Journal of Consumer Ethics

JCE – Stumbling into the light

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Welcome to the third issue of JCE. Our first issue was themed around classic texts in ethical consumption. Our second, a special issue on gender, was a triumphant thirteen articles long, and seemed to reflect a pent-up demand to speak on the subject. This third issue is the first we have tried with no theme at all – just an attempt to capture some of what is going on in ethical consumption generally. Although it is short, it is the first whose contents are making a general statement about the space we are trying to occupy, and this remains an open question.

In this issue

Our first article uses ethical consumption ideas as a lens to focus on the history of ivory consumption – from Roman furniture to the modern day illegal trade in artifacts from an endangered species. Our second article looks at the difficulties of measuring ethical consumption using traditional marketing and economic ideas and tools.

We have a great review of a new book from the USA situating the recent political consumption campaigns against Trump in the country's long history of consumer activism. And we have an extract from another book focussed on business ethics but which also identifies and discusses how changing consumer desires are driving new ideas around purpose in global business.

Our news section, as well as looking at some conferences and calls for papers, keeps us up to date with ethical consumer research around the world. We learn about studies from China, Romania, India and Saudi Arabia as well as about a mobile phone app project in Spain.

Finally we have a 'practitioner paper' from Heather Webb at Ethical Consumer on the state of reporting by companies on modern slavery in their supply chains, and what this means for consumers.

A valuable perspective

So although the formal reviewed articles are sparse this time, there is something about the combination of themes here that gives a glimpse of what the JCE might be able to achieve. Where else could you find political consumption, sustainable consumption, business ethics and practitioner campaigning discussed in the same place? There is unlikely to be anyone coming to this issue who does not learn at least a couple of new things.

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sustainable consumption, business ethics and practitioner campaigning discussed in the same place? There is unlikely to be anyone coming to this issue who does not learn at least a couple of new things.

There are already some excellent journals on sustainable consumption, consumer behaviour and business ethics – as well as an increasing number of special issues in this area – but none are trying to carve out a space with the particular perspective that the notion of consumer ethics brings.

Whether this perspective is significant enough to generate real cross-fertilisation of ideas and insight in the long term remains to be seen. It has certainly developed traction and a life of its own outside academia in more general discourse.

Resource issues

The limited size of this journal is also a product of its currently slightly under-resourced state. It is being produced as a side project within the Ethical Consumer Research Association machine and, as such, is at the mercy of whatever other demands are blowing through the organisation at the time. We had hoped to identify some independent funding for it by about now and may also have underestimated the work required to persuade contributors of its value at this early stage. We are keeping up with telling the wider audience reading Ethical Consumer magazine about the articles appearing in each Journal issue though.

And future issues

None of this is insoluable. Our next two issues will be special issues. The first, due in October, will be on Food and the ethical consumer and will be edited by Professor Carrigan, now at Keele University. In 2019 (Vol 3 Issue 1) we are planning a special issue edited by Professor William Young, linked to a conference at Leeds University on Sustainable Consumption in September. More details about the call for papers appear in the news section on page 49.

The next general un-themed issue (Vol 3 Issue 2) is not due until the second half of 2019, and we have plans to prepare better for it and to generate some more resources. Now that we are learning more about how long this type of publishing takes, we are not reticent about talking about dates already. April 30th 2019 will be the deadline for first drafts for the unthemed issue. Do get in touch to discuss ideas or ask questions for the next step in our exciting journey.

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Elephant Ivory and the Temporalities of Consumer Ethics

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Abstract

Consumer ethics have temporal dimensions. Practices once considered quite normal, even commendable have later become morally questionable. Consumption deemed ethical today might be judged defective in the future. This article investigates two temporalities: the historical contexts of past ethical norms and some of the factors driving ethical change over time. A brief account of elephant ivory consumption from the ancient world to the early twenty-first century serves as a case study for better understanding these ethical temporalities.

Keywords: consumer ethics, ethical consumption, elephant ivory

Introduction

From the point of view of the present, the morality of past consumption can appear quite dreadful. Take the treatment of other species. Many ethical consumers in the twenty-first century are repulsed by how humans for their own thrills and amusement or for the sake of fashionable adornment have wantonly slaughtered countless animals, and have tortured many millions more for dubious scientific experiments and product testing (Haynes, 1983; Singer, 2009). Yet, applying contemporary moral standards to past behavior should be done with caution (Edmonds, 2013; Newholm, Newholm & Shaw, 2015). People lived under different circumstances than we do now and their particular social worlds shaped and constrained their choices as consumers. Human lives were shorter and more precarious and wild animal resources far more plentiful than in the present-day. While the most egregious human behaviors, such as purchasing and owning other human beings as slaves, have crossed ethical lines and been condemned for centuries, the treatment of animals has been less of an ethical concern.

Historical analysis has much to contribute to our understanding of consumer ethics. Past consumption practices and meanings occurred within complex normative structures determined by prevailing material culture, religious beliefs, secular superstitions, advertising appeals, fashion dictates, and a variety of other factors. By revisiting these previous contexts or 'synchronic temporalities', historical research provides insight into the multiple causalities that may influence consumer ethics (Sewell, 2005). Historical analysis also has a diachronic face. It recognizes that normative structures, while often exhibiting significant continuities over time, do change and are often transformed dramatically. Religious influences, for example, may wax and wane compared to other determinant features in the ethical environment, such as accrued scientific knowledge,

levels of economic development, and the pervasiveness of unbridled marketing and consumer culture. Though some work in consumer ethics has taken an historical approach (see, e.g., Lang & Gabriel, 2005; Newholm, Newholm & Shaw, 2015), most has been concerned with the immediate here and now and may be 'flawed by inadequate temporal assumptions' (Sewell, 2005: p.14).

This article seeks to demonstrate the value of temporal perspectives on consumer ethics through a brief historical account of the consumption of elephant ivory. In the early twenty-first century, the killing of African elephants for their ivory threatens the survival of the species in the wild (Chase *et al.*, 2016; Maisels *et al.*, 2013). Governments, international bodies, global civil organizations, and many concerned individuals feel morally obligated to protect these iconic animals and have been working to restrict trade in ivory while deploying social marketing campaigns to discourage consumer demand (Nellemann *et al.*, 2013). This ethical position is a relatively recent development that must contend with long-standing patterns of ivory consumption and accrued meaning often resistant to well-intentioned moral arguments. Without first establishing temporal contexts and a narrative chronology of ivory consumption, adequately identifying causal factors and successfully addressing the current crisis may be less likely.

Data sources and investigator position

The research draws from the substantial secondary literature on elephant ivory and from scrutiny of primary data sources including surviving artifacts, advertising ephemera, and period photographs. Art historians, museum curators, collectors, and dealers have been responsible for much of the writing on ivory objects made in the past. They have focused on describing items and their characteristics, how and where they were made, and who owned them. Very little primary historical evidence, such as diaries, letters, and other writing, has been found that directly reveals the state of mind of early ivory consumers. Visual inspection of ivory artifacts and their representations in advertising and photographs provide alternative methods for inferring past consumer motivations and ethical judgments. I have studied many images of ivory online and have visited museums, starting with the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in January 2016, with a mission to survey their collections for ivory objects. Artifacts on display may not be representative of the universe of original ivory objects made in various source cultures. High quality, luxury goods tend to be preserved and thus survive into the future better than do everyday objects and this may bias our view of the past (Witkowski & Jones, 2006: pp.74-75). Ivory deteriorates when buried where moisture is present and so much ancient ivory undoubtedly has been lost. Our material knowledge of these objects is thus based upon the ones entombed in dry climates or preserved by churches, the wealthy, and collectors.

Diligent investigators have documented the recent history of elephant ivory consumption through market surveys enumerating ivory items for sale in different countries and, when possible, recording the attitudes of vendors (Martin, 2000; Martin & Stiles, 2008; Martin & Vigne, 2015). Conducting primary consumer research with living ivory consumers is trying since informants may be unwilling to discuss their buying motives and activities openly and, even when they do, may not be entirely forthcoming. It can also be dangerous. On February 4, 2018, noted researcher Esmond Martin was stabbed to death in Kenya, possibly in retaliation for his clandestine penetration of ivory and rhino horn markets (Dixon, 2018). Additional evidence of the beliefs and motives of contemporary ivory consumers can be found in public written documents, such as

legal actions and editorials and letters to the editor in collectors' publications, and videos related to ivory trafficking available online (Grammaticas, 2014). The arguments of authors, whether committed activists dedicated to saving elephants or collectors and dealers defending the antiques market, need to be weighed carefully.

For the sake of ethical transparency, readers should know that I am a collector who owns, among a lot of other stuff, two revolvers made circa 1860 to 1875 and several older knives and swords, all of which have grips probably made from elephant or marine ivory (rather than bone). I did not purchase these objects for their ivory per se, but rather as antiques that happened to have ivory components. Researching elephant and other ivories, now and in the past, has instilled a more skeptical appreciation of museum pieces while imparting a negative valence to the substance as something I would want to own. As Greenwood (2010) so eloquently puts it, learning about the social and ecological consequences of one's consumption is a personal journey.

Early ivory consumption

Ivory is a beautiful, warm and creamy substance, sensuous to feel. It is flexible, but relatively durable and fairly easy to work with tools. Ivory comes from the teeth and tusks of large mammals, especially African and Indian elephants, but also from extinct mammoths and mastodons whose tusks have been preserved in arctic permafrost, and from walruses, narwhals, sperm whales, and hippopotamuses. Ivory has been obtained from hunting living animals, but also from scavenging the remains of dead ones. According to signage at the British Museum, researchers have determined that some of the walrus ivory used in the famous medieval Lewis Chessmen had been harvested from animals that already had died. The late nineteenth century book, *Billiards Simplified; or, How to Make Breaks*, claimed that in sourcing from Africa 'The natives discover great quantities in what are known as the elephant's burial-grounds' (Burroughes & Watts, 1889a: p.8). This assertion may have been wishful thinking and a moral rationalization rather than actual fact.

Until about the middle of the nineteenth century, ivory was a relatively rare and valuable material used mostly in luxury goods for domestic consumption by the wealthy and for public display by the powerful. Worked ivory has been found in prehistoric archaeological sites and the ancient Assyrians, Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans all carved it. Triumphal monuments show captives bringing tusks as tribute and archaeologists found ivory artifacts in Tutankhamen's tomb. Roman demand was insatiable:

'Ivory was used to decorate temples and palaces; carried in triumphal processions; and made into a vast range of luxury goods: thrones, chests, statues, chairs, beds, book-covers, tablets, boxes, birdcages, combs and brooches. Caesar rode in an ivory chariot; Seneca possessed 500 tripod tables with ivory legs; Caligula gave his horse an ivory stable. Consuls and magistrates adopted ivory for their insignia of office, their scepters and curule chairs and they sent inscriptions of their appointments to dignitaries and friends on ivory diptychs' (Meredith, 2001: p.26).

Searches for 'Roman ivory' on Google Images, Wikimedia Commons, Pinterest, and different museum websites reveal carvings of gladiators, satyrs, the goddess Aphrodite, and many other real and mythical characters. Roman and other ancient ivory artifacts carried religious, social status, and political meanings. Ivory also appeared figuratively. In the Hebrew Bible, the Song of Solomon conveyed images of ivory, and in Homer's Odyssey Penelope dreams of ivory gates. As early as the

twelfth century the 'ivory tower' trope became associated with the Virgin Mary, but in the nineteenth century its meaning shifted to secular aesthetics and then, in mid-twentieth century America, to academia as a frequently belittled site for disengagement from the cares of the real world (Osborne & Boström, 2001; Shapin, 2012).

Ivory was very popular in Byzantine and Medieval Christian devotional art, such as relief panels (diptychs and triptychs) illustrating Biblical stories and covers for illuminated manuscripts (Figure 1). Domestic uses in the Middle Ages and early modern period were limited to a few luxury goods for the upper classes including pins, combs, mirror cases, writing tablets, knife handles, sundials, dice, draughts, and chess pieces (British Museum 2018). According to online and onsite descriptions, museums have not always established whether this ivory came from elephants or some other large mammals. Northern Europeans possessed little knowledge about elephants, but in 1255 Henry III of England received one as a gift from Louis IX of France and kept it in the Tower of London where it attracted much curious attention (Osborne & Boström, 2001). In the eighteenth century watercolor on ivory tusks or whalebone became a standard medium for portrait miniatures in England and America and remained popular into the nineteenth century until superseded by faster and less expensive photography in the 1840s. These personal images, painted on very thin discs, provided a connection with absent or deceased loved ones (Frank, 2000). Mason (2014) estimates that only the top two to four percent of Americans could afford these mementos.

In addition to its uses in the West, ivory sourced from both African and Indian elephants lent itself to the intricate geometrical patterns and Arabic inscriptions found in Islamic Art. India and Sri Lanka also have had long traditions of ivory
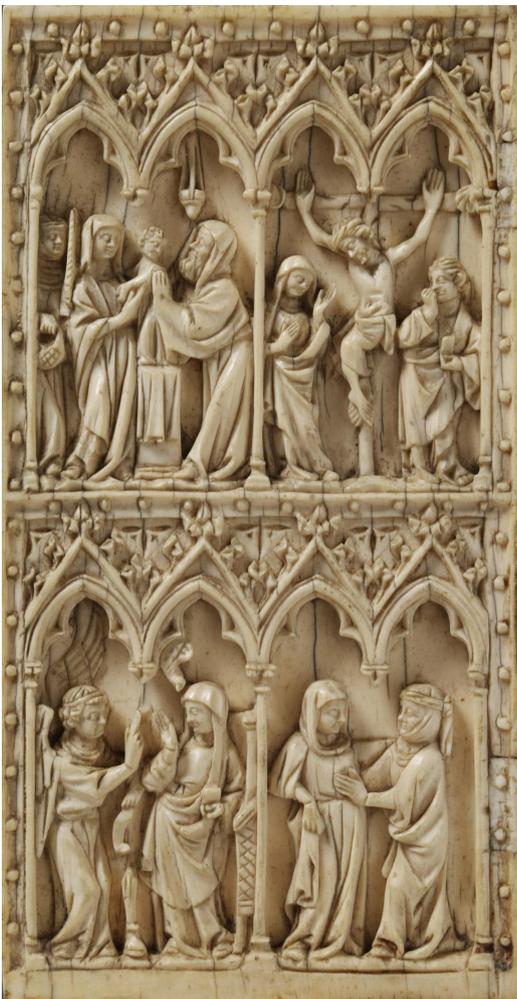
Figure 1. Ivory diptych (14x7.9cm) carved with scenes from the life of Christ, probably France ca. 1350-1375. Source: Victoria and Albert Museum A.18&A-1940.

carving with Murshidabad in West Bengal a primary region for carving and with other centers in Mysore and Tamil Nadu in South India, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan in the north, and Kandy in Sri Lanka. Ivory was not a prestigious material in ancient China, but did lend itself to domestic utensils, such as combs, and to decorative art. Until the seventeenth century, the Japanese rarely used it, but then began to apply it to netsukes (fasteners used with obi sashes) and other miniature sculptures (Lane, 2015). Around 1600, workshops in the Philippines and China started mass-producing religious sculptures and portable art made from imported African Elephant ivory. Spanish and Portuguese traders purchased these objects for re-export to Mexico, Peru, and Europe (Lane, 2015).

Well before the current crisis, and even before the longer-term decline that got under way in the 1800s, humans had driven populations of elephants and, even entire elephant species, into extinction. Prehistoric hunters contributed to the disappearance of mammoths and mastodons in North America, Europe, and Asia some 10,000 years ago. By 500 BCE the Asian elephant herds in Syria had been eliminated (Brown, 2008). The Romans killed so many elephants for sport in the morning animal hunts (*Venationes*) of the Roman games that they drove North African populations to near extinction (Meredith, 2001; Minowa & Witkowski, 2012). In 77 CE Pliny (the Elder) wrote, 'An ample supply of ivory is now rarely obtained except from India, the demands of luxury having exhausted all of them in our part of the world' (cited in Meredith 2001: p.27). The rare Chinese elephant, known only from art and archaeological research, was probably a subspecies of the mammoth, but possibly a unique species. It went extinct by 100 BCE.

Many of the world's cultures have shown respect for elephants in their literatures, visual arts, and sculptural objects. Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists worship the elephant headed god, Ganesha. Nevertheless, no evidence from this very long period has been located to indicate our ancestors entertained the notion that they should take the interest of living elephants. Like antlers and skins from deer and bison, or horn and leather from cattle and sheep, ivory apparently was just another material, albeit a more precious one.

Ivory consumption 1800 to 2000

By the middle of the nineteenth century Egyptian and Arab traders were exploiting elephant populations in East Africa (Beachey, 1967), while southern Africa was becoming increasingly accessible to sport and market hunters who now wielded large bore percussion rifles soon to be superseded by even more powerful repeating breech-loaders using high-power cartridges (Meredith, 2001). In the years from 1780 to 1830, the price of ivory had increased tenfold and fortunes could be made. The supply of ivory began to increase reaching 1000 tons a year (65,000 elephants) by the late nineteenth century (Burroughes & Watts, 1889a; Meredith, 2001). Great quantities of ivory were shipped to Europe, India, China, and Japan for manufacturing to serve both domestic and export markets. Factories in Aberdeen in Scotland, and London and Sheffield in England made ivory combs, handles for cutlery, and billiard balls. Burroughes & Watts (1889a: pp.7-8) reported that in 1888 Britain alone imported 60,000 tusks. Ivory no longer was reserved for elite luxury goods. It became another raw material for the industrialized production of goods targeting middle-class markets. Prices for ivory billiard ball sets ranged from £2.5s to £3.10s (Burroughes & Watts, 1889b) or £274.86 to £427.56 in 2017 currency (Bank of England, 2018).

In the United States the Connecticut towns of Deep River and Ivoryton became the center of the industry. In the early

1800s new machinery had lowered the cost of combs made from ivory and by the 1840s the growing popularity of sheet music and pianos meant burgeoning demand for ivory keys. One 75-pound adult tusk could produce enough thin veneers to cover the keys of 45 pianos. The largest firms were Pratt, Read & Company and Comstock, Cheney & Company. Just one company, Comstock, Cheney & Company, milled an estimated 100,000 tusks before 1929 (Malcarne & Milkofsky, 2015). The colloquial expression for piano playing – 'tickle the ivories' – seems to have originated in early twentieth century America. Meanwhile, the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, formed in 1884, manufactured billiard tables and sold sets of ivory billiard balls like the ones in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Ivory billiard balls manufactured by the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company. The set sold for $800 in May 2013 by Rich Penn Auctions, Waterloo, Iowa. Source: Photo courtesy of live auctioneers.

Americans were as bloody minded as other people in their exploitation of animal resources. They sent the passenger pigeon and Carolina parakeet to extinction and greatly endangered wolves, grizzly bears, and the bison (not to mention American Indians). By the end of the 1800s, big game hunting on African safaris had become an acceptable, even somewhat romantic endeavor epitomized by the character Allan Quatermain in the popular 1885 novel, *King Solomon's Mines,* by H. Rider Haggard. U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt was an archetypical 'great white hunter'. After leaving office, he organized the 1909-1910 Smithsonian-Roosevelt African Expedition where he and his son Kermit killed over 500 animals including eleven elephants (see Figure 3) (Meredith, 2001). This enterprise had scientific overtones rather than commercial objectives. The animal skins were eventually mounted and displayed at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington and the American Museum of Natural History in New York, with duplicates distributed to other museums across the U.S. to build their collections of animal specimens.

Indicative of shifting public opinion, newspaper writers and cartoonists jeered Roosevelt's pretensions (Coutu, 2015; Shaw, 1910). In response to questions about the large number of animals slaughtered, Roosevelt said: 'I can be condemned

only if the existence of the National Museum, the American Museum of Natural History, and all similar zoological institutions are to be condemned' (O'Toole, 2005: p.494). True enough, museums all over the world eagerly purchased animal specimens for their collections (Coutu, 2015). Despite his bloody mindedness, Roosevelt was also an ardent and forward thinking conservationist who established the U.S. Forest Service and numerous national parks, monuments, forests, and bird and game reserves.
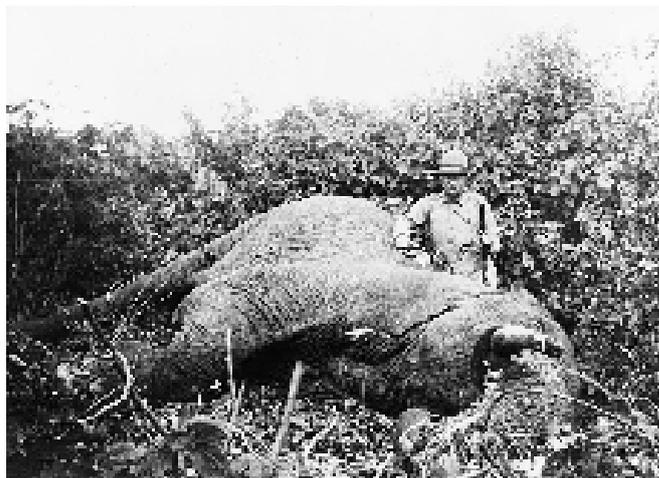
Figure 3. Theodore Roosevelt on African safari, 1909. Source: U.S. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

Historically, some killing of elephants by Africans had been for food or the result of competition over habitat (Meredith, 2001). Before1800, the ivory market was small and elephant hunting perilous. The rise in hunting and ivory trading in the nineteenth century did convey benefits. Certainly consumers should have been pleased to own ivory goods if they could afford them. And the trade supported hunters, artisans, and various middlemen. As cruel as was, the treatment of elephants had not been any worse than that inflicted upon other wild animal species with market value, such as whales for their oil, beavers and bison for their pelts, and exotic birds for their plumage. Captive elephants in zoos, circuses, and work camps were handled reasonably well at times, but perhaps more often subjected to cruel exploitation and mistreatment.

On the other hand, many consumers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may have been exposed to an incipient animal rights discourse. For centuries numerous philosophers including John Locke (1632-1704), Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), and Charles Darwin (1809-1882) had all argued, albeit from different perspectives, for the humane treatment of animals. Animal protection legislation was enacted in Britain, France, and the U.S. in the 1800s, while Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals were launched in England (1824), Ulster (1836), Scotland (1839), Dublin (1840), the U.S. (1866), and New Zealand (1882). British bird lovers railed against using feathers in millinery for over fifty years before the passage of the Plumage Act in 1921 (Haynes, 1983).

A glimpse into what some people in the Victorian era may have thought about the ivory trade is illustrated in Figure 4, which depicts a cover circa 1865 for the Julius Pratt & Co. catalogue. Four separate panels show, starting in the upper left, an Indian elephant saddled up with an elaborate Howdah, a very large and impressive horned bull with a human minder, a buff

African man in skivvies holding a spear in his right hand and cradling an elephant tusk with his left, and an upper middle class American woman, wearing a full white dress and peacefully knitting in her parlor across from an impressive, ivory-keyed, square grand piano. The tranquility of these scenes belied the reality in Africa at a time when tribal people were being conscripted into forced labor to move tusks long distances from the interior uplands to the Indian Ocean coast and Zanzibar where both the ivory and slaves were sold (Meredith, 2001).

'Missionaries from Europe, in Africa to spread Christianity, left vivid accounts of the suffering of ivory's human porters. Though precise figures are not available, David Livingstone, the famous Scottish physician and clergyman who spent decades in Africa, violently opposed the use of enslaved workers and is said to have estimated that five Africans died for every tusk moved to the coast for export. The American Civil War created some pressure to end slavery in Africa, but it continued there through 1897' (Malcarne & Milkofsky, 2015).

Thus, although they may not have known it, or cared even if they had, ivory consumers, dealers, and manufacturers in the late nineteenth century were complicit in the brutal enslavement and decimation of African people (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Cover for Julius Pratt & Co. catalogue, ca. 1865. Source: Ivoryton Library Association and the Treasures of Connecticut Libraries.

Ironically, Procter & Gamble registered the 'Ivory' trademark in 1879 to signify the purity of its new soap product. Harley Procter, the founder's son, created the name, allegedly inspired by Psalms 45:8 in the King James Bible: 'All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad' (P&G, 2018).

By the early twentieth century, a conservation ethos was emerging and attitudes toward animals began to shift (Coutu, 2015). Ivory trading had been at the center of Joseph Conrad's powerful 1899 novel, *The Heart of Darkness,* which exposed the horrors of colonialism (Hochschild, 1999). In 1900, colonial powers drew up the Convention for the Preservation of Wild

Figure 5. (Top) African slaves in chains, ca.1890s. (Middle) Ivory caravan fording stream near border of Belgian Congo, ca. 1908. (Bottom) Zanzibar natives and two American buyers sitting on approximately 50 recently harvested ivory tusks, ca. 1890-1910. Source: Ivoryton Library Association and the Treasures of Connecticut Libraries.

Animals, Birds, and Fish in Africa, and, in 1933, the Agreement for the Protection of the Fauna and Flora of Africa. These measures, along with the establishment of national parks and game preserves, restricted hunting to only those who could afford licenses (i.e. white Europeans), which provided ample revenues, but also marginalized indigenous hunters (Coutu, 2015). Still, a change in ethical norms regarding animal stewardship was taking place.

Equally important, new materials and new consumption patterns challenged ivory in different applications. Bakelite, an early plastic invented in 1907, started replacing ivory in billiard balls within just a few years and in the 1920s became very popular in jewelry. Piano production in the U.S. peaked in 1910. Subsequently, consumers turned to gramophones and radio and, increasingly, left home to go out to the movies or drive their automobiles. During the Great Depression the demand for pianos plummeted and cheaper plastics began to supplant ivory piano keys. The last shipment of ivory to Ivoryton was in 1954 (Malcarne & Milkofsky, 2015). However, the production of ivory souvenirs continued in Asia after World War II and American tourists and military brought home many of these objects (Mason, 2014; Meredith, 2001).

Ivory consumption in the twenty-first century

Since 2000, overall consumption of raw or newly worked ivory appears to have declined in the traditional markets of Europe, North America, and Japan, but has burgeoned in China (Martin & Vigne, 2015; Nellemann *et al.*, 2013). Accordingly, this section first investigates China and Hong Kong, and then turns to recent consumption trends in Japan and the United States.

China has had an 1800-year history with ivory, but until recently consumption has been rather limited and the material was not accorded the status of jade. Today, however, because of economic growth and an expanding middle class, many more Chinese can afford to buy ivory goods that are being targeted toward them by producers and retailers. Chinese consumers have come to think ivory is a good luck charm, a status symbol, a good investment, and a suitable gift or bribe to win favor or a business contract (Grammaticus, 2014; Martin & Vigne, 2015). The purchasing of ivory by some Chinese does not necessarily imply widespread consumer demand, but if only a small segment within a very large and growing middle class Chinese market is buying, total consumption can still be significant. The Chinese government has imposed laws against trafficking and selling ivory, but enforcement is difficult (or compromised by corruption) and the trade has been carried out online.

Hong Kong is a leading processor of raw ivory, 90% of which is now sold to visitors from Mainland China. Martin & Vigne (2015) conducted surveys of the Hong Kong ivory business in 2002, 2010/11, and 2014. It consisted of two parallel markets: one for Russian mammoth ivory, which in Hong Kong was legal to import, work and export, and one for new ivory that cannot be imported and should be made only from supplies acquired before 1990. The latter group consists mostly of small items, such as jewelry or name seals (chops), that can easily be smuggled to the mainland. Figure 6 illustrates small carvings with Buddhist and Catholic influences. They are said to be from mammoth tusks, but may be from recently killed African elephants. Martin & Vigne (2015) found that prices had risen and, in their last survey, ranged from $5 for trinkets to $2.5 million for one elaborate carving. On January 31, 2018 Hong Kong lawmakers approved a measure to phase out the legal retail market by 2021 (Actman, 2018).

Figure 6. Small items in Hong Kong, 2014. Source: Martin and Vigne (2015).

Ivory consumption in China has features in common with the growth in demand for shark fin soup. Once a traditional delicacy only a few Chinese could afford, rising affluence has enabled more Chinese to partake with the expected consequence being rapidly declining shark populations. Fabinyi (2012) discusses the cultural and social context of this demand. Traditional Chinese medicine links seafood to bu foods, which purportedly imbue strength and health and promote virility. Wild foods have more bu than domesticated foods and studies have shown that Chinese men more than women prefer to consume wildlife (Wasser & Jiao, 2010; Zhang, Hua & Sun, 2008). Ancient Confucian notions of man subjugating nature shape modern Chinese attitudes toward wildlife. In addition, shark fin soup is featured in important social functions, such as weddings and banquets, where the cultivation of guanxi (connections) and social display are important (Fabinyi, 2012). Chinese probably do not spend money on ivory trinkets and figurines for sexual potency, but like shark fins these objects made from wild animals can become a vehicle for conspicuous consumption. Many of the ivory statuettes depicted in the photos accompanying Martin and Vigne's (2015) monograph are carvings of dragons, Laughing Buddhas, and other traditional characters from Chinese folklore, further reinforcing cultural meaning.

Japan is the only nation in the world with noticeable demand for 'hard' or forest elephant ivory (a species of African elephant), where it has been used for making *hanko* (personal name stamps) and *bachi* (a plectrum or pick for playing the traditional *shamisen*). Ivory *hanko* became highly fashionable in the 1970s and by the mid-1980s about 25% of all worked ivory in the world went into their production (Meredith, 2001). Musicians use wooden bachi for practice and save their ivory ones for performances (Figure 7). Ivory *bachi* need to be replaced occasionally, sometimes as often as once a year. In 2010, Nishihara (2012) and his associates, posing as clients, surveyed 86 *hanko* and 29 *shamisen* shopkeepers in Tokyo. Knowledge levels appeared low: more than 70% of *hanko* vendors could not distinguish between hard and soft ivory, about two-thirds did not know the origin of the ivory they sold, and several believed that elephant tusks could regenerate after removal. The

shamisen sellers knew more about different types of ivory (*bachi* require hard ivory) than the *hanko* dealers, but were equally clueless regarding the geographical origins of their ivory. Perhaps these informants knew more than they shared with the researchers, but in any event they did not appear to be helping educate customers to make informed ethical decisions about purchasing ivory. Ivory items have been sold on Rakuten, Japan's largest e-commerce site (Mead, 2014), and an undercover investigation in 2015 (McCurry, 2015) found widespread fraud in tusk registration in Japan due to lax enforcement of existing laws.

After China and Hong Kong, the United States may have had the world's next largest retail ivory market according to a census of items seen for sale conducted in 2006 and 2007 at 657 outlets in 16 cities (Martin & Stiles, 2008). Out of 24,101 items counted, about 7400 appeared to have been crafted after the 1989 ban on importation and were presumably illicit. The authors estimated that the U.S. consumes less than one ton of raw ivory annually, down from seven to eight tons a year in the late 1980s. This may indicate falling consumer demand, but the decrease may also result from smugglers successfully evading law enforcement.

Figure 7. Musician playing shamisen with ivory bachi. Source: Nishihara (2012).

Subsequent to the Martin and Stiles research, authorities arrested Philadelphia-based dealer in African art, Victor Gordon, in July 2011 for possession of nearly one ton of elephant ivory objects probably worked in Cameroon and Gabon and valued at $800,000. This was one of the largest U.S. seizures of illegally imported ivory (Figure 8). Gordon later pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 months in prison (Christy, 2014). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service destroyed this ivory in the middle of New York's Times Square on 19 June 2015. Two years later, on 26 July 2017 a pair of New York antique dealers pled guilty to illegally offering and selling $4.5 million in elephant Ivory (Figure 9). Fined $2000, they were also ordered to contribute

$200,000 to wildlife conservation groups. This batch of contraband, most of which appeared to be in a Chinese taste, was crushed in Central Park on August 3, 2017 as part of World Elephant Day (Ferré-Sadurní, 2017).

In March 2015, researchers collected data on ivory sales via Craigslist in 14 primary and 14 secondary cities (LaFontaine, 2015). They located hundreds of items for sale, worth over one million dollars, that were suspected of being made from new ivory. Only rarely did the online ads provide information on the legal status of the product, knowledge crucial for making ethical consumer decisions. Because Craigslist is a classified advertising site, and not an ecommerce or online auction site, information about actual transactions was unavailable.

Figure 8. Some of the items seized from Philadelphia ivory smuggler Victor Gordon, 2011. Source: Photo by Bill Butcher U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service via AP.

Figure 9. Ivory confiscated in New York City in 2017. Source: Ferré-Sadurní (2017)

Discussion and conclusion

The consumption of elephant ivory has shown continuities and change, both temporally and spatially. The making of devotional objects from ivory has existed for several millennia across different cultures (see Figures 1 and 6), but this tradition appears to be waning in the twenty-first century. For household purposes, different peoples have been fashioning ivory into portable luxury goods since ancient times and by the second half of the nineteenth century the range of applications appears to have increased. After World War II, however, much ivory carving has been redirected toward making what are essentially assortments of souvenir kitsch (see Figures 6 and 8). In the public arena, ivory lost its meaning as a symbol of secular political power long ago. Technological change has affected patterns of ivory consumption. The invention of photography in the nineteenth century curtailed the art of painting portrait miniatures on ivory and plastics replaced ivory in piano keys, billiard balls, and other objects by the mid twentieth century. At this writing, ivory markets have been shut down in many countries though exceptions have been made for antiques. Illicit commerce in newly worked ivory undoubtedly continues.

Norms pertaining to killing living elephants for their ivory have evolved over time in much of the world, but certainly not everywhere. Although a paucity of written data sources means we may never discover their inner thoughts, ivory consumers in the early period seem to have had few ethical reservations about their possessions were produced. Not until the 1800s did conservation and animal rights philosophies start taking hold and activists begin organizing in Britain, America, and elsewhere. Concern about elephants grew further in the late twentieth century and up to the present day. Economic development may be an important causal factor behind this normative change. Though there are many exceptions, in general people living under subsistence conditions may have less regard for animals than do people with the 'moral luck' to live in affluent societies where caring for the other is more of an option (Edmonds, 2013). The development of information technology, whether newspapers, magazines, and novels in the late nineteenth century or the Internet and social media in the twenty-first, has enabled the transmission of vivid reports and visual images stimulating new ideas about animals and how they should be treated. The drastic dwindling of elephant populations in recent years has undoubtedly been an alarming wake up call and spur to action. Moral progress is not a certainty, however, and we should be wary of teleological explanations that view historical processes of change as an inexorable march toward some better future state (Sewell, 2005). The arc of history does not necessarily bend toward higher standards of ethical justice in consumption. Most animals raised on modern industrialized farms, for example, live under inferior conditions compared to husbandry a century ago.

Returning to the question raised in the introduction, how should we judge the ethics of past ivory consumption? Moral relativists would argue that we should not compare present day standards with those of prior times. For most of human history (and pre-history), ivory workers and consumers lived in a world with little regard for the rights of animals and, unless exceptionally prescient, could not have known any different (Edmonds, 2013). By the late nineteenth century, however, the situation had changed. Philosophers had been commenting upon animal rights for some time and a conservation ethos had been developing. Yet, ethical consumer decision-making requires knowledge of product provenance (origin), as well as understanding of the consequences that flow from the act of purchasing. The history of elephant ivory illustrates barriers to

acquiring this information. Past ivory sellers were not entirely forthcoming about the origins of their products. In the late nineteenth century, slave labor and European brutality were ignored (see Figure 4) until activists such as George Washington Williams and Edmund Morel and the novelist Joseph Conrad alerted the public about these horrific practices (Hochschild, 1999).

The cause of animal rights had a mixed reception during the twentieth century – the proliferation of industrialized agriculture and animal testing being major steps backward – and did not get serious traction until the publication of the first edition of *Animal Liberation* in 1975 (Singer, 2009). Since then animal rights movements have achieved legislative success in a number of countries. Yet, the late Esmond Martin and his colleagues have documented numerous examples of willful ignorance and stonewalling among ivory dealers in various countries. To make matters worse, other parties have undermined ethical decision-making by casting doubts upon 1) the threat to wild elephant populations and 2) the relationship between ivory consumption and poaching and trafficking (see, e.g., Ivory Education Institute, 2018). Ethical consumers must critically examine these assertions and studiously ask questions about producer markets and supply chains (Greenwood, 2010). Ethical consumers need factual data for assessing product origins and the consequences of their consumption.

They also need to know the history of ivory in their culture. Ivory goods in the twenty-first century may not be as authentic or traditional as they may think. In China, for example, ivory is now used in myriad crafts and accessories never before made of ivory. Interpreting long-standing designs and characters from Chinese art and folklore, these tchotchkes convey a sense of cultural continuity, but are not historically accurate in terms of their material composition. In Japan, the making of *hanko* from ivory started after World War II. Previously stones and crystals were used. Crafting *bachi* from ivory began earlier, in the Meiji era (1868-1912), but still relatively late in Japanese history (Nishihara, 2012). Elephant advocates hope that highly informed ivory consumers today will switch to other materials.

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Measuring Ethical Market Size: Challenges and Dilemmas

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Abstract

The Ethical Consumer Markets Report (ECMR) is a measurement of the size of the UK market for 'ethical' products which has been published annually for 17 years. However, the researchers making choices about what to include and what not to include in the report have commonly faced some challenges and dilemmas.

This article explores just four of the many 'datasets' which make up the report to illustrate some of the problems faced: energy-saving light bulbs, organic food, ethical money and vegetarian food. According to researchers, one common problem which ran though many of the datasets was deciding whether there was a need to understand motivation to define a purchase as ethical? The ECMR records annual sales of, for example, all organic food, all meat substitutes and all energy efficient light bulbs as ethical sales, despite the fact that some individuals may be choosing these items primarily for health or economic reasons rather than ethical ones.

One core challenge identified in this paper is that widening the boundaries of what constitutes an ethical purchase could make spotting smaller trends more difficult for researchers of the ECMR's. Adding building societies to the definition of ethical money, for example, would lead to the size of the UK 'ethical market' nearly tripling overnight.

The authors hope that exploring these problems can help shed some light on the phenomenon of ethical consumption itself and how its complexity does not always lend itself to the kind of simple measurement often found in annual indices.

Keywords: Ethical consumer markets report, ethical consumer, organic food, ethical money, vegetarian products

Introduction

In 1999 the Co-operative Bank began working with the New Economics Foundation to produce a measurement of the UK's 'ethical market' size. It calculated a total market figure by combining sales of 'obviously' ethical products like Fairtrade coffee with others such as low energy light bulbs and ethical investment funds (Doane 2001). Despite some management changes, a report has been produced annually since then, providing a unique picture of the sector's growth over a 17-year period. Figures from the Ethical Consumer Markets Report (ECMR) show that it has grown from just over £13 billion in 1999 to £83

billion in 2016. This is a growth rate of around 540% compared to a growth rate of around 65% for total UK GDP in the same period.

The report's use of actual sales data has also proved to be a useful reference point for researchers, activists, charities, and businesses trying to understand the phenomenon of ethical buying. This is important because quantitative opinion survey data in this field has been challenged as particularly unreliable, not least because of the possibility of 'social desirability bias' or people claiming to be more ethical than they really are in practice (see e.g. Carrington M et al, 2016).

Nevertheless, according to researchers at Ethical Consumer, choices around what to include in the ethical market measurement have not always been easy. It is a phenomenon, as we will show below, where boundaries are contested and one where consumer motivations are complex and multi-faceted. The purpose of this article is to share some of these difficulties and dilemmas more widely. This is partly because these difficulties are illuminating of some of the complexities of the phenomenon itself. It is also because Ethical Consumer, the current ECMR researchers, are seeking feedback, comment and criticism on some of its boundaries. External reflection could lead to a better understanding of the nature of any growth identified in future reports.

The market measurement is made up by combining datasets from around 40 'ethical markets'. As well as those mentioned above, for example, it also records sales of ethical investments, home solar panels and bicycles. Each annual report provides a breakdown of the totals and various historical reports are available on the websites of Ethical Consumer and the UK Universities Consumer Data Research Centre. Web links appear at the end of this article.

Whilst no market is without some problems and complexities, we focus on just four here to illustrate some of the key difficulties and dilemmas faced: energy efficient light bulbs, organic food, ethical money and vegetarian food. We chose them because they were illustrative of four core problems often experienced in some of the other datasets too. At the end, a conclusions section looks at some of the common issues raised and explores some possible solutions.

Energy Efficient Light bulbs and choice editing by governments

When the ECMR began in 1999 the vast majority of light bulbs sold were 'incandescent' or 'filament' types which were commonly rated as using between 60 and 100 watts of power each. Also available were 'compact fluorescents' (CFLs) which consumed around one fifth of the power. While these lasted up to ten times longer they commonly cost around ten times more per bulb. Sales were therefore quite limited and, it is not unreasonable to assume, mostly bought by those commited to environmental interests.

The EU had an energy labelling scheme for light bulbs where incandescents were rated E or F (the worst) and CFLs rated A or B (the best). The original ECMRs therefore measured sales of A-rated light bulbs and included this figure in the totals.

Since that time, European regulations have gradually phased out the sale of incandescent bulbs, leading to an outright ban from 2012 onwards. In addition, a newer, even more efficient, technology – LED lighting - is beginning to replace CFLs, so that in 2016, the majority of domestic lightbulb sales in the UK were of A rated products.

Unlike environmentalists in 1999, most consumers in 2018 are unlikely to be consciously making an ethical choice when picking up A-rated bulb. So, should the ECMR be recording these sales as ethical purchases - which it currently does? If it

were not to include these sales, the actual ethical market size might appear to be reducing. But if it does, does this mean that all consumers are now ethical in respect to their lightbulb purchasing?

The concept of 'choice editing' by governments became much discussed in sustainable consumption circles around the turn of the century. (see e.g. Sustainable Development Commission 2006) Since individual consumers were often time poor and without the specific knowledge needed to make complex choices over environmental impacts, it was argued that it made no sense for governments to allow them to choose clearly damaging products, and that poor choices should be 'edited out'. The EU's use of this approach around lightbulb choices provides a classic example of how successful it can be – especially where the cheapest choices are not always the most ethical ones.

Organic Food and problems around motivation

Organic food makes up the second largest sector within the broader category of 'Ethical Food and Drink' in the ECMR. In the 2016 Report it recorded UK sales of organic food as £1.8 billion. The 2017 Report showed a 3.8% growth rate over the previous year, evidencing a resurgence in its popularity since the apparent slowdown in sales after the 2008 financial crash. The Soil Association confirms that this is the highest recorded level of actual sales of organic products and it represents the sixth year of solid growth within the organic food market in the UK.

To understand the sustained growth of the organic market, a plethora of academics from across disciplines have tried to understand the motivations of consumers when choosing to purchase organic food (Azjen, 1991; Baker *et al.*, 2002; Moser, 2016; Padel and Foster, 2005; Seyfang, 2008; Zanoli and Naspetti, 2002). They pose questions like: *Why has organic food shown so much resilience in a competitive and budget driven food and drink market? Is it solely an ethical choice to purchase organic or are people buying it because it is perceived as healthy? How can we gain a greater understanding through research of why consumers buy organic?*

The existing body of literature focussed on researching organic food and consumer motivations more specifically is large. We summarise crudely here that academics have concerned themselves with drawing together an accurate profile of an organic food consumer by segmenting consumers based on their attitudes, purchase intentions, values, demographics, food-related lifestyles and purchase behaviours (Azjen, 1991; Baker et al, 2002; Moser, 2016; Padel and Foster, 2005; Seyfang, 2008; Zanoli and Naspetti, 2002).

It has proved extremely difficult to draw any overarching or meaningful insights from such a disparate array of conclusions however. The research we reviewed frequently sought to make the distinction between individual and altruistic consumer motivations. Most papers argued that the extent to which consumers are motivated by individualised concerns such as personal safety or enjoyment, rather than ecological or altruistic concerns such as the environment, would impact (positively and negatively) the growth of the market itself.

Identifying an ethical purchase must surely involve asking questions about the motivation of an individual consumer. If a consumer is buying organic solely for reasons of health or taste, then is this an ethical purchase? Barnett and Land (2007) for example discuss how "motivation of virtuous actions such as caring cannot be solely self-referential". Is the ECMR overstating the size of the ethical market because it is not taking account of these variations in motivation? Should it be reduced after

some kind of product-specific quantitive survey of motivation?

However, despite the research explaining the variations in motivation, none were claiming that 'health or taste' purchasers of organic were completely unaware of the environmental or animal welfare benefits. It is difficult to therefore argue that this had no effect on their choices. All papers noted above agreed that the picture is extremely complex with real life purchases always resulting from a highly varied mix of factors – including health, taste, price, environment and animals. The great philosopher Immanuel Kant was of the view that no matter how much an individual might ponder on her or his motivations they would never discern them accurately. There appears to be little practical option then for the ECMR to record all these sales as examples of ethical purchases.

Ethical Banking and Building Societies – problems of scale

The latest Ethical Consumer Market report published in 2017 values the 'Ethical Money' sector at £21.4 billion. This ranks it as the highest value sector in the report beating ethical favourites like Fairtrade products by a considerable margin. The significance of its monetary size has resulted in the need for some careful reflection regarding what can and should be included as 'Ethical Money'.

It is difficult to record annual sales of 'banking' products in quite the same way as bars of chocolate or bicycles. Because of this the ECMR has always measured the size of this market by totalling up retail deposits at ethical banks and building societies. If a bank is attracting more customers, the size of is retail deposits should rise – and therefore the ECMR can track growth in this way.

As might have been predicted, the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crash saw a boom in alternative ways to look after and invest money during hard financial times (Co-operative Bank 2010). The Ethical Consumer Market report saw the 'Ethical Money' sector more than double between 2010 and 2015 (an increase of £12,169 million). Trouble at the Co-operative Bank in 2013 though, the ethical money sector's biggest player, saw an outflow of savers in subsequent years and a brief drop in market size was recorded in the 2016 Report.

It is against this backdrop that some of the key difficulties faced in categorising and tracking the 'Ethical Money' sector have emerged. Firstly, what counts as an 'ethical' alternative? 'Ethical Money' has been subject to an array of definitions, the content of which is often dependent on standpoint, be it industry, policy or academic (see; Government Inclusive Economy Unit 2017; Triodos 2018; Ethical Consumer 2016).

Building societies provide an obvious alternative for consumers seeking something slightly different to the big four high-street banks. They often rank highly in Ethical Consumer product guides and have been advocated by campaign groups, such as 'Move Your Money UK'. A different business model means that they will not be lending to controversial business sectors like armaments, tobacco or oil. Building societies are also marketed to customers as an antithesis to the greedy bankers which brought about the 2008 banking crash. Nationwide Building Society describe themselves as a 'mutual, owned by and run for the benefit of our members' in their promotional literature. They highlight how they are 'free to reinvest more of their profits into improving products and services for their customers', ideas that undeniably sit comfortably when we imagine ways to bank more ethically.

The Nationwide Building Society has, according to its 2017 Annual Report, retail deposits of around £144bn. This is nearly double the size of the all the other ethical market sectors put together (£83bn). Combined with totals of deposits at other UK building societies the amount would grow to something near £300bn. This could be included in future Ethical Market Reports, and indeed previous years figures could be re-stated to prevent historical distortion, but it would dwarf the size of the other datasets meaning it would be harder to spot trends in other sectors. At present the ECMR only includes in its calculations deposits at one – avowedly ethical – building society, the Ecology.

Vegetarian Products and defining boundaries

'Vegetarian products' are another central component of the 'Ethical Food and Drink' category within the Ethical Consumer Market reports. Reflecting the category more generally, 'Vegetarian products' have seen a sustained growth since 2010 (5.1% in the year 2015-2016) with the UK market now valued at £630 million. The uptrend visible in ECMR data has been mirrored by a diverse range of products including vegetarian sausages, burgers, pies and ready meals (to name a few) taking up entire sections of local supermarkets in the UK. Television advertising campaigns by market leaders such as Quorn have sought the backing of Olympic gold medallists, professional athletes and celebrities to reinforce the now familiar adage that Vegetarian meat substitutes are a 'healthy source of protein' (Quorn, 2018). The 'Vegetarian product' category in the ECMR has worked with headline figures from within commercial market research reports from both Mintel and Keynote over the years which record sales of items such as "meat substitutes, or dishes made using meat substitutes, including ready meals, sausages, burgers, shaped products, deli, ingredients (e.g. vegetarian mince), pastry products and snacks. (Mintel 2017)."

This approach however fails to capture the majority of food spending by vegetarians which will be on less processed foods like bread, pasta and indeed the staple of all vegetarian diets, vegetables. It may be possible to establish through innovative research methods such as accompanied shopping trips, club card data exploration and ethnography, an accurate 'weekly average spend' analysis between vegetarians and meat eaters (Consumer Data Research Centre). This in turn, may help to shed more light on the suggestion that not all vegetarians are prepared to consume pre-prepared 'vegetarian products'. To further complicate the picture, products such as Tofu and Soya milk, often staples of a vegetarian diet, could be included in the ECMR but are currently not. It would also be technically possible to add all sales of (say) pasta and vegetables to the Vegetarian product category in the ECMR, but this would be picking up purchasers by meat eaters as well and would mean the sector grew, as with the building societies discussion above, far larger than the other sectors the ECMR looks at.

There are also complex issues of motivation around vegetarian foods in the same way as there are around organic foods. Discourses of health and fitness have come to the fore recently in both social and mainstream media outlets (Mintel, 2017). Instagram famous, fitness bloggers now regularly push a 'plant-based' lifestyle as an essential pre-curser to '6-pack abs'. As vegetarianism/veganism becomes heavily associated with a fashionable lifestyle, research needs to revisit the primary reasons consumers cite as their motivation for choosing vegetarian or vegan lifestyles.

Flexitarianism (flexi-vegetarianism, being vegetarian one or more days a week) and abstaining from meat with varying frequency for health reasons have also exploded in popularity in recent years. Meat-free Mondays are another variant of

this phenomenon. According to the Guardian in 2015 'Flexitarians – also known as veggie-vores – eat mostly vegetarian meals but make time for a big, juicy steak or a smoked salmon bagel when they feel the urge'. This approach to diet seems to abscond from the notion that deep-seated personal ethics inform our approach to meat eating. Instead, this pick and mix attitude to food, ethics and consumption could contribute to some of the increase in the sale of 'vegetarian products' recorded in the ECMR.

Conclusions

In this article we have looked at just four of the datasets used in the annual Ethical Consumer Markets Report to illustrate some of the challenges and dilemmas which researchers face when trying to reach a meaningful figure for the size of the 'ethical market' in the UK. We had also hoped that it would shed some light on the phenomenon of ethical consumption itself. There appear to be two common problems which run though many of the datasets.

Firstly, there is a core dilemma which asks whether we need to understand motivation to define a purchase as ethical? The ECMR records annual sales of, for example, all organic food, all meat substitutes and all energy efficient light bulbs despite the fact that some individuals may be choosing these items for health or economic reasons. It appears that the complexity of motivation in ethical consumption is such that, even if the report were to combine some kind of survey data (asking about motivation) with sales data, it may not be able to solve this problem. It may be a matter of accepting that it is not possible to measure something as complex as morality in the market in a simple numeric way.

Secondly, there is a core challenge in that widening the boundaries of what constitutes an ethical purchase may make spotting smaller trends more difficult. For example, building societies in the UK are seen by some to be a more ethical choice than banks for savers. However, if the definition of ethical money were widened to include this whole sector, the size of the UK 'ethical market' would nearly triple overnight. There would be a similar if less dramatic problem if the definition of 'vegetarian products' were extended to cover mainstream non-meat items such as bread and pasta.

Another key learning in this article comes in particular from the review of the energy efficient light bulbs dataset. 'Choice editing' around energy efficient light bulbs is just one area where government intervention has had a dramatic impact on the take up of ethical choices by consumers. Others recorded by the ECMR include energy efficient appliances such as fridges, and sales of solar panels for the home. By including them in the ECMR it is possible to explain that getting to 540% growth is not a phenomenon of consumers becoming more 'ethical', but of what can be achieved when governments, companies and consumers each play a role.

There is, finally, some consolation in the fact that a key use of the ECMR is as an annual comparison. In their chapter on 'Surveying Ethical and Environmental Attitudes' (Harrison *et al.* 2005), Bob Worcester and Jenny Dawkins from pollsters MORI had to concede that their attitudinal measure was of more use in ongoing comparison than in establishing statistical accuracy. In the same way, whatever the methodoligical problems are in the ECMR they are, for the purposes of comparison, at least the same from year to year.

Webslinks to Ethical Consumer Market Reports

www.ethicalconsumer.org/researchhub/ukethicalmarket.aspx

https://data.cdrc.ac.uk/dataset/ethical-consumer-markets-temporal-spending-data

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License Information

Book Review: Caroline Heldman (2017) "Protest Politics in the Marketplace: Consumer Activism in the Corporate Age"

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The Market for Politics

This is a very American book. Two of the most iconic moments of American political history are surely the Boston Tea Party of 1773 and the Montgomery bus boycott, sparked by the arrest of Rosa Parks in 1955. Each inaugurated critical episodes in the modern political story of emancipation. In *Protest Politics in the Marketplace*, Caroline Heldman invites us to read these as acts of consumer activism, and to consider the market as an under-theorised vector for political change. Heldman, a US political scientist, is concerned with the potential of consumer activism for realising not just the specific objectives of market campaigns, but positive effects on democracy itself. Consumer activism, she concludes, "is an American tradition that has strengthened democracy at key points in U.S. history".

Heldman extends the traditional definition of democracy into the marketplace. Her concern is both how corporate influence effects the democratic process and how consumer activism can both counter this influence and improve democratic "inputs" (such as "robust citizen participation") and democratic "outputs" (such as "government accountability to citizens"). *Protest Politics in the Marketplace* offers a systematic assessment of both, in the US context. An unusual aspect of the book is to consider not only the progressive aspects of marketplace activism but its reactionary forms as well, such as, historically, campaigns to exclude Chinese immigrants in the 1800s, and contemporary mobilisations against LGBT rights and for "gun rights".

The book first analyses seven distinct eras of consumer activism from the American Revolution to the Global Justice Movement of the 1990s: "the story of colonists, abolitionists, labor organizers, feminists, civil rights leaders, consumer safety advocates, economic justice advocates, xenophobes, and racists using market channels to achieve political change" (p.22). The account is compelling. Drawing on historians of consumption in the US such as Lawrence Glickman and Lizabeth Cohen, Heldman argues that consumer activism is an American political tradition that predates the Revolution, "an integral thread in the U.S. political tapestry, woven into our founding by the colonists conflation of freedom and consumption" (p.26). This story, of course, speaks as much to American consumer and political culture in the round, as it does to marketplace activism—not least by casting "consumers as the primary moral actors of the burgeoning republic rather than producers" (p.31). The historian T.H. Breen goes so far as to argue that the American Revolution would not have been possible without a shared consumer identity to bring the 13 colonies together against the Empire—wrought both through consumption itself and the boycott of British goods. Similarly, in the Progressive Era (1880-1920), when marketplace activism was used to

challenge the encroachment of corporate power on politics, citizens—and particularly non-Anglo immigrants—transcended ethnic, class and regional identities as consumers in the newly *national* economy.

Heldman addresses the contemporary era, characterised uniquely by the development of social media, in detail. As Heldman notes, the intensity of consumer activism on both sides surrounding Donald Trump's presidency signals the unprecedented mainstreaming of the consumer-activist mentality. About one in five Americans boycott each year; 40% of under '30s boycotted in the previous year. What is less clear is how this mainstreaming relates to the rise of the "consumer citizen" who views citizenship and community no longer in terms of civic participation and responsibility but in terms of the transactional relationships of the "entitled consumer" devoid of civic agency (p. 57).

Beyond admirable curation of existing scholarship, Heldman's unique contribution is found in the four empirical chapters in which she assesses case studies of national US campaigns between 2004-14, focused on racial justice, environmental issues and animal rights, gender and sexuality, and conservative campaigns. As well as addressing overviews of their effectiveness in achieving their goals (58% succeeded), Heldman systematically assesses these different areas in terms of "democratic inputs and outputs". With over 61 cases over 90 pages this is comprehensive (and excellent source material for teaching purposes), if not a particularly engrossing end-to-end read. But it is a significant contribution to scholarship in the area, and provides Heldman with authority to make her wider arguments, such as debunking criticisms of "slacktivism" (on an instrumental level, social media engagement increases campaign effectiveness of achieving goals to 68%).

The focus on the growing use of consumer activism by conservative groups is original. Aside from "gun rights" campaigns, these are largely the creatures of just two evangelical organisations—Focus on the Family and the American Family Association (the website of which offers "practical ways to get involved in the culture war"). Progressives, according to this worldview it seems, do not have families. Heldman is laudably balanced in acknowledging the contribution of these campaigns to the positive democratic virtues of improving political participation and corporate accountability, while censuring campaigns against LBGT rights. Cheeringly, success rates are considerably lower than those of progressive campaigns (though being increasingly social media savvy might change that).

Lastly, Heldman considers US consumer activism in the wider context of questions of whether business holds a privileged position in US politics, how consumer activism differs from traditional types of political participation and whether consumer activism improves democracy under different normative models of democracy—participatory, deliberative and economic. Opposition to the influence of business corporations is as old as the institutional form itself. In 1720 in England the corporation was actually banned, following the South Sea Bubble. As Heldman notes, prior to the twentieth century, US corporations were contracted to serve the public good (such as building roads) and had to regularly renew their charter to do so. US states resisted federal attempts to curtail their power to revoke corporate charters for much of the nineteenth century, until in 1886 the Supreme Court extended the 14th Amendment, established to grant rights to emancipated slaves, to the notorious concept of "corporate personhood". In 1961 President (former General) Eisenhower could caution of the danger of the confusion of national and corporate interests in the emerging "military-industrial complex" (his term), without vilification. Today, Heldman argues, most citizens are unable to identify their own interests. In the words of John Garenta, "socialised into compliance [citizens] accept the definitions of political reality as offered by dominant groups" and are unable

to imagine alternative economic systems (even those in their own history). As well as offering a good review of the literature of corporate political influence in the US, the section on "economic democracy" rescues the account from the prevailing liberal approach, drawing on thinkers such as Robert Dahl, who recognise the inherent conflict of capitalism and democracy.

Where Heldman is critical of consumer activism is in its tendency to be reactive to business practice, and that it is "limited in its systematic critiques of … foundational systems of power" (p. 211). Furthermore, voting with your dollar, she argues, will always be a capitalist form of voting. Heldman ably demonstrates the democratic virtues of consumer activism, and emphasises how it has historically been a particularly important political tool for women, African Americans and other politically marginalised groups. I was surprised therefore to find her also concluding that consumer activism "quantifies and commodifies social justice in a neoliberal way" (p.212) and erodes civic identity "by casting citizens as economic [rather than] political actors" (p.215). "Popular sovereignty", she argues, "becomes incoherent as individual activities in the marketplace eclipse participation and deliberation" (p.214)—it is not only an indicator of, but a contributing factor of, popular sovereignty's erosion. But surely the question is to what extent does consumer activism eclipse participation and deliberation, rather than being an entry point and accompaniment to them? These conclusions seem at odds with her own historical account—in which consumer activism is more often than not just one tool in the repertoire of a wider political movement more than capable of systemic critique—from the Boston Tea Party, to the bus boycotts of the civil rights movement, to Occupy and Black Lives Matter. It is also at odds with her assessment that: "The contemporary era of consumer activism rewrites the decline in participation narrative…engaging citizens through the marketplace in ways that strengthen political equality, liberty and popular sovereignty" (p. 219). Furthermore, the aggregationist view of political consumerism as a demand signal in the market (voting with your dollar) is oddly out of step with an acknowledgment of the political power of the rhetorical figure of "the consumer" mobilised by collective actors, perhaps nowhere more so than in the US (see Barnett *et al,* 2011).

So as not to conclude on a negative, I'll address as an aside a quick moan to the publisher here—there is no bibliography! And combined with historical-style endnotes offering a full reference only on the first citation, this reviewer pursued many irritated searches for sources (and from a university press no less!).

Protest Politics in the Marketplace makes an excellent contribution to consumption scholarship. Heldman provides a compelling curation of the role of consumer activism, and the consumer per se, in American history, and a thoughtful account of contemporary consumer activism in the age of Trump and social media. She offers a systematic empirical analysis of recent campaigns in the US, with an original focus on conservative movements, and a thorough analysis of the struggle between corporate political interests and market campaigns in US political culture.

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License Information

Book Extract: Doing Good – the new business mantra

Anne Bahr Thompson

Abstract

Do Good: Embracing Brand Citizenship to Fuel Both Purpose and Profit is a new book published the year by the American Management Association. Although its primary audience, as you can guess from the title, is intended to be corporate executives, it does contain insights into changes in consumer attitudes and behaviour. As the book's author, Anne Bahr Thompson, explains in the extract below, these developments are a key element in driving the changes in business behaviour which are required for a sustainable future. "My research demonstrated that 'real' people define corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship very differently than academics and experts do….As more consumers grow concerned with fairness and sustainability, more of us are seeking 'relationships' with brands that link us to a larger purpose that enriches our modern lives and sustains the planet…People don't expect 'perfection' from brands: they respect brands that exhibit human traits and, as such, expect them to be somewhat flawed—provided they're transparent about their imperfections and working to improve them."

In our personal lives, sometimes change comes slowly after we spend weeks, months, or years thinking about how we can be happier, more successful, or more fulfilled. Other times, change pursues us: We're fired from a job, a natural disaster strikes, our spouse calls it quits, or our child is diagnosed with a potentially terminal disease. Whether by choice or necessity, we typically discover that changing takes time, is full of competing demands, and is far from easy—even when it's a proactive choice.

The process of change is no different for a business, particularly now, because the model that's guided business for the last several decades *must* change. What was an optional path for companies before the millennium has become mandatory. The global economy, technology, climate change, generational shifts, and an evolving socio-political landscape are all dramatically altering the ways in which people consume, engage, and even abandon the brands in their lives.

Over more than twenty years as a Fortune 500 global brand strategist and researcher I have observed people continuously expecting more from brands. Three years of investigation with more than 6,000 people dedicated to deconstructing the shifting elements of brand leadership, corporate citizenship, and favourite brands confirmed customers unequivocally are demanding more value, more service, better ethics, and a greater focus on sustainability and social good. What people told me in qualitative conversations and quantitative surveys was clear: They want the companies they do business with not only to "do good" and make the world a better place, but also to advocate on their behalf and make them feel like they are part of a larger community or grander mission. Customers are calling for, yearning for—and paying for—a new business ethos that I call Brand Citizenship®.

Brand Citizenship is a way of doing business—from a company's core purpose; to its delivery of goods and services; to its responsibility to its employees, community, the environment, and the world—that people trust, believe in, and rely on. It creates a sense of partnership and belonging, all with the aim of earning profits that are maintainable over the long term.

MORE PEOPLE LOOK TO BRANDS TO LINK THEM TO A LARGER PURPOSE

People who participated in my research beginning in 2011 expressed the belief that companies were more equipped than governments to address and solve problems—from the ordinary needs of daily living to the big issues of our age. The research also showed that people support companies that demonstrate they have their customers' and employees' best interests at heart. Brands, especially the ones we're most loyal to, represent more than things and services. They signify a lifestyle and an ethos—one that mirrors our values or ones that we aspire to. As more consumers grow concerned with fairness and sustainability, more of them—in other words more of us—are seeking "relationships" with brands that link us to a larger purpose that enriches our modern lives and sustains the planet.

Some of the brands participants in my research named as good corporate citizens—and why they chose them—might startle corporate social responsibility and sustainability experts. As far back as the end of 2011 they included:
• Apple – for making products that make life more inspired and communicating worldwide easier.
• Tesco – for making prices low enough to make the cost of living and quality of overall life easier.
• Ford – for making individual Americans feel proud of what they can accomplish through the company's turnaround which exemplified "coming back stronger."

Customers' perceptions are sometimes counterintuitive and vastly different than what industry and functional experts expect. Today's consumer is savvy—an individual person who easily identifies efforts that are "bolted on" or straight up marketing ploys disconnected from what they know or believe is true about a brand. At best, such initiatives fall flat or fail to grow revenue and fans. At its worst, these approaches will significantly erode a loyal customer base. My research consistently demonstrated that people don't expect "perfection" from brands: they respect brands that exhibit human traits and, as such, expect them to be somewhat flawed—provided they're transparent about their imperfections and working to improve them.

THE RESISTANCE TO DOING GOOD IS LARGELY ROOTED IN A COMMON BUSINESS SCHOOL MANTRA

While more and more companies desire to partner in new ways with customers, employees, and other stakeholders, there is no definitive way to do this. Many executives wrestle with how to integrate sustainable, environmental, and social initiatives into their corporate mission and how to align these programmes with the products and services they offer. For a large number, the activities related to doing good still feel as though they are in conflict with the mantra that has dictated corporate behaviour for decades: The primary purpose of a corporation is to maximise profits and shareholder value. Importantly,

however, this guiding principle is not codified in law. Indeed, it's a notion that was popularised by economists in the 1970s, most notably Milton Friedman in a September 13, 1970, article in *The New York Times*.

Thirty years before Friedman wrote his article, Theodore Kreps, a professor at Standford's Graduate School of Business known as "the conscience of the business school," coined the term social audit as he strove to establish a process for companies to report their contribution to society. And since then, there's been a wealth of academic research on the rise of social consciousness in business. Despite this, my research demonstrated that "real" people define corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship very differently than academics and experts do. Over three-plus years of investigation, people told me that the first responsibility of a business is to live up to its promises to its customers and employees, followed by aligning its purpose to behave responsibly, in a way that advances society. With executives, academics and the general public having varying perceptions of the purpose of a business and role of corporate citizenship, it's not surprising many companies are hesitant to adopt new ways of working and integrate doing good into their corporate mission.

PEOPLE DEMAND BRANDS SPAN ACROSS A ME-TO-WE CONTINUUM OF BRAND CITIZENSHIP

The qualitative and quantitative studies I conducted led me to uncover something unexpected: People want brands to start with a ME-First orientation and then to span across a ME-to-WE continuum of Brand Citizenship. Brands must first deliver value, functionally and emotionally, to individual consumers (ME) and then, depending on the brand's purpose, move outward toward delivering added value to society: the collective WE.

Brand Citizenship isn't about a company sacrificing to better the world. Nor is it boasting about doing good. It's a five-step model that integrates "doing good" activities – such as fair employee policies, corporate social responsibility, sustainability programs, ethical sourcing, and charitable giving – with brand development to strengthen reputation, foster greater loyalty, and enhance value creation. It's a win-win-win solution that mutually benefits consumers, companies, society, and the planet.

THE FIVE-STEP ME-TO-WE CONTINUUM OF BRAND CITIZENSHIP

Brand Citizenship begins with placing a greater purpose at the centre of a brand – and a business. This is followed by aligning the value a brand delivers to individual customers with how it treats employees, suppliers and the environment, and with the way it helps the world. The five steps of Brand Citizenship logically flow from one another:

1 TRUST: DON'T LET ME DOWN

First and foremost, brands that deliver on their promises are trusted more. Digital communications and information channels have made reciprocity one of five key requirements for trusted brands. Farrow & Ball's *The Chromologist* is a fun example of this. Through this blog, the seventy-year-old paint-and-wallpaper supplier offers a deep dive into the world of color in art, decoration, food, fashion, literature, and more. SunTrust, one of the largest regional banks in the US, has also discovered ways to give customers unexpected and worthwhile benefits that reflect its brand purpose through its onUp program. Anyone, not

just SunTrust customers, can join onUp and learn to become a good steward of their own money, no matter how modest their means.

2 ENRICHMENT: ENHANCE DAILY LIFE

People identify more with—and are less price sensitive toward—brands that help them to simplify routines, make mundane tasks less dull, and enrich their daily lives. The US-based baby food manufacturer and public benefit corporation Plum Organics, for example, enriches parents – and their babies –lives with wholesome foods similar to what they would make themselves if they had time, packaged in innovative, environmentally friendly ways. Its focus on nutritional intelligence, Parenting Unfiltered initiative, and The Full Effect® social impact programme have grown loyal followings.

3 RESPONSIBILITY: BEHAVE FAIRLY

In a post-recession, flattened, and transparent world, customers expect brands to treat their employees fairly, behave ethically, and be proactive in their business practices. From the beginning, The John Lewis Partnership put employees (partners) at the centre of its success as a retail brand. From its jLab start-up accelerator program to Waitrose's recent decision to reduce wastage by inviting myWaitrose loyalists to bring their own cup to collect their free coffee, the Partnership consistently balances the needs of customers, partners, suppliers and the environment as it adapts to remain relevant in a fiercely competitive marketplace.

4 COMMUNITY: CONNECT ME

Brands that rally communities, motivate behavioural changes and fix social problems attract more loyalists. The mobile operator Giffgaff has built a highly successful, award-winning brand in the competitive telecom space by creating a mobile community based on fair pricing, an online forum at the center of its network, and reaching out to customers in a variety of creative, entertaining, and practical ways. In the B2B space, The Forest Stewardship Council certifies brands sourcing materials from sustainable forests, underlining the credibility of their social identity. It brings together like-minded major corporations focused on educating consumers on the meaning and purpose of the growing number of product certifications.

5 CONTRIBUTION: MAKE ME BIGGER THAN I AM

Brands that play an active role in creating a more positive and life-enhancing future enrich loyalists' lives by improving life on the planet. Beginning as a creator and purveyor of natural bath and beauty products, Lush fresh, handmade cosmetics is the outcome of its founders' determined journey to live their personal purpose and embody the positive side of activism. The brand continually expands its reach and the ways in which it connects its fans to sustainable products, fair trade, and philanthropic causes.

There is not one type of Brand Citizenship company. Multiple approaches along the ME-to-WE continuum resonate with

customers, employees, investors, and other stakeholders of all types, as well as with companies in all industries and of all scales.

DOING GOOD AND MAKING A PROFIT

The phrase "doing good" conjures up images of idealism and altruism—which translates to self-sacrifice and not making a profit. Yet globalised sourcing, production, and sales all insist that long-term success be dependent on meeting the needs of a wide range of stakeholders. In an interconnected world where mashups of all kinds are mainstream concepts and where social media enables people to share stories globally of good and bad experiences with products and services, the notions of doing good and earning a profit cease to be at odds with each other. They are each part of a symbiotic, interdependent circle – a "virtuous circle" – that includes customers, employees, suppliers, communities, society at large, and even the planet.

Today, the goal of "doing good" and becoming a sustainable business is a practical and necessary investment into brand loyalty. This is the new model of Brand Citizenship, the holistic principle that equips businesses to gain lasting credit and customer credibility for sustainability and corporate social responsibility initiatives as part of a continuum of doing what you say you will, doing right by employees and the planet, and providing goods and services that are truly worthy of the buying public's time and hard-earned dollars. Companies that make this strategic shift are judged to be more relevant and more in synch with modern society: empathic, innovative, inspiring. Please join me on the journey and accelerate the movement already underway of companies creating a legacy of good.

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License Information

The Modern Slavery Act – are company responses helping consumers?

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Abstract

In 2015, the UK Government passed the Modern Slavery Act which required most medium to large UK companies to publish a statement on their websites explaining what they were doing to combat any modern slavery that may be occurring in their supply chains. Since then, more than three thousand companies have produced statements, and civil society groups have begun to analyse and comment on what is emerging. The main purpose of this paper is to look at these analyses by civil society groups and to reflect on the extent to which they are helping to inform ethical consumers.

From the analyses featured in this article, only one third of companies required to report meet the legal minimum requirements and over a third of the estimated companies required to submit statements have failed to comply. Civil society organisations agree that the regulations need to be tightened to ensure all companies actively address this issue and a number of suggestions and campaigns have been forthcoming. In the section entitled 'Upgrading the MSA' below, we look at calls for the government to publish lists of companies required to report and to use its own procurement budgets to drive change. Encouragingly, a consortium of civil society organisations have established a UK Modern Slavery Act Registry, and one organisation has published a report comparing companies supplying the same sectors. But more needs to be done to digest the data created by the MSA to make it practically useful to most consumers. We explore some options for developing a rating and suggest a simple score or traffic light system which might help ordinary people differentiate bad from good in this complex environment.

Keywords: Modern Slavery, consumers, trafficking, forced labour, supply chains, CORE coalition, jewellery, transparency

Introduction

The Modern Slavery Act (MSA) 2015 is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom and was was the first piece of UK legislation focusing on the 'prevention and prosecution of modern slavery and the protection of victims' (Kelly, 2015). Section 54 of the MSA requires companies carrying out business in the UK with a total annual turnover of £36m or more to prepare slavery and human trafficking statements explaining what, if anything, they are doing to ensure slavery and trafficking are not taking place in their supply chains and businesses.

Now that the MSA has been in force for a couple of years, company statements are being published in their thousands.

The government was clear that the purpose of the act was to 'encourage businesses to do the right thing, by harnessing consumer and wider stakeholder pressure' (Home Office 2015). And while civil society groups have been critical of this approach (see below), they have nonetheless embarked on attempts to analyse and comment on the quality of these statements and we look at these in more detail below.

The purpose of this article is first to outline what modern slavery is in order to understand what the MSA was trying to address. It then sets out to look at the civil society responses which are beginning to take stock of progress under the MSA. Finally it seeks to address the questions, where do consumers fit into all this, and what could be improved to make progress more effective?

What is modern slavery?

Modern slavery is an umbrella term that covers the offences of human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Campaign groups working in this area tend to define it as including the following:

• Bonded labour: when a person is forced to work to pay off a debt.

• Forced labour: when a person is coerced to work through the use of violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as accumulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities.

• Descent-based slavery: when a person is born a slave because their family belongs to a class of 'slaves' within a society.

• Trafficking: the transport or trade of people from one area to another and into conditions of slavery.

• Child slavery: is the enforced exploitation of a child for their labour for someone else's gain.

• Early and forced marriage: when a woman is married without consent, often while still girls, and forced into sexual and domestic servitude, (see e.g. Anti-slavery 2018, ETI 2018).

In 2014 a Guardian investigation found that Asian migrant workers were brutally enslaved during the production of seafood for several major UK and US supermarkets (Hodal, Kelly & Lawrence 2010). Thailand-based Charoen Pokphand (CP) Foods, the world's largest prawn farmer, admitted to sourcing fishmeal used to feed prawns sold on the international market from boats manned by modern slavery victims. A follow up investigation by Human Rights Watch in January 2018 found that migrant fishermen from south-east Asia continue to be routinely trafficked onto fishing boats; prevented from leaving or changing employers; and are often not paid for their work or paid less than the minimum wage (Kelly, 2018).

However, this is only a drop in the ocean as far as the scale of slavery found in consumer supply chains. According to the Global Alliance to Eradicate Forced Labour, Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour (also known as Alliance 8.7), an estimated 40.3 million people were victims of modern slavery in 2016 (Donger 2018). 24.9 million of those were in forced labour and 10 million were children. Alliance 8.7 said in its report in 2017 that domestic work accounted for a quarter of forced labour followed by the construction (18 per cent), manufacturing (15 per cent), and agriculture and fishing (11 per cent) sectors (ILO 2017).

A common misconception is that slavery only occurs in distant supply chains. The UK government, in its 2017 UK Annual Report on Modern Slavery however estimates that there are potentially between 10,000 and 13,000 victims of slavery

in the UK (HM Government 2017). It states that the "complex and hidden" nature of slavery makes it impossible to accurately estimate the prevalence but has found that, in its own words, the most common type of 'exploitation' is 'labour exploitation' (HM Government 2017). In January 2018 a woman and man were jailed under modern slavery legislation for forcing children trafficked from Vietnam to work in nail bars in the UK (Morris 2018).

Latest figures from the National Crime Agency said British nationals made up the highest number of cases for the first time, followed by people from Albania and Vietnam. With over 5,000 potential victims of modern slavery and trafficking were referred to UK authorities in 2017 (BBC 2018).

Civil society responses to the MSA?

There are two legal requirements of a Modern Slavery Statement. Firstly it must be published on the organisation's UK website with a link in a prominent place on the UK homepage. And secondly a company's statement should be approved by the board or directors and signed by a director. Aside from these two legal requirements the actual content of a statement is left up to the company.

Carrier and Bardwell (2017) from the Business Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC) summarise criticism from civil society groups which complain that the MSA has:

• 'no monitoring mechanism to verify whether companies that are meant to report do so;

• no enforcement mechanism for those companies that fail to report; and

• no legal consequence for reporting that no steps have been taken to address modern slavery.'

The Government's own reports show that civil society asked for: "the Government or one of its partners...to launch a central database, the purpose of which would be to act as a comparison site to consumers as well as a league table of compliant companies. It would streamline the reporting process as consumers and the general public would be able to see which businesses have published an annual statement for their reporting period." (Home Office 2015) It however declined to provide one.

In response to the lack of monitoring and the lack of a government database, the BHRRC has set up its own UK Modern Slavery Act Registry where companies can submit their statements. The registry is a free, public and transparent database of company statements which can be searched by company name, headquarters and sector. The registry is 'guided and supported by a group of partner organisations that includes: Freedom Fund, Humanity United, Ethical Trading Initiative, CORE Coalition, Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX), Walk Free, Anti-Slavery and UNICEF UK' (Carrier & Bardwell 2017). It does not accept funding from companies.

The fact that only 3,800 statements had been submitted to the registry by January 2018 (Modern Slavery Registry 2018) - a third of the companies expected to report under the Modern Slavery Act (CORE 2018a) - highlighted the lack of enforcement, and the lack of incentive for companies, to comply.

Benchmarking Modern Slavery Statements

The main organisations working to benchmark modern slavery statements have been CORE and BHRRC (CORE 2017b). In their reports they have checked that Modern Slavery statements comply with the legal requirements (signed by a director and have a link on their homepage) and whether they address the six suggested topics. Perhaps unsurprisingly, what they have found has been mostly weak statements with some examples of good practice.

BHRRC first report (2016) looked at the FTSE 100 and analysed the 27 statements available at the time. It found that most companies provided very little information "on the structure and complexity of their supply chains" with even less information "available on specific risks in the supply chain, both with regard to the type of risk and where in the supply chain the risk was identified (sector or location)." It also found that only 15 out of 27 fully complied with the Act (i.e. they had explicit board approval, were signed by the appropriate person and a link to the statement was found on the company homepage). However it did find examples of good practice. M&S and beverage company SABMiller provided 'details on their risks, detail instances of modern slavery and explain how these have been addressed'.

In September 2017 CORE produced a detailed report called "Risk Averse? Company reporting on raw material and sector-specific risks under the Transparency in Supply Chains clause in the UK Modern Slavery Act 2015." The report focused on companies which sourced raw materials associated with a risk of modern slavery - cocoa from West Africa, mined gold, mica from India, palm oil from Indonesia, and tea from Assam - and companies operating in sectors that are widely recognised as being at heightened risk: garment production; hotels and accommodation; construction; football clubs; and outsourcing companies. It found that compliance with the Modern Slavery Act was low.

Out of the 50 companies CORE analysed:

• only 45 had statements;

• 20 out of the 45 had not been signed in accordance with the legislation (by a director and on behalf of the board.

• two-thirds of the statements made no reference to specific risks of slavery and human trafficking in relevant raw material supply chains or specific sectors.

Marilyn Croser, Director at CORE, spoke to Ethical Consumer in January 2018 and said that the lack of detail in statements was "disappointing" although there were some sectors and companies that were better at mapping their supply chains than others. "It seems that many companies have adopted a lowest common dominator approach in order to comply the regulation. In most of the statements there was very little detail. This might be because companies are have decided to wait and see how others in their sector respond, or it may be that they are nervous about releasing data. We're in the first year of the requirement so we'd hope to see companies adding more detail to their next statements". (Croser 2018).

CORE also chose to highlight how, in many industries, exploitative labour practices existed alongside positive policies. Their report went on to say that: "While we found that several companies are beginning to integrate their approach to addressing the risks of slavery and human trafficking in the context of wider human rights and labour rights risks, few are making the link to risks that can be generated by their own business models, such as the price paid for an agricultural/mined product or the low wages that characterise certain sectors."

Table 1 shows the headline conclusions from the report for each sector. It highlights that many companies working in areas of high risk fail to understand what is required of them and there was little leverage to force them to do more.

Issue	Companies	CORE Summary
Cocoa from West Africa	Ferrero UK; Hershey ; Lindt & Sprüngli; Mars; Mondelez	Of the cocoa companies, only Mars specifically acknowledges that severe human rights risks including forced labour may be present in the cocoa supply chain. Hershey expresses its commitment to eliminating 'illegal and forced child labour' from its supply chain, but it does not provide information on its supply chain or source countries, and neither do Ferrero and Lindt & Sprüngli, in spite of all three companies acknowledging in other publicly available documents that they source from West Africa. Mondelez (Cadbury's) has not published a stand-alone statement.
Mined Gold	Cartier (Richemont); Goldsmiths (Aurum Group); Pandora ; Signet; Tiffany	None of the jewellery companies provide any substantive information in their statements on their supply chains and the risks of slavery and trafficking associated with gold mining, even though risks to human rights related to gold sourcing are mentioned in other documents. All companies appear to rely on certification schemes and audit to assess supply chain risk. There is limited discussion of due diligence.
Mica	Boots (Walgreen Boots Alliance); Dior / LVMH; Estée Lauder; L'Oréal; Revlon	A number of the cosmetics companies are members of the Responsible Mica Initiative, a multi-stakeholder effort intended to address issues in the mica supply chain. In spite of this, none of the companies provide any substantive information in their statements on their supply chains and the risks of slavery and trafficking associated with mica from India. We could not find a statement from Dior/LVMH.
Palm oil	Colgate Palmolive; Kellogg; Nestlé UK; Procter & Gamble; Reckitt Benckiser	All five companies featured in the palm oil chapter have published statements. Kellogg and Procter & Gamble do not mention raw material sourcing. Colgate reports on the scale of its business and provides a link to its policy on palm oil sourcing. Nestlé reports on the scale of its raw materials sourcing and lists palm as one of 12 priority categories for its responsible sourcing activities. Reckitt Benckiser's statement includes a case study on its efforts to improve palm oil traceability, but general information on its supply chain is not provided.

Issue	Companies	CORE Summary
Tea from Assam	Bettys & Taylors; Fortnum & Mason; Tetley (Tata Global Beverages); Typhoo; Unilever	The only tea company to specifically reference sourcing risks related to Assam in its statement is Bettys & Taylors. Of the other three companies that have published statements, two do not go beyond making general references to human rights issues and conditions on tea estates. Unilever's 2015 Human Rights Report notes low minimum wages as an issue in many tea producing companies, but does not reference Assam specifically. We could not find a statement from Fortnum & Mason.
Apparel & footwear retailers	Aldi UK; Foot Locker; Lidl UK; Matalan; Sports Direct	Of the apparel and footwear retailers, Aldi and Matalan briefly describe their supply chains and Aldi provides information on identified risks. Lidl has published a list of tier-one production facilities for all its own-brand textiles and footwear and provides information on its due diligence processes. Sports Direct's statement gives no substantive detail on the supply chain or the company's own operations, and no information on identified risks. We could not find a statement from Foot Locker.
Hotels and Accommodation	Airbnb; Hilton; Hyatt; InterContinental; Marriott	The four hotel companies provide an overview of the scale of their operations but only Intercontinental provides any information on its supply chain and is the only one of the four to provide details on identified risks. We could not find a statement from Airbnb. There is little discussion of labour conditions in hotel operations and in other published documents, Hilton and Hyatt describe collective bargaining agreements as a risk to their business.

Table 1. Headline findings relating to Slavery and Human Trafficking Statements. Risk Adverse CORE.

In December 2017 human rights specialist consulting firm, Ardea International, published a report "All that glitters is not gold: Shining a light on supply chain disclosure in the jewellery sector. Has the Modern Slavery Act had an impact?" (Theron 2017). In Ardea International's report it examined eight jewellery companies operating in the UK. Again, the research found poor compliance with the MSA with only 50% of the companies producing statements on their websites and only 37% being fully compliant with the MSA. These were disappointing results for a sector which has been heavily criticised for labour practices during the mining process and which subsequently set up initiatives – the Kimberly Process and The Responsible Jewellery Council – to improve practices within its supply chains.

The theme of companies failing to identify in their statements the areas of risks they face in their supply chain was also found by US based corporate social responsibility research organisation Know The Chain (2018). Their report, released in March 2018, focused on the electronic industry and companies which are required to produce a statement under the MSA. It found that "The majority of company statements did not address forced labour risks specific to the electronics sector, even

though risks such as exploitation of migrant workers through recruitment agencies are well documented." In 2014 a Verité study found nearly a third of migrant workers in Malaysia's electronics sector were in situations of forced labour (Verite 2014). More formal academic research into this area, particularly around reporting, would certainly be useful.

Upgrading the MSA?

In 2017 The Modern Slavery (Transparency in Supply Chains) Bill Amendment, promoted by civil society organisations, had its first reading in the House of Lords. This private members bill called on the Secretary of State to publish a full list of all companies required to comply with the MSA. It also asked that local authorities exclude sub contractors which have not prepared statements in accordance with the MSA. In January 2018 the Government appeared to quash any hopes of the MSA Amendment receiving support after it published its response to parliament's Joint Committee on Human Rights report. It stated that it stood by its decision not to be prescriptive about what MSA statements contain and felt that the need for a central list of companies required to report under the Act could be better met by the private sector which holds more comprehensive and easily accessible data (Rutledge 2018).

Nevertheless many civil society organisations still argue that for the MSA to be effective in addressing the issue of modern slavery in supply chains the requirements on companies need to be tightened. In February 2018 CORE submitted evidence to the Public Accounts Committee Inquiry into Reducing Modern Slavery where it argued that five amendments should be made to the MSA: They asked that the government:

• publish a list of companies covered by TISC

• create and maintain a registry of statements

• require companies to report on all six areas (see below)

• mandate a public authority to deal with reports of non-compliance and sanction non-reporters;

• extend the reporting requirement to the public sector (Core 2018b).

Are MSA statements helping consumers to take action?

Modern Slavery Statements have helped Ethical Consumer's own research into the general ethical performance of companies since more of them are now having to disclose information on the management of workers' rights issues in their supply chains. Some sectors, like the home appliance sector often had very few publicly available documents. Through the MSA, companies are now being required to produce, at least rudimentary, statements which is helping Ethical Consumer assess how well they are doing. Ethical Consumer is then passing this onto the tens of thousands of consumers which use its website buying guides, though it is just one element in a complex wholistic ranking system.

It also appears that ethical investment organisations, which often have relatively well-resourced research teams, are beginning to use modern slavery statements as a way of assessing ESG (Environmental Social and Governance) risks. CORE and its partners, for example, in June 2017 provided guidance to help investors raise modern slavery with the companies they invest in (CORE 2017a).

More direct consumer responses to either very poor or very good modern slavery statements are yet to hit the headlines however. It is likely that consumers will need civil society organisations to act as intermediaries to separate good from bad just as they do when they work, for example, to certify Fairtrade products. Like many issues addressed by ethical consumption campaigns, placing the responsibility solely at the feet of the consumer has not always brought the change hoped for.

The MSA expects consumers to understand the Act and what is required of companies. It also misses the point that consumer purchasing decisions take into account a multitude of factors: price, availability, quality, brand loyalty and a wide range of other sustainability criteria. The MSA is arriving in an already busy space. Modern slavery permeates every society in the world and consumers can act as global citizens in alerting authorities to suspected cases, but to use consumers as the sole motivation for companies to comply should not reduce the culpability of governments and companies in enabling conditions for slavery to occur.

However, more can be done by civil society organisations to engage consumers in the campaign. It does look as if some kind of simplified rating might be useful in this space. Commonly found in ethical ranking reports are, for example, 'traffic lights' - a three point scale using green for good and red for bad. Additionally there are sometimes five point scales used to produce more granularity in a rating.

The government's own reports have issued recommended content for a modern slavery statement (CORE 2017c).

• Structure of the organisation and its supply chains;

• Policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking;

• Due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking;

• Risk assessment and management;

• Effective action taken to address modern slavery; and

• Training on modern slavery and trafficking.

It is possible that a simple six point scale might make interpreting these complex results more easy for ordinary consumers. The BHRRC (2016) Report, FTSE 100 at the Starting Line, made a first attempt at this kind of ranking, putting companies on a ten point scale. Consumers will need much more of this, potentially simplified even further. Benchmarking companies against competitors in the same product area or sector will also help.

Conclusions

The MSA has been broadly welcomed by civil society organisations as it has persuaded many companies to examine their supply chains with a different lens (Carrier & Bardwell 2017). As the BHRRC has explained "The process of a company producing a statement under the Act, if done in the right way, prioritises slavery and trafficking issues with the company's senior management (Carrier & Bardwell 2017).

This has been positive step, but the poor quality of statements (lacking reference to specific risks for example) or lack of statements is a major concern at this early stage. From the studies featured in this article only a third meet the minimum

requirements – requirements that do not even include addressing the issue of modern slavery or the risk companies face within their supply chain. What is more troubling is that over a third of the estimated companies required to submit statements have failed to comply. The lack of enforcement mechanisms and oversight on who is required to produce statements is still a concern. If the goal of the MSA goal is to end slavery in supply chains then civil society organisations agree that the regulations need to be tightened to ensure all companies actively address this issue. A number of suggestions and campaigns have been forthcoming and most appeared in the 2017 The Modern Slavery (Transparency in Supply Chains) Bill Amendment mentioned above. It will be interesting to see if the inclusion of the registry and list of companies required under the Australian modern slavery act will 'persuade' the UK government to alter the current MSA if it leads to higher levels of compliance.

It is encouraging that a consortium of civil society organisations have established a UK Modern Slavery Act Registry. And a number of reports have been issued which benchmark and critically reflect on some of the statement already issued. But more needs to be done to digest the data created by the MSA to make it practically useful to most consumers. A simple score or traffic light system might help ordinary people (and institutional buyers) differentiate bad from good in this complex environment and therefore to factor this into their own buying decisions. As the BHRRC itself has said, 'The UK Modern Slavery Act can transform business action to eradicate slavery, but only if investors, civil society, consumers and companies use their leverage to ensure it' (Carrier & Bardwell 2017).

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For Citation

License Information

News

Calls for submissions

UK

Journal of Consumer Ethics on Engaging Business and Consumers for Sustainable Change

A special issue of JCE will be published in 2019 in collaboration with the University of Leeds. The edition will publish the best papers submitted for the university's upcoming conference on "Engaging Business and Consumers for Sustainable Change".

It will be edited by academics from Leeds curating the conference. The deadline for final submissions to the conference is July 31st 2018.

Sub themes include:
- Sustainable Consumption and Consumer Behaviour
- Food Supply Chains and Sustainability
- Circular Economy
- Stakeholders and the Natural Environment
- Change Agency in Sustainability Transitions
- Sustainability and Big Data
- Modern Slavery in International Business

More information is available at: http://crrconference.org/

UK

Call for Papers: Journal of Business Ethics special issue

The Journal of Business Ethics has called for papers for a special issue titled, "Taking an Interdisciplinary View of Ethics in Consumption".

Potential topics may include but are not limited to:
- The definitional and conceptual nature of ethics and morality in consumption.
- Re-considering ethical consumption in collective and group rather than individual consumption settings.
- The influence of corporations and their agents in consumers' ethical consumption in the broader context of CSR and stakeholder multiplicity.
- Philosophical papers that tackle the ontological

assumptions of ethics in consumption and/or the competing ethical frameworks underlying consumption decisions.
- The role of complex and culturally derived understandings of ethics in consumption.

The deadline for submissions is August 31st 2018.
www.springer.com/philosophy/ethics+and+moral+philosophy/journal/10551/PS2?detailsPage=press

Conferences

Denmark

Journal of Consumer Ethics on Engaging Business and Consumers for Sustainable Change

The conference will be held 27-30th June 2018, in Copehagen, Denmark. It will focus on "Sustainable Consumption: Fostering Good Practices and Confronting the Challenges of the 21st Century".

The topics covered by the conference are expected to include:

- Emergence of post-consumerist lifestyles
- Role of behavioral economics and related strategies on consumption routines
- Social practices research related to sustainable consumption
- Sustainability and the transformation of agro-food systems
- Policy frameworks to promote a circular economy
- Consumption-based greenhouse gas accounting
- Grassroots innovation to facilitate sustainable consumption
- Challenges of reconciling sustainable consumption priorities in a globalized world
- Post-consumerist and post-capitalist visions of the future
- Consumption and sustainable cities

Its keynote speakers are Jan Gehl's, a Danish academic working on public spaces and public life; and Mary Mellor, expert on alternative economics.
scorai.org/2018conference/

UK

Conference on Engaging Business and Consumers for Sustainable Change

The University of Leeds' 13th Corporate Responsibility Research Conference will take place on the 11th-12th September 2018, in association with the Kedge Business School, France. It will look at how to engage business and consumers in present ecological and sociocultural challenges; as well as that role that the state, the international community and civil society organisations play in engagement.

It is looking for papers from different disciplines and fields of study, including literatures on corporate responsibility, corporate sustainability, sustainable consumption, sustainable development, business and society, business ethics, ethical consumption, sustainable entrepreneurship, and organisation and the environment. Sub-themes range from Tensions, Conflicts and Paradoxes in Corporate Sustainability and CSR; to Sustainability and Big Data; to Circular Economy. The deadline for submissions is July 31st 2018. The conference will be preceded by a PhD workshop on 10th September.
www.see.leeds.ac.uk/research/sri/news/story/call-for-abstracts-13th-corporate-responsibility-research-conference/

UK

First International Sustainable Production and Consumption conference to be held in Manchester

The conference will be held 4-5th October 2018, in Manchester UK, and has been organised by the Institution of Chemical Engineering in conjunction with the journal Sustainable Production and Consumption.

The topics covered by the conference will include:
- circular economy
- sustainable technologies, products and services
- energy, food, water and waste nexus
- life cycle sustainability assessment and management
  - consumer engagement and communication
- sustainable lifestyles
- sustainable policy development

Current key note speakers include Professor Raimund Bleischwitz; Chair in Sustainable Global Resources at University College London; David Greenfield, Managing Director of SOENECS (SOcial, ENvironmental & EConomic Solutions); Dr Hirschberg, Senior Advisor in Energy Divisions at the Paul Scherrer Institute; and Carmen Teodosiu, Director of the Department Environmental Engineering and Management at Gheorghe Asachi Technical University of Iași.
www.icheme.org/events/conferences/sustainable-production-and-consumption/home.aspx

Publications

Spain

Shopping Location choices as a method to address city inequalities

Applied Network Science has published a study of consumer behaviours in Barcelona and Madrid. The study looked at the spatial distribution of consumers' spending across the two cities, using data from one year of bank card payments from more than 150,000 anonymous users in over 95,000 businesses. It then used this data to establish the proportion of individual shopping trips that would have to be redirected in order to evenly share the commercial income from spending between different neighbourhoods.

Shopping and leisure trips account for 15 to 20% of the individuals' daily travels. Such trips virtually move money from one part of the city to another, and directly contribute to shape the spatial distribution of wealth across neighbourhoods.

The study found that for both cities only a small fraction (~5%) of trips would need to be modified to equally distribute spending across the city. It also found that it was possible to significantly decrease the total distance travelled and at the same time to strongly reduce wealth inequality among neighbourhoods. However, it did find that it was not possible to decrease distance travelled whilst increasing the spatial mixing of individuals; and more surprisingly, that it was not possible to increase the equality of wealth distribution and the spatial mixing of individuals.

The study concluded: "one could easily imagine

dedicated mobile applications, querying databases similar to the one we used in this paper. Their purpose would be to assist their users in a transition toward a more socially and spatially concerned shopping mobility."

https://appliednetsci.springeropen.com/articles/10.1007/s41109-017-0026-3

China

Narratives of sustainable consumption in Nanjing

An empirical analysis of 129 narrative interviews with local residents in urban Nanjing has been pushed in Social and Cultural Geography. The study found that a combination of 'being green' – living a healthy lifestyle which has less impact on the environment – and being rational through qinjian jieyue – by reducing both consumption and waste – was regarded as key to sustainability.

Quinjian jieyue — which can be roughly translated as being diligent and thifty / frugal — was found to be the most significant component of sustainable consumption. Most of the interviewees were therefore found to portray their sustainable practices as contributing to the sustenance of their own families and personal lives. The study commented, "producing waste is conventionally considered to be an improper behaviour". Such attitudes align with recent government campaigns to create an environmental-friendly and resource-conserving society.

Recent eco-awareness campaigns also appeared to have had an impact. Thus, the report found that sustainable consumption in the region was "ambivalently positioned between concerns for sustaining the environment and sustaining personal or family lives."

The study also found, however, that this sustainable way of consumption is restricted by Chinese mianzi and guanxi cultures. Mianzi can be defined as favourable self-esteem, wealth and prestige; guanxi as the importance of interpersonal connections that requires the maintenance of long-term relationships, mutual commitments and obligations. As both cultures play a significant role in Chinese approaches to hospitality, they often lead to significant amounts of food waste for those hosting.

Anxieties caused by scares related to food safety, a social welfare system that does not promote a sense of security, and a widespread distrust of products made in China

which has diffused across society were also found to restrict sustainable consumption.

The participants were diverse in terms of gender, socio-economic status and other various factors, and were interviewed in Nanjing between February and October 2016.

www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14649365.2018.1454978?journalCode=rscg20

Romania

Older generations more likely to engage in ecologically sustainable behaviours

The study, published in March 2018 in the open access journal Sustainability, focused on the correlation between generation and approach to ethical consumption, in relation to the potential for developing a circular economy.

Based on 597 online questionnaires completed by Romanian nationals, the study analysed results from three generation: 35 to 44 years (Generation X); to 34 years (Generation Y); and 18 - 24 years (Generation Z). All three generations had a major favorable attitude towards the business and consumption models that have a lower impact on the environment, the most concerned were, in ascending order, the X-ers, the Y generation and the Z generation. Although concern for the environment was relatively important for all three generations, all three adopted ecologically concerned behaviour relatively infrequently. Generation X was again the generation most engaged in ecologically concerned consumption, followed by generation Y and generation Z.

The study stated: "Generation Y is behind generation X with regard to ecologic activities, but we expect a more pronounced ecologic behavior once they become older. This trend is not in accordance with the behavior of Ys in the West, where Ys are more expected to establish the trend and adopt ecological behaviours." However, it also concluded that business models based on the circular economy would have to educate customers from the current Y and Z generations in the future: half of generation X did not try to adopt experiential type consumption behaviour, staying instead within traditional practices.

www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/3/865

India

Links between sustainable consumption and reuse and recycling of household waste

A study of households in Bhopal city, India has found links between sustainable consumption and prevailing green practices in reuse and recycling. The study looked at long-standing practices in the reuse and recycling of materials such as paper, plastic, glass, metal, textile, kitchen waste, garden waste, e-waste, and appliances, by those living in both formal and informal housing.

Practices in the lowest income, often informal, households were found to range from the reuse of cement bags for covering roofs and grain bags for doormats; to the sale of paper, metal, glass, and plastic to waste dealers. For middle and higher income households, likely to be based in formal housing, they included the sale of books to used book dealers and the donation of appliances and old jars to domestic help or needy people.

"Waste generated is mostly reused by the household itself in lower income groups, whereas it is given away for reuse and recycling by the higher income groups. The three most commonly adopted 'green practices' identified across all income groups are: first, selling (directly or indirectly) of waste that is considered to have any reuse and recycle value to waste-dealers; second, textile waste is reused again and again, recycled many times before discarding it for disposal; thirdly, reuse of plastic (PET) jars for refilling purpose in kitchens…

The practices identified for reuse and recycling are currently being practiced informally at household level. Formal recognition of such practices can promote efficient outcomes which would further help in the curbing of waste generation. As Indian households are already following green practices for managing waste, recognizing and incentivizing these practices can help in achieving sustainable consumption. The current generation of urban practitioners should learn to connect the dots in order to offer solutions to global problems from the bottom up."
www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S095965261730714X

UK

International: Ethical Values of Consumers has greatest impact on likelihood of action against multinationals

Two studies of consumers in the UK and 14 other nations, published in the Journal of Business Ethics in 2018, found that participants' ethical values had the greatest impact on their likelihood to engage in instrumental actions against multinationals, such as boycotts.

The first study surveyed 606 UK nationals, online or in person. The second surveyed 2561 individuals from 15 nations: Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, South Africa, Taiwan, UK, USA. The studies aimed for maximum heterogeneity across age, gender and income.

Both studies focused on consumers' 'instrumental actions': actions with a perceived purpose and likely outcome. Boycotts were one example, insofar as they aim to cause economic damage for the targeted multinational and thereby reduce its social capital.

Looking at consumers' likeliness to engage in instrumental action, the report concluded: "Perhaps the most important and surprising finding of our study is that societal practices seem to play less important roles than we expected." The impact of social practices represented less than 2% of the variance. The affect of age and gender was also found to be insubstantial, although both studies linked higher personal income to likeliness to engage.

The report concluded that individual ethical values played the primary role across cultural contexts. Belief in the likelihood that the action would succeed in its desired outcome was also found to have a significant impact on consumers' likeliness to engage.
www.researchgate.net/publication/323201536_Sustainable_consumption_Insights_from_the_protection_motivation_PMT_deontic_justice_DJT_and_construal_level_CLT_theories

International

Special issue of Management Decision on Sustainability and Ethical Consumerism

A ten-article special issue of Management Decision, published in 2018, focuses on current understandings in the area of sustainability and ethical consumerism and new possibilities for future research.

The range of empirical and conceptual submissions includes a range of topics from philanthropic engagement, ethical investment in corporations, collaborative framework for balancing stakeholder power and social responsibilities to responsible consumer behaviour, fair trade movement, mapping the sharing economy for sustainability, ethical product attributes, green purchase intention and the role of information in ethical consumption.

One article appearing in this special issue was of factors impacting green purchasing choices in Saudi Arabia. A study of 471 students at Northern Border University, Arar, has found a strong correlation between consumers' likeliness to make green purchasing decisions and their perception of how serious a risk global warming poses. Participants' perception of their own vulnerability to global warming's effects also played a significant role.

A strong sense of self-efficacy — belief that one could control events — was further found to be key. The study therefore concluded that "fear-appeal messages – that include strong efficacy information and threat information – are more likely to be influential." Moral outrage and moral accountability were also confirmed as significant drivers.

The psychological study primed participants to consider global warming either in abstract or immediate terms. Participants then completed a questionnaire on their purchasing decisions. The above variables – perception of risk, perception of vulnerability, sense of self-efficacy, and moral outrage and accountability – were found to be more important for the likelihood of making green purchasing decisions when students were encouraged to consider global warming in abstract terms.

The study was published in Volume 56: Issue 3 of Management Decision, which was a special issue on sustainability and ethical consumerism.

www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/MD-03-2018-949

Other News

India

Launch of global impact rating system

Impactwala, a new global impact rating system, has launched in India to help consumers make sustainable choices.

40% of those living in India are willing to pay and extra 15% for an ethical alternative. However, a study conducted by Fairtrade in the country revealed that lack of information and transparency on the sustainability of products is one of the fundamental factors that prevent Indians for buying ethical products. Impactwala seeks to address this gap.

It acts as a collaborative platform for multiple, like-minded organisations around the world. It processes and analyses the data that they contribute to create a system for rating companies' and products' sustainability. It provides information about the health, social and environmental impacts of all products at the point of purchase, and allows users to compare prices and customise impact options.

"It is our belief that as our choices become more and more sustainable, the producers and manufacturers will be compelled to bring sustainable products to the market and produce sustainably. In a world, where our choices are driven by mindless consumerism, Impactwala empowers consumers to demand ethical products and manufacturers to unflinchingly provide them. It envisions to initiate a societal revolution towards a more sustainable and ethical future."

Books

Ethical Consumption: Practices and Identities, a realist approach

Routledge has published Ethical Consumption: Practices and Identities, a realist approach, by Yana Manyukhina. The book is a sociological contribution to the field of consumer studies. Taking a critical realist approach, it consists of sections on theorising the ethical consumer and studying the ethical consumer, in the context of a growing movement towards and main-streaming of ethical consumption around the world. In particular, the book seeks to provide an account of "how ethical consumer identities emerge, evolve and materialise" through what is broadly conceived to be more responsible consumer behaviour.[1]

[1] Manyukhina, Y., 'Introduction', Ethical Consumption: Practices and Identities, a realist approach, Routledge (2018)

The SAGE Handbook of Consumer Culture

SAGE Publications has published The SAGE Handbook of Consumer Culture. The collection of essays offer an interdisciplinary perspective on how the complexities of consumer culture are addressed by a variety of academic disciplines, from sociology, anthropology, history to media studies, material studies and business/marketing. The book includes six discreet sections:
• Part 1: Sociology of Consumption
• Part 2: Geographies of Consumer Culture
• Part 3: Consumer Culture Studies in Marketing
• Part 4: Consumer Culture in Media and Cultural Studies
• Part 5: Material Cultures of Consumption
• Part 6: The Politics of Consumer Culture

In the final section, authors look at the concept of consumer-citizens; the politics of consumption under neoliberalism; sustainable consumption and the politics of the megatrend; and consumption and nationalism. Other chapters dealing with consumer ethics include 'Spaces of (Consumer) Resistance' and 'Contesting Understandings of Contestation: Rethinking Perspectives on Activism'.

Societal Transformation, Social Innovation and Sustainable Consumption

Routledge has also published Societal Transformation, Social Innovation and Sustainable Consumption: Research and Action for Societal Transformation, in association with SCORAI Studies in Sustainable Consumption. Edited by academics from five European universities, the collection looks at "strategic policies for and processes of societal transformation, which are required to address the challenge of sustainability." It provides:
• in-depth discussions at the nexus of sustainable consumption, social innovation and social transformation, highlighting their significance to sustainability-related policy and practice;
• detailed case studies of social innovation in energy, food, housing and policy which illustrate emerging practice and promising policy, business and civil society interventions; and
• critical reflections and commentaries on the contribution of social innovation to societal transformation.

The collection includes chapters on more specific topics including the sharing economy, community energy, community agriculture, and co-housing.