Millennials are and will demand products with sustainable credentials and companies will need to adapt to it. These days, Millennials represent the largest demographic workforce, meaning that their spending power increases constantly, and companies should be knowledgeable about potential customers (Price, 2018). The participants said if, for instance, recyclable wrapping paper, more Christmas meat alternatives or ethical, affordable gifts were more accessible and available, they would more likely make use of it and replace unsustainable elements of Christmas with sustainable ones.

Furthermore, this research provides a great insight into the behavioural patterns of green consumers, which could be a great foundation for further research for behavioural and social science.

Theoretical Contributions
As it was explained throughout the thesis, we made use of two models, which have been adjusted before and extended after the research. As a result of this study, we added another layer to the 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' by Terlau and Hirsch (2015) in order to compare all year and Christmas. Furthermore, we extended the 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' by Puchalska-Wasyl and Oles (2013) by adding inconsistencies, internal and social dilemmas and the proposed neutralisation strategies.

Besides, the work of Bourdieu (1986) shows how the habitus influences one's behaviour. Our findings suggest similar conclusions in terms of the habitus of individuals, further we argue that habitus is an important element when understanding the behaviour of consumers. In the course of this research, we discovered that the participants showed the possibility and capability to have different types of habitus depending on the setting. For example, the Swedish participants claimed that being and behaving green is something that is anchored in the way they have been raised in Sweden, it comes almost naturally. However, the same can be said about Christmas. It is a custom how families celebrate Christmas, it has always been, for instance, with gifts, a Christmas tree and the typical food, which we argue can as well be categorised as a habitus. Consequently, it could be assumed that Christmas is a setting for green consumers where these two kinds of habitus clash and cause internal and social dilemmas.

Also, Arnould and Thompson (2018) argue in consumer culture theory that consumers create their identity through consuming, interestingly the participants do the opposite. Almost all participants agreed that they do not like to consume and if so, second-hand, which results in creating an identity through avoiding consumption. We used the CCT perspective as a foundation for this research in order to understand why consumers behave the way they do. During the research, we realised that the participants have several identities, which they adjust depending on the situation, like a chameleon, which indicates a rather unstable identity. It can be stated that the constant of the identity project depends on the coherence of the habitus.

In addition, this thesis enhances existing knowledge on the importance of gift-giving for people. Belk (1988) has conducted several pieces of research about this topic and concluding it can be said that he argues that gift-giving shows meaning and strengthens relationships, which was confirmed by the respondents. However, we identified differences and that the importance of gift-giving cannot be generalised, it rather depends on the context. This research has shown that the British participants align with what Belk (1988) said, but the Swedes do not attach that much importance to gift-giving.

Moreover, the findings confirmed and supported the results provided by Farbotko and Head (2013), which indicate that green consumers are not automatically green givers. The participants excused their behaviour through the argument that they would not give green gifts since the recipients would not appreciate it, thus it would be a waste of financial resources. However, this research adds new insights to the research of Farbotko and Head (2013), whereas the participants justified their missing interest in giving green gifts because of the little availability and the high prices for ethical gifts.

Lastly, we introduced six neutralisation techniques in the literature review, which are used by consumers when they show an inconsistent behaviour. The research findings have extended those, and we would like to propose to add another one. During the research, it became apparent that many respondents mentioned the significance of traditions and their families as justification for their inconsistent behaviour.

6.2 Limitations

The following paragraphs state the limitations which were faced during the research. Due to the current (2020) Corona crisis, there were some difficulties with finding potential respondents, which has led to an apportionment of participants. We planned to be present in Lund (Sweden) to get in contact with Swedish participants, as well as Brits who are currently living and studying in Lund. However, due to unexpected consequences of the Corona crisis, we were not able to be in Sweden during the research, therefore, we contacted the participants solely online and held the interviews by way of online tools such as Skype. We made use of snowball sampling, which consequently led to the fact that all of the respondents belong to the same age group, Millennials, but young Millennials (22-27 years old), which can be seen as a limitation. Due to the difficulties with finding participants, especially British respondents, an unequal number of participants can be found, as illustrated below. However, this has not compromised the research quality since the saturation level was reached for both parties equally.

- *thirteen* Swedish participants (**eight** female and **five** male)
- *six*　British participants (**five** female and **one** male)

Nonetheless, we transformed a challenge into an opportunity. Since the interviews were held via Skype, we felt that the respondents were more open and honest during the interviews due to the added level of anonymity and distance, than they might have been during in person interviews. Furthermore, we think talking to British participants who still live in England, instead of Britons who live in Sweden, has added value to the research since there are distinct differences in the way of living in Sweden and England, for instance, the availability and affordability of green choices. Lastly, it is important to mention that due to the small size of the samples and the fact that we conducted qualitative research, our research findings cannot be used to generalise the attitude and behaviour of an entire nation.

6.3 Future Research

During this research, especially after conducting and analysing the data, we noticed interesting suggestions for future research. First of all, since this study mainly focused on young Millennials, it could be of interest comparing the younger and older sub-generation of the Millennials. Another comparison could be made concerning Millennials with children and the ones without because during the research it became present that some of the younger Millennials are living a sustainable lifestyle now, however, when they were asked about future Christmas celebrations once having children, they would not act as sustainably as they do now. Moreover, the majority of the Swedish participants have studied environmental engineering, which has impacted them a lot and led to a more sustainable lifestyle. For future research, we recommend a direct comparison between people who have studied, for instance environmental engineering, and people who have not, to measure the extent of education as an external factor on the attitude and behaviour. Overall, we believe that with qualitative analysis there is a lot of room for "Subgroup Analysis" (gender, age group, nationality, salary group, and so on...).

Another interesting aspect is the origin of the respondents and the place of residence. Even though some cultural differences were spotted during the research, they were not major. Thus, we recommend doing the same research, however, with e.g. Americans and Swedes since there is clearly a big contrast regarding their lifestyles and consumption patterns. Another possibility would be comparing the USA to England since both countries are known for their extensive Christmas celebrations. In addition to that, we talked to a Swedish respondent who moved to the USA, which has clearly changed his/her lifestyle. This is why we propose to not just do a country comparison but for instance interview Swedish citizens who moved abroad and how this might impact their lifestyles and green identities.

Lastly, a different approach to conducting this study can be recommended. We thought it could be interesting to choose participants before the Christmas season and to give them a diary and the task to keep a Christmas diary, where they can explain how they feel, what they do and take pictures of their celebrations such as the Christmas tree, food and gifts. Afterwards, this data could be analysed and in-depth profiles of the green consumers during Christmas could be established. Finally, in case this study will be repeated, it could also be beneficial to conduct the interviews either shortly before or after Christmas to see if respondents share similar or different answers based on the timing of the interview.

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Appendix

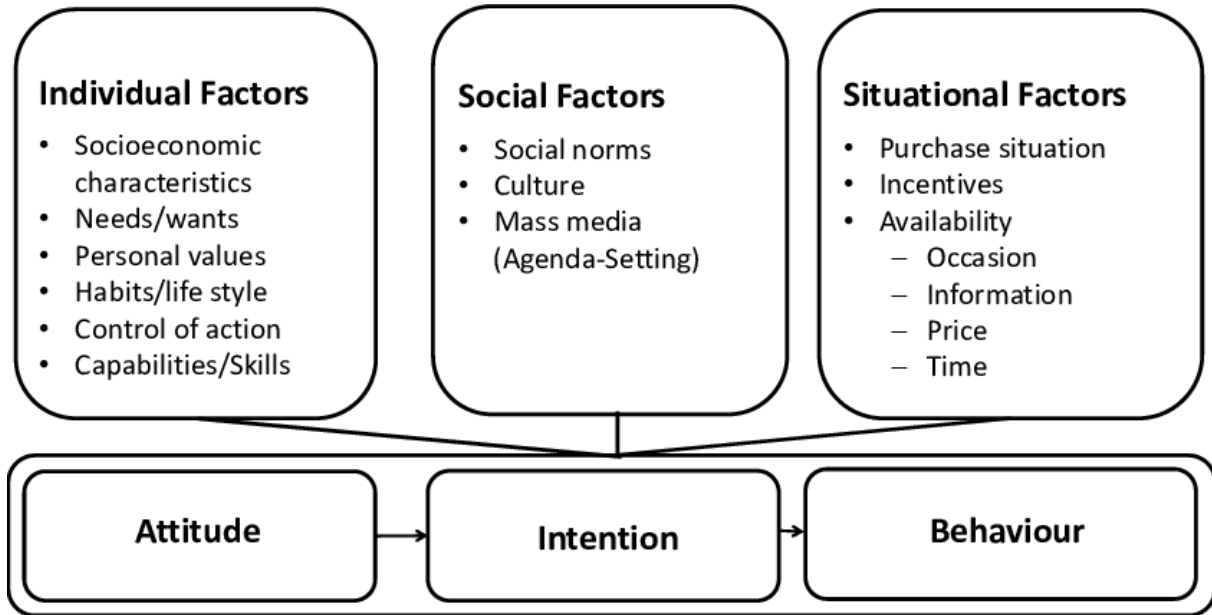## Appendix 1: Original Models from Conceptual Framework

Figure 8: 'Decision-Making Model of Sustainable Consumption' (Terlau & Hirsch, 2015), which is based on Balderjahn (2013), Carrington et al. (2010) and Vermeier and Verbeke (2006)
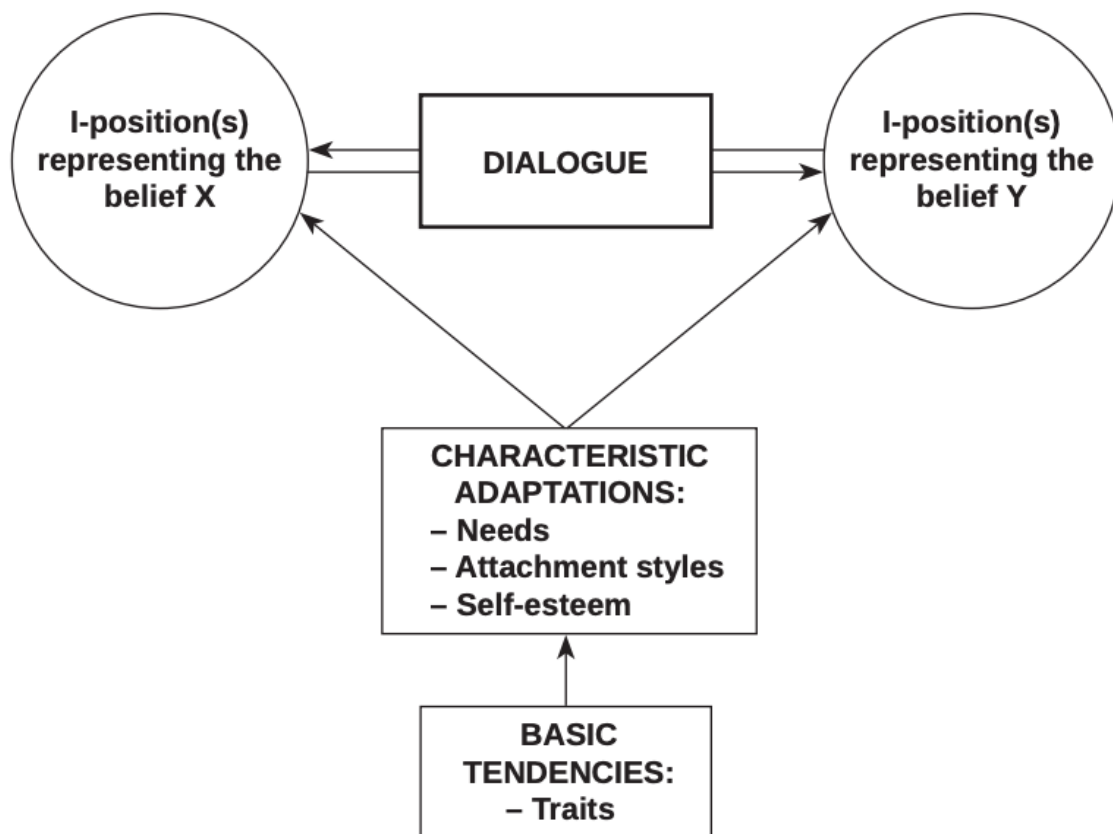

Figure 9: 'Dialogical Model of Doubtfulness' (Puchalska-Wasyl & Oles, 2013)

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

The interview questions were based on Literature Review (Ch. 2), conceptual framework (Ch. 2.5) and sub-questions (Ch. 1.3), since they are interrelated, as previously mentioned. The following list of interview questions is structured according to this. The interview questions are mainly divided into attitude, intention and set of beliefs from both the perspective of the green consumer identity and the Christmas setting. Behaviours are not highlighted as a special colour since they were interpreted from attitude, intention and what the participants actually claimed to do, the same goes for the internal dialogue and inconsistencies.

Table 3: Interview questions

ATTITUDE towards green consumer identity
o Do you live a sustainable life?
o Why have you changed your lifestyle?
o When have you changed your lifestyle?
o Why did you decide to adopt a sustainable lifestyle?
o Are brand in general important to you when consuming?
o How would you define the lifestyle of your friends?
o How would you describe the lifestyle of your family?
o Is your family (parents, siblings) open for change?
o Do you feel that you have to stick to Christmas traditions due to your social environment?
o Do you feel pressure to consume due advertising, discounts, traditions etc.?
o Does your family have a sustainable lifestyle?
o Do you feel social pressure to be green?
o Do you feel social pressure to always have more and the newest things?
o Do you think people try to be green, but external factors have a bigger impact and hinder them?
General INTENTIONS
o What are you doing to be sustainable?
o Do you buy second-hand clothes?
o Are you vegan/vegetarian?
o Do you buy sustainable brands?
o Where are you going shopping?
o Where do you buy groceries?
o How many times per month are you going shopping (clothes etc.)?
o Do you own a car? Is it important for you to own a car, a certain brand?
o How do you picture the future?

ATTITUDE towards Christmas traditions
o How does your family celebrate Christmas?
o How many gifts do you usually receive and give?
o How many presents did you receive last Christmas?
o How many presents have you given last Christmas?
o What are Christmas traditions and rituals in your country?
o What cannot be missing at Christmas?
o What did you eat last Christmas?
o Imagine it is the 10th of December, what would be your biggest wish for Christmas?
o What is your favourite gift you received last Christmas?
o What is your favourite gift you gave away last Christmas?
Christmas INTENTIONS
o Are you consistent with being sustainable when home for Christmas?
o Which sustainable practices do you practice during Christmas?
o Since you live sustainable, what is your opinion towards consumption and Christmas?
o Which elements of Christmas traditions do you think are rather unsustainable?
o Do you give ethical presents?
o Do you have a real tree or plastic tree?
o How do you purchase Christmas gifts?
o When do you start purchasing gifts?
o Where do you buy gifts? (online or in shops)
Sets of beliefs: Lifestyle of green consumer vs. following Christmas traditions
- What does 'being sustainable' mean to you?
- What does celebrating Christmas mean to you?
Part of the result of our research following from the previous categories and the interview questions

Appendix 3: Thesis Participants

Table 4: Thesis participants

Nr.	Nationality	Gender
1	Swedish	Female
2	Swedish	Female
3	Swedish	Female
4	Swedish	Female
5	Swedish	Female
6	Swedish	Female
7	Swedish	Female
8	British	Male
9	Swedish	Female
10	British	Female
11	British	Female
12	Swedish	Male
13	Swedish	Male
14	British	Female
15	Swedish	Male
16	Swedish	Male
17	Swedish	Male
18	British	Female
19	British	Female

Appendix 4: Coding Technique

The following shows the color system we used when coding the interviews. In order to get an overview of the raw data we used the different colors to highlight separate parts of the interviews.

I do not care about sustainable consumption during Christmas
I stick to sustainable consumption during Christmas
I try to stick to sustainable consumption during Christmas, though it is difficult
Attitude (year)
Intention (year)
Behaviour (year)
Attitude (Christmas)
Intention (Christmas)
Behaviour (Christmas)
1st set of beliefs: green consumer identity
2nd set of beliefs following Christmas traditions dialogue
Inconsistencies/Dilemma
Influences (ext. factors)

Appendix 5: Messages to Potential Respondents

First message to potential respondents
Hello,
We are two Master students in International Marketing and Brand Management. In the course for our Master thesis at Lund University, Sweden, we are researching Christmas traditions in different cultural contexts among Millennials from England and Sweden.

We are currently looking for Swedish and British Millennials (born between 1980-2000), who have a self-defined sustainable lifestyle (long-term interest in contributing to sustainable development such as recycling, zero-waste, second-hand clothing, vegetarian/vegan diet).

If you think you are fitting the description or you know others who do, we would appreciate your or your friends' valuable contribution to our research project. The interviews will be held via Skype and will take approximately 30 minutes. Of course, all data will be confidential.

Please feel free to share this note with others and contact us.
Thank you.

Second message to potential respondents
Hello,
Thank you for taking the time and talking to us … We wanted to ask if it is possible for you to look for two pictures from last Christmas, one which shows your Christmas tree during Christmas eve/morning and one from your favourite Christmas gift. Since we compare two nationalities, Swedes and Brits, we think comparing pictures and settings could be valuable to our research. The pictures are treated confidential.

We are looking forward to talking to you.