Green Governance and Energy Use
Neoliberalism in search of the "responsible citizen" and the practices of the UK carbon economy

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Awarding institution:
King's College London

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Green Governance and Energy Use: Neoliberalism in search of the "responsible citizen" and the practices of the UK carbon economy

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February 2018

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography

School of Social Science and Public Policy

King's College London
Abstract

The United Kingdom has one of the most antiquated housing stocks within the EU, which each year is responsible for a staggering percentage of the UK's total energy consumption. This project analyses the politics and ‘everyday practices’—at both the institutional and individual level of the UK’s shift in policy towards neoliberal environmental governance focused around free choice and voluntarism. Marking a substantial deviation from traditional forms of policy, this shift aims to help reduce the UK carbon footprint in line with legally binding emissions targets. Situated within the broad confines of research and theorisations of geographies of care and responsibility, the neoliberalisation of sustainability through the so-called ‘carbon economy’, depoliticisation and social justice, this project seeks to explore the complicated issues of morally responsible action and human agency with regards to behaviour. This project aims to move away from theories of reasoned action in order to take a more complete view of environmental consumption and its determinants. Rather than viewing consumption as entirely deliberate or determined by circumstance, environmentally relevant action may be viewed as a function of a series of causally-linked external and internal factors including physical structures, social institutions and economic forces (external), and general and specific attitudes and beliefs, information and behavioural intentions (internal). Using the example of the UK’s Green Deal and Energy Performance Certificates, I present a detailed examination of the more mundane practices of ethical consumption that occur on a daily basis yet are frequently overlooked while evaluating empirical examples of neoliberal governance highlighting why some have succeeded while others have failed. I argue for the importance of research aimed at further exploring the relationship between internal and external factors and the barriers to the creation of a Foucauldian self-fulfilled “sustainable citizen” so that we may better understand the practices of everyday consumption and sustainability and how neoliberal methods of governance exert power on the individual.
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Episteme
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To what extent is neoliberal policy an appropriate method for tackling issues of injustice and energy efficiency?

How do issues of scale and spatiality impact on attempts at creating a self-governing form of citizen-consumer?

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Free choice isn't free – voluntary neoliberal forms of governance are a gamble, not a certainty
Neoliberalism is questionable in terms of its ability to formulate an ethics of care and responsibility.  

Behaviour and consumption must be properly situated in the social, economic cultural and structural context in which it operates.  

Understanding what matters to the individual is key in changing behaviour and patterns of consumption.  

One of the best ways to learn is through doing.  

### 8.3 Areas for future research  

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<th>Meaning</th>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>Energy Efficiency Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERT</td>
<td>Carbon Emissions Reductions Target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CESP</td>
<td>Community Energy Savings Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPCs</td>
<td>Energy Performance Certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECO</td>
<td>Energy Company Obligations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HHCRO</td>
<td>Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (part of ECO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERO</td>
<td>Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation (part of ECO)</td>
</tr>
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<td>NAO</td>
<td>National Audit Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECC</td>
<td>Department of Energy and Climate Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFGEM</td>
<td>Office of Gas and Electricity Markets</td>
</tr>
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<td>HoC</td>
<td>House of Commons</td>
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<tr>
<td>WREN</td>
<td>Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network</td>
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<td>ONS</td>
<td>Office for National Statistics</td>
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I will keep this short and sweet. I would like to thank:

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Professor Mike Goodman (my supervisor), I cannot express enough how grateful I am to you for your input and help throughout this thesis. I have gone through some tough times both medically and personally during this thesis and you have always been patient, supportive and understanding and I will never forget it! I could not have asked for a better supervisor!

My partner, Hooky. We were unfortunate enough to have been born on opposite sides of the world and because of that we were forced to spend long periods apart throughout this time. I am so grateful to you for sticking with me through these tough times and I am on my way to you now! I love you!

Last but not least, I dedicate this thesis to my parents, you are the best parents anyone could ever hope for. You are kind, caring and all around wonderful people. Words cannot express my admiration for you both. I love you so much!
We are living as if we have an extra planet at our disposal. We are using 50 per cent more resources than the Earth can sustainably produce and unless we change course, that number will grow fast – by 2030 even two planets will not be enough. - Jim Leape, Director General of WWF International, Living Planet Report, 2012

To me, there’s one word at the heart of all this, and that is responsibility. We need people to take more responsibility. We need people to act more responsibly, because if you take any problem in our country and you just think: ‘Well, what can the government do to sort it out?’, that is only ever going to be half of the answer. - David Cameron in his speech on Big Society, Feb, 2011

With the UK aiming to reduce emissions by 80% of 1990 levels by the year 2050 (Climate Change Act, 2008), it is clear that there must be key policy changes to reach this goal. In the case the UK, one of the biggest problem areas with regards to carbon dioxide emissions is the residential sector or the “housing stock” and its excessive energy usage. With estimates placing residential energy consumption at as much as 40% of the European Union total (Petersdorff et Al. 2006) it becomes evident that this is a major area of concern for policy-makers. When one combines this with the fact that Britain has an exceedingly antiquated and poorly insulated housing stocks (Sunikka, 2005) then a significant area for improvement becomes apparent.

With this goal in mind, the British government has sought to apply an increasingly neoliberal approach to governance based around the creation of what Bell (2005) terms environmental citizenship. While it is difficult to specify when this trend arose, Wheeler (2013) notes how the privatisation of public services under the Thatcher government served to provide a springboard for a redefinition of the consumer and their role within society. More recently, the coalition government under David Cameron have also attempted to outline the increasingly responsibilised role that the individual must play within society in order to tackle common problems.

As a result, new and varying methods of governing are coming to light which aim to
reintroduce the individual as an active participant within a framework of sustainable green governance where through our actions and increasingly, our consumption, we may instrumentalise aspects of our behaviour in pursuit of greater-than-self objectives.

Whether it is possible however to reconcile concepts of environmental citizenship and duty with consumption is a topic of some ambiguity (Soper, 2007; Campbell, 2004). There is now an increasing body of literature (Shove, 2010, 2011; Reckwitz, 2002, Shove and Walker, 2010) noting how behaviour is not as previously thought rationally determined by a combination of values, attitudes and information. In many cases, it is undertaken at an alarmingly low level of reflexivity throwing into question the potential of a more neoliberal form of environmental governance. Therefore, relying on individuals to take voluntary action no matter how incentivised it may appear bears substantial risk. Given this, I set out to explore the implications of a shift in policy towards neoliberal forms of governance aimed at the creation of the sustainable citizen and the personal, social, political and circumstantial factors that account for current practice in terms of the residential consumption of energy within the United Kingdom. I will examine relevant empirical examples of these neoliberal forms of governance in an effort to determine why some were successful while others were not and the implications this has for policy-making going forwards.

In this chapter, I begin by contextualising this study and the shifting nature of public policy within the United Kingdom. Initially, I seek to explore the main mechanisms through which the British government is seeking to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock. With neoliberal policies including the Green Deal, EPCs and ECO representing the dominant manner in which the British government seeks to pursue environmental goals, I will explore how these might be seen to represent the creation of the sustainable citizen. I argue that traditional methods of looking at behaviour such as information deficit models are increasingly problematic and therefore, attempts to understand behaviour and interactions of power should be increasingly considered in terms of governmentality in an attempt to avoid overstating the rational nature of behaviour. I propose that in order to evaluate this issue, it is necessary to examine how at an empirical level, governmental power is enacted upon the individual and the way in which behaviour is subsequently performed as a result.

I conclude by setting out a rationale for this research and outlining the contents of the remaining chapters in the thesis.
1.1 – Neoliberal energy governance: Introducing the UK approach

Contemporary forms of environmental governance have evolved significantly within a UK context over the past 15 years. In this section, I highlight recent historical methods of tackling energy efficiency before outlining the policies through which the government has sought to change how they tackle this issue. This is crucial as these policies will serve as the case studies and real world reference points for all empirical chapters in this thesis. As such, developing a basic understanding of how said policies function, what their goals may be seen to be and the way in which they have altered the policy landscape within the UK is critical with regards to the work in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

I start by using a table below to introduce the relevant policies both historically and currently before explaining them in more detail below. (Source: Ofgem.gov.UK)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Period of activity</th>
<th>What did it do?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency Commitment 1</td>
<td>2002-2005</td>
<td>Required all energy suppliers covering more than a certain amount of homes to achieve energy savings through customers homes of 62 TWh with 50% of savings targeting a priority group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Efficiency Commitment 2</td>
<td>2005-2008</td>
<td>Same as EEC1 except doubled the targets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Energy Saving Program</td>
<td>1 October 2009 – 31 December 2012</td>
<td>Obligation for energy suppliers to provide 19.25 Mt CO2 savings to domestic consumers living in specific low income areas of Britain. Achieved 16.31 Mt CO2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Green Deal</td>
<td>1 January 2013 – July 2015</td>
<td>Obliged energy suppliers to provide Pay-as-you-save loans for home energy efficiency to consumers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Company Obligations</td>
<td>April 2013 – April 2017 (to be continued by ECO2t)</td>
<td>Tackles fuel poverty by obligating energy suppliers to provide grants and energy efficiency measures to vulnerable and low income households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Performance Certificates</td>
<td>Legislation introduced in 2002 – Present</td>
<td>Obliges anyone selling, renting or building a property to provide an in-depth eco-label of the energy efficiency of the property to prospective buyers which includes measures which can be undertaken to limit energy use and expected spend.</td>
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A brief history of UK attempts at tackling the energy efficiency of dwellings

Starting in 2002, the government introduced the original Energy Efficiency Commitment (Ofgem, 2013). This would represent the main way in which issues of energy efficiency would be dealt with at a federal level until the introduction of the Green Deal. The Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) introduced a requirement that all energy suppliers covering more than a certain number of homes had to achieve energy savings of 62 TWh (Ofgem, 2002) with half of these savings targeting a “priority group” (Ofgem, 2002, p.1) highlighting the EEC's role as both an environmental and socially focused program (Ofgem, 2002). As such, energy suppliers were given an obligation to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of their customers based on government targets. This could be achieved through insulation, lighting, heating or appliances and was monitored by Ofgem.

At the end of the scheme in 2005, EEC one was replaced by EEC two which doubled the targets for energy savings and ran for another three years. While targets increased, very little was done in terms of radically altering the design of the policy.

At the end of EEC two, the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) was introduced and ran from 2008-2012 at which point it was replaced by the Green Deal (Ofgem, 2013). During this time the Community Energy Savings Programme also ran which focused on providing measures to low income households. CERT achieved around 297 Mt CO2 savings in its lifetime and once again, focused on the obligation of energy suppliers to help reduce the amount of energy used by their customers with failures for compliance potentially resulting in fines at the discretion of Ofgem.
Enter 2013 and the Green Deal. With previous energy efficiency schemes such as CERT and CESP being scrapped, this represented a new era for how the British government was intent on tackling the issue of poor energy efficiency in homes. To quote the then Secretary of State for Energy and Climate change “The Green Deal [was a] revolutionary programme to bring our buildings up to date (DECC, 2010).”

Marking a new way in which the British government did business increasingly based around the notion of austerity, keeping costs down and leveraging the economic might of the private sector, the Green Deal aimed to “revolutionise (DECC, 2010, p.5)” how energy efficiency was portrayed.

At the heart of the Governments plan was a new and supposedly innovative financing mechanism under which consumers could pay for energy efficiency upgrades through the savings on bills. The way this worked was that customers would have a Green Deal assessment performed by an accredited objective advisor for a small fee which would calculate their expected energy need and then based on this calculated energy need, would estimate how much you could save by undertaking specific measures. If the measure allowed you to save as much as it cost within a certain time frame, this met what was known as the “Golden Rule” (DECC, 2010). At this point, a Green Deal accredited installer would undertake the work which would be financed by a Green Deal Provider. You would then continue paying your estimated energy need with any savings generated paying back the finance package with interest.

**Figure 1.1**

The Green Deal came with additional measures such as protection for vulnerable customers if they were unable to meet repayments with protections extended to make Green Deal repayments equivalent to any normal energy payments with regards to one's rights.

The result of this was hoped to be a policy where consumer demand for lower energy bills and increased efficiency would lead to a large scale take up of Green Deal packages and
subsequently large scale energy savings. It was at its core a voluntary policy as it required individuals to voluntarily engage with the scheme with the incentive for participation being the long term financial savings that one could expect to materialise.

Unfortunately for the government, the British population and for the environment, the Green Deal turned out to be a failure with a National Audit Office (2016) report finding that at around £17,000 per property it represented poor value for money and as such, it was scrapped in 2015. Despite the energy companies shouldering a large amount of the burden, the cost to the taxpayer was still estimated at around £400m with £154m coming from the Green Deal Home Improvement fund (a scheme that was introduced to offer cash grants to try to kick-start the popularity of the scheme). This led to Meg Hillier, chair of the public accounts committee to state “The Department of Energy and Climate Change has been flying blind when it comes to implementing the Green Deal and energy company obligation … The schemes have cost over £3bn to date, but the department has achieved little energy savings compared to previous schemes.” (Guardian, 2016)

The fact that only 14,000 homes took advantage of Green Deal finance coupled with the meagre carbon savings compared to previous schemes highlights the significant nature of the problem. As such, part of this thesis deals with the ways in which the Green Deal failed and although it was scrapped during my PhD, this does not mean useful information cannot be garnered from it in terms of attempts to transform individuals into citizen-consumers.

**Energy Company Obligations (ECO)**

In addition to the Green Deal, the Energy Company Obligations were introduced simultaneously. ECO was specifically targeted around fuel poverty and is the main source of funding for those suffering from fuel poverty since the Green Deal was introduced. It may be seen as a more direct continuation from previous schemes as it outlines the obligations of energy companies to increase energy efficiency for those who are most vulnerable (DECC 2010). Designed so that “everyone can share in the British energy efficiency transformation (DECC, 2010, p.15), ECO (which unlike the Green Deal still exists) may be consumed alongside a Green Deal finance package or independently. As noted, ECO was designed to tackle fuel poverty and help those on low incomes. If one qualified, then one could receive funding from ECO providers which unlike the Green Deal were not loans but grants. ECO is heavily tied to the Green Deal in that if one failed to meet the criteria for ECO funding, the Green Deal was the next available alternative.

ECO came with multiple separate obligations such as the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation aimed at tackling insulation for low income and vulnerable households, the Carbon
Emissions Reduction Obligation and the Carbon Saving Communities Obligation which targeted measures at people living in the bottom 25% of the UK's most deprived areas by income.

ECO much like the Green Deal, despite its goal of targeting the most vulnerable still relied on those in need seeking out assistance which was not always simple as highlighted by this text from the Energy Saving Trust's website on ECO.

“There are complex eligibility criteria for this scheme, based on income, receipt of benefits and status of the household. Call Home Energy Scotland on 0808 xxx-xxxx to check whether you are eligible.” (referring to the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation of ECO).

While ECO has saved far less than previous schemes performing a similar function (NAO, 2016) it treated 1.4 million homes over the period of the Green Deal as opposed to the 14,000 under the Green Deal itself.

**Energy Performance Certificates**

The final policy which I wish to introduce is the Energy Performance Certificate System. In 2002, the European Parliament and Council implemented the directive “On The Energy Performance of Buildings” (DIRECTIVE 2002/91/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL). The aim of this directive was simply put to reduce the energy use of existing buildings, ensure energy efficient construction and to reduce the overall energy use of the EU building stock. In pursuit of this goal, there were several main requirements in the directive. These included harmonising energy calculation methods, regulations for new construction and retrofits, required inspections for large heating/cooling systems, and most importantly in the case of this thesis, the requirement for any new or existing building upon sale, rental or construction to have an Energy Performance Certificate to be presented to the buyer or tenant which must be awarded by independent and qualified experts and be no more than 10 years old. (Sunikka, 2005).

As such, energy performance certificates may effectively be seen as an eco-label for housing with some additional extras. Working on an A-G (Gov.uk) scale the Energy Performance Certificate or EPC, rates the overall efficiency of a property in terms of energy taking into account things such as heating, lighting, insulation and materials. This is meant to provide information for potential buyers or tenants allowing them to not only avoid the most egregious of offenders in terms of poor energy efficiency but also to understand what options are available to them in the future in addition to estimates of likely energy spend. This highlights the second major part of an EPC in that in
addition to outlining the energy efficiency of a property, it also provides information aimed at encouraging action. The EPC will tell an individual which parts of a property can be upgraded, how much it will cost and then how much they are likely to save as a result of undertaking said upgrade. Previously, it also served to inform individuals whether or not said upgrade was covered under the Green Deal.

Eco-labelling schemes such as the EPCs bring two main goals (Kratz, 2005; Dosi et al. 1998). Primarily, they serve to correct information asymmetries (Mitra and Lynch, 2005) and to reduce uncertainty (Kolman and Prakash, 2001)(Porter and Van der Linde 1995). This allows the consumer to make more enlightened or informed decisions taking into account the true cost of a good or what can be referred to as the social cost of the good as opposed to simply its monetary cost. The second goal/benefit is that they serve to reduce the environmental impact of an economy by leading consumers towards goods with a lower social cost.

In the next section, I introduce the way in which policy has evolved before noting some of the core issues with an increasingly neoliberal form of governance and energy policy.

1.2 - A new way – the turn of neoliberal approaches to governance

Castree (2010) notes seven main characteristics of neoliberalism as a policy discourse. These are privatisation, marketisation, state roll-back or deregulation, market friendly regulation, use of market proxies in the residual state sector, strong encouragement of flanking mechanisms in civil society and most importantly, the creation of free, self-sufficient and self-governing individuals and communities. In the case of the Green Deal, EPCs and ECO, it is not hard to see how it bears many of the key traits of neoliberalism as a policy discourse. By aiming to leverage the economic force of the private sector, energy efficiency is being treated as an increasingly technical issue which can be solved by adjusting market prices resulting in a form of self-governing citizen who acts and consumes in line with government objectives.

As Giddens (1991) notes, in the case of an increasingly neoliberal view of society, individuals are considered to operate as reflexive subjects, able to select their own identities rather than those traditionally associated with a specific nation or class (Hinton, 2011). This means that power is no longer purely disciplinary however but is enacted through what Foucault (2001) labels coercion and persuasion including by those operating outside the state (Hinton, 2011).

This new approach to the transfer of political power comes with certain issues. As power is no longer purely disciplinary and lacks the authoritative dimension of times past, the way in which power is enacted becomes far more complicated. Power now becomes increasingly discursive with
a focus on how the interaction of discursive regimes, systems of practice and external conditions interact to form a sense of individual responsibility. As the individual can no longer be forced to engage in specific behaviours, it becomes crucial to find a way to transfer power that enables the individual to behave in a manner concurrent with the objectives of those governing without requiring them to directly.

As Noxolo et al (2011) note, contemporary notions of responsibility come with certain issues. These include the fact that responsibility might be ascribed yet not practised and also that its imputed agency might make it possible that agency is usurped by those in a position of privilege (Noxolo et al, 2011). The crucial point to take from this though is that contemporary government no longer comes with a notion of certainty seen with traditional forms of government.

By failing to understand how power is enacted and through what means, neoliberal forms of policy based around the concept of individual agency risk falling flat on their face so to speak such as in the case of the Green Deal. Given the risks of failing to achieve desired goals when dealing with issues such as climate change, the significant importance of properly understanding how power is transferred within a neoliberal environment becomes apparent. As such, the focus of this thesis is on understanding how neoliberal forms of policy serve to transfer power and persuade individuals to adopt a notion of citizenship and behaviour in line with policy goals.

**Governmentality and neoliberal policy**

While acknowledging the significant contribution previous research has made to this field, the research in this thesis will seek to address the critique by Mitchell (2006, p.390), “that, despite the theoretical call for detailed, in-depth analyses of the circulation of power in multiple empirical sites and despite the intellectual heritage of Foucault, most studies of governmentality are generally abstracted from actually existing subjects and spaces (Frankel, 1997; Larner, 2000; O'Malley, 1996).” Given that, this study will empirically examine the Green Deal, EPCs and ECO in order to establish their potential with regards to their ability to create new discursive regimes, solve problems of energy inefficiency and inequality, and also crucially the way they interact with regimes of practice. It will engage with the ways in which power is enacted and circulated at an individual level focusing on the ways in which individuals engage with policy based around notions of governance and choice.

As noted, one of the key aspects regarding a more contemporary neoliberal form of governing is the introduction of choice. As noted by Clarke (2010), choice has become central to
the public policy debate within the United Kingdom and is often seen as a way of injecting accountability into the public sector. There has been some debate however as highlighted by Barnett et al. (2013) about the degree over which ethical forms of consumption as encouraged by the Green Deal represent the substitution of private acts of consumer choice with new forms of collective political action and as such, the effectiveness of neoliberal forms of governing is of key interest to this study. Therefore, this study will focus on key topics such as geographies of care, responsibility and justice amongst others in an effort to evaluate how neoliberal governance impacts on individual choice and to what extent these choices are made under the guise of the selfish consumer as opposed to the enlightened politically participating citizen.

It will focus on how these issues interact with “habits (in the sense of self-actuating dispositions) and routines (as sequences of action); the dynamics of everyday life; social relations; material culture; socio-technical systems; cultural conventions; and shared understandings of cultural and technical competence (Evans et al. 2012, p.144).” It will attempt to not only consider the methods of governmentality being used but also the discursive regimes being formulated and how these impact on the ability of policy to achieve its goals.

In short, this thesis focuses around the new neoliberal forms of environmental governance that are increasingly prevalent such as the Green Deal and the way that they attempt to leverage new techniques of governmentality to create an enlightened citizen-consumer. I identify barriers to the transfer of power under neoliberal governance and seek to identify ways in which empirical examples of policies serve to construct the sustainable self governing citizen. In the next section, I will present a rationale for the research, list the aims, objectives and research questions and present an overview of the forthcoming chapters in the thesis.

1.3 – Rationale for study

Energy use and energy efficiency as noted above is absolutely crucial when it comes to limiting our over-using of natural resources. As noted previously, some estimates place residential energy consumption at as much as 40% of the European Union total (Petersdorff et Al. 2006). As highlighted by forthcoming chart outlining final energy consumption by sector within the UK, we see that not only is the domestic sector one of the highest consuming sectors within the UK but unlike for example the industrial sector, residential energy consumption has remained relatively stable over the past 50 years with the most notable drop in recent times coinciding with a massive rise in price (HoC Briefing Paper, Energy Prices, 2016).
While it should be noted that population has increased over this time by around 17% (DBEIS, 2016), it is clear that this remains an area of significant worry. This is highlighted by the fact that in 2014, as much as 16% of the UK housing stock was built prior to 1919 (DBEIS, 2016).

To deal with the apparent energy inefficiency experienced by the UK housing stock, several main policies have been put in place. Initially, we have the Energy Performance Certificate system whereby any property rented or sold must come with a certificate detailing the energy performance of the dwelling. The idea behind this was twofold in that it aimed to tie house prices to energy efficiency by divulging a more accurate representation of the long term costs of a dwelling thus theoretically making less efficient houses less desirable and to alleviate feelings of helplessness by providing a clear breakdown of which aspects of a property's energy use could be improved and what this would mean financially. The EU left the use of follow-up mechanisms to the EPCs up to national governments and in the case of the UK, the British Government decided to link the EPCs to a policy as know as the “Green Deal.” Both serve somewhat different purposes in practical terms in that the EPC system is primarily aimed at providing information to facilitate informed decisions/demonstrate possibilities and is somewhat of an enhanced eco-label similar to that found on a whole host of other products. The Green Deal meanwhile is primarily aimed at being an enabling tool for such improvements to take place (although it does have an initial assessment stage...
similar to an EPC if required). This “revolutionary” policy (as deemed by the coalition government) is designed to remove the financial burden of investment in energy efficient technologies and therefore remove what many see as the primary barrier to action in investing in said technologies. As noted in the explanation of the Green Deal, through loans on technologies installed by government accredited suppliers, people may reduce their energy bills and then pay back the loan via savings on the bill at a rate of no more than they were originally paying. While the practical applications of the two policies are moderately different, one focused on information and one on finance, the overarching goal of the two policies remains almost identical which is providing people with the tools and information necessary to make consumption decisions that are aligned with policy goals through the creation of “responsible citizens,” whom when put together will turn the mass of individuals into a labour force of sorts all working towards the goal of sustainability. A variety of criticisms have been levelled at these policies however (Dowson et al, 2012; Guertler et al, 2013). Changing the behaviour of a large number of diverse individuals is an incredibly taxing task for a single nationwide policy and many attribute the apparent failure of these polices to their unwillingness to take into account the social and political context in which they operate. With the Green Deal fully behind us, its rather staggering failure has helped to demonstrate the potential validity of these criticisms with many claiming a return to simple command and control based policies are a necessity given the impending severity of the ecological crisis that we face.

For this reason, this project will focus on the key social, political and situational aspects of environmental behaviour and the ways we are asked to be responsibilised. As such this thesis will analyse the politics and “everyday practices” - at both an institutional and individual level of the UK’s “Green Deal”, Energy Company Obligations and Energy Performance Certificates in an attempt to determine the effectiveness of this substantial policy shift towards neoliberal governmentality. This thesis will be situated within the broader confines of research and theorisation of the green economy (Bakker, 2010; Peck and Tickel, 2002), governmentality(Mitchell, 2006; Rutherford 2007) and the responsibilisation of the individual (Soper, 2007; Campbell 2004), the neo-liberalisation of sustainability through the privatisation and marketisation of risk and care (Lawson, 2007; Popke, 2006; Cox 2010), and social justice (Agyeman et al., 2002). In addition to this while there has been a handful of studies on constituent parts of the Green Deal (Booth and Chodhary, 2013; Dowson et al, 2012; Rosenow and Eyre, 2013; Guertler, 2012), as far as I am aware, to date there has been very minimal sustained research into the political, practical and scholarly implications of the Green Deal, the coalition governments
flagship environmental policy.

The project has four separate but tightly related chapters, all of which make significant contributions to the practices of sustainability in a neo-liberal era. They will each examine a different attempt at neoliberal environmental governance through a common lens of care, responsibility, social justice and depoliticisation.

The first chapter will analyse the loans provided by the Green Deal to homeowners designed to reduce the carbon footprint of dwellings through a series of energy saving strategies. Issues surrounding the privatisation of care will be analysed examining how this represents a loss of accountability on the part of the government and the implications for the individual. It will examine the ways in which the Green Deal generates an ethics of care and sense of responsibility amongst its recipients and the implications this has for levels of energy usage.

The second chapter explores the provision of Energy Performance Certificates for dwellings being rented or sold. While essentially eco-labels, aimed at influencing consumption choices based on the provision of environmental information, the scale of the purchase both in terms of price and carbon dioxide generated highlights their importance. This section will engage with questions of “choice” and “voluntarism” and their impact on energy usage and the purchase of energy efficient properties. It will examine the ways in which EPCs foster a sense of care and responsibility in potential buyers/renters while examining how the constriction of choice reinforces inequalities.

The third chapter will analyse how the reduction of fuel poverty has been orchestrated in terms of the Green Deal. With the reduction in fuel poverty a major objective of the Green Deal yet also one of the most highly contested in terms of its ability to deliver, this will focus on ways that fuel poverty has been constructed, measured and understood by the government in attempts to eradicate it. With the shift towards a more neoliberal and individual method of tackling fuel poverty, one must also postulate that those who are less educated or less able may be likely to suffer. Links will thus be drawn across questions of the politics of measurement of fuel poverty, the Green Deal and how the increasingly technical definition of fuel poverty and its subsequent depoliticisation threatens serious implications for social/environmental justice in the context of the UK’s carbon economy and its most vulnerable citizens.

The final chapter aims to analyse community led alternatives to the Green Deal and the motivation for participation. It will focus on signs of the development of a grass-roots “alternative energy sector” based around Foucauldian practices of “fulfilment of the self” and “green citizenship” in neo-liberal society. Under a Foucauldian notion of governmentality, we must seek to understand reasons for the success or failures of government policy to encourage responsible
citizenship and the ways in which techniques of governmentality are enacted at an empirical level in order to facilitate transfers of power and governing. This chapter will address how differing geographical levels of scale impact on the ability of policies and initiatives to foster a sense of care and responsibility. This section will also seek to address the critiques of studies of governmentality highlighted by Mitchell (2006, p.390), Raco (2003) and Rutherford (2007) just to name a few, stating that studies of governmentality tend to involve abstract theoretical approaches rather than empirical examples of how power is enacted at different spatial levels.

I believe that the significance of the research lies in the potential “real” contributions to the wide scale reduction of UK carbon emissions through policies such as the Green Deal, ECO and EPCs and the development of future environmental policy, specifically in terms of this increasing trend towards neoliberalism. With seemingly more and more government policies aimed at the motivation and encouragement of responsible individual behaviour; governmentality as opposed to government is rapidly becoming the dominant means of pursuing environmental protection. While there are clear advantages to having a motivated public who understand why they undertake environmentally motivated actions, the success of current schemes suggests it may be somewhat naïve to think that behaviour may be altered so easily. Throughout this paper, I will therefore seek to examine the questionable impact that this trend is having in terms of efforts to ensure sustainable development and consumption. This project will also make significant scholarly contributions to theorisations of practices of the carbon economy, of the “everydayness of sustainability,” sustainable consumption and affective economies under regimes of state-led neoliberalism. This project will also make significant scholarly contributions to geographies of care and responsibility, the “everydayness of sustainability”, social justice, the depoliticisation of consumption and civic life in addition to sustainable consumption and affective economies under regimes of state-led neoliberalism. Focusing on topics such as the ability of policies to generate an ethics of care and a sense of responsibility regarding consumption, values and behaviour, voluntarism and structuralism and the constricted nature of choice, theories of neoliberal citizenship and consumption, and social justice and exclusion, this project will analyse the shift towards governmentality using a multi-disciplinary approach. While I wish to highlight the criticism of inter-disciplinary work as noted by Shove (2010) that it may serve to obscure different problematisations of an issue, I believe through acknowledging this fact, it is possible to some extent to remember that rather than trying to provide a unified theory, inter-disciplinary work in this context seeks to highlight how an understanding of the large range of problematisations of the issue of energy use and residential energy governance is key given how seemingly related they are. Given the profoundly interdependent nature of the
constitution of sustainable consumption in terms of both the personal (psychological), the social, the political and the situational combined with the apparent lack of previous thorough interdisciplinary work on this subject, I believe there is great potential to develop a more complete theory of environmental consumption and behaviour with regards to energy governance. While a fairly substantial volume of work exists with regards to the separate disciplines, I believe that individually, they are incomplete and by viewing them as constituent parts all exerting influence both individually and as part of a wider practice, it will provide new insight and depth. In addition to this, it will also work to develop a methodological/theoretical lens that works to specifically link up energy use to the wider political economies of sustainability.

To summarise this study can be seen to be about the future of our planet if green governance and sustainability in the UK are undertaken through choice. It makes an empirical contribution to the topics of neoliberal energy governance, governmentality, the everydayness of sustainability, social justice, regimes of practice, and geographies of care and responsibility. Furthermore, it also seeks to make a contribution to the potential “real” reductions of carbon emissions within a UK context through the empirical study of key environmental policies and residential energy governance through undertaking an inter-disciplinary approach which recognises both the individual and combined validity of its constituent disciplines. From here, I will now set out the aims, objectives and research questions of this study before providing an overview of the remaining chapters and the content within.
1.4 – Aims, objectives and research questions

The aim of this study is to explore the implications of an increasingly neoliberal approach to tackling environmental issues based around personal choice and the creation of the self-governing sustainable citizen. Below, I outline the specific research questions examined in pursuit of this goal.

**Objective of thesis:** To determine the implications of engaging climate change through neoliberal policies focused around personal choice and the individualisation of responsibility.

**RQ1:** In what ways is an ethics of care and responsibility generated under the Green Deal?

**RQ2:** What are the implications of an increasingly privatised form of care under neoliberal regimes of governance?

**RQ3:** To what extent can a new form of neoliberal paternalism overcome the irrational nature of behaviour and consumption in pursuit of ecological modernisation?

**RQ4:** How does the constriction of “free” choice influence the effectiveness of the Energy Performance Certificate system and what does this imply for neoliberal policy based around voluntarism and market mechanisms?

**RQ5:** What are the implications of an increasingly technical definition which depoliticises the issue of fuel poverty, with regards to justice, exclusion and energy efficiency?

**RQ6:** To what extent is neoliberal policy an appropriate method for tackling issues of injustice and energy efficiency?

**RQ7:** How do issues of scale and spatiality impact on attempts at creating a self-governing form of citizen-consumer?

**RQ8:** How are issues of climate change and energy efficiency made relevant in the case of alternatives to the Green Deal?
1.5 - Overview of chapters

In **chapter two**, I review the literature relating to this thesis. This will engage primarily with concepts of neoliberal governance and governmentality, social justice, care and responsibility, values and behaviour, and green citizenship in an attempt to set out a theoretical framework for the study. I consider this literature and develop an understanding of the ways in which neoliberal modes of governance attempt to enact power on the individual and the issues this brings up. I outline how given the irrational and unpredictable nature of behaviour, attempting to create a national level sustainable citizen might be seen as ambitious and I explore the ways in which neoliberal governance seeks to use techniques of governmentality in order to achieve its political objectives.

In **chapter three**, I outline the methodological approach taken in this thesis. I set out my approach to data collection based around semi-structured interviews and the analysis of secondary data sources in addition to seeking advice and information from relevant experts within the political and academic community. I explore my reasoning for the way in which the research was undertaken in addition to outlining the limits of the research and subsequent results.

In **chapter four**, I focus on the Green Deal and issues of care and responsibility. With climate change representing a new challenge with regards to policy given the inconspicuous nature of its consequences, I examine how an ethics of care does or does not form around trans-boundary environmental issues. Drawing on the literature on geographies of care and responsibility, I argue that the lack of relational connections present with regards to trans-boundary issues in combination with the exceedingly low level of reflexivity under which most everyday tasks are performed means that it is exceedingly difficult to generate a sense of care when dealing with the environment and climate change. I discuss how behaviours can be constrained both in terms of the physical or institutional landscape in which they are located and also in terms of the emotional and affective responses they trigger and that it is crucial to understand behaviour in a manner which does not overstate the rational nature of consumption. As such, I conclude that based on the research undertaken in this chapter, neoliberal forms of governance must take into account the ways in which care and responsibility are ascribed and normalised within the social space in which these policies operate. They must move beyond a rational understanding of behaviour and seek to re-politicise the consumption based activities which they seek to encourage in order to be truly effective. This chapter makes contributions to geographies of care and responsibility including the difference
between caring for and caring about, neoliberal governmentality and the increased role of the private sector in public policy, and the ways through which consumption may generate meaning.

In chapter five, I focus on Energy Performance Certificates and their ability to alter behaviour under a framework of ecological modernisation and new paternalism. Drawing on literature from paternalism, values and following on from the work on care and responsibility, I explore the ways in which our behaviour is constrained by our values, our attitudes, our situation, and how this interacts with the transfer of power present under regimes of neoliberal governance. In addition to this, I focus on the concept of ecological modernisation undertaken at an individual level, evaluating the logic that through capitalist growth and the consumption of “better” technologies, we can reduce material costs and increase energy efficiency and environmental protection. I argue that issues surrounding behaviour limit the effectiveness of neoliberal forms of governance given the tendency of individuals to behave in ways which cannot be foreseen. I highlight the different way that policies such as the EPC are perceived by the public relative to the governments intention and the implications this has. I argue that despite the best intentions of a new form of libertarian paternalism and nudging, people cannot be relied upon to reduce energy consumption even under perfect conditions and as such the way in which people consume technology for example may serve to limit the potential of ecological modernisation. I argue that policies such as the EPC are overly narrow and fail to materialise a sense of injustice or trigger a sense of social normality, care and responsibility within individuals. I argue for the contradictory nature of tackling issues of sustainability with neoliberal market mechanisms given the inherently constrained nature of the choices we make while highlighting issues of justice based around those with the most resources being able to consume more resources at a lower average price. This chapter makes contributions to work on values and behaviour, neoliberalism and choice, social justice and geographies of care and responsibility.

In chapter six, I focus on the issue of fuel poverty within the United Kingdom and how the depoliticisation of the issue with a tendency to view fuel poverty in overly technical terms has limited our ability to reach those in need. I briefly outline previous attempts to tackle fuel poverty in the context of the United Kingdom before going on to explore how the concept of fuel poverty and who is in need of help is being increasingly depoliticised and with what implications. I argue that through the depoliticisation of the issue, exclusion of vulnerable individuals is exacerbated as in many cases, those in need are indeed vulnerable and already increasingly disconnected from the political process. I argue that by failing to take into account the importance of behaviour with
regards to fuel poverty we are not only missing out on one of the core drivers of fuel poverty but also one of the most cost effective ways to treat it. Finally, I seek to examine the practices of fuel poverty in an attempt to better assess the nature of fuel poverty before drawing conclusions on the appropriateness of neoliberalism for tackling fuel poverty and issues of equity. I conclude that as noted above, neoliberalism's tendency to assume needs can be expressed through markets is overly simplistic and the result is that many sufferers of fuel poverty both fail to understand their situation, the rights they have and what they can do about it. As such moving forwards there must be increased efforts with regards to framing fuel poverty as an issue of recognising the rights of vulnerable members of society in addition to increasing their ability to be genuine participants in the political process as it appears clear that policymakers currently have a questionable grasp on the nature of what it means to suffer from fuel poverty and vulnerability. This chapter makes contributions to the politics of measurement, issues of social justice and exclusion and the nature of vulnerability with regards to neoliberalism.

In chapter seven, I focus on issues of green neoliberal governmentality, sustainable citizenship and more successful empirical examples of alternatives to the Green Deal. I aim to explore issues surrounding the use of neoliberal policy in an attempt to create a self-governing sustainable citizen. Furthermore, using criteria developed by Legg (2005) originating from the work of Rose (1996), Dean (1999) and Hindess (Dean and Hindess, 1998) I will attempt to evaluate the Green Deal and community led alternatives with regards to techniques of governmentality and the identification of forms of government (Legg, 2005). I argue that issues of scale and spatiality are key when evaluating empirical examples of the enactment of power and governmentality and that results may differ greatly depending at which spatial level power is applied. I argue that grass roots approaches to sustainable citizenship may be seen to be increasingly likely to succeed given the abundance of pre-existing affective connections able to be leveraged to create to a genuine sense of community and that government policies tend to ignore this, failing to understand the importance of subjectification and the ability of individuals to frame their actions in terms of relevant discourses of environmentalism and sustainability. I conclude that seeking to use techniques of neoliberal governmentality in an attempt to create the responsible “citizen-consumer” while not always effective, may have some form of potential, however it is crucial to pay attention to the geographical and spatial level at which this occurs and how the issue of climate change is made relevant with regards to everyday engagements. Unlike the Green Deal, these alternatives were successful due to their ability to form a genuine sense of care and feelings of responsibility within the space in which they operate. By leveraging these pre-existing connections, issues of
sustainability and energy consumption were re-politicised and a discourse was created around which a successful policy could be constructed. This chapter makes contributions to the empirical study of the circulation of power and governmentality, neoliberal citizenship and geographies of scale.

In chapter eight, I conclude the findings to my research. I summarise the contributions I have made to the literature and set out the key findings of my empirical chapters in relation to the research questions and objectives. Finally, I present a series of suggestions for policymakers with regards to the design and implementation of future policy and suggest potential avenues of interest for further research.
2. Neoliberal governance and the sustainable citizen: a review of the literature

As we have seen, neoliberal forms of governing and governance are reshaping the way in which environmental protection and the overconsumption of natural resources are tackled. From a system of government centric command and control style legislation, the consumer has been reinvented as a point for the application of power and the new labour force for sustainability (Wheeler, 2013). Despite the newfound importance with regards to techniques of governmentality and governance and the way power is enacted upon the individual, governments still tend to overstate the rational nature of behaviour and consumption ignoring the new and evolving ways behaviour is theorised.

In this thesis, I work with themes such as geographies of care, responsibility, environmental behaviour, neoliberal citizenship and governmentality to explore the ways in which power is enacted on individuals in empirical examples in order to enable new and neoliberal forms of governance with regards to energy use. Before moving on to the empirical chapters however, I engage with several key bodies of literature. These are geographies of care and responsibility including theories of emotion and affect, neoliberal paternalism, values and behaviour, and neoliberal governmentality and citizenship. I have chosen these topics in order to form a base from which to evaluate empirical examples of neoliberal environmental policy within the current day United Kingdom. These topics serve two key purposes in that they engage with debates on both the nature of neoliberalism and the ways in which environmental behaviour is determined allowing us to anticipate and evaluate the impact of relevant policies on the individual. While I will engage additional literatures in the empirical chapters in order to go into a greater level of detail with regards to specific topics, this chapter is crucial to understand the bodies of work which form the literary basis for this thesis and to contextualise issues explored within this thesis with regards to relevant debates.

While all being distinct areas of research, I believe that these categories are crucial with regards to answering the research questions put forward in this thesis and are tightly related. The first section on geographies of care and responsibility is key as this explores the ways in which connections are formed including in an increasingly globalised and neoliberal world and the way in
which care is constructed. With the consequences of contemporary environmental problems often exceedingly inconspicuous, forging meaningful connections based around our common dependency on the environment is an area of significant challenge. This is key as I will argue in this thesis that based on this literature, our ability to forge meaningful emotions connections within a space impacts on our ability to alter behaviour and as such new forms of governance which fail to establish said connections are likely to be less effective. It is therefore crucial to understand how affect and emotion functions in addition to how an ethics of care is constructed and generated.

The second section deals with the irrational nature of behaviour. I argue that there is a strong tendency for governments to overstate the rational nature of behaviour and consumption when in reality, it is constrained by a range of factors. This section will seek to examine in particular issues around values and behaviour in an attempt to understand how values impact on behaviour. Furthermore, this section will focus on introducing the concept of the everydayness of sustainability which will highlight the low level of reflexivity under which much energy consumption occurs and what this implies for neoliberal policies aimed at tackling the overconsumption of energy.

The third section will introduce ecological modernisation and explore the logic under which neoliberal ideals are translated into sustainability. I argue that while ecological modernisation bears some promise and is clearly very appealing given its adherence to the status quo in terms of consumption and quality of life, there are multiple factors based on the previous literature in sections on geographies of care and responsibility and values and behaviour that raise significant issues for ecological modernisation as a policy tool. I also introduce concepts of neoliberal paternalism based around choice and voluntarism leading into the final section.

The final section will deal with issues of neoliberal green governance and governmentality and will examine the techniques which neoliberal forms of governance use to enact power explored in chapters five and seven. This will introduce concepts of ecological modernisation and most importantly, neoliberal consumer based citizenship which will examine the way in which attempts at neoliberal governance aim to encourage the creation of the sustainable citizen who understands their civic duty to others and the environment and therefore consumes in line with policy objectives as is desired by the Green Deal, EPCs and ECO.

2.1 Forging connections – geographies of care and responsibility

In this section, I introduce the concepts of geographies of care and emotion. As Slocum (2004) notes, one of the main issues when attempting to motivate action when dealing with
contemporary environmental issues is the fact that there is a lack of a clear cause and effect relationship in addition to a lack of tangible relations. As such global efforts to tackle climate change are often based around the desire to make climate change relevant to people therefore inspiring political action (Slocum 2004, p.413). Slocum for example highlights the Cities for Climate Protection campaign which deals with (appropriately for this thesis) energy efficient light-bulbs. By trying to extol the virtues of energy saving bulbs with regards to cost savings and the financial benefits of energy efficiency, this program aims to bring climate change closer to home. Despite this, generating an ethics of care is not always as simple as just pointing out something which you think that people can relate to. What is crucial is our ability to forge meaningful connections within a space of high affective potential. As such, drawing heavily on feminist geographical works, this section will explore the way in which care is constructed and generated in the context of emotion and affect in the hope that this will highlight ways in which to empirically evaluate the success of policies in subsequent chapters of this thesis. Having an understanding of the way an ethics of care is generated and maintained is crucial given the voluntary nature of neoliberal forms of governance. In order to be successful they must find a way to motivate and engage individuals beyond traditional methods of governing.

Geographies of emotion and affect

Emotion and affect are interesting concepts when studying geography for several reasons. These include but are not limited to the fact that emotion and affect play a key role in interpreting social interactions and culture (Bondi, 2005) in addition to determining what meaning and sense of self we are able to create through consumption. In addition to this affect and emotion are emerging within a range of other debates (Thien, 2005). These include the influence of critical and feminist debates about rationality and critiques of master narratives, a greater interest in the body as discursive (following Foucault), as phenomenological (Merleau-Ponty) or hyperreal (Baudrillard).

While often used interchangeably, affect and emotion are two distinct concepts (Bondi, 2005), distinguished by the level of consciousness at which they occur. Affect focuses of the ‘how’ of emotions, looking at the trans-personal nature of affect and the capacity of bodies (and the spaces in-between them) to affect and be affected (Pile, 2010; Thien, 2005). Affect, originates primarily out of psychological writings (Thien, 2005) with Freud using it (often loosely) to refer to instincts, drives and emotions in his early work on the unconscious. Matthis (2000) then continued to develop this notion of affect drawing on Freud's “An outline of psycho-analysis.” She suggests that affect “is a matrix that encompasses both feelings and emotions” and therefore is a “higher order”
level of organisation (Thien, 2005 p.451). Following on from this, Sedgwick and Frank (2003, p.19) have defined affect as an “immediate instrumentality” and states that affect has greater freedom regarding “time, aim, and object and can be attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions and any number of other things including other affects.” Massumi (2002, p.35,) goes on to describe affect as a “virtual synthetic perspectives anchored in the actually existing, particular things that embody them.” This highlights the key point that affect serves as a link between cognitive pathways albeit before reflection of the full cognitive process can occur. Finally, Giardini (1999) describes affect as the “qualitative expression of our drives.”

To simplify this, affect may be seen as the potential to be affected by something. Unlike emotions which are social and feelings which are personal, affects are “prepersonal” (Shouse 2005, p.1). As such it is the “prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act.” As such, affect bears a distinct similarity to potential energy in physics in that it determines the potential for action. Affect is also inherently pre-cognitive. This is in distinct contrast to feelings which can be formed knowingly and related to past experiences and to emotion, which is the social manifestation of feeling. Unlike emotion and feelings, affect can also be trans-personal as it deals with not only the capacity of bodies but also the spaces in-between them to affect and be affected. This can at times be confusing however as given its relational nature and the way it is charged with social meanings, it can also be viewed as deeply personal (Hemmings, 2005; Thien, 2004). Thrift (2004) thus uses the metaphor of a series of “pipes and cables” which serve to manipulate social interactions and create new emotional geographies.

Geographies of affect are not without issue however. Given that affect occurs in the realm of the non-cognitive and therefore cannot be known or represented it can be exceedingly difficult for affective geographers to convey the extent of their research without it losing context (Pile, 2010). This is one of the fundamental problems within what is known as non-representational theory championed by authors such as Thrift, McCormack and Dewsbury.

Ontologically speaking, non-representational theory highlights how the world is “emergent from a range of spatial processes whose power is not dependent upon their crossing a threshold of contemplative cognition (McCormack, 2003 p.488).” Similarly, it “challenges the epistemological priority of representations as the grounds of sense-making or as the means by which to recover information from the world” (Doel 1999; Dewsbury 2000; Harrison 2000; Thrift 2000; Thrift and Dewsbury 2000; Dewsbury et al. 2002; McCormack 2002; Wylie 2002 (quoted from McCormack, 2003,p.488)). It is therefore important to hold everyday, personalized, emotional experience at a distance (Bondi, 2005).
Emotion is somewhat simpler to classify in that emotion is simply the cognitive response to affective drivers (McCormack, 2003). Despite this, McCormack (2003, p.494) is keen to clarify that emotion is not simply “an outward expressive representation of some inner subjective reality” and that they cannot be traced back to some affectual precondition (Pile, 2010) as emotions reflect not just ones pre-cognitive affect but also the social context in which they operate. Bondi et al (2005) further this point, claiming that in order to maintain its critical edge, geographers must view emotion as both relational and personal and as connecting researchers to their subjects.

While the literature dealing with geographies of emotion and affect can get somewhat complicated, the key points to take from it relating to this thesis are that affect is precognitive and similar to physical potential energy (the higher the affective potential, the greater then potential effects of an interaction occurring within a space) and that emotion is social. What this means with regards to this thesis is that crucially as noted, affect works not only between individuals but also within spaces. Therefore in order for behaviour change to occur or action to occur, interactions must occur within a space of reasonable affective potential as affect refers at its simplest level to our ability to be moved by something. While in the case of something with high affective potential it is still possible to fail to motivate change if once an issue becomes framed and normalised, it counteracts our affective responses, in an area of low affective potential, there is almost no possibility for change as we essentially fail to care. What this means is that anything aiming to engender change must be able to elicit some form of precognitive response and this can be seen as affective potential. Therefore to encourage a sense of care between two individuals or within a space, there must be a certain level of affective potential.

**Geographies of care and responsibility**

As noted, care and caring can be seen to be highly related to affect and emotion given that an increased level of affective potential is increasingly likely to motivate a sense of care. Over the last decade in geography, there has been a significant trend occurring in terms of the framing of contemporary issues around an ethics of care and responsibility combined with the geography and politics of emotion and affect. The concept of care and geographies of care are vital with regards to this thesis given how “the affective power of a body is understood in terms of its capacity to form relations with other bodies” (McCormack, 2007 p.367; Woodward and Lee, 2010). What this means to some extent is that the potential of policies such as the Green Deal or EPC relies on our ability to form meaningful relations within a space or put more simply, our ability to care.

While the majority of the work tends to be focused towards either care and responsibility or
emotion and affect, the two have become increasingly prevalent in geographers attempts to understand and engage in environmentally beneficial behaviour and in this case, the act or practice of consumption. With the concepts of emotion and care gaining momentum in the realm of geography and specifically within the realm of consumption, this thesis will seek to explore questions such as why and for whom do we care (Smith, 1998), spaces and places of care or “care-scapes” as they are sometimes called (McKie et al. (2002)), and the politics of emotion as a social interaction shaping care and the relationship between care givers and receivers (Barnett et al., 2005; McEwan and Goodman, 2010; Pile, 2010; Noxolo et al, 2011).

The literature surrounding geographies of care and responsibility highlights multiple ways in which care and responsibility are both theorised and practised (Cox, 2010). While there probably exists a whole variety of ways in which care exists and is theorised about, there are two which seem to be more prevalent than others in an academic sense. The first deals with the ethics of care in the more traditional sense of an individual or group viewed as weak or unable to support themselves such as the young, the sick or the old (Lawson, 2007). Secondly, we have care framed in a far more abstract sense in terms of for whom we are responsible for and for what reason? This frequently revolves around the concept of distance be it both physical or emotional. For the sake of this thesis it is most definitely the latter definition that is the most interesting. Following on from work by authors such as Lawson (2007), McEwan and Goodman (2010), Cox (2010), Massey (2004) and Milligan and Davidson (2004) and combined with the literature on emotion and affect, new opportunities are arising in terms of studying care in terms of core geographical themes such as place, space and how within these theoretical constructs, the social is shaping our notions of care. Be it in terms of power, inequality or the interaction between various individuals or groups in society research on care has become heavily linked to geography with Goodman and McEwan (2010 p.109) even going so far as to say that “care is fundamentally geographical in its production, development, reception, and, now, consumption.” There are however other authors whom for the sake of this paper make a very valid point in stating that geography's interest in care is a not a fundamentally new phenomenon, highlighting that the recent extension of market mechanisms and a shift of responsibility and care from the public to the private is what is causing the illusion of change (Lawson, 2007). Indeed Lawson sees these new spaces of care or “care-scapes” as the key area of opportunity for geographers.

In days gone by, care was considered more of a directly attributable service to one individual or group caring for another, be it the elderly, the sick for example (Lawson, 2007). Today however care has evolved, largely due to the work of feminist geographers, to a somewhat all encompassing concept which is less of an action and more of a relation or link to our fellow human beings and the
environment (Popke, 2006; Goodman and McEwan, 2010; Smith, 2005; Staeheli and Brown, 2003).

As is common within geography the basis of the formation of ethics of care and responsibility is formed within defined places/spaces (although these can exist at almost any level from a household to a nation to globally) through the social interactions, power struggles and inequalities that occur within. Care can thus be seen as having a highly charged and political nature with Cox (2010 p.113) stating the care is “political both in terms of its current organization, which can support and enhance inequalities, and in terms of the possibilities it offers to counter dominant discourses of individualism, independence and competition.” Ultimately then, it is the relationships formed via these political processes through which care and responsibilities are formed. While responsibility is “inherently agentic” (Noxolo et al, 2011) it is linked to practice via “morally-mediated sequences.” As such relationships are interpreted, be it under a guise of reciprocity, guilt, or trust with the ascription of responsibility usually based on previous actions (Noxolo et al, 2011). It is important to note however that responsibility does not necessarily rely on a particular action and can be ascribed to practice either before, while or after an action takes place (Noxolo et al, 2011). Therefore, via the creation and interpretation of relationships developed within the “care-scape,” responsibilities are ascribed based on the socially validated norms of the care-scape and ultimately failure to act in accordance with established relationships of responsibility may be seen as irresponsible. Noxolo et al. (2011) also highlight how this force serves to explain how the moral pull of geographies of responsibility functions as a call to action.

Cox (2010) and Lawson (2007) highlight how the multiple ways that care is theorised and practised represents a considerable problem for policies such as the Green Deal or EPCs explored in this thesis. This is due to what Lawson (2007) terms partiality. Values such as responsibility and empathy which are required for an ethics of care, are most easily motivated in places or spaces well known to us in which we have tangible connections (Lawson, 2007). As such, human nature dictates to some extent that we naturally care for those closest to us (physically or socially) starting with friends and family and diminishing from there. This is highlighted by Popke (2006, p.507) who claims that “if relations of care are affective, embodied and relational, then an ethics arising out of this would seem to be necessarily partial and situational, holding only for those with whom we have some immediate contact and familiarity.” This means that given the nature of climate change and energy consumption as an area of low visibility without a clear cause and effect relationship or even any form of tangible connection between those consuming and those feeling the effects of consumption in some cases, that forging an ethics of care may be exceedingly difficult. Therefore one of the key questions when dealing with issues such as climate change and care is in what way is it possible to generate an ethics of care with regards to climate change and issues
surrounding the overconsumption of energy?

While much work has attempted to cover the ethics of care and the concept of caring at a distance (Smith, 1998, 2000, 2002; Cox, 2010; Popke, 2006; Massey, 2004; McEwan and Goodman, 2010; Lawson, 2007) the low affective potential of certain carescapes given the lack of relations make this incredibly difficult. In this case as Slocum (2004) notes, the focus may shift towards generating an ethics of care which remains relational yet not necessarily leveraging the relationship between those directly affected by consumption. The focus then becomes on what Demeritt (1998) terms making climate change relevant to various publics. This approach focuses around building an ethics of care based upon framing climate change around pre-existing relationships which are able to be exploited yet do not necessarily relate to the issue of climate change or its consequences (Slocum, 2004).

Caring at a distance: making climate change relevant

In his paper on aid chains, Silk (2004, p.229) sums this up quite eloquently noting how “To care for distant strangers is to extend the geographical, psychological and political scope of a universal human activity. Traditionally associated with the territorially restricted family and community and limited to interaction with known others, caring now routinely extends beyond such geographical and emotional ranges.” He goes on to note that as societies and communities become increasingly stretched, it becomes illogical to assume moral boundaries should be limited to everyday communities. Slocum (2004) echoes these concerns, noting how climate change is in a unique position in this regard. With Taylor (1997, p.151) pointing out that “most people do not have problems of a global nature,” the means of making climate change relevant (Demeritt, 1998) is a key issue. This is made doubly hard by the fact as as Slocum (2004) notes one of the main ways in which issues are made relevant is through facts or discourses which may be seen as objective. Unfortunately however, objectivity is often only found within homogeneous communities often experienced at local scales (Slocum, 2004).

As Silk (2004) notes, from our family to our friends to our countrymen, we for the most part, will defend and stick up for those with some connection to us regardless of how seemingly meaningless that connection may be. This leads to some significant challenges with regards to using an ethics of care in geographic inquiry (Popke, 2006). Starting with David Smith's (1998) work entitled How far should we care? a wide range of literature has sprung up on the topic (Smith, 1998, 2000, 2002; Cox, 2010; Popke, 2006; Massey, 2004; McEwan and Goodman, 2010; Lawson, 2007). If then as Popke (2006, p.507) claims that “relations of care are affective, embodied and
relational, then an ethics arising out of this would seem to be necessarily partial and situational, holding only for those with whom we have some immediate contact and familiarity.” This leads on to the issue that Smith (2000) points out when he notes that any advocates of an ethics of care need to consider how to spin their web of relations widely enough to reach out to all potential recipients. To further this point, Massey (2004) notes how that in order to foster any form of ethical consumption it is crucial to understand space as relational. Space here can be defined as the “product of social relations” which continually evolves both locally and over distance. Space in this case may also be referred to under the umbrella of “carescapes” which refers to the extent through which the actions of one party are experienced by another within a geographic and social location (Massey, 2000, p.282).

With the invention of the internet and the onset of the digital age it is clear that forming relationships on a global scale is easier than ever before as connections never before possible are achieved. The question thus shifts to one of can this global building of relationships keep pace with the speed of some of the more negative aspects of globalisation such as the transboundary nature of pollution or vast income disparities between the global north and south. One such case which seems to be a positive example of how this can happen are Fair Trade products. As noted by Goodman and Bryant (2004) Fair Trade products use product labelling and associated literature to form a connection or relationship between the producer or the consumer. Ultimately by using these mechanisms they increase what I shall call “visibility” which in turn creates an affective space and invokes feelings towards the producers. As Smith notes (1998) it is about establishing a sense of intimacy that facilitates a caring relationship usually associated with face-to-face contact.

The consumption of energy and energy related products in the UK however is particularly unique and troublesome in a several key ways. Initially, unlike Fair Trade products, consumption of poor quality products is typically felt by those outside of the market. Whereas me purchasing fruit grown at unfairly low prices will harm producers in the third world, the impact of consuming energy inefficient light bulbs will be felt by the entire population of the planet. Not only this but energy use can be viewed as inconspicuous consumption so unlike a car or purchasing something in a public location which may serve to symbolise my commitment to the environment in a manner that can elevate me above my peers through a process referred to as “ethical-selving,” (Varul, 2008) a light-bulb cannot. Energy use and the consumption of energy related products and appliances thus suffers from poor visibility in two crucial areas. Primarily there is no visual connection between my consumption and the impacts on those who suffer for it and secondly, the inconspicuous nature of the consumption prevents me from using it to gain any sort of social standing. Unfortunately, given that “the affective power of a body is understood in terms of its capacity to form relations
with other bodies” (McCormack, 2007 p.367; Woodward and Lee, 2010), the fact that few relationships exist within this space and that there are no obvious opportunities for kick-starting said relationships, it would therefore seem that the affective potential of this particular care-scape and the bodies within it is limited. Not only this, but given the inconspicuous and everyday nature of the consumption in question, there seems minimal chance of evoking any sort of strong affect or feelings through the personal experience of the consumption itself.

The privatisation of care

This brings us on to the shifting nature of how care is distributed. This is something which has significant implications for energy governance and indeed the future of public policy. A significant change that has occurred recently and is still occurring with regards to care, as highlighted by the sections above, is that governments are increasingly shifting the distribution of care to the private domain while reducing the burden on the state. To fit in with neoliberal tendencies, care is ceasing to become a matter for governments and is practised via the realm of consumption (Wilson, 2005, see Lawson, 2007). In a sense, we are seeing a shift towards a Foucauldian notion of governmentality. While this will be discussed in detail in further chapters, governmentality may be seen in its simplest form as “mentalities of government” or an examination or contemplation of how we govern (Dean, 2010). It is an attempt through “more or less calculated and rational activity” (Dean, 2010, p.18) undertaken by a range of authorities and agencies both in and out of government to influence the population to act in accordance with the governments concrete but ever shifting policy goals.

By shifting towards this neoliberal form of governance, what is essentially occurring is that consumption is being moved out of the realm of leisure and individuality and into the realm of the social and labour in what Wheeler (2013) calls “consumption work.” This relies heavily on the notion of what Penner (2002) calls “volunteerism” which essentially equates to the use of volunteer labour. As such, governments in an attempt to steer society and transition to a desirable end state, start to infuse consumption with the notions of care and responsibility thus turning consumption into a form of labour aimed at accomplishing a governments objectives. We now know that our consumption has consequences and are constantly told to consume in such a way as to benefit others as well as ourselves whether it is buying electric cars or recycled paper.

As a result, the new way in which we are able to express our opinions, to be political and to care for each other becomes through consumption. Meanwhile the government essentially turns the entire population into a labour force acting benevolently in line with the governments wishes albeit
with a certain degree of independence. This leads to a certain dilemma however depending on one's view of behaviour as if one tends to give credence to a more structuralist or non-representational view of behaviour, one typically associates consumption as being a constituent part of a larger practice with individual acts of consumption often happening under very low levels of discursive consciousness. As such the idea of generating a unifying practice of caring through consumption seems somewhat optimistic.

What this essentially boils down to is through the manipulation of markets and policies, there has been an increased focus from the state towards persuading people to act as discrete and autonomous actors for the collective good (Bickerstaff and Walker, 2002). As Giddens (1991) points out, there has been a more general tendency towards individualisation, whereby traditional social constraints are loosened and things which were previously fixed become matters of choice and responsibility with official reports now presenting a world in need of total citizen participation where knowledge should affect decisions and change routines (Myers and Macnaghten, 1998). Despite this, individuals continue to refer to environmental problems in a general societal sense thus absolving individual blame (Bickerstaff and Walker, 2002). People often refuse responsibility for “global problems” as they believe governments or other individuals are better placed to deal with such issues (Clarke, 2008; Barnett and Land, 2007; Hobson, 2006; Barnett et al, 2007).

Energy governance is a prime example of the indicators of this shift as outlined by Lawson (2007), these being market extensions, pervasive discourses of personal responsibilities and the withdrawal of public support and funds from many crucial areas. As Lawson (2007) notes, traditional care ethics questions what may be seen as the core principles of neoliberalism such as individualism, competition and the notion of a correct price for everything and rejects that care has been “privatized as opposed to politicised” (Wilson, 2005 p.21). This leads to a further separation from ascribing responsibilities to western neoliberalism and the creation of global inequalities as environmental issues as responsibilities are increasingly focused on individuals thus discounting other scales (Lawson, 2007).

While this is in contrast to some political scientists (Clarke, 2008) who see markets as political arenas and consumers as citizens, it does highlight certain opportunities. Clarke (2008) highlights how consumption can be organised and mobilised by social movements and other organisations so that it becomes a method of registering commitments. Sywngedouw (2005) notes an issue with this however in that it lacks the socially agreed rules of government of “one person, one vote,” by allowing the rich to register increased commitment. As such, the concept of using consumption as a means of distributing care and politicising the role of the consumer is highly at risk of serving to increase or create new inequalities both globally and locally. Clarke (2008) does
however note the potential in political consumption as he claims it has a low-threshold to entry and can therefore be attractive to non-traditional groups such as women. It also serves to raise consciousness and trust among citizens. It is important to note as well that some authors believe that everyday consumption is already imbued with practices of care and responsibility (Miller, 2001). While the care Miller refers to is typically local and highly personal such as a mother caring for her child through consumption of healthy foods for example, brands such as Fair Trade do show under the right conditions a willingness to consume ethically and to bridge the gap between consumers and producers is possible.

It is also important to note that linking care with consumption and the commodification of care may have negative impacts such as the framing of care as a domain of the wealthy (Goodman and McEwan, 2010).

To summarise, the key points to be taken from the literature with regards to an ethics of care and geographies of care are that care is inherently political and relational, is dependent on the affective potential of bodies or the space (care-scape) in which it operates and in the case of energy consumption and climate change is exceedingly problematic. If one views a sense of care to be a necessary precursor for behaviour change based around the understanding of the inequalities of consumption and production which are exposed through forming relationships within other bodies within a given space, then policies such as the Green Deal or EPCs face a significant challenge.

In this thesis, I explore the ways in which the empirical examples being studied attempt to motivate an ethics of care and seek to situate subjects within a discourse of sustainability and a sense of responsibility to our fellow humans and the environment. I examine the ways in which the Green Deal, EPCs and grass roots alternatives try to forge relations within a given space and leverage said relations in pursuit of tackling climate change and how the nature of climate change is restrictive with regards to these objectives.

2.2 – The irrational nature of behaviour: values, behaviour and the everydayness of sustainability

One of the reasons that generating an ethics of care relating to the environment and energy use is so difficult is the exceedingly irrational nature of behaviour. While many people state pro-environmental intentions and values when questioned, there is a general consensus that these stated intentions often fail to translate to reality (Barr, 2006; Schott and Osbaldiston, 2012; Schultz et al., 2005; Lane and Potter, 2006; and many more). In Schultz et al (2005) for example, they note how a
number of polls suggest that environmental problems are considered globally amongst the most important social problems of the day (Dunlap, 1991; Dunlap, Gallup, & Gallup, 1993; Kempton, Boster, & Hartley, 1995) yet the environment is well known as an area of difficulty in terms of making legitimate progress in terms of behaviour.

For obvious reasons this is problematic and becomes increasingly exacerbated by the onset of neoliberalism favouring policies which are fundamentally voluntary in nature such as those in this thesis. With the consequences of failing to curb excessive consumption literally catastrophic, understanding the fact that people claim to care or state an intention to act then do nothing is something which is of vital importance with regards to environmental policy. It is therefore crucial for neoliberal policymakers to understand the ways in which behaviour is constructed and when people will respond to stimuli positively and when they will ignore it so to speak or find themselves constrained.

Given this, before examining the Green Deal, EPCs and ECO in the empirical chapters, it is first necessary to examine the literature regarding behaviour and consumption. This will be divided into two sections. Initially, I will examine the work on values and behaviour. With a significant gap being noted between values and behaviour, this section will seek to explore the ways in which values serve to influence behaviour/consumption and some of the reasons why such a gap occurs. The next section will deal with the everydayness of sustainability and how this interacts with the neoliberal concept of consuming ethics (Barnett, 2005). Given that so much environmentally damaging behaviour (such as energy use) is relatively habitual, this may be seen to limit the potential different interventions have to interact with it (Bardi and Schwartz, 2003). This section will explore how the everyday nature of energy consumption impacts on efforts to alter behaviour and what this means for policies.

Values and Behaviour

Initially, I will define the key points of values and how they serve to influence behaviour. As Torelli et al, (2009, p.231) note, “values are conceptions of desirable end states that reflect what is important to us in our lives (Feather, 1990, 1995; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990).” Unlike norms and attitudes (which are expressive and cognitively established ways of responding to situations) they are hierarchically organised in terms of importance to the self and transcend specific situations, being abstract in nature (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003; Feather, 1990, 1995; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987, 1990). They are motivational constructs that involve the beliefs people hold about desirable outcomes and they can be applied to situations across contexts and time through the
framing of issues or situations (Schwartz, 1992). Given this, Torelli et al. (2009, p.231) argue that “the strength of the value–behaviour relation is affected by the accessibility of cognitive operations, or mindsets (see Gollwitzer, 1996), that facilitate (or impair) defining a situation in terms of relevant values (e.g., as one in which social justice is involved).” Therefore in a perfect world devoid of external stimuli, “The values that people hold would affect their initiation of new goal-directed activities, the degree of effort that they put into an activity, how long they persist at an activity in the face of alternative activities, the choices they make between alternative activities, the way they construe situations, and how they feel when an activity is undertaken either successfully or unsuccessfully according to the standards that are set” (Feather, 1992, p.112).

Furthermore, values may be intrinsic or extrinsic (Crompton et al, 2010) with intrinsic values based around a sense of community, affiliation to friends and family and self-development whereas extrinsic values are based around others perception of the self and relate to factors such as wealth and power. Other ways of looking at this include self-transcendent versus self-enhancement values, openness to change versus conservation or self-interest vs common-interest (Crompton et al, 2010). While one set of values tends to be dominant, it is incorrect however to think of someone as only possessing one of the two sets and it is instead better to think of one as dominant and the other as more dormant.

To illustrate this, Schwartz (2009) lays out 10 fundamental values, these being self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence and universalism which can be categorised into groups such as self-enhancement, openness to change, self-transcendence and conservation.

Values are resistant to change but are still evolving. A number of factors help to shape and form values such as society, gender, age, education, parents, culture as well as a range of attitudinal variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust in institutions, attitudes toward ethical dilemmas, toward the environment, sexism, religiosity, and identification with one’s nation or group. Unsurprisingly, intrinsic values are typically associated with pro-environmental behaviour as opposed to extrinsic (Crompton et al, 2010). Extrinsic values can lead to pro-environmental behaviour due to some environmental products being status symbols or being cost effective but this serves to frame environmental issues in an extrinsic manner and thus lower general concern which can be problematic and damaging to future scenarios. It is thus also logical that values bear a close relationship to affect and affective potential. Given that much like affect, values appear to be predominantly pre-cognitive, the affective potential of a body is somewhat dependent on its values. Therefore when I find myself presented with a situation, the affective experience is likely to be generated by my core abstract values whereas my subsequent feelings and
emotions are more likely to be shaped by my attitudes as these are considered discursively. What is crucial here is that values are no guarantee of any specific form of pro-environmental behaviour. No matter how strong one's values are, there is always the chance that circumstances prevent you from activating certain values with regards to specific situations. The stronger the values you hold however and the more accessible they are, the greater the affective potential of a space and therefore while we should not rely on appealing to intrinsic values in the case of energy consumption, we should understand that stronger intrinsic values increases the potential for change.

The everydayness of sustainability

The everydayness of sustainability (Shove, 2003) is highly relevant with regards to values as it highlights one of the main reasons why our values fail to align with our behaviours to some extent in that energy consumption and other environmentally damaging behaviour is often habitual in nature and therefore performed at an exceedingly low level of discursive consciousness. As such, it's often performed in a sub-optimal manner which fails to imbue consumption practices with care. To explore this further, this section will examine the concept of practice theory in an effort to highlight the ways in which behaviour may be seen to be somewhat irrational and structurally constrained as noted above.

There are two dominant theories with regards, to everyday consumption and sustainability. The first is the theory of reasoned action (Azjen and Fishbein 1980) which, works on an information deficit model (Burgess et al. 1998) and perhaps lends itself more to the concept of ethical consumption than its alternative. The alternative, is known as practice theory and is re-emerging in consumer studies (Shove and Pantzar, 2005; Warde, 2005). While I do not wish to devote too much time to practice theory, I believe it is still important to mention with regards to neoliberal environmental policies given that practice theory is an attempt to move away from what Shove (2010) calls the A+B+C model of behaviour which views the individual as a deliberate consumer with attitudes influencing behaviour and personal choice viewed as inherent to consumption. It instead pertains that the majority of environmental decision-making and consumption occurs at what may be termed an “everyday” level or more precisely, an inconspicuous level (Shove and Warde, 2003) where the symbolic and communicative aspects of consumption are attributed less importance with unreflexive and ordinary consumption being the focus. Another explanation of sorts is offered by Evans et al. (2012, p.144) who note that practice theory “views unsustainable patterns of consumption as embedded in the social ordering of practices. In doing so, conceptual attention is paid to: habits (in the sense of self-actuating
dispositions) and routines (as sequences of action); the dynamics of everyday life; social relations; material culture; socio-technical systems; cultural conventions; and shared understandings of cultural and technical competence.”

Practice theory thus moves away from the notion of the individual as a rational agent and instead takes the view that agency and self-awareness are influenced by dispersed regimes of practice, distributed across institutions and social space (Giddens, 1991; Beck et al., 1994; Alexander, 1996). This has proved to be very useful in studying rationalities of personal conduct in the modern era where governance is increasingly varied in its distribution across society and institutions as opposed to a single dominant narrative (Binkley, 2009; Hargreaves, 2011). This moves away from Beck's (1992) notion of the “individualisation of risk” which highlights how reflexive modernization is encouraging us to adopt lower risk-thresholds and to take into account the temporality of our actions combined with the uncertain outcomes, a process which one would expect if actively followed to promote a sense of care and responsibility to others. Alexander's criticism (1996) of Beck's risk society starts to lead us towards a notion of practice theory as he claims Beck's notion of risk is utilitarian and objectivist as it is tainted by neoclassical economics and rational choice and thus does not give proper consideration to the “complex world of social life.”

2.3 – Ecological modernisation – the means to and end for neoliberal sustainability

With an increasing tendency to forgo viewing behaviour and consumption as rational casting serious doubt on the ability of policy framed around an information deficit model, it is crucial for governments to find new and innovative ways to exert political power. The Green Deal and EPCs and to a lesser extent, the ECO may well be seen as attempts with regards to this. Using market based incentives combined with the provision of information, the Green Deal and EPCs aim to encourage individuals to make the “correct” decisions without the need for concrete government interference by increasing the relative attractiveness of good behaviour. As such we see the emergence of a new method of governing increasingly framed around encouraging the individual to self-govern through consumption habits which are in line with policy objectives highlighting what Barnett et al. (2005) refer to as consuming ethics or more simply, the way in which in which ethics, morality and the politics of responsibility has been problematised under neoliberalism.

This section therefore deals with issues around the ways in which governments are attempting to achieve this goal of exerting political power through pushing an agenda of ecological modernisation using techniques of neoliberal governmentality in an attempt to create the neoliberal
citizen consumer. With the British government seemingly intent on leveraging market forces and promoting neoliberal policy ideals, I will explore the way in which ecological modernisation may be seen to offer a new way of considering environmental policy around a concept of free-market capitalism which is compatible with environmental protection. Following on from this I examine the ways in which new neoliberal forms of governance and governmentality are aiming to regulate and influence individual behaviour through the governing of the self and the creation of a new neoliberal form of citizenship framed around appropriate consumption.

**The multiple forms of ecological modernisation**

Ecological modernisation is a topic of much debate. While often cited as the means through which modern capitalism will be able to deal with the environmental crisis (Janicke, 1990, Mol, 1995), others view it as a means through which to promote neoliberal hegemony in a manner which offers capitalist solutions to capitalist problems (Pepper, 1998). Buttel (2000) takes this further highlighting how its appeal potentially lies within the fact that it “accords particularly well with a number of intellectual and broader political-economic factors, many of which lie outside the realms of sociology and environmental science.” It is a term which emerged around the mid 90's from the works of Mol, Janicke, Baker and Spaargaren amongst others (Buttel, 2000; Pepper 1998). It is based around the intertwining of the notion of sustainable development with capitalism (Pepper, 1998) and at its most basic theoretical level states that increased levels of capitalist development will lead to increased levels of environmental protection. The logic is that by developing increasingly sophisticated and technologically advanced methods of distribution and production in search of greater profits, this will invariably lead to less resource use through increased efficiency and material cost. A practical example of this may be seen as the Nordic countries who have seemingly decreased energy and material use per unit of GNP (Pepper, 1998).

Buttel (2000) notes four different ways in which ecological modernisation is deployed and utilised. The first of these is an “identifiable school of ecological modernizationist/sociological thought.” Buttel wishes to clarify that he does not view ecological modernisation as a fully fledged theory such as industrial metabolism or the treadmill of production (which are coincidentally seen to underpin ecological modernisation to some extent) given the reasonable level of disagreement surrounding it in addition to its lack of codification. As such he views it more as a thought or perspective thus embracing the plurality of the statement.

The second form of ecological modernisation Buttel (2000) brings to light is a that of a notion for depicting prevailing discourses for environmental policy. Hajer (1995) may be seen as
the main figure associated with the “political-discursive and social-constructionist perspective on ecological modernisation (Buttel 2000, p.58).” According to Hajer, ecological modernisation is less about the causal link between industrial and ecological progress and more to do with the prevailing policy discourses found in most northern nations. Hajer’s (1995) constructionist view may be seen as starkly contrasting with the “objectivism (Buttel, 2000, p.58)” of the core literature. Hajer also goes on to note how ecological modernisation as a policy discourse may serve to dilute the political impulse for environmental reforms by serving to obscure the real capabilities of capitalism and industrialism to provide a stable environment (Buttel, 2000). As such Hajer’s view is more of a counter argument to the dominant discourse of ecological modernisation and as a result is often seen to be incompatible with the concept.

The third form of ecological modernisation is a synonym for strategic environmental management or industrial ecology found in the works of Hawken (1993) and Ayres (1998) (Buttel, 2000). This refers to the notion of private sector behaviour that “simultaneously increases efficiency and minimises pollution and waste. (Buttel, 2000, p.59)” This follows the core notion of ecological modernisation with capitalist progress leading to increasing levels of environmental protection however focuses primarily on the private sector.

Finally, Buttel (2000) notes a fourth use where ecological modernisation is applied more generally to any form of policy innovation or environmental improvement such as the policies that make possible the internalisation of environmental externalities as noted by Murphy (1997).

Mol (1999) also distinguishes between first and second generation ecological modernisation. The first generation according to Mol introduces the key theme of development in a capitalist liberal democracy leading to improving ecological outcomes. The second generation however is increasingly focused on specific sociopolitical processes such as the ways in which globalisation might catalyse an ecological modernisation process in the south (Buttel, 2000).

Buttel (2000, p.60) goes on to note how the rise of ecological modernisation as a social theory stems from the increasingly apparent shortcomings of the concept of sustainability. While sustainability had been developed with regards to policy aimed toward the South and primarily dealt with non-metropolitan or rural places, ecological modernisation deals with the “transformative sectors of metropolitan regions of the advanced industrial nations.” Further more, ecological modernisation does not require a restructuring of state machinery or the landscape making it an increasingly attractive prospect to policy makers.

In the case of the Green Deal, EPCs and ECO, I am primarily concerned with the concept of ecological modernisation as a policy discourse. This is because as Buttel (2000) notes, it offers the chance for individuals to self govern and to internalise environmental externalities. While as noted,
it comes in many forms, ecological modernisation is key here in that it outlines the dominant policy approach undertaken by the British government in that it focuses around the ability of consumption and capitalism through what can be termed “better consumption” to reduce environmental degradation. Through using more efficient technologies, we are able to grow economically while simultaneously limiting our impact on the environment. Despite the promise it may appear to offer however, Pepper (1998) offers several key criticisms of ecological modernisation which are highly relevant when analysing policies such as those discussed in this thesis.

The first is the fact that there is absolutely no guarantee that increases in efficiency will decrease total resource consumption. While production may well be more efficient, the total use of resources may well increase as more and more people seek to indulge in the good life and our total demand continues to rise at a rate beyond the increase in efficiency.

Secondly, as noted by Christoff (1996, p.486), it is “weakly ecological”. This is due to the fact that it tries to monetise the environment and thus relies on technocratic elites and state control in addition to being a heavily watered down version of environmentalism based on maintaining the status quo in an already depleted world.

Finally, it is overpowering and is often conceived as the exclusive means to achievement development and sustainability without taking into account the plurality of different ways that different cultures deal with the economy and the environment. As Christoff puts it, ecological modernisation is capitalism with a greener aspect used to accommodate the deregulatory neo-liberal climate of the 70's and 80's without addressing the basic contradictions of capitalism (Pepper, 1998).

Therefore while ecological modernisation may be seen to offer the promise of a world in which business, the economy and the environment can all flourish hand in hand, we must be careful to remain vigilant about the impact of neoliberal policies aimed at increasing efficiency with regards to their real environmental impacts.

The constricted nature of behaviour

With ecological modernisation as a policy tool relying on individual action, an understanding of consumption, values and behaviour is crucial. While people constantly claim environmental motivation and a willingness to chip in, it is rare for this rhetoric to convert into action. The value-action gap as Barr (2006) notes can be conceptualised using the core element of Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) model of social behaviour which relates to stated intention and behaviour. While a significant portion of the public may declare themselves environmentally aware
and motivated, the general consensus among experts in the field (Barr, 2006; Schott and Osbaldiston, 2012; Schultz et al., 2005; Lane and Potter, 2006; and many more) is that there is a considerable divide between people's stated intentions and their values and attitudes compared to their observable behaviour. In Schultz et al (2005) for example, they note how a number of polls suggest that environmental problems are considered globally amongst the most important social problems of the day (Dunlap,1991; Dunlap, Gallup, & Gallup, 1993; Kempton, Boster, & Hartley, 1995) yet the environment is well known as an area of difficulty in terms of making legitimate progress in terms of behaviour.

While there is a certain level of consensus emerging with regards to why this occurs, the difficulty in developing a theoretical framework linking values to behaviour is evident as so many variables are in play. Despite this, understanding how values interact with behaviour is crucial when attempting to switch to a less centralised form of care promoting a sense of individual agency and responsibility.

In order to begin, I examine a range of factors which serve to influence our behaviour beyond our core set of values thus rejecting rational human agency in favour of viewing behaviour as dependent on a range of social and physical processes. I will examine both internal and external constraints on behaviour as while internal factors are commonly dealt with in psychological models, external factors are frequently omitted and as such an inter-disciplinary approach may prove extremely beneficial. This is crucial with regards to policies aimed at implementing forms of ecological modernisation as given their voluntary nature, understanding the way in which behaviour is constrained can serve to increase the effectiveness of policies. As such I wish to briefly introduce these factors as a base from which to explore notions of choice and voluntarism.

**Internal constraints**

Initially, a number of internal factors exist that explain to some extent why this gap occurs. Numerous studies (Agyeman and Kollmuss, 2002; Stern, 2000; Vlek et al., 2004) list a range of internal factors which they see as prohibiting pro-environmental behaviour in the face of pro-environmental values, these being , knowledge, awareness, attitudes, emotion, locus of control, responsibilities and priorities. Agyeman and Kollmus (2002) make a valid point that environmental knowledge is a subcategory of environmental awareness and that emotional involvement is what shapes attitudes and awareness. While this is not necessary, I do believe it to be very valid in that if one is aware of environmental issues and solutions as well as current events, there is likely to be a a far higher degree of knowledge with regards to how to address certain issues
which in turn makes one more likely to act. Furthermore, there is evidence that undertaking activities shapes and reinforces attitudes and know-how (Haron et al., 2005; Agyeman and Kollmus 2002) and therefore while one may have inherently intrinsic values which lend themselves to pro-environmental behaviour, a lack of awareness coupled with inconsistent attitudes formed via undertaking repeated extrinsic actions may limit behaviour.

Furthermore, emotional responses tend to be greater when faced with immediacy of consequences (Newhouse, 1991; Chawla, 1999) and given the indirect nature of environmental problems this can delay action.

Another key concept with regards to internal constraints regarding behaviour is how we frame the situations we experience during our daily lives. Dittmar’s (1992, see Vlek and Steg, 2009) theory on the meaning of material possessions serves to elaborate on this fact as material goods fulfil three functions, these being instrumental, symbolic and affective. As such, my ability to frame the issue in a manner that allows the activation of intrinsic values is crucial. Frames according to Lakoff (2006, p.16) “are the mental structures that allow human beings to understand reality – and sometimes to create what we take to be reality. They structure our ideas and concepts, they shape how we reason, and they even impact how we perceive and how we act.” If I thus frame my purchase of a car on purely utilitarian features such as fuel efficiency or emissions, this is far more likely to activate intrinsic values than if for example I frame cars as luxury items or status symbols.

It is important to note that it is not only individual actions or consumption behaviour that must can be framed as well but also our goals. Vlek et al. (2004) establish three key goal frames, these being hedonistic (to feel better now), gain (improve and protect resources) and a normative goal-frame (to act appropriately). Motivations as well are very rarely homogeneous and therefore if my background goals contrast to my primary goal this will weaken the strength of the focal goal. In addition, we are often not conscious of all of these motivations and as such consumption becomes increasingly complex.

A final point that should briefly be drawn on is the fact that our ability to draw the larger meaning for an event is likely to influence action. According to Torelli et al. (2009, p.232), “action identification theory holds that the identification of any action is just one choice from among many possibilities, ranging from low-level identities that specify how the action is performed to high-level identities that signify why the action is performed.” Higher level identities are more abstract and refer to general understanding or meaning whereas low-level identities refer to details of actions. Thus in the case of environmental issues which are exceedingly complex, our inability to view the more abstract nature of an action and its corresponding values may limit action (Maio & Olson,
External Constraints

Whilst internal constraints are typically more integrated into psychological models of behaviour, external constraints are crucial when it comes to understanding barriers to individual agency. External constraints to behaviour have typically been more the domain of geographers with key work on the subject coming from a range of geographic backgrounds. While there are an enormous amount present in the literature listed in varying degrees of depth, (Stern, 2000; Barr, 2006; Dietz et al., 1995; Vlek et al., 2004; Agyeman and Kollmuss, 2002) I will limit them to roughly three main categories, these being economic, social/cultural, structural/institutional. It is important to note that as mentioned, this strongly backs up the concept of practice theory and the notion of the habitus with rational choices being constrained by external factors.

Initially we have economic constraints. This refers to people who may hold pro-environmental values and attitudes yet lack the financial means to engage in certain pro-environmental behaviours. This often explains why pro-environmental values and attitudes can be seen as a better precursor for low cost (be that cost financial or otherwise) actions (Vlek and Steg, 2004). This can be doubly detrimental as often environmental products are cheaper in the long run yet require a larger initial investment. On the other hand those who have satisfied personal needs are more likely to act in a pro-environmental manner as they have more resources to care about less personal issues (Agyeman and Kollmuss, 2002).

Secondly, there is social and cultural. This is slightly more complex as it mixes both internal and external. As previously mentioned though some people's goal frame is normative in that they wish to act in a way that is acceptable in society. As Roccas (2010, p.30) points out though culture serves to moderate the relationship between values and behaviour by determining the “repertoire of normative behaviours.” Culture subsequently determines the meaning of behaviour so depending on social setting and culture, pro environmental behaviour may experience public apathy or in the worst case, condemnation. Normative pressure can have a profound effect on behaviour not just through direct pressure but also through the introduction and normalisation of new technologies and practices. While the significance of this will be tackled shortly, it should be noted that despite the nature of the sample, not one respondent noted a feeling of any significant social pressure when it comes to property purchasing, energy use and the environment.

Thirdly, there are structural/institutional factors (Maio et al., 2009; Sanne 2002). These refer to structural conditions allowing or preventing certain behaviours. While it is unlikely many
pro-environmental behaviours would be classified as illegal, some can be made more or less attractive than others for various reasons. Structuralists view behaviour as inherently constrained with Sanne (2002) noting how a consumer is no longer able to exercise free choice but is “locked in” to unsustainable consumption patterns (Haq et al, 2008). One example could be a desire to take public transport but poor provision of public transport in that area. Given this, another way to perceive this might be a combination of availability and attractiveness relative to alternatives either due to practical considerations or government policies. Another example of this might be government recycling pickups being increased or decreased thus making the act of recycling less attractive relatively speaking. Vlek and Steg (2004) also note that these contextual factors may be linked to goal framing. Normative goals for example may be strongly related to recycling when facilities are available whereas gain or hedonic goals may feature more prominently if facilities are lacking.

**New Paternalism: a nudge in the right direction**

Trying to overcome these constraints mentioned above is the concept of new or “libertarian” paternalism (Hausman and Welch, 2010). While the Energy Performance Certificate and Green Deal system may well be viewed as a either a result of or a contributing factor towards ecological modernisation, both mark a fundamental shift in UK environmental policy in terms of the neoliberalisation of sustainability and green governance in a way rarely seen before at such a scale. Gone are the previous attempts to legislate and control directly and in comes the “in theory” logical proposition that changing people's behaviour voluntarily is more conducive to long term success than forcing people to do something. While the popular definition of paternalism typically equates to restricting someone's freedoms for their own good, libertarian or new paternalism such as nudging aims to dictate to someone the most appropriate behaviour to maximise their own and societies benefits without ever constricting their choice. As we have seen from the above section however, there are numerous factors, both internal and external, that limit our ability to behave in a manner that both maximises our own utility and adheres to certain rationalities (and additionally, determining which barriers apply to whom at which scale is an exceedingly difficult task on any meaningful level). Given this, what are the implications then for a form of policy based around the concept of not restricting choice while still aiming to alter our behaviour.

In order to explore this, it is necessary to look at the concept of nudging in more detail. At its most basic level, nudging is the process of affecting someone's behaviour or decision making
without limiting their choices or as Thaler and Sunstein (2008, p.6) put it “any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people’s behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives.” The intricacies around the definition are debatable but to put it in layman’s terms, nudging is pushing someone towards a certain decision without forcing them or removing alternatives and as such may be seen as the policy embodiment of the academic concept of libertarian paternalism and to a lesser extent, the governance aspect of ecological modernisation. An example of nudging might be a shopkeeper arranging healthier foods to come before fatty foods so that more people will buy healthy foods or road markings which give a better visual representation of how fast you are going thus prompting drivers to slow down. Neither are restrictive yet both promote a certain kind of behaviour.

Nudging is a somewhat controversial topic both in terms of its morality and its effectiveness and is heavily linked to the notion of new or “libertarian paternalism (Hausman and Welch, 2010).” When I spoke to members of the governments Nudge Team as part of the research for this project and found them to be generally against the notion of paternalism with regards to nudging, academically speaking they are inseparable.

Proponents of a new paternalism such as Cass Sunstein view nudging as an area of significant promise. Nudging is “a promising foundation for bipartisanship—a way of maintaining our firm commitment to freedom of choice while also helping people make better decisions for themselves (Hausman and Welch, 2010; p. 123).” It is a way past the awkward debates that exist in modern society around topics that nobody wants to discuss. But what are the issues?

The first major issue that is frequently brought up is the morality of nudging and paternalism in general. I will only mention this briefly given that it is not of major concern to this project but there are several debates taking place around the concept of nudging and libertarian paternalism.

Initially, Thaler and Sunstein (2008) claim that paternalism is not necessarily coercive. They claim that unlike the old paternalism, the new “libertarian paternalism” helps people without compulsion. They further go on to claim that people who have benefited themselves from paternalistic expertise seem to concur (Leonard, 2008). This is highly debatable. As Hausman and Welch note (2010), numerous examples of “nudging” are indeed coercive. Thaler and Sunstein (2008) take as an example the Toxic Release Inventories which while not mandating anything, allow environmental groups to monitor and pressure the worst offenders. Now just because the sanctions are social, does this mean that it is not coercive? Another example they claim is taxing pollution as one can simply not pollute should you wish to not pay the tax. In any case Hausman and Welch (2010, p.128) make the very valid point that “if one is concerned with autonomy as well as freedom, narrowly conceived, then there does seem to be something paternalistic, not merely
beneficent, in designing policies so as to take advantage of people’s psychological foibles for their own benefit” and that designing said policies “to the extent that it lessens the control agents have over their own evaluations, shaping people’s choices for their own benefit seems to us to be alarmingly intrusive.”

The second major argument is that paternalism is inevitable and unavoidable. Thaler and Sunstein claim that for as long as there are planners, choices will inevitably be made that affect the behaviour of others. They once again use the example of someone running a cafeteria to outline this. They claim the cafeteria owner may choose to arrange the food so that healthy items are purchased first, so that she maximises profit or randomly. In any case, the owner is obliged to make a decision which affects the behaviour of the consumers and as such some form choice architecture is inevitable. As such libertarian paternalism may be viewed as the best option as it promotes “good” behaviour if properly carried out without restricting choice. I believe this is somewhat relevant in the case of the policies studied in this thesis. With the UK government legally obligated to cut emissions by a certain amount under international agreements and with homes representing such a significant portion of the UK’s total emissions, it is overwhelmingly clear that this is an area the government cannot afford to ignore. As such, the fact that choices will be made for us does seem somewhat inevitable and policies such as the Green Deal or EPCs are more likely to preserve individual liberties than most alternatives whether or not they have elements of coercion to them.

The third argument they make and perhaps the most important one is that the notion that an individual will make a better choice for him or herself than the paternalist is false as once again highlighted by the people who have benefited from paternalism. They go on to claim that the idea of Homo Economicus is a myth and that not only are people fallible but they systematically make mistakes. The benefit of this however is that given our myopic and unreflexive nature, we are more easily manipulated by choice architects (Leonard, 2008)(although some academics dispute the amount of evidence available from outside a laboratory claiming this phenomenon is less visible in the real world, Levitt and List, 2008).

Hausman and Welch (2010) do a good job of summarising the key points regarding “Nudge” and paternalism in relation to practical issues that might arise as a result of the issues presented above. These are as follows.

1. Nudging is subject to abuse. Nudging may well be forcing people into behaviours which they do not want to engage in. Furthermore it is increasingly difficult to monitor policies such as this compared to policies which are openly coercive. This is particularly relevant to the EPC and Green Deal system, as methods of measuring success are crucial in terms of the evolving design of the policy under the logic of transitions.
2. Publicity is crucial and governments must be open about their efforts to shape choices.

3. Nudging is problematic in that much like what we have seen in the literature on values above, nudging has the capability to lessen an individual's autonomous decision making capacity and that by pursuing these means, it can undermine the capacity of persuading people rationally which remains the most effective form of policy if possible.

4. Coercion is often justified however only fully rational persuasion fully respects individual sovereignty.

While there are more issues that I could go deeper into such as whether or not paternalism is about giving people what they want or what you think they should want and whether or not you are celebrating an individual's success or your power over them, I believe this provides an ample description of the basis of “nudging” and “libertarian paternalism” as a theory from which to explore the relevant policies in the context of this thesis.

2.4 - Neoliberal governance and governmentality

In the final section of this literature review I wish to explore the increasing trend of neoliberal governance. If we see ecological modernisation as the goal or rationale of policies such as the Green Deal, ECO or EPCs, then neoliberal governmentality might be seen as the way we get there through the creation of the self-governing citizen-consumer. As such, this section explores concepts of governmentality and the way it leads to the creation of a self-governing citizen consumer such as the one desired by policies such as the Green Deal or EPCs studied in this thesis. I begin by introducing governmentality before expanding on geographies of responsibility by linking it to governmentality based around the rise of ethical consumption. I then move on to focus more specifically on the concept of a neoliberal version of citizenship and the rise of the consumer.

Governmentality and governing the self

With the Green Deal and EPCs and ECO encouraging environmental protection through altering consumption patterns, this requires us as consumers to engage in practices of self-government as part of a new form of governmental project. Governmentality, is key when attempting to evaluate examples of neoliberal rule and the application of power as it represents the technologies through which neoliberal rule is applied and as such is crucial towards an
understanding of the impacts of policy approaches such as those found in this thesis. Governmentality at its core can be seen “as a way of explaining the establishment and exercise of political power, one in which the concept of government is broader than management by the state; it also involves the regulation of populations through multiple institutions and technologies in society. (Mitchell, 2006, p.389)” Put simply, it refers to the concept of governing indirectly without formal legislation being used, instead favouring technologies, discourses and practices aimed at creating a citizen whose behaviour conforms with defined norms. This is particularly relevant when it comes to the state of policies aiming to reduce energy consumption within the United Kingdom.

As Rutherford (2007) notes, governmentality marks a new means of theorising about the exercising of power (Dean, 1999). Despite being a Foucauldian concept however, Rutherford notes how it is often studied in decidedly “non-Foucauldian” ways with parts of the literature appearing to claim that under governmentality, rule appears as a completed project applied to a passive populace (Rutherford, 2007). While claiming that population was “discovered” as opposed to “created” Foucault himself may have naturalised the population to some extent. Legg (2005) reminds us that Foucault's commitment to social construction highlights the importance of placing these concepts in context. As such, one cannot exist without the other and both serve to actively construct the other.

While governmentality has been defined above in loose terms, the methods through which power is exerted is less evident. This is primarily through the notion of subject formation and technologies of the self (Rutherford, 2007). This is through a combination of discursive knowledge, practice and technologies aimed at the creation of a subject whose behaviour is based around a set of socially defined and accepted norms. Interestingly, while a large volume of work exists on biopolitics, political rationality and power, Rutherford (2007) believes that with several notable exceptions (Gibson, 2001; Mitchell, 2003; Desbiens, 2004; Howell, 2004), governmentality literature is lacking in the production of normalised subjects, despite its apparent location at the core of governmentality. Another interpretation can be found in Rose (1996, p.158) who notes how the neoliberal subject answers a call based around individual freedoms where one becomes an “entrepreneur of oneself.” One therefore seeks to maximise one's own happiness, power, quality of life through enhancing autonomy and then instrumentalising autonomous choices in the service of its lifestyle (Rose, 1996; see Rutherford, 2007). Ultimately, we may see a process that Legg (2005, p.145) refers to as subjectification. This is the process through one conceives oneself “as a subject, positioned in various discourses, for instance, of gender, sexuality, age, class, physical ability, but also of citizens’ responsibilities, the need to account and calculate, or the urge to reproduce or exercise.”

Rutherford (2007), also highlights the appropriateness of geography with regards to studying
governmentality. She claims that geographers are able to bring an analysis of spatiality, an attention to scale, and a recognition of the imbrications of nature and culture. Geography therefore is able to take into account not only the role of the state and the landscape in which state regulation is situated, but the role of the individual as a “vehicle of power” as opposed to simply “a point for its application” (Foucault, 1980). Geography is therefore perfectly suited to avoiding one of the major pitfalls of governmentality research by assuming that rule is a concept that is applied equally over spatial and scalar levels, a concept that is key with regards to the Green Deal and grass roots alternatives. Geographers can thus comprehend rule is a concept that is applied differently in different places with power being enacted ontologically and in a spatial reality. Given that power is enacted through institutions, governments, corporations and bodies that are “materially and particularly located,” our ability to understand power as “articulated and enacted in places” means that spatial analysis becomes crucial (Rutherford, 2007, p.303). Therefore, by examining a more rounded notion of the constitution of society which factors in economic, social, cultural, political and biophysical processes we avoid an overly simplified and “monolithic” application of governmentality (Rutherford, 2007). This also serves to counter several of the critiques present within governmentality literature such as Butler (1996) who claims that Foucault did not pay close enough attention to the mechanisms of exclusion and how certain narratives are able to gain prevalence over others and that subjectivity cannot be “disconnected from its social location as certain narratives gain privilege in the environmentalist critique, while others are marginalized (Rutherford, 2007, p301).”

**Globalising responsibility – governance, ethical consumption and globalisation**

Borrowing from the previous work on geographies responsibility and governmentality, this section aims to introduce the concept of responsibility in terms of neoliberal governance and governmentality by looking at the ways in which neoliberal forms of governance aim to mitigate some of the more negative aspects of globalisation. A range of literature has sprung up in recent times on this topic dealing specifically with neoliberalism and consumption (Bondi 2005; Gökariksel and Mitchell 2005; Guthman and DuPuis 2006; Walkerdine 2005), on globalising responsibilities in a neoliberal world (Barnett et al. 2010) and on the ways in which we are being asked to adjust our consumption in pursuit of the greater good (Schudson, 2007, Clarke et al. 2007, Bauman, 2007).

Hilton (2004) notes how the late twentieth century until the current day has seen a noticeable
trend in efforts to remoralise the market and consumerism. As Barnett et al (2010) note, the emergence of contemporary ethical consumption may be seen to represent distinctive new forms of “political mobilization and representation, and of new modes of civic involvement and citizenly participation.” Despite this, they are keen to stress that they do not necessarily view ethical consumption as the substitution of privatised acts of consumer choice for properly political forms of collective action. They note that in order to properly understand consumerism, it is necessary to move away from this tendency to view the consumer as the centre of all analytical and critical attention. Instead, ethical consumption is the result of the influence of a range of actors, governments and campaigners who “seek to articulate the responsibilities of family life, local attachment and national citizenship with a range of ‘global’ concerns – where these global concerns include issues of trade justice, climate change, human rights and labour solidarity” (Barnett et al., 2010, p.2).

Barnett et al. (2010) go on to note two key viewpoints for theorising about consumption. The first is that consumption may be seen as a privileged entry point through which one can enter into the moral horizons of modern life. They note how in this paradigm, “Marx’s account of commodity fetishism is reframed as a hypothesis about the deleterious effects of affluent consumers having no knowledge about the origins of the goods that they consume.” What this means is that in order for responsible change to occur, consumers must be reconnected both spatially and temporally to the origin of their consumption through the provision of explanatory knowledge. Through the reconnection of locations and consequences of production with acts of consumption, the “alienating effects of modern capitalism can be exposed” (Barnett et al. 2010, p.2). The second paradigm is built around research on the politics of consumption and emphasises the “skilled, active and creative role of consumers in consumption activities” (Barnett et al. 2010). This second interpretation is based on research from sociology, anthropology, cultural studies and human geography that highlights how everyday consumption is a realm for actualising capacities for “autonomous action, reflexive monitoring of conduct and the self-fashioning of relationships between selves and others” (Barnett et al., 2010, p.2). Rather than taking flaws in consumption trends as a fundamental flaw regarding a lack of information, consumption is seen as actively constructed by various actors and in which consumers are able to resist, subvert and creatively appropriate dominant cultural registers of consumerism. As Miller (2001) notes, the first is essentially about consuming less whereas the second deals with the objects of consumption and practices of “self making.”

Barnett et al. (2010, p.4) note how this has led to a situation where the two dominant frames under geography's moral turn for attributing responsibilities are where responsibility is reduced to a
matter of causality and/or assisting those less fortunate. They dispute this to some degree however and wish to understand responsibility and justice as normative and socially constructed. This goes back to the previous point of ethical consumerism being the focal point of pressures from a wide range of actors, both professional, governmental and individual in which a notion of responsibility is constructed to match the time and place for which it is relevant.

This can be traced back to wider philosophical debates about responsibility such as those found in Thomas Pogge (1994, 2001). Pogge argued that rather than claiming that we have an innate obligation to those less fortunate as a helper, we should acknowledge the fact that citizens of the West are in a position where they are the beneficiaries of global institutional systems that impoverish and disenfranchise others (Barnett et al., 2010). As such, we should think about global responsibility in terms of justice rather than morality. This can be linked to the energy consumption dealt with by policies such as the Green Deal and EPCs in that through our consumption of commodities such as heating/cooling or lighting for example, the natural resources available to distant others decreases. Barnett et al. (2010) link this debate to a broader philosophical debate about the degree to which an egalitarian theory of justice such as the one proposed by John Rawls (1972) can be applied to transnational processes and a global scale. The key question in this debate is which activities should we evaluate using this egalitarian theory of justice. Rawls (1972, p.7-11) claimed that the “subject of justice” should primarily be thought of as the “institutions of society which sustain deep and pervasive inequalities” (Barnett et al. 2010, p.5). This is what Rawls (1972, p.7-11) thought of as the “basic structure of society” including key political, social and economic arrangements.

Given that Rawls viewed the subject of justice primarily as the institutions which perpetuated the injustices in the world, this brings up one of the next key points in the debate which is where the agency for changing consumption lies (Barnett et al. 2010). Is it the responsibility of the consumer to do their part or is it up to the institutions that govern society?

As Young (2003) notes, basing a model of responsibility around liability is likely to be counterproductive in many cases. Purely demonstrating to an individual that their everyday consumption is connected to wider systems that reproduce harm is no guarantee of a change in consumption habits. Allen (2008) points out that the opposite might even be true in that while this might persuade an individual consumer that their actions contribute in small ways to wider systems of harm, it is equally likely to convince the consumer that there is little, as an individual, that they can do it about it. Young (2003) goes on to note that political responsibility should therefore not necessarily arise from being connected to events or people or places but should be differentiated according to the capacities actors have to initiate change (Barnett et al. 2010). While it might be
those who are in a position of privilege and who benefit from the harms done to others are also the
most capable to produce change, this is far from a universal truth. As Barnett et al. (2010, p.8) note
benefiting from patterns of harm and having the potential to alter them are not easily placed within
a particular social space. Therefore, an analysis of the politics of responsibility must be attentive to
how these dimensions of responsibility are articulated together. One must also look at how different
agents make issues of global responsibility into both a problem and a possibility.

Problematising consumption

With Pattie et al. (2003, p.631) finding that “people’s participation in conventional political
activities (such as voting, contacting a politician and attending a political meeting) has declined,
whereas participation in consumption and contact politics (boycotting goods and contacting the
media) has grown significantly,” finding a way to exploit this new trend in consumption based
activity becomes crucial. One of the ways that this works is through the Foucauldian notion of
problematisation.

Problematisation is a complicated issue to study as it is the result of so many opposing
forces. As Barnett et al. (2010) note, one of the main ways problematisation occurs is through
organisations who seek to mobilise the consumption efforts of a mass of individuals in addition to
the dominant rhetoric coming out of governments and corporations. Consumption may be seen as a
means of mobilisation through which to “generate public awareness and enrol potential supporters.”
It “does not necessarily substitute idealized models of consumer agency and market power for other
modes of civic participation, associational organization, or collective action. It just as often serves
as a pathway for enrolling resources in support of these types of activity” (Barnett et al. p.23).
Ultimately, we may see efforts to problematise consumption in some way or other as an attempt to
“align everyday routines with existing moral and political commitments in order to sustain a degree
of personal integrity in an unequal world” (Barnett et al. 2010, p.23).

Given how the Green Deal and EPCs however lack the involvement of organisations
working to promote a certain brand of ethical consumption such as organisations such as Fair Trade,
the problematisation of consumption that is of most interest with regards to this study is what
Barnett et al. (2010, p.27) term “ethical problematisation”. This refers to “the practices through
which people come to take their own activities as requiring moral reflection.”

One of the key concepts when exploring contemporary ethical consumption efforts as noted
by Clarke (2010) is that of choice. Choice according to Clarke, is becoming ever more prevalent
within UK policy circles be it health, education or pension provision. Choice serves dual purposes
in that it simultaneously injects accountability into the public sector while giving consumers agency over ethical dilemmas and allowing them to align abstract values with daily engagements. As Pykett (2009) notes, this agenda reframes state led initiatives such as the Green Deal or EPCs as a method of empowering individuals to make informed choices, based on reliable government information while making service providers more responsive to the varying needs of the population (Barnett et al. 2010). Successful problematisation of environmental consumption thus relies on the ability of those governing to secure a correlation between their stated objectives and the motivations and identifications of individuals.

Giddens (1994, p.90) argues that this transformation has now led to something dubbed “life politics.” This revolves around disputes and struggles over how we now live in a world where everything that was once natural must now be chosen or decided about. Therefore, from this theoretical perspective, the driving force of social change becomes the process of individualisation as seen in Beck (2001) (Barnett et al. 2010). Micheletti (2003, p.2) goes on to define political consumerism as “actions by people who make choices among producers and products with the goal of changing objectionable institutional or market practices.” Therefore, by making choices, individuals signal to governments or producers, a desire for a specific change which can then be acted upon.

One thing to remember when dealing with consumption is that consumption is shaped in all sorts of different ways by caring for other people and explicit moral values such as from faith communities or ethnic groups (Barnett et al. 2010). Going back to the notion of practice theory that was touched upon previously, it is important to note that a lot of consumption people do is not enacted as a consumer so much as embedded in other sorts of practice where they are enacting other identities such as a mother or a father for example. When taking consumption behaviour into account and designing policies around this, it is therefore to crucial to understand the specific reason, motivation and identities in question relevant to the consumption at hand. In addition to this, once we recognise the emotional and relational dimensions of consumption, it is not necessarily the arena of choice it once was, instead being heavily constrained by obligations and responsibilities similar to those listed above in internal and external constraints to individual level ecological modernisation. This will also be examined in the empirical chapters when examining the validity of policy based around volunteerism. What is particularly important however about this point is that the consumer is not necessarily an economistic self-interested utility maximizer (Barnett et al, 2010, p.41) as often assumed by theories of neoliberalisation. Instead the consumer may be seen as the bearer of a multiple responsibilities, both for themselves and for dispersed others.
Responsible governmentality

As Rose (1999, p.20) notes, governmentality is a distinct approach to understanding political power which should begin by asking “what authorities of various sorts wanted to happen, in relation to problems defined how, in pursuit of what objectives, through what strategies and techniques.” Rose (1999) subsequently argues that advanced liberalism involves a thorough reordering of political rule. Instead of governing through society, we now govern through individuals’ capacities for self-realisation. Barnett et al. (2010, p.42) go on to note how “the sense that responsibilisation is a process that involves diverse actors, pursuing diverse objectives, provides a better entry point to understanding the ways in which the politicization of consumption has come to be framed around discourses of consumer responsibility than the singular emphasis on a shift from liberal to advanced liberal political rationalities found in governmentality theory.” As such, individual responsibility has not simply arisen from a shift to neoliberal political rationalities but as the result of pressure from a range of actors. What we now see is a new mode of citizenship which might seen as more “ethical” (Barnett et al. 2010) in terms of citizenship practices and identity formation. What this refers to in governmentality theory is how ethical may be seen as “the active shaping of lives in relation to individuals’ own sense of fulfilment rather than by reference to models of citizenship, in which obligation and prescription are the dominant registers of subject formation (Rose, 1999, p.178). This in turn leads to a contemporary politics of consumption which may be seen through various modes of “ethical problematisation” (Barnett et al. 2010, p.43) where people are expected to treat their conduct as consumers as subject to different moral injunctions. As Rose (1999) notes however, governing through individual responsibility and citizenship may be seen as inherently risky. Those with citizenship status are always likely to reinterpret their ascribed rights and reject the authority to which they are subjected, something which becomes exacerbated when mixing the concepts of citizen and consumer. Therefore, “we can expect, then, that consumption is a field of intense contestation between competing rationalities of the free market, of rights and participation, and both the hedonistic and caring dimensions of everyday consumer practice” (Barnett et al. 2010, p.43).

Governmentality theory however is not without issue with regards to the study of consumption and responsibilisation. As Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) note, governmentality theory is often far too averse to acknowledge the degree to which normativity inhabits the social world in ordinarily communicative registers. Barnett et al. (2010, p.48) take this further by arguing that theories of governmentality cannot adequately understand how consumption is governed at a
distance through the operation of norms given a recurrent tendency to ignore the distinction between governing action and governing subjectivity. It is therefore crucial to understand the normative dimension of ethical consumption and neoliberal rule when studying empirical examples.

**Governing consumption and the consumer**

Another debate raised when looking at neoliberal governmentality and consumption is whether or not we should aim to govern consumption or the consumer. Barnett et al. (2010) specifically call into question the idea that governing consumption requires people's identification as consumers.

They highlight two key arguments in that first, the key site of interventions into consumption are just as often the infrastructures of consumer choice as they are getting individual consumers to alter their behaviour, and second, that these interventions aim to reshape consumers actions while remaining relatively indifferent to the subjective motivations of individual consumers (Barnett et al. 2010, p.51). What this means more simply is that there are two distinct types of interventions. One is aimed at altering the systems of production and distribution and creating a landscape in which increasingly beneficial consumption is prioritised, facilitated and actively encouraged while the other seeks to create a new sense of normality around better consumption habits for the consumer to adopt. The Green Deal and EPCs are two good examples of this. The Green Deal aims to lower the up-front cost, increase the ease of access and lower the hassle of investing in energy efficiency through altering the landscape in which these measures are provided. The EPC system on the other hand aims to provide consumers with relevant information about the options available to them in the hope of encouraging the consumers to make more informed decisions in line with government objectives.

Both are not without issue however. As we have previously seen, many geographers and social scientists these days are adopting an increasing irrational view of behaviour under which consumers are bound by numerous responsibilities, challenges and motivations which are often less than clear. Therefore making something more attractive or logically the best choice such as in the case of The Green Deal (theoretically at least) may not be successful.

Trying to create a sense of normality however is equally not without issue. Hammersley (2003, p.753) notes that norms “do not include instructions for their own interpretation” with Barnett et al (2010) noting how the application of a norm necessitates a capacity for interpretation that is not rule-governed. Hammersley (2003, p.754) goes on to note that norms “involve identifying a situation as being of a kind that is relevant to a norm, or to one norm rather than
another, and recognizing what the implications of the norm are for action in that situation.” This is an issue when we look back to the fact that policies are often ignorant of the subjective motivations of consumers. Therefore while we may try to frame a situation under the context of a certain normality, there is no guarantee that the individual will also view the situation under the same sense of social normality and instead may view visibly differently. As Sayer (2005, p.51) notes, when dealing with ethical consumption, what is crucial is the idea that one can only understand the relationship between an individual and a sense of social normality by taking into account “what matters to them.” Consumption may be thus seen as part of a process of subject formation combined with habitual action with Sayer (2005, p.6) highlighting the concept of “lay normativity.” This concept highlights the “range of normative rationales, which matter greatly to actors, as they are implicated in their commitments, identities and ways of life. Those rationales concern what is of value, how to live, what is worth striving for and what is not” (Sayer, 2005, p.6). Barnett et al. (2010) note how it is thus crucial for research on this phenomenon to develop theoretical and empirical strategies which account for the dynamics of these “lay normativities.”

Barnett et al. (2010, p.54) go on to note that this is the only way to understand the responsibilisation of the individual as a consumer, “empowered with choice through various marketized practices of public and private provision of the means of social reproduction.” Therefore, we must view the problematisation of consumption as working not through pure self interest, but “making problematic the exercise of consumer choice in terms of ever-proliferating responsibilities and ethical imperatives” (Barnett et al. 2010, p.54). This is concurrent with Day Sclater (2005) who notes that we must acknowledge the inter-subjective and communicative dynamics through which norms are iteratively performed (Barnett et al. 2010). In order for consumers to alter their habits, they must be willing to engage with relevant discourses, and to position themselves with respect to these discourses, with consequences for their selves and identities (Day Sclater, 2005, p.323).

Vocabularies of responsibility

It is also crucial that we do not view consumption as a finished project, with Thrift (1996, p.129) nothing how the human subject should be seen as socially “constructing” rather than socially “constructed”. Barnett et al. (2010, p.116) note that rather than tracing moments where subjects are positioned within a hegemonic discourse, it is preferable to focus on the ways in which people position themselves as subjects of various ethical responsibilities that should be discharged through consumption. They note the concept of “grammars of responsibility” through which people reflect
on cares, concerns and duties of consumption practices. They note that sometimes people make excuses for not doing what is presented as ethical, sometimes they make justifications for not considering certain demands relevant or binding to themselves and sometimes they exhibit scepticism towards the frame of responsibility that is being addressed to them (Barnett et al., p.117). They go on to note how policymakers in addition to governance research often seems unable to acknowledge the degree to which their subjects are able to articulate sceptical questions about “whose definition of responsibility has come to dominate public discussion and insinuate itself into their own practices through the diverse mediums of the ethical problematisation of consumption (p.119).”

They subsequently note three versions of problem-solving with regards to consumption exhibited in their empirical research. These are “first, a version in which everyday consumption is understood as primarily and legitimately determined by calculations of monetary cost; second, a version in which consumption activities are placed within the temporal routines of everyday life, and third, a version in which consumption is placed across a division between hard work and good fun (Barnett et al., p.127). Linking back to above with the diverse motivations individuals have for engaging in certain consumption behaviours and with certain discourses, different individuals all used different methods of accounting for their practices and explaining their actions. Given this, it is crucial that as noted, policymakers and researchers take this into account.

Neoliberal governance and justice

Another aspect of neoliberal governance that I wish to briefly discuss is that of neoliberalism and justice. Neoliberalism may be seen to produce a re-regulation of the environmental under neoliberal ideals with a shifting of the costs and benefits between users and the environment, (Bakker, 2005; Harris, 2009). As Haughton, (1999, p.54) notes, it is crucial to acknowledge the interdependency of social justice and environmental stewardship given that an “unjust society is unlikely to be sustainable in environmental or economic terms in the long run.”

With neoliberal policies also increasingly based around notions of free choice and volunteerism as previously noted, it becomes increasingly difficult to predict the real impact of policies on various groups, both within society, and globally. Agyeman and Evans (2002) also note, that issues of environmental quality are inextricably linked to human equality, both globally and nationally. Environmental problems are typically disproportionately experienced by the poor despite the fact they are typically contributing less to their existence and in addition to this, as noted above in the sections above, the financial situation of the poor means that they are often in a situation where they
are increasingly powerless to act. Castree (2010) also notes how in a number of studies, neoliberal environmental policies were found to disadvantage the poor and powerless (Bakker, 2003; Budd, 2007; Prudham, 2004; McCarthy, 2004). Bell and Rowe (2012) also note how climate change mitigation proposals often exacerbate injustices by increasingly focusing power in the hands of big business and the rich. It is therefore crucial that new neoliberal forms of governance take into account issues of social and environmental justice.

Agyeman and Evans (2004, p.163) go on to note that it is critical that governments at all levels from the local to the international, start to recognise issues of environmental justice such as those championed by a range of progressive “just sustainability” based organisations. While sustainability in an environmental sense is crucial, it is vital that it is placed within a context of social justice, equity and human rights. Public policy has an obligation to make sure that it does not disproportionately disadvantage any particular social or economic group, and is equally accessible to all members of a society. Neoliberalism however can be somewhat of a double edged sword in this regard as while attempting to solve problems through the market opens up the opportunity to participate to non traditional groups such as women or minorities (Clarke, 2008), it also allows those with more resources to register an increased commitment. This is coupled with the fact that given the voluntary nature of these policies, those are better informed and more aware have a higher chance of benefiting from them than those who are socially marginalised. There are clear issues for example with policies such as the Green Deal and EPCs in this regard. With the Green Deal, while you are guaranteed in theory to not pay more than your original bill, for a low income household, this original bill represents a far more significant burden than for a wealthier household. In the case of the EPC, this also illustrates the point about the rich being able to register an increased commitment as houses with better EPC ratings are likely by design to be more costly as they are being signalled as increasingly desirable.

Bickerstaff et al. (2013) also note how energy poverty (as studied in this thesis), coupled with the politics of consumption represent two clear examples of contemporary inequality under neoliberal systems of governance. They note how while issues of sustainability are often perceived in terms of the over-consumption of resources, issues of justice are often just as much to do with the under-consuming of resources such as the case of energy poverty. This is consistent with Agyeman and Evans (2004) who notes that justice and sustainability have historically, often been seen as competing rationalities. Bickerstaff et al. (2013) note how one of the key issues regarding justice and environmental policy is that of recognition, in terms of recognising which groups are fundamentally disadvantaged by a policy or patterns of consumption relative to others. They criticise prevalent notions around energy consumption and attempts to reduce everyday carbon
consumption for misrecognition. They note how behaviour is once again too frequently viewed as economically rational thus failing to recognise the fairness or justice dimensions that are key regarding people's hesitance to engage in sustainable behaviour. These include concerns about free-riding, structural inequalities as mentioned previously, and the inability of big business or governments to accept their fair share of responsibility (Bickerstaff and Walker, 2002; Horton and Doran, 2011). Swyndegouw (2010) also highlights how the tendencies of neoliberal policies towards a consensual form of policy-making based around market mechanisms often serves to evacuate fairer, plural and antagonistic means of solving environmental issues with interests heavily skewed towards capital.

One solution to some of the concerns highlighted about neoliberal forms of environmental governance comes in the ascription of basic environmental and social standards as human rights as highlighted by Day and Walker (2012), Agyeman and Evans (2004) and Bickerstaff et al. (2013) amongst others, who note the benefits of such an approach. While this will be tackled in more detail in future empirical chapters, at its a core, a rights based approach outlines certain standards which any individual has the right to attain and should these standards not be met, there should be a procedural system for the individual to challenge the government that these needs are not being met. The benefit of such a system is that all individuals are guaranteed the same basic rights and should have an institutionally legitimised space in which to dissent should these rights not be met. This also shifts the politicisation of the issue away from the distribution of resources in terms of who should get what and how much certain groups are able to benefit from a policy towards a debate around what constitutes acceptable minimum standards.

While this solution is somewhat being trialled in the case of for example, minimum standards for landlords in terms of the energy efficiency of properties they rent, it is a far cry from being the norm. With neoliberalism and contemporary British environmental policy clearly heavily focused on a desire to leverage the capital resources of the private sector, guaranteeing a fair and just outcome of said policy is crucial. It is therefore vital when evaluating empirical examples of said policies, to ask who should be responsible for taking action combined with who the winners and losers are of any action that is taken.

2.5 - Sustainable neoliberal citizenship

The next topic I wish to look at in terms of neoliberal governance and governmentality is the shifting nature of citizenship with the line between citizen and consumer becoming increasingly blurred as a result of the responsibilities and obligations touched on above being implanted within
patterns of consumption. In its simplest form, sustainable citizenship deals with the relationship between individuals and the common good (Barry, 1999; Smith, 1998). Dobson (2007, p.280) further notes how environmental responsibilities stem from environmental rights as a “matter of natural justice.” He claims that citizenship has always been a case of balancing rights and responsibilities with liberal citizenship focused on the rights of the citizen such as the right to vote, security and property while republican citizenship has focused on responsibilities of citizens to the collective. Another way of looking at it is in terms of caring capacity with Dobson (2007) noting how every citizen is allocated an environmental space and it is therefore ones objective to not exceed ones given space.

Neoliberal sustainable citizenship differs from normal citizenship however in a number of ways. Initially, neoliberal sustainable citizenship may be seen as both global and intergenerational thus separating it from other models of citizenship with perhaps the exception of the cosmopolitan model (Dobson, 2003). This immediately complicates things as there is no longer a necessary spatial connection between various members of a community, a factor highlighted by the work on caresetapes and their affective potential earlier on. Secondly, as Gabrielson (2008) notes, traditional notions of citizenship were based around the existence of a homogeneous demos. Modern sustainable citizenship however has to take into account the somewhat extreme heterogeneity of society. Furthermore, traditional definitions of citizenship such as those put forwards by Aristotle (Gabrielson, 2008; Dobson, 2007) take into account the citizens power to shape policy and to be an active contributor to government. Modern citizenship however for all its rhetoric appears to position the citizen in a far more passive role than that traditionally imagined. This could largely be down to the fact that neoliberal citizenship is far more private than other types might be. With traditional citizenship based around (Dobson, 2007) debating, acting, protesting and publicly demanding, neoliberal citizenship is based around the implications of private actions and in particular, consumption. While these private actions have public implications, the situation of citizenship within the realms of the public and the social become far more blurred. Jelin (2000) sees this as potentially inhibiting the potential of citizenship noting how effective citizenship must take into account the scale of social action and meanings of nature. This means that in order to progress, institutional structures must be put in place which allow one to stake ones claim in a participatory manner in addition to recognizing the range of relations between culture and nature.

The rise of the consumer

Wheeler (2013) notes how in the case of the UK, the privatisation of public services under
the Thatcher government provided the springboard for this redefinition of the consumer. As Kjærns et al. (2007, p. 95) noted “This socio-political moment provided the context in which the ‘consumer’ became an important political figure who was ‘drawn into the limelight of public debate’ and was appealed to by a number of different powerful actors and organizations.” As Giddens (1991) points out, citizens political involvement is increasingly moving from the production side of the economy towards consumption. Kjærns et al. also note how simultaneously, NGOs, charities and a range of other institutions were encouraging consumers to go and support causes through their purchases. Throughout history, they note that governments and other groups have served to construct a notion of the “consumer” relevant to the time and place in which they govern. As Trentmann (2006, p.6) puts it, “consumers did not rise effortlessly as an automatic response to the spread of markets but had to be made and this process of making occurred through mobilization in civil society and the state as well as in the commercial domain, under conditions of deprivation, war and constraint as well as affluence and choice, and articulated through traditions of political ideas and ethics.” In modern society however we see how consumption behaviour has “less to do with conscious choice and more to do with collective norms and practices, infrastructures of provision and institutional frameworks that people operate within (Shove 2003, Southerton et al. 2004, Warde 2005, Halkier, 2010, Wheeler, 2013, p.496).” Through this diminishing role of the nation state and the call to arms for the consumer, it represents “the rhetoric through which the self-selected ethical (or citizen) consumer is called to action.” (Wheeler, 2011, p.496). In addition to this, Wheeler (2011) notes how organisations these days often monitor consumption and use the combined acts of individuals to speak “on behalf” of consumers in the wider policy realm. Furthermore, organisations and market professionals constantly seek to re-evaluate the qualities of goods. Cochoy (2007) for example notes how Fair Trade is an example of this requalification. This however means that while we are being told to consume politically and to vote via our wallets, we are constantly being pushed in a certain direction away from our own personal commitments.

Reconciling notions of citizenship with consumerism

While few debate the existence and growing importance of the concept of the citizen-consumer, there is considerably more ambiguity with regards to its ability to achieve real reductions in the overconsumption of natural resources. Scammell (2000) for example notes how traditionally, free market capitalism has been seen as the undifferentiated pursuit of profit while consumption the undifferentiated pursuit of self-interest. Some authors go even further in so much as they question
the very concept of the neoliberal citizen consumer (Soper, 2007; Johnston, 2008) as desired by policies such as the Green Deal. Soper (p.206) notes how citizenship and consumption have traditionally been two separate areas of study for social scientists with the self interest of consumption a long reach from the “social accountability and cultural community associated with citizenship.” Recently however theorists have noted that the ‘caring’ altruism and sociality of the consumer (Miller, 2001a, 2001b; Warde, 1997; Warde and Martens, 2000) is complicating the idea of the selfish consumer (Soper, 2007). Soper (2007) also notes how there is confusion sometimes between those who consume to benefit kith and kin which she wishes to emphasize has always been part of the private domain as opposed to concern for humanity or country which she sees as part of the public domain.

Soper (p.208) goes on to level one of the harshest criticisms in the literature at the citizen-consumer stating how critics have rightly pointed out how the citizen consumer is simply used as a “discursive stratagem” for concealing the loss of accountability that occurs through privatisation. She then goes on to say how in reality, it covers an impoverishment of choice and a reduction in the equal distribution of public services and how the claim that governments have successfully integrated market and public interests is wishful.

Campbell (2004) goes on to say that even in cases where the consumer behaves in a “green” or “ethical” fashion, the tendency is still towards being a consumer rather than being a citizen. As such, attempts to create a citizen consumer may be seen as more risky than attempts to create a traditional form of citizenship based around a sense of duty and obligation to those with whom you share a space as the latter can leverage existing tangible connections which as we have seen can increase its affective potential. While Soper (2007, p.209) notes how some theorists are more willing to view at least a modest breaking down of the divide between citizen and consumer, there remains an inclination “to view ethical consumption as motivated at least in part by an interest in acquiring status and distinction or the gratifications of ‘moral selving’ and thus far as obedient to ‘consumerist’ rather than ‘citizenly’ urges (Barnett, Carfaro et al., 2005; Barnett, Cloke et al., 2005).”

Despite this, there are those who reject this separation of citizen and consumer. Schudson (2007) notes how a lot of the criticism of consumer culture has been moralistic, intolerant, judgemental and muddled. Schudson (2007, p.238) claims the majority of criticism is a trope that “offers a narrow and misleading view of consumer behaviour as well as an absurdly romanticized view of civic behaviour.” Schudson (p.237) suggests a post moralistic approach which moves away from the notion that consuming is necessarily self-centred whereas political behaviour is public-oriented or that consuming for any reason distracts from public obligations and instead draws a
more blurred line between public obligations and private consumption.

The obligations of the neoliberal citizen-consumer

As we have seen, the Green Deal, EPCs and ECO represent a hollowing out to some degree of government machinery in favour of a self-governing citizen who is asked to express their commitments through consumption. As Bell (2005) notes, citizenship at its core revolves around the ascription of certain rights associated with being a citizen and in return one is expected to perform certain civic duties including not violating the rights of the others. The state also serves to play a key role in ascribing rights and obligations. Dobson (2007) claims that citizenship has always been a case of balancing rights and responsibilities with liberal citizenship focused on the rights of the citizen such as the right to vote, security and property while republican citizenship has focused on responsibilities of citizens to the collective. Neoliberal citizenship becomes far more complex however with rights and duties often expressed through the markets and consumption without ever being expressly attributed.

As outlined by an increasingly large body of work (Bakker and Dagevos, 2012; Scammell, 2010; Johnston, 2008; Soper, 2007; Lockie, 2009; Livingstone et al, 2007; Keum et al, 2004) this starts to introduce the concept of the citizen consumer. As Lockie (2008) notes, neoliberal policy constructs citizenship in terms of the ability of individuals to monitor and regulate their own behaviour as entrepreneurs through consumption. Through consumption, we are able to express ourselves and our values and attitudes in order to register a sense of commitment to various causes, something which has been noted as a potential source of sustainability by numerous social movements and governments (Seyfang, 2006).

Despite this, there remains some doubt within the literature as to whether or not this is something that is realistically achievable with multiple authors (Soper, 2007; Johnston, 2008) questioning the ability of citizenship and consumption to work in tandem. While this will be explored in greater depth in the fourth empirical chapter in particular, I wish to outline several main criticisms of citizen-consumers from Johnston (2008). Johnston (p.261) notes how the citizen-consumer hybrid generates multiple contradictions as it relates to dimensions of social reproduction in globalised economies. These include a cultural ideology of consumption, a political economic denial of class inequality and a political-ecological message of conservation through consumption. Johnston (2008, p.262) goes on to note however that the citizen-consumer typically provides superficial attention to citizenship goals with an increased focus on the consumerist ideology of consumer choice, status distinction and ecological cornucopianism (a concept which can be seen as
closely related to ecological modernisation). This he notes, is the means through which social and ecological concerns become privatised as the state distances itself from responsibility.

Another issue with the concept of the citizen-consumer and neo-liberal green citizenship as outlined by Bell (2005) is the failure of this new form of green citizenship to establish new rights and obligations. Bell argues that if citizens have substantive rights based around the environment, then there should necessarily be procedural rights which allow one to enforce the substantive rights attributed to them. In the case of consumption however this does not occur and while we are being tasked with new forms of obligation with regards to our environmental impact, there is little procedural space in which to protest should others violate our rights. Therefore while we are tasked with not exceeding our allotted space (Dobson, 2007), little can be done if others exceed theirs.

Light (2002, p.159) therefore favours a model of citizenship in which duties to the natural world are articulated as interests and the practice of nature restoration becomes a means to working to restore nature and the participatory strong democratic elements of local communities rather than transforming ones identity.

Dobson (2007) further notes how citizenship is a fundamentally a matter of justice as opposed to charity. The key point here is that while charity and justice can both be ignored or “not done,” the obligation to do justice remains at all times as opposed to charity which can be very on and off. Therefore a failure to adopt a model of citizenship which fails to recognise the persistent inequalities generated across modern consumption risks alienating those who do not share this view (Light, 2002).

What we are seeing here is a movement towards a new method of both theorising about and carrying out methods of government. With the state increasingly seeking to distribute responsibility with regards to the environment to the consumer, the way in which governmental power is enacted becomes increasingly relevant. Despite attempts at engaging with citizens through policies such as the Green Deal or EPCs which try to enable individuals to monitor and regulate their own consumption, there is a clear feeling in the literature (Johnston, 2008; Soper, 2007) that consumption tends to activate consumerist tendencies rather than citizenly tendencies. Therefore despite efforts to create something resembling a self-governing consumer citizen, whether or not this exists in reality and the ways in which power is enacted upon individuals remains an area of some debate. This thesis explores the ways in which governmental power is exercised at an empirical level and the impact of scale and spatiality on governance and the creation of the self-governing citizen-consumer. Using real world examples of various attempts at neoliberal environmental governance, I analyse why some have succeeded while others have failed using the
literature presented here as a base. Following on from this, I set out my methodological approach.
3. Methodology

My goal in this thesis has been to empirically evaluate methods of neoliberal green governance aimed at tackling climate change and environmental issues in a manner based around personal choice and the creation of the self-governing sustainable citizen. Addressing the critique of Mitchell (2006, p.390) that “despite the theoretical call for detailed, in-depth analyses of the circulation of power in multiple empirical sites and despite the intellectual heritage of Foucault, most studies of governmentality are generally abstracted from actually existing subjects and spaces (Frankel, 1997; Larner, 2000; O'Malley, 1996),” this thesis may be seen as an effort to engage with the means in which neoliberal policies such as the Green Deal, Energy Performance Certificates and ECO as well as community led alternatives have served to enact governmental power in an attempt to create the sustainable citizen-consumer and to curb the excessive use of energy experienced by the UK housing stock (Petersdorff et al. 2006). As such, it aims to explore the numerous ways in which power is circulated at an empirical level in cases of neoliberal governance based around individual choice and the implications this has for the over-consumption of energy.

In section 3.1 I introduce my methodological approach to data collection based around engaging with individuals and relevant professionals involved in the policies listed above. I explore the appropriateness of techniques used in the research and their relevance with regards to the bodies of knowledge which this thesis aims to explore. In section 3.2 I describe how the samples for this research were constructed, the way the research was conducted and it's limitations. In section 3.3 I outline my approach to data analysis before briefly summarising my approach in section 3.4.

3.1 - Introducing my approach

With the completion of environmental goals so often based around the responsibilisation of the individual and the imbuing of consumption practices with care, my research has taken an approach based around the empirical study of governmentality and the way power is circulated in an attempt to create the self-governing citizen-consumer. While acknowledging that individual agency cannot be ignored, I have adopted a predominantly structuralist view of behaviour in that it may be seen to inherently constrained by a range of factors not least of which is the everyday level at which much energy consumption occurs. This is due to the fact that I wish to examine the
reasons for why policies such as the Green Deal have failed to have the desired impact despite the tendency of the public to acknowledge the importance of environmental issues (Schultz et al. 2005; Dunlap, 1991; Dunlap, Gallup, & Gallup, 1993; Kempton, Boster, & Hartley, 1995).

I began by viewing behaviour under the logic of what Thrift calls non-representational theory or the theory of practices (Thrift, 1996; 1997; 1999). As explained in the literature, non-representational theory may be seen as the precursor for a more modern concept of practice theory (Nash, 2000) in that it views behaviour and individual actions as objects for empirical observation rather than as conceptual explanation (Evans et al., 2012). As Thrift (1997, p.126) notes, it is a not a project about representation or meaning but about the performative “manifestations” or everyday life. It highlights how we cannot rely on personal emotional accounts of behaviour and must therefore focus on observation in order to determine systems of practice. As McCormack (2003, p.488) notes, it highlights how it is not necessary for their to be an understanding of behaviour for it to take place pointing out that the world is emergent from a range of processes which do not require “crossing a the threshold of contemplative cognition.”

Given the emphasis placed in this thesis on adopting a viewpoint that does not overstate the rational nature of consumption and behaviour, I have thus tried to adapt the above theory to my research. Rather than asking respondents to explain their behaviours to me or to try to give insight into why they do the things they do, I have tried to establish routines, habits and connections by studying the affective responses and emotional cues when certain topics are discussed and the way the individual interacts with the world around themself as this may provide valuable insight into the affective potential of spaces and regimes of practice. As Pile (2010) notes, one of the main challenges this offers is that conveying the extent of the research may be difficult without it losing context and as such, I have tried to remain true to the concept of the performativity of everyday practices when writing despite the fact that as Nash (2000, p.655) notes, text may be seen to “inadequately commemorate ordinary lives.”

One of the key benefits of this approach is that it may be seen to remove the tendency for individuals to frame themselves within a certain light or to try to project a certain imagine as they are initially at least, being questioned with regards to their actions and routines as opposed to how they view themselves within these routines.

The exception to this adherence to the performativity of everyday practice came primarily from questions relating to forms of citizenship and fuel poverty which were less focused about the subconscious and unreflexive nature of everyday behaviour and consumption. While studying governmentality, it was crucial to determine the manner in which respondents viewed themselves within a discourse of sustainability and justice in order to examine the way in which neoliberal
policy serves to construct the neoliberal citizen-consumer. With this in mind, I typically left these questions to the end of the interview process primarily focusing on habits and routines before moving on to more subjective forms of questioning to determine the discursive elements of the policies studied. In addition to this, the research on fuel poverty was primarily focused around determining how the depoliticisation of the issue affected attempts to tackle it in combination with issues of social exclusion and as such, the interviews conducted for this chapter were primarily focused around how respondents suffering from different forms of fuel poverty perceived themselves with regards to the concept of fuel poverty and their procedural rights.

While I tried to remain as objective as possible during these interviews, I would also like to acknowledge the role I played in constructing the knowledge formed during this process. While I did my best to avoid leading questions, while participants were mostly willing to provide information, they sometimes required guidance as to the level required (Doody and Noonan, 2013). Furthermore, given my sympathies and environmental tendencies, it is possible that I served to provoke certain responses in some individuals and that the knowledge and bias I had going into these interviews served to obfuscate certain lines of questioning at the expense of others. It is therefore impossible to extract me from the production of this data.

I also viewed the individual as the key source of empirical observation in the case of this study. Given the extreme heterogeneity of the literature with regards to behaviour and consumption, I wished to avoid seeking to normalise populations taking the view that each individual offered an opportunity to empirically evaluate neoliberal forms of governance and the circulation of power. I was hesitant to view forms of governance as having a uniform effect and as such I sought to explore the myriad ways in which individuals responded to the policies explored in this thesis in an effort to explore how the outcome of the various neoliberal approaches to governance being studied.

**Semi structured interviews**

The primary way that research was undertaken for this thesis was through the use of semi-structured interviews. In the majority of cases these interviews were undertaken with a view to providing empirical material for the thesis however in rare cases they were carried out informally with relevant experts in fields of academia, third sector advocacy or government in order to help me gain a deeper understanding of the issues at hand.

One of the main reasons that semi-structured interviews were used is due to the fact that I viewed the individual as the main source of empirical observation and as such I wished to engage
with them in a private setting (typically the respondents home) where they would not feel under any sort of pressure to adhere to normality. As noted by Doody and Noonan (2013, p.1) I attempted using qualitative research to “understand people's lives and the way they are lived (Schwandt 2001, Lambert and Loiselle 2008, Schultze and Avital 2011).” I sought to give a voice to others (Cloke et al, 2009) rather than using questionnaires for example which tend to aggregate individuals into categories and patterns and to understand positions of practice through personal accounts of routine and consumption. Given the attention paid to affective geographies in this study, this was also something which could not be achieved without the use of interviews as this required direct contact which allowed for a greater sense of connection in addition to being able to interpret non-verbal cues. One of the benefits of this approach is that it allowed me to gain an understanding of how residents “perceive and adapt” to their environment and their behavioural intentions without relying on prior knowledge of the subject (Langevin et al, 2013, p.1359).

Furthermore as Doody and Noonan (2013) point out, interviews provide a contextual account of experiences and a way in which to explore events in subjects lives. By using semi-structured interviews, I was able to maintain a somewhat consistent line of questioning throughout the interviews yet I maintained the freedom to go off-topic relatively speaking if something of interest arose or I saw a respondent particularly upset or pleased by one event or other. Hand (2003) and Deamley (2005) also found that semi-structured interviews encourage depth and vitality through allowing new concepts to emerge thereby increasing the validity of the study (Doody and Noonan, 2013).

As noted by Valentine (1999), “an in-depth interview is always a collaborative process, constructed through the unique relationship between the interviewer and the respondent.” Cloke et al. (2005) also go on to note however that it is naïve to assume that a constant set of truths can be garnered from from the interview regardless of the social and cultural conditions which they include the researcher in. It is therefore crucial to acknowledge that the interviewer is implicated in the construction of meanings with the interviewee. Depending on how it is dealt with, this intersubjectivity can either be an asset or a hindrance. If properly acknowledged though, it can permit a deeper understanding of the “who's, hows, where's and what's of many aspects of human geography research. (Cloke et al, 2005).

Secondary data analysis

In addition to using semi-structured interviews, secondary data analysis was carried out on a range of policy documents relating to the Green Deal, EPCs, fuel poverty within the United
Kingdom, data sets on fuel poverty statistics within the UK and literature provided to me from organisations acting as alternatives to the Green Deal so to speak.

There were several advantages and dominant rationales to using secondary data sets in addition to the primary data collected through the interview process. The first is that secondary sources of data serve to improve the validity of arguments as well as helping to develop a critical analysis of policy (Cloke et al, 2005). Through the use of secondary data, it is possible to contextualise the primary data collected in addition to having a greater awareness and knowledge regarding the extent of the topic you are researching. As Vartanian (2010, p.14) notes, secondary data sets may allow for the prompt examination of current policy issues. Given that many secondary data sources are designed to capture policy relevant outcomes, they have the potential to not only capture policy effects but also policy shifts. Furthermore, the sample size in cases where a sample is collected is usually significantly larger than a primary data set thus allowing for a far wider ranging view of an issue or policy. While the limitations on primary data sets often make it difficult to draw generalised conclusions or apply advanced analysis techniques, secondary data sets offer the benefit of casting the net much wider.

In addition to this, secondary data sets have the benefit of being far more cost effective and easily accessible than primary data sets (Vartanian, 2010). With the internet now containing a vast amount of secondary data, this allows researchers to cover topics with greater depth while using a fraction of the time and resources as primary data sets require.

Finally, as was the case in many of the secondary data sources used here, certain secondary data sources such as policy documents, briefs and records of meetings and conversations allow insight into the thinking and decision making behind certain actions of policies which would not otherwise be accessible to a researcher. In the case of this thesis, many of the secondary data sets analysed were policy documents and briefs concerning the Green Deal and EPCs which provided crucial insight into the governments motivations behind specific policy decisions allowing me to gain a deeper understanding of why they were made, with what expectations and the final outcomes of the policies they were replacing.

There are however concerns when dealing with governmental information such as the policy briefs and documents used in the research for this thesis. As Cloke et al. (2005) note, the process of government both requires and produces information. The way in which information is constructed (somewhat clearly in the case of a policy brief) legitimises certain approaches to policy while discrediting others and therefore no information is neutral. I do not believe this is a serious issue in this case as I am more interested in discovering which approaches have been encouraged as opposed to discredited, however, it is important to ask why was information constructed, to which
policies does it relate to if not clearly expressed, and have policy concerns influenced which data sets were constructed and how? While the majority of secondary data studied for this thesis was textual data aimed at outlining the governments aims and ambitions with regards to certain policies, it is important to note that almost all of them contained numerical arguments as some form of justification for their contents. When analysing said content, it is thus crucial to examine, whose voice is present, whose voices are absent, and which mechanisms led to the production of the report or brief (Cloke et al. 2005).

The challenge of following a policy in real time

Before I go in to more depth about the data collected for this thesis, I wish to briefly touch upon the issue of following a policy in real time which turned out to be far more challenging than I had initially anticipated. This applied predominantly to the Green Deal but to some extent also with issues surrounding fuel poverty and the EPC. The biggest issue regarding this was the fact that I anticipated that the Green Deal would have become far more popular than was the reality of the situation. As my research period began before the start of the Green Deal, it was at that point impossible to anticipate the actual reaction to the policy. Somewhat naively, I assumed that the Green Deal would be popular given what it was offering to people and as such I assumed that people would be both keen to take a Green Deal finance package and also keen to discuss their participation with the scheme. Of course this turned out to be untrue with the first year of the scheme resulting in so few people taking finance packages that you could all but count them on one hand. What this meant in terms of my methodological approach was that my original ambition in terms of who I wanted to speak to and interview for the research had to be continually cut down as time progressed. This was very challenging as the approach for the thesis in terms of which topics were going to be covered and what conclusions were going to be drawn from the data had to also be adjusted as the data set got smaller and smaller and therefore less statistically relevant in addition to more homogeneous in terms of the geographical location of the sample. While the original aim was to be able to draw some kind of generalisable conclusions about the impact of geographical location and economic and social status with regards to uptake, the focus soon switched to simply trying to find anybody who had taken a finance package and was willing to talk.

In addition to this, the government's aim for the project changed substantially during the duration of the project. While they were originally touting this as the future of environmental policy within the United Kingdom, it soon became somewhat of an embarrassment. From having connections and meetings lined up within the government to discuss the Green Deal, I soon had
nothing as members of the DECC backed out of arranged meetings once it became clear that the policy was not successful. There was a range of government communication that came out during the duration of the thesis outlining their changing expectations and efforts to jump start the policy which had to be monitored and assessed in terms of shifts in the discourse surrounding the issue and what this represented both politically and practically.

Fuel poverty policy, something which I was very much interested in as well also underwent a substantial change during my thesis, switching from a 10% definition to the LIHC definition (which will be explained further on in the thesis). While studying the change in the definition was something that I was interested in, it posed some challenges in that many people in fuel poverty were unaware of the change and what it meant for them. Therefore I had to overcome the challenge in some situations of general awareness lagging behind the changing definition.

Finally, one serious issue going back to the Green Deal was that the policy was scrapped midway through my thesis. As I note below, this was exceedingly problematic as the local government who I had partnered with to help get the interviews required thus became unable to spare the resources to continue to aid me in this regard and so that fell through. Not only that but I now had to adapt the thesis to fully analysing the failure of the scheme rather than examining its progression. Overall, attempting to study a policy which was not only started and finished during my thesis but also so unsuccessful during that time created a sense of great uncertainty which required a great deal of flexibility.

The rationale for the case studies

Before going into detail as to how the data was collected, I wish to briefly explore why these policies in particular were chosen as the focus for this study. Having previously completed an MSc thesis on the EPC system, it originally stemmed from there and an interest in the Green Deal which was being touted as the follow up to the EPCs and revolutionary environmental policy. In order to choose an overarching theme for the thesis however, the focus shifted to assessing the impacts of a neoliberal approach to environmental policy within the UK. The Green Deal, having been the original focus of the study was a simple choice in this regard. It defined neoliberal policy within the UK under the coalition government and was aiming to tackle one of the most serious issues, environmentally speaking, within the UK. With the importance of success evident, and minimal study existing to date, it felt highly relevant and important. I chose to speak to green deal assessors and installers primarily to gain access to members of the public but also to try to gauge the reception of the scheme from a professional viewpoint in addition to getting valuable feedback on
their opinion of their clients and customers which allowed me to have a better idea whether or not the individuals I spoke to where being honest with me. Finally, the individuals I spoke to where to examine empirical examples of the circulation of power under regimes of neoliberal governance.

Next, there was the EPC system. The EPC system was chosen given its close links to the Green Deal (highlighted in the introduction). The EPC, while also being heavily linked to the Green Deal, represented a nice counterpoint to the Green Deal in a way in that the Green Deal aimed to reduce the financial burden of reducing your energy consumption whereas the EPC provided users with information about how to reduce their energy consumption. This provided an interesting contrast from which to explore issues of structuralism and voluntarism. Speaking to estate agents and members of the public who had recently moved house was a fairly simple decision in that it allowed me to gain insight into the effectiveness of EPCs and how they impacted on the consumption of property. Furthermore speaking to estate agents once again allowed me to compare and contrast answers from both a professional and individual side of things.

Fuel poverty also stemmed from a connection to the Green Deal originally. The Green Deal introduced the ECO while also replacing the vast majority of previously existing policies aimed at tackling fuel poverty within the UK. With one of the aspects of studying a shift in governance towards neoliberalism being the implications for justice, fuel poverty was the obvious focal point given the overwhelming figures for households in fuel poverty within the UK. The study of Draughtbusters in particular actually came from being put in touch with them through Reading Council. Once I was put in contact with them however, it became clear that it was a fascinating example of the kind of low level responsibilisation of society which the government was advocating. Not only this, but unlike government efforts to tackle fuel poverty, Draughtbusters were making a genuine impact, albeit on a small scale and as such it was fascinating to examine a successful example of neoliberal governance. In addition to this, they were also one of my only entrances to individuals suffering from fuel poverty who were not easy to locate and often hesitant to talk about their experience.

Finally, much like the Draughtbusters in the previous chapter, WREN were selected as a contrast to the Green Deal. While being somewhat more multi-purpose than the Green Deal, they offered a direct community led alternative to the Green Deal in terms of encouraging and facilitating energy retrofits of properties that was emerging as a continuing success. With the focus of the study being on examining empirical examples of neoliberal rule, it was crucial for me to explore successful examples as well as failures in order to draw conclusions on how neoliberalism can prosper under the right circumstances.
3.2 – Data Collection

In this section I outline my approach to the data collection for each chapter of the thesis. Unfortunately I developed a range of serious allergic reactions during my PhD costing me a massive amount of time spent in hospitals and various specialists which eventually led to being forced to take a medical hiatus so unfortunately data collection was not able to occur in one specific time period as I had hoped occurring more broadly across the duration of the project.

Chapter 4 – The Green Deal and practices of caring

In this chapter, I interviewed individuals who had taken Green Deal assessments or packages in order to assess its impact on an ethics of care and responsibility and the circulation of power with a focus on the individual. I think it is safe to say that this was by far the most complicated chapter of the research. I began by aiming to make contact with the DECC to discuss their intentions for the policy and was granted an interview. Before this could occur however it became clear that the Green Deal had flopped with an article in the Guardian in June, 2013 pointing out how zero households in the UK had completed Green Deal measures despite 40,000 assessments. At this point the contact I had in DECC stopped responding and I was never able to get a reply from DECC again.

I then moved my focus on to the individuals under the Green Deal given that they were the primary area of focus in any case. In order to do this, I contacted via email (and if that didn't work I followed up via phone) every single Green Deal installer within a reasonable distance from my home (London and the surrounding counties) and tried to arrange interviews. This was positive and I conducted 10 separate interviews with Green Deal installers who outlined their feelings on the scheme and how they viewed individuals undertaking assessments and their reasoning. While this was interesting and informative, my primary reason for these interviews however was to try to gain access to individuals undertaking assessments or finance packages given the government would offer no assistance in this regard as I had originally hoped. This was however where I met my single greatest challenge which was the Data Protection Act. While typically obliging, for obvious reasons installers would not give up clients contact details and therefore would have to make contact on my behalf. While one or two willingly obliged providing me with two respondents, most refused to aid me with this as it would take up their time. Given this, I asked if they would send out a letter on my behalf to their clients asking their clients to contact me if they would be happy to participate in research for a PhD thesis. Once again, very few agreed but several did although the
response rate was overwhelmingly low with only two people replying.

At this point I was put in contact with Reading Council through a colleague of my supervisor at Reading University. Reading Council had undertaken a Green Deal pilot scheme and in return for me agreeing to follow up on their initial pilot, they offered to contact members of the public on my behalf. Unfortunately before I could complete the interviews, the Green Deal was abolished and those working on it for Reading were moved on and I was informed that they could no longer afford to support my research after months of working this out.

Out of desperation at this point I turned to those respondents whom I had already interviewed and asked them if they knew anyone else who had undertaken assessments or finance packages that they could put me in contact with along with those few exceedingly helpful installers who had helped me before. Following on from this, I requested help from my entire list of non-professional contacts imploring them to ask everyone they knew if they had undertaken Green Deal assessments or knew anyone who had. While responses were few and far between, nine more respondents were located leaving me with 13 in total. I limited this to London and the surrounding area as by this stage in the thesis, I had no time to travel for extended periods.

As noted before, the reason that I focused specifically on members of the public is that I treated individuals as the key point for the empirical observation for the circulation of neoliberal governmental power and therefore I wished to examine the ways in which the Green Deal affected energy consumption and the ways in which it opened up a discourse of sustainability, citizenship and environmentalism. These interviews began by questioning respondents about their experience with the Green Deal including how they heard about it, why they took an assessment and their experience in an effort to determine the engagement felt with the scheme and how individuals reacted to it. I was primarily interested in determining whether or not the scheme elicited some sort of affective response from the respondents and if so, to what extent. I then moved on to questions about whether or not the Green Deal had an impact on environmental awareness, energy use or other areas of consumption by enquiring about habits before and after the Green Deal. At the end of the interviews, in order to gain a more complete picture of how individuals perceived the discourse around the Green Deal and their environmental awareness, I enquired about the sense of citizenship created by the Green Deal in addition to people's perceptions about the responsibility of governments and individuals. I sought to explore the ways in which the Green Deal motivated a sense of care for the environment or whether it encouraged the ascription of citizenly obligations in individuals. Finally, I asked questions on the consequences of energy consumption, climate change and the way in which individual's perceived climate change in terms of injustice and inequality.

Interviews, were carried out over the course of the thesis whenever they became available.
given the extreme difficulty in connecting with relevant publics and my medical issues, and typically lasted between thirty minutes to an hour. Once realising that my goal of interviewing a larger sample would not be possible, I focused on the depth of these interviews in order to try to paint a more complete picture of the everyday nature of the consumption that occurred and the perception of the individuals place within relevant discourses. Given the nature of semi-structured interviews it must be noted again that it is impossible to extract the researcher from the creation of knowledge and as such, I tried to begin with simple questions about routine and habitual consumption before finishing with more sensitive topics in which the social context and a search for normality might have been likely to play a larger role.

I also wish to acknowledge that given the limited sample size with regards to this research and the relative geographic homogeneity, it is not possible to view this sample as representative of larger trends. Instead this research focuses on individuality and issues surrounding neoliberal policies based around choice exploring the variety of ways in which respondents reacted to the Green Deal.

Furthermore, in addition to carrying out the interviews listed above, secondary data analysis was performed on key policy documents and proposals published by the government on the Green Deal. These included documents such as the outline document for parliament, pilot scheme reviews, draft proposals and impact assessments for the scheme. My motivation here was primarily to gauge the governments objectives and ambitions for the scheme in addition to analysing the predominant discourse around energy efficiency within political circles. This allowed for an increasingly critical analysis of the policy by being able to judge whether or not the policy was meeting government objectives, whether or not government objectives were compatible with an academic definition of just neoliberal sustainability, and also to be able to see government statistics on figures such as uptake, regional disparities and other similar categories.

Chapter 5 - Energy Performance Certificates: values, behaviour and the promise of ecological modernisation

Thankfully, this chapter proved somewhat easier than the first empirical chapter on the Green Deal. My aim in this chapter was to determine the ways in which our values and behaviour are constrained by regimes of practice and how “free choice” was not necessarily as free as we are led to believe. With this in mind, I conducted interviews with 15 estate agents and 30 members of the public who had just moved house in the last 6 month or were going to move in the next 6 months in attempt to determine the difference between the intention of the EPC and how it was
perceived in reality.

To begin with, I contacted estate agents via email to ask for interviews however this was a failure with exceedingly poor response rates. With this in mind, I switched to the telephone in addition to going into agencies in person and requesting interviews. This proved far more successful and I was quickly able to fulfil my goal of interviewing 15 estate agents. The members of the public however were more complicated in that once again, estate agents were unwilling to share the details of their clients for Data Protection Act related reasons. With this in mind after consulting with my supervisor, I decided to gather contacts for these interviews through personal connections. Thankfully living in London it was absolutely trivial to find 30 people who had just moved house or were just moving and as such, I completed these interviews with relative ease. It should be noted that this sample was skewed towards renters with 21 out of 30 respondents renting which may have implications with regards to behaviour.

I began with questions on the EPC such as whether respondents had seen an EPC, whether it was clear and whether it made sense and if they had an impact on decision making. I also tried to gauge whether or not norms existed regarding energy efficiency in the property market. I sought to evaluate the value of the EPC in addition to energy efficiency more generally. As these interviews were focused around how behaviour is constrained, rather than asking people specific questions about energy use and the environment (which I enquired more specifically about with estate agents as to how members of the public engaged with these issues), I typically enquired as to what people looked for in a property (in addition to posing this same question to estate agents) and why they chose specific properties in general terms rather than directly asking them about environmental commitments. Following on from this, I used the second half of the interviews to engage with more general discussions about consumption and everyday consumption in order to try to establish in what ways the choice of a property differed from the more everyday choices we make with regards to consumption in an effort to show how choice is constrained and the inability of individuals to frame certain decisions within a relevant discourse. This included whether respondents engaged in other “ethical” consumption activities and if so, why they did.

As noted, the members of the public I spoke to were a mix of friends, previous colleagues and contacts made through friends and family which at first I thought might be a hindrance however turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Given the importance of values and attitudes to this chapter and the ability of individuals to frame consumption in terms of sustainability, having a prior knowledge of the respondents values, norms and characteristics amongst other things, I was able to better understand and comprehend the informants lines of interpretation (Blichfeldt and Heldbjerg, 2011). While this perhaps served to question the objectivity of the research, I tried to avoid
questions at first which could be perceived to have a normative or ethical dimension to them before moving on to more specific questions surrounding everyday sustainable consumption. Furthermore, having a knowledge of the lives of the majority of these respondents made it easier to judge their values and interpret their responses. As Blichfeldt and Heldbjerg, (2011) note, sometimes it is possible to become stuck in methodological rites meaning we uncritically turn towards interviewees we do now know and as Gummesson (2003) notes, what is important is the best possible access to reality and the most information and therefore, we should not automatically view a pre-existing connection as invalidating the usefulness of a respondent.

Chapter 6 - Neoliberalism and fuel poverty: technocentrism and the depoliticising of care

The aim of this chapter was to explore the way in which an overly technocentric conception of fuel poverty served to depoliticise the issue and restrict access to care for those in need. As such interviews were focused around whether or not respondents were aware of government definitions of fuel poverty, what fuel poverty meant to them, what options they felt they had and how practices and behaviour affected fuel poverty in an attempt to determine the impacts of the technical definition and how this affected those suffering.

With that in mind, interviews were conducted with five respondents suffering from some form of fuel poverty (I say this as they were unaware if they met the government definition) and the head of a local fuel poverty organisation in Reading called Draughtbusters who provided free or exceedingly cheap home improvements in areas such as draughtproofing, insulation and energy use advice as part of a voluntary service. They received a small amount of funding from Reading Council which was used autonomously. The use of this organisation in interview terms was that it provided a more objective assessment of the experience of many of those in fuel poverty given that the organiser himself was not directly in fuel poverty and I was therefore able to ask him questions which I would not necessarily feel comfortable asking those suffering from Fuel Poverty such as to what extent their behaviours exacerbate the issue.

This was another case in which finding interviews proved to be relatively problematic. Thankfully this was one of the few benefits of the time lost with Reading Council in that it was through them that I was put in contact with Draughtbusters. Given that the majority of those suffering from fuel poverty are often vulnerable or in some cases ashamed, there was typically a low willingness to talk despite the head of Draughtbusters being exceedingly cooperative. As a result, I obtained 3 interviews from the Draughtbusters organisation, before searching elsewhere. At this point once again, I turned to personal connections for help and was thankfully able to find
two more households struggling to heat their homes using pre-payment meters. Unlike the previous chapter, despite the fact that I was put in contact with these people through personal connections, I had not met these people before and while I acknowledge the indirect connection may have possibly served to influence what answers respondents felt were acceptable, one could argue that this is true across almost any semi-structured interview with Polkingthorne (1989, p.27) noting how one may take the view that “it is not possible to achieve objective knowledge because the only knowledge available to humans is subjective and relative.”

Once again, the size of this sample for obvious reasons cannot be considered representative however it does not aim for this, instead focusing on individual experiences of how the depoliticisation of fuel poverty drives exclusion and constrains efforts to tackle the issue.

One further point that should be noted is that given the nature of fuel poverty there may be a tendency for responses to search for a form of normality. The head of the fuel poverty organisation noted how those in fuel poverty were often unwilling to talk given their vulnerable nature and how in certain cases they were ashamed of their inability to provide and therefore may seek to obfuscate certain elements of their lifestyles.

In addition to the primary data collected, this was another case where I spent a significant amount of time studying secondary data and government publications surrounding fuel poverty. With the change in definition of fuel poverty occurring near the beginning of my thesis, it was crucial to examine government documents such as the Hill (2012) fuel poverty review commissioned by the government which led to the change in definition. Examining the motivations of the government regarding this change in definition was crucial when studying the politics of fuel poverty given how the impact of a change in definition was so pronounced in terms of the governments efforts to combat fuel poverty. In addition to policy documents and reports, I also examined government statistics on fuel poverty in order to get a better idea as to the extent of fuel poverty within the UK and the success of historical efforts to tackle it.

Chapter 7 - The neoliberal citizen-consumer and issues of scale: comparing the Green Deal and its alternatives

In this chapter, I aimed to explore how issues of scale affected attempts at governmentality and the circulation of neoliberal power. With this in mind, I attempted to compare the Green Deal to small scale local alternatives. Having already planned interviews on the Green Deal for the first empirical chapter, this meant the focus of the research on this chapter would be the local alternatives. With the local fuel poverty organisation from the previous chapter already
representing one such example from which to draw data, I decided to focus on one additional community led alternative. When searching for this alternative, I looked for several criteria which were: does this organisation deal with energy efficiency, does this organisation provide or increase access to financing and does this organisation provide information? To this end, I searched on the internet for Green Deal alternatives and shortly after came across the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network. WREN is somewhat of a mix of a local energy collective and a Green Deal style operation which encourages home efficiency retrofits directing members to available sources of funding and providing information either through the internet, publications or through their storefront. I contacted WREN and shortly after speaking to them, arranged to visit the area for several days in order to talk with the organisers and interview members of the organisation. This resulted in an interview with four organisers of WREN and ten public members. While I considered various alternatives to WREN, I could not find any which seemed to so directly offer a point of contrast vis-a-vis the Green Deal.

Given the focus of this chapter on governmentality and citizenship, interviews conducted were primarily focused on engaging with why people joined WREN, in what ways they benefited and the way WREN was tied to the community. Once again I tried to avoid asking specific questions preferring to let respondents express in their own words their reasons for participation. I deliberately avoided mentioning citizenship or the community myself to avoid leading respondents down a certain path instead waiting for them to mention these aspects organically. Furthermore, interviews with the organisers served to outline the methods of governance used by WREN and the services it provides as well as the impact it has had. Interviews also focused on the way the public engaged with WREN and I also spoke informally to various members of the public not actively involved with WREN.

One thing I should note is that WREN were keen to share their experience and also put me in contact with the majority of public respondents which means it is highly unlikely that they would ever pair me with someone who has something bad to say about it. This being said, I endeavoured to pursue five interviews with members of WREN whom I located myself through asking around local stores and businesses and responses were typically similar in addition to informal chats taken around town serving to reinforce my belief that the interviews WREN provided me with were not atypical.

Yet again, the fact that two alternative organisations were interviewed means that this sample cannot be viewed as representative but instead is meant to demonstrate empirical examples of ways in which an attention to spatiality, scale and a sense of community can greatly increase effectiveness with regards to governance.
Summarising the respondents

This chart briefly summarises the respondents and which chapter the data is relevant to. With many respondents wishing to remain anonymous, as there is no value to naming them individually I will list the ways that various respondents will be referred to in the empirical chapters below.

Table 3.1

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<th>Label in chapters</th>
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<th>Relevant Empirical Chapter</th>
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</table>
3.3 – Data Analysis

Given that the data collected for this thesis was almost entirely in the form of semi-structured interviews combined with some secondary data, the data analysis essentially involved poring through the resulting transcripts and interview notes in the cases where respondents either refused to be recorded or were exceedingly uncomfortable. It is important to acknowledge that when using field notes as opposed to transcripts as Clifford (1990, p.64) notes, they are written in a way that is meant to make sense elsewhere later on. As such they require a degree of interpretation which often favours a coherent narrative. There is a certain degree of truth in this in that when respondents would not allow me to record them I was forced to jot down notes however if they said something particularly relevant I would ask them to pause in order for me to properly note it. Given this, I must acknowledge that events which I found to be most interesting and important at the time of the interviews may take preference in the case of field note interviews. It should also be noted that as some interviewees refused to be recorded, quotations from the research are often paraphrased and as such in some cases may contain my interpretation if the intended meaning.

Thematic Analysis

Initially, once the data was sorted, I began looking for ways to transfer the results of my research to the writing. This was primarily focused around thematic analysis and the identification of patterns and the affective experience of individuals in relation to the topics being discussed. In some ways, this was focused around highlighting the considerable differences between respondents answers as much as it was highlighting similarities. I took a predominantly exploratory approach as highlighted by Guest et al. (2012) focused around content driven analysis rather than hypothesis driven, searching for specific codes and analytic categories which were not predetermined. I started by reading through the notes until some ideas started to form and some common themes such as an ethics of care or and responsibility, the affective potential of spaces and connections, moments of self identification and subject formation, and the identification of relevant discourses started to appear. I then noted down the categories to be used based on a combination of areas of interest in terms of the research questions and those which appeared as a result of going through the data, which I then used to assign excerpts from the interviews which could then be used to explore and illustrate specific points from the empirical chapters. With the list of examples highlighting specific points or categories completed, I then wrote up my empirical chapters with the ability to pick the most suitable examples of various themes which I wished to discuss.
I chose to undertake data analysis in this manner as I felt that this was the most effective way in serving to highlight key issues from the empirical research with regards to the objectives and research questions highlighted earlier. Through identifying responses relating to these themes, it was possible to not just view patterns but to see how individual responses varied considerably across a range of issues allowing me to evaluate the real effectiveness of policies studied in this thesis. While obviously the thematic analysis was not limited to these themes, I highlight some of the main themes here and how they are employed.

An ethics of care and responsibility under neoliberalism

As noted, an a discussion and critique of neoliberalism through the lens of an ethics of care and responsibility was central to this thesis. Therefore data analysis was performed with this in mind. I aimed to examine responses and interview texts in order to highlight examples or an ethics of care and responsibility either existing or being formed, and how this functioned in terms of who cared, and what or for whom did they care about. There were two key ways that I attempted to define or pinpoint the creation or existence of an ethics of care. These were directly and indirectly. In certain cases, people came out and deliberately said I did this because I care about this person or the environment or some similar factor. In addition to this, given the tendency of this study to view behaviour as not dependent on crossing a threshold of cognitive contemplation, the second method of identifying geographies of care and responsibility was through people's actions. This was predominantly in cases where people did not expressly state a sense of care for an individual or cause but were clearly constrained in their behaviour as a result of their unwillingness to inconvenience or harm someone or something other than themselves. As such, examples of people exhibiting a sense of care or responsibility were noted down and used to determine the capability of neoliberal forms of governance to both create and exploit this ethics of care.

Affective geographies and connections

The second core theme which I sought to highlight from the research was the way in which connections were formed and at what level they existed. With so much of the thesis focused around our ability to connect with others and the environment within a defined space, I felt this was crucial. Using emotional cues and responses from the research, I attempted to go through the results and to establish when connections occurred and between whom and how this might be relevant in terms of increasing or decreasing affective potential of spaces. With the affective potential of a space so
inherently tied with the ability of those operating within the space to forge meaningful connections, I believe this approach was crucial with regards to determining examples of care in the research. While especially in the first two empirical chapters I tried to deliberately avoid asking people directly about their feelings given the tendency of emotions to be tied to social norms and not always crossing a threshold of contemplation, at the end of interviews I sometimes enquired as to certain behaviours or habits with the intention of determining the affective and emotional responses they elicited. I therefore grouped together examples where a relational sense of care or a strong sense of connection either to other humans or nature occurred within the research. I also noted possible examples of respondents expressing a sense of citizenship or community. This often involved using research notes in addition to simply transcripts given the importance placed on visual cues in determining the affective potential of a relationship.

**Self perception and subject formation**

Another example of a thematic category which I used was that of self identification and subject formation. I was interested with individual perceptions of self such as whether or not individuals viewed themselves for example in a position of power or as a passive recipient of policy which may potentially constrain the impact of governance on the individual. Furthermore, I was interested in how the individual viewed their behaviour or participation within certain regimes of practice and whether or not it was used as a means of constructing an identity or in the process of subject formation. With Legg (2005) noting how subjectification is the means through which neoliberal rule is applied, I was interesting in determining how respondents viewed themselves such as for example consumers, citizens, as being a part of a certain group or whether they had not actively considered their role within the wider context of society. I thus attempted to group together examples where individuals noted themselves as being “ethical consumers” or “environmentalists” for example or specific examples where people used their consumption to construct their identity.

**Identification of relevant discourses**

Following on from above, given the interest of this thesis with regards to values and behaviour in addition to citizenship, the ability of respondents to frame themselves within a certain discourse was key. With this in mind, I attempted to outline responses from the research in which respondents identified themselves (either directly or indirectly) as operating within a certain discourse be it of sustainability, social justice or consumerism. With Crompton et al. (2010) noting
the inability of so many individuals to activate relevant values when dealing with consumption, being able to identify the ways in which respondents saw themselves situated within relevant debates was crucial. I explored problematisations of issues as outlined by the respondents in an effort to view how practices were formed around higher order objectives which arose as a result of these problematisations in addition to which discourses were prevalent regarding these problematisations. In addition to this I attempted to outline examples of social normality as highlighted by the respondents such as what they viewed as acceptable or unacceptable behaviour, whether or not they judged their own behaviour relative to others or whether in fact they judged the behaviour of others.

3.4 – Summary

In this study I collected data from a range of different sources, outlined in the table earlier in this chapter, via semi-structured interviews. I sought to engage with the individuals who have been in direct contact with new and neoliberal forms of environmental policy within the UK and to examine the way in which these new forms of governance impacted on efforts to tackle the overconsumption of domestic energy. I argued how my research was undertaken in order to engage with and highlight real individual experiences with regards to new forms of governance and the various ways in which individuals interact with new and evolving neoliberal policies based around free choice. Furthermore, it is designed to highlight the ways in which we form connections with individuals within a space, how an ethics of care and responsibility is generated in the context of energy governance and the ways in which governmental power is enacted under neoliberal rule.

In the subsequent empirical chapters, I use the data collected from the research including illustrative quotes and examples from the research in order to explore the research questions. In chapter 4 I use the interviews with Green Deal installers and takers to argue that the global nature of environmental change coupled with low affective potential of energy consumption hinders the ability of policy to generate an ethics of care. In chapter 5 I use the interviews with estate agents and members of the public who have moved or are moving properties to argue that choice is inherently constrained and therefore policies based around a notion of voluntarism are uncertain. In chapter 6 I use the interviews with the local fuel poverty organisation and fuel poverty sufferers to argue that the depoliticisation of fuel poverty increases exclusion and fails to tackle the issue at hand. In chapter 7 I use the interviews from Green Deal takers, WREN and fuel poverty to argue that in order for neoliberal governance to generate a sense of citizenship, it must pay attention to the spatial scale and which it operates.
4. The Green Deal and the privatisation of care under regimes of neoliberal governance

*The affective power of a body is understood in terms of its capacity to form relations with other bodies.*

(McCormack, 2007, p.367)

In this chapter, I contribute to issues surrounding engaging neoliberal green governance through the lens of an ethics of care and responsibility. With the Green Deal representing an attempt at solving a global problem with seemingly invisible consequences and energy use occurring at what might be seen as an exceedingly low level of discursive consciousness, the ability of individuals to comprehend the inequalities generated through their consumption and to normalise this in a manner which generates a sense of care is questionable at best. Drawing on the literature from geographies of emotion and affect, geographies of care and responsibility, and neoliberal governance, I argue that the inability of individuals to form relevant connections in the context of the global space in which the Green Deal operates limits the ability of participants or non-participants to be affected by the it. With the government failing to understand the implications of behaviour occurring at a distinctly low level of reflexivity, the neoliberal privatisation of care and responsibility embodied by the Green Deal fails to understand the way in which consumption is often undertaken as part of a practice in pursuit of higher order objectives and as such, is unlikely to be an effective approach at conducting environmental policy. The result a situation where care and a responsibility to tackle overconsumption is being increasingly painted as the responsibility of the private sector and the individual however this responsibility is not being adequately transferred in reality.

With McCormack (2007) noting how the affective power of a body can be seen in terms of its capacity to form relations with other bodies, Popke (2006) noting that if relations of care are affective and relational then an ethics of care would necessarily be situational and for those with whom we have immediate contact, and Smith (2000) pointing out that advocates of an ethics of care
must consider how to spin their web of relations widely enough to reach out to all potential recipients, one would be forgiven for thinking that one of the first consideration of the Green Deal would be the ways in which it connects consumers to the consequences of their consumption. Despite this, very little has been done in this regard with the Green Deal seemingly taking a view of consumption and behaviour framed around an information deficit model rather than an ethics of care. The result of this is a policy which asks individuals to consider the impacts of their consumption in a global context yet seemingly gives them very little reason or help in doing so.

With the government believing that through the introduction of Green Deal finance packages, people would find sufficient reason to self-motivate in terms of undertaking energy efficiency improvements, this has not been the case with the Green Deal being shut down in July 2015 (NAO, 2016). Using the framework of an ethics of care and responsibility under neoliberal modes of governance, I argue that the government has failed to understand consumption within the relevant social, structural and political context overstating the rationality of behaviour which has ultimately led to the failure of the Green Deal.

In order to pursue this idea, this chapter will be divided into two main sections with the goal of examining the Green Deal under the logic of neoliberal governance and an ethics of care. Before beginning a more critical analysis, I will also briefly explore the creation of the Green Deal and outline the governments objectives and aims for the policy based on policy documents and proposals for the scheme published by the DECC and House of Commons.

In the first section, using empirical examples from the research, I expand on the literature on geographies of care and affect in order to explore issues of caring at a distance and the ability of individuals to form relations when a lack of relevant corporeal connections exist. I trace the main issues raised in the literature while engaging with the ways in which social normality is key when generating an ethics of care. I examine the ability of the Green Deal and policy to develop an ethics of care and responsibility while exploring factors which impact on the affective potential of carescapes. I also raise issues of the distinction between caring for and caring about and how the governments failure to understand this distinction and the motivations of individuals regarding consumption inhibits their ability to design successful policy.

Following on from this, the second section will focus on the privatisation of care in order to use care as a critique of neoliberalism. I explore issues around the privatisation of care and how the nature of care has evolved under a system of neoliberal governance. I examine whether care is being privatised or politicised while exploring questions around who is responsible for issues of the overconsumption and energy and its solution and whether or not responsibility is being effectively
transferred to the private sector and the individual.

The data from this chapter has been drawn from the interviews conducted with ten Green Deal assessors and 13 members of the public who in 11 cases have undertaken Green Deal assessments and in two cases, finance packages. The interviews revolved primarily around establishing routines and practices related to energy use and whether or not changes occurred as a result of the Green Deal. Following this respondents were asked how they viewed themselves in terms of relevant discourses of sustainability, citizenship and environmentalism with regards to the Green Deal and in what ways it connected them to the consequences of their consumption.

The Green Deal

Before beginning the analysis of the empirical material collected from the interviews for this chapter I wish to briefly go over the governments publications on the Green Deal such as the draft proposals, pilot scheme reviews and impact assessments in order to provide a clearer picture of exactly what the government was aiming for when designing the Green Deal. As we saw from the introduction, the Green Deal represents a new way of doing environmental policy within the UK. With the secretary of state dubbing it a “revolutionary programme” (DECC, 2010, p.5), it aimed to leverage the economic might of the private sector while being consistent with the notion of austerity through keeping costs down and increased efficiency.

In the Green Deal outline presented to parliament Smith (2010) notes how the Green Deal is being introduced in the context of rising levels of fuel poverty and legally binding carbon emissions reductions targets coupled with the criticism of existing schemes to encourage energy efficiency. There is a clear focus on issues of fuel poverty being a very real problem within the UK political landscape and in addition to this that previous schemes to tackle both fuel poverty and energy efficiency have not been as successful as hoped. CERT and CESP (p.3) are specifically noted as not doing enough to help those in fuel poverty and as such this is one of the reasons they are being replaced. Looking at the coalition governments' programme for government (2010) shows two key things. First there is a focus around what they term, “freedom, responsibility and fairness” (p.1) highlighting an increasingly neoliberal approach similar to the one discussed in the literature based around individual choice and the responsibilisation of the public. While concerns are noted about the involvement of the private sector and what they will demand in return for their involvement, it is treated as somewhat of an inevitability given the ambitious targets being set and the amount of resources required. The document for parliament is also very keen to stress that it is not a loan and will not affect personal credit. This is supposed to be a major benefit of the scheme and make it
increasingly palatable to the public. Furthermore, in the original draft, plans were in place for group sign-ups with reduced prices, cashback schemes for referring friends and a great deal of discussion around additional methods of implementation for cashback schemes which in the end failed to see the light of day.

The government clearly believed pre-launch that the Green Deal was an attractive proposition for individuals with a section in the summary of Green Deal proposals (DECC, 2010, p.8) noting how the fact that investments would be made possible at no upfront cost coupled with the robust accreditation process that would take place should lead to an increase in confidence and subsequently an increase in demand for energy efficiency measures. The government fully expected the Green Deal to spread organically through a range of organisations such as landlords, estate agents, builders, home improvement stores and the like, acknowledging what they viewed as the clear benefits of a bottom up approach to energy efficiency.

A large amount of this optimism was as a result of the pilot projects carried out on PAYS or Pay As You Save schemes. Multiple reports such as the governments review of the pilot schemes (DECC, 2011) and the reports from individual trials such as Gentoo (2012) gave policy makers cause for genuine optimism. With the pilot schemes focusing on the types of partners householders would prefer to deliver such schemes and make repayments to, the relationship between payments and savings, the energy measures available, the ability to overcome high capital costs and finally the ability of the market to communicate these finance packages to households, almost all were viewed as a success. The PAYS pilot schemes revealed that for most householders, potential financial savings was the key motivation to taking energy saving action in the home and the government predicted in its draft proposal (DECC, 2010) that especially in the long term as energy prices continued to rise, real savings should have appeared making the scheme desirable. Not only did householders want to save money but others were interested in warming their homes, improving their living space and also simply being “greener.” PAYS thus enabled them to take action and save money.

Not only this but as the review of the pilot schemes noted (DECC, 2011) the PAYS scheme fell perfectly in line with coalition governments efforts to responsibilise the population and “big society.” In the pilot scheme review (p.82) 70% of individuals claimed that their involvement in the pilot scheme would make them more likely to encourage energy efficiency in others, 51% claimed that they would be more likely to change their behaviour regarding energy consumption and the environment in general as a result of higher environmental awareness and 52% claimed they were likely to install additional measures beyond what the PAYS project had already installed. There was also a general consensus that the vast majority of people would not have undertaken these upgrades
by themselves with the availability of the PAYS finance scheme being crucial in this regard (although it should be noted that the PAYS scheme trials did not have the same interest rates as the Green Deal). In addition to this, individual pilot reports painted a similar picture. In the Gentoo (2012) pilot, 29% of participants claimed a reduction in energy use as a direct result of increased environmental awareness in addition to the authors of the review noting a serious improvement in environmental awareness and efforts to reduce energy use after the work was done in a more general context. Given this, it feels safe to assume that while the Green Deal was clearly primarily focused around meeting legally binding emissions targets and the reduction of fuel poverty as highlighted as the key ambitions in the draft proposals for parliament (DECC, 2010), the government also had ambitions for the Green Deal to have a transformative dimension to it in terms of the creations of new social norms based around energy consumption and behaviour.

It should also be noted that the government commissioned multiple reports through the Energy Saving Trust and Consumer Focus (Lainé 2010,2011) about making sure the Green Deal was fair for everyone. These reports came out notably more sceptical in terms of the potential of the schemes compared to the pilot reviews noting how consumer confidence in the energy market was exceedingly low compared to other markets and there has been no increase in the proportion of people willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. While people want changes that help the environment to fit in with their lifestyles, 61% of people (Lainé, 2011, p.11) think that taking environmentally beneficial measures is only worth it if it saves them money in addition to a 19% increase from 2007-2009 in people who think that it is harder than before to change your habits to be environmentally friendly and that it is not worth Britain taking action on climate change if other countries will not.

To summarise, the Green Deal may be seen primarily as the governments attempt to meet legally binding emissions targets and reduce fuel poverty within the UK. In the final impact assessment (DECC, 2012) p.1, it notes how the Green Deal aims to, reduce GHG emissions, maintain energy security and address fuel poverty through addressing barriers slowing the uptake of socially effective energy efficiency measures. These barriers include access to capital and discount rates, information asymmetry, positive innovation externalities, inertia, and incentive incompatibility. The government believes that by providing information, reducing the up front cost and facilitating access to capital, the individual householder will be encouraged to undertake personal energy efficiency measures. Based on the pilot scheme reviews, there is also the additional hope that individuals will become increasingly environmentally aware and develop increasingly beneficial patterns of behaviour as a result. The benefits of this according to the governments impact assessment (DECC, 2012) is the benefit to householders taking packages, those occupying
the properties with Green Deal plans and wider benefits to society such as improved air quality, carbon savings and traded carbon allowance savings.

4.1- Caring at a distance – the Green Deal and an ethics of care

In the first half of this chapter, as noted, I examine the empirical evidence from the interviews conducted with the Green Deal suppliers and assessor coupled with individuals who underwent Green Deal assessments or finance packages, to look at the ability of the Green Deal to promote an ethics of care and responsibility.

Given that care is both fundamentally relational and formed within defined places/spaces through the social interactions, power struggles and inequalities that occur within in addition to being inherently political (Cox, 2010), it seems almost paradoxical to imagine that we are capable of caring for people half way around the world who we have never and will never meet. The Green Deal and more specifically residential energy use is just one of many cases appearing these days which highlight the many issues faced by environmental policy-makers. The Green Deal and energy use represent a common issue when it comes to the environment in that people are asked to feel responsible for problems which they have no direct way of perceiving. Whether this is an inability to see people or animals suffer, to see climate change or varying weather patterns or to recognise the impact humans have on biodiversity just to name a few, there is a clear problem that in virtually no way, shape or form are there any sort of cues which allow people to get a sense of the way their actions interact with the rest of the world. The result of this is seemingly that many of us are unwilling or unable to take into account the true costs of our actions and attribute responsibility for them in the way which we would in a more local or small scale setting. While the internet and globalisation have in some ways brought us closer together than ever before, there remains a very real level of disconnection between almost all scales of society from the local all the way up to the global. Environmentally speaking, if true this is inevitably problematic as it potentially discourages individuals from taking responsibility for their actions which in turn potentially leads to people acting or consuming in a more polluting and resource heavy fashion.

Looking at the research from the Green Deal, this is something which was immediately apparent from the respondents with all but two respondents failing to acknowledge or understand the relationship between their consumption and global society as a whole. This was highlighted by multiple respondents whom when asked about whether they had ever viewed the Green Deal in terms of taking responsibility for the impact of their consumption in terms of the global pollution created by it almost exclusively replied that they had not. One respondent noted for example when
asked what the impact of their energy consumption was that

*I'm not really sure to be honest, it's not something I've ever really thought about* (GD5, interview, March 2016)

with another noting when asked the same question

*I'm not going to say I've never thought about it but I couldn't tell you anything specific beyond that its probably not something I should be proud of* (GD9, interview, August, 2016).

This was a common theme amongst the responses with it becoming increasingly clear that the vast majority of respondents were a) largely unaware of the specific ramifications of their energy consumption and b) for the most part, this did not seem to bother them. In total, there were two respondents who were able to give a somewhat coherent answer with regards to the impacts of their energy consumption linking it to pollution, rising levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide and the knock on effects this is having on the planet. When asked about what could motivate them to care more about their energy use, of the respondents who did not view themselves as already concerned, there were very few meaningful answers with the majority unconvincingly stating

*I think if I maybe just knew a bit more about it I would care more* (GD4, interview, Nov, 2015)

or stating that financial implications of energy usage might convince them to care with one noting

*if energy bills keep going up then I will have to care* (GD2, interview, June, 2015)

and another noting

*At the rate things are going though, I think in the future we'll all have to be a bit more careful or we'll all have gone broke* (GD 11, interview, September, 2016).

Interestingly, this did not necessarily apply to all consumption undertaken. While I did not specifically question the consumption of the respondents with regards to other aspects of life in these interviews, it should be noted that there were several times during which respondents who seemed completely uninterested with their energy use and who openly admitted to not considering
environmental factors, started mentioning times they had undertaken what might be viewed as sustainable consumption with a marked difference in attitude. Two women interviewed for example, aimed to illustrate their commitment to the environment by telling me how they purchase sustainable make-up and skin care products while another respondent was eager to demonstrate his new hybrid car. Despite the fact that none of the respondents viewed themselves as particularly concerned with energy use, all three were keen to stress the efforts they made in these cases. When asked, it turned out that all three of the respondents who brought these things up felt that these were issues that were important within their social circles. One woman in particular was keen to stress how

*Me and my friends are very conscious about which brands we buy (referring to skin care) as it is something we all care about (GD4, Interview, Nov, 2015)*

with another man noting how (when discussing his hybrid car parked outside that I brought up)

*Ye I just got it recently, a friend of mine was banging on about his and how great it was and how much money he was saving so I thought why not (GD10, interview, September, 2016).*

This serves to highlight the relational aspect of care brought up in the literature (Silk, 2004; Popke, 2006). Unlike examples in the literature dealing with topics on fair trade (Goodman and McEwan, 2010; Barnett et al. 2010) for example, the Green Deal fails to create and sort of meaningful connection between the consumer and those suffering the impact of their consumption. What is required is what Massey (2007) refers to as the “politics of place beyond place.” In this, Massey notes, political obligations of public authorities, private companies and citizens located in one place are reframed to include considerations of relationships that reach far beyond the spatial confines of place in question (Barnett et al, 2010). The Green Deal fails to deploy what Kurtz (2003) terms “scale frames” which are discursive practices that construct a meaningful linkage between where the impact of consumption is felt and the spatial scale at which action needs to be taken (Barnett et al. 2010).

Furthermore, the fact that consumers were increasingly conscious however about products such as skin care or cars which were raised in social circles implies that the relational aspect of care does not necessarily have to occur between consumer and victim of consumption. Instead, social norms operating within circles are potentially more important with regards to care in addition to highlighting the difference in levels of reflection when purchasing a product linked with a
hedonistic sense of pleasure

This has potentially severe implications with regards to the green governance of residential energy use. While some authors (Silk, 2004; Smith, 1998) note that awareness of our impact on and our “ability to care for” obligates us to care for the vulnerable, this is decidedly wishful thinking in reality with almost all of the respondents interviewed aware of the fact that their consumption is to some extent unsustainable and almost all respondents in a situation where they are capable or doing something about it. While as Jackson (2005) notes that perceived ability to make a difference may add to the weight of awareness which is likely true to some extent, in reality there are a range of other factors which influence our ability to generate an ethics of care. What this does is start to lead us away from the notion of caring being as simple as simply being aware of a problem and able to help and start to develop the notion that our behaviour is not always as logical and under our control as we might like to think (Bagozzi, Baumgartner, & Yi, 1989; Bamberg, Ajzen, & Schmidt, 2003; Ouellette & Wood, 1998; Saba & di Natale, 1999).

This can cause serious complications and means trying to generate any form of genuine care in this case becomes exceedingly difficult. Given that information alone does not seem sufficient to motivate meaningful relationships (Bartiaux, 2008; Halkier, 2001; Fahy, 2005; Bickerstaff and Walker, 2002; Fischer 2008; Shove 2003)), the question thus becomes, under what conditions can a significant relationship be formed over a distance to the point where it will form an ethics of care and responsibility between the parties.

Popke (2006) notes two main responses to this question. Initially, he links a disposition of care to the notion of justice. Using these sets of principles and what he refers to as “more or less universal precepts,” judgements can be made which employ a sense of responsibility be it towards humans, animals, the planet or all of the above. He states that care need not be opposed to universal ideals like justice but rather can be crucial in progressing the concept of justice to include new values. To summarise this point, Popke (2006, p.507) notes that “responsibility toward others, in this view, is guaranteed through the collective negotiation of rules, policies and practices that recognize and foster an ethos of care.” Lloyd (2004) also goes on to note how this method of thinking about care is predominantly feminist and can be understood as an attempt to develop a new means of conceptualising ethics which breaks from “liberal political philosophy.”

Unfortunately, in the case of the Green Deal, issues of justice were rarely of great consequence when discussed with the respondents. Near the end of the interviews, once I had completed all the initial questioning regarding people's experience with the Green Deal I endeavoured to get a clearer picture of how people viewed issues of climate change and overconsumption by asking them what they thought about the concept of energy use and
environmental degradation within the United Kingdom representing an issue of distributional or environmental justice. If necessary as some respondents did not immediately understand what I meant by this, I used a generic example about how our energy consumption increases pollution which in turn raises global temperatures which threatens the livelihood of people living in the third world and subsequently how they suffer as a result of our consumption. It was immediately clear however that this was not a line of thinking which was prevalent or popular amongst the respondents. From the total sample of interviewees, only two when asked, associated environmental protection within some form of justice and distributional awareness. One respondent noted when asked about this that

*I think that sounds a bit preachy no? I don't know, it would have to be done in a very tactful way that's for sure. I don't want to be told its my fault that the world is screwed cos I left my lights on you know, cos I just don't think that's true (FT2, interview, March, 2016)*

and another noted that

*I don't know if id necessarily say climate change is all about inequality. From what I gather the whole planet is pretty much in this together no? (GD8, interview, July, 2016).*

Interestingly, there were other cases where respondents acknowledged issues of justice with regards to climate change such as in one interview with a women who worked for a women's organisation who noted when asked whether climate change was an issue of justice and inequality

*Yes, I think so to some extent. I mentioned earlier that there are other groups where I work that are working on the impact of climate change on women so I definitely think its a case of an unequal distribution of the consequences of it. Again, its not something that I know a lot about but I definitely think that what you said has some truth to it at least (GD7, interview, April, 2016)*

and another who noted when asked if we have a responsibility to do something about climate change that disproportionately harms others

*I think it's a fair point, yes I'd say we do (GD11, interview, September, 2016).*

Despite this, none of the cases where respondents acknowledged the link between issues of climate
change and justice actually led to any sort of increased motivation to act upon fixing these injustices. The respondent above who noted how it was a fair point to link the two, when questioned if whether or not this link was increasingly emphasised for issues such as energy consumption and the Green Deal would encourage him to take a more proactive approach to environmental protection or limiting his own impact on these injustices went on to respond 

..its unlikely but perhaps, I just think its so hard to actually link these things together. Its very difficult to say your doing this causes that you know (GD11, interview, September, 2016).

Therefore while he acknowledged that distributional impacts to climate change exist, the fact that you cannot easily quantify them or attribute them to a specific source prevented this from providing a serious sense of motivation. Given this, it seems that basing an ethics of care and responsibility around a sense of justice may have a questionable effect in practical terms as even if it is acknowledged, it is no guarantee of action.

Unfortunately, the second means of emphasizing care dealing more specifically with the relational aspect of it looks equally unlikely to succeed given the evidence from the research. Given that the fundamental nature of the human condition is our common vulnerability and reliance on each other, care can thus be seen as universal and an activity that “binds us all” (Williams, 2002). As much environmental degradation falls right into the category of a common vulnerability and a situation where we are reliant on others, this conceptualisation of care and responsibility seems particularly appropriate. This links in to some extent with Massey’s (2004) conceptualisation of global space as dependent on the sum of local places, and helps to shift focus away from the traditional western notion of care diminishing as it moves from the local to the global. This second definition of care thus seeks to recognise space as a site which frequently produces inequalities both locally and globally in the case of environmental degradation. Once again however, highlighting these inequalities seemingly offers no guarantee of action.

The affective potential of a space (carescape)

We must therefore ask, why, if people admit that the production of these inequalities are problematic and they acknowledge their existence, do they not feel the need to do anything about it? Going back to the literature, I wish to revisit the idea of a carescape as proposed by Lawson (2007). To briefly review, a carescape may be seen as a “space of care” or more generally, the space in which specific instances of care are constructed, fought over and carried out. It involves not just the
geographical area of this space but also the social sphere in which it operates. With Smith (2000) noting that advocates of an ethics of care must figure out a way to spread this sense of care wide enough for it to be relevant, the carescape may thus be seen as the spatial limits to which this web of care must stretch. In the case of the overconsumption of energy, the carescape is for all effective purposes, the entire world, as the impact of the overconsumption of energy is a global problem. Thus if people understand the global connotations of their actions, why are they unable to frame their responsibilities in a global context. In this section, I wish to draw on the literature of geographies of emotion and affect to explore how in the case of the Green Deal, the limited affective potential of the carescape in question, prohibits individuals from turning their awareness of injustice or the consequences of their consumption into something proactive.

As we saw in the literature, affect and the affective potential of something can be referred to as the ability of something to influence or have an impact or effect on us at a pre-cognitive level (Shouse 2005; Thien, 2005) and can be thought of similar to potential energy in physics. Given this, no matter how logical a proposition may seem, if it operates within a space of low affective potential action is unlikely to occur. In the case of the Green Deal, the fundamental lack of excitement and interaction when discussing the Green Deal left me in no doubts with regards to the low affective potential of the Green Deal. Even the most environmentally motivated respondents who claimed to have undertaken Green Deal assessments purely for the sake of curbing their energy consumption appeared only moderately interested at best and when asked if they derived any sort of pleasure from the Green Deal were the only respondents out of the thirteen to reply positively. While others noted its use as an informational tool or were pleased with the results, none admitted to deriving any form of satisfaction or self satisfaction from knowing their actions were environmentally beneficial in the case of the Green Deal.

Strangely, this was in stark contrast with several respondents who exhibited or engaged in other pro-environmental or altruistic behaviours. One respondent outside of London was a keen gardener and spoke freely to me about his efforts promoting biodiversity in his garden. Another was a member of a local energy organisation and talked to me happily on the work they do there noting

*It is so important for the local community (GD10, Interview, September, 2016)*

Others also spoke freely about social or political organisations they worked with such as one respondent who noted
The sense of satisfaction I get from working with the local women's group is huge [...] it changed my life (GD7, Interview, April, 2016)

Part of this as well stems from the fact the Green Deal has done almost nothing in terms of establishing newly defined places and spaces of caring. While the government does not specifically state that it is aiming for this, one may argue academically that the Green Deal is an attempt to reframe the energy market and home energy consumption as a space for caring, which given the coalition governments stated intention of prioritising individual responsibility does not seem unreasonable. This is backed up by several Green Deal publications from the government such as Green Deal or No Deal (Lainé, 2011) and the pilot review (DECC, 2010) both of which claim that people are eager for changes that help the environment fit in with their lifestyle. Despite this, not a single respondent interviewed was in agreement that the Green Deal created new spaces in which they felt they were specifically able to care for anything other than nature in a vague general sense or direct family. This was highlighted by one respondent who when asked if the Green Deal allowed them to care about the environment or the impact of their pollution and the inequalities it creates noted

No I wouldn't say so really [...] I could do all this myself anyway if I wanted to. I suppose it makes it a bit easier if you are motivated to do something but that's about it (GD4, interview, Nov, 2015)

Indeed there were no relational aspects to the Green Deal beyond our common dependence on nature and this was never highlighted in any way. As such, the Green Deal failed to establish any sort of social traction to accompany it. When asked, whether or not there was any social value to the Green Deal, the immediate reaction from almost every respondent was that nobody they know outside of a small circle would have any interest in it whatsoever. As such unlike more successful eco-labels such as Fair Trade there was never any form of social discourse evolving parallel to the Green Deal which clearly hamstrung the policy. One man who had taken a finance package noted how he would

I'd like to tell my mates about it as it worked great [...] but none of them were interested one bit in listening. (FT2, Interview, March, 2016)

This highlights the already inconspicuous nature of the Green Deal and more generally with inconspicuous consumption in terms of the environment. In the case of the Green Deal however
this is two fold in that not only is the consumption inconspicuous but also the benefits as highlighted above. Not only is there a lack of visibility of the impacts of inaction but there is an equal lack of visibility in terms of the benefits of action which leads to the lack of satisfaction from participants and affective potential witnessed above.

Once again, we see how the fundamental nature of the consumption in question coupled with the lack of tangible connections limits the affective potential of any care-scape. Given that this consumption is not only invisible but relatively speaking, very everyday, the possibilities of defining yourself or making some form of social statement or attempt at ethical-selving seem limited in addition to the inherent satisfaction one receives for doing something (Varul, 2008). We now have the issue of global space becoming dependent on local places (Massey, 2004) where these interactions and relationships occur which continues to fuel global inequalities.

This also goes back to some extent to the literature on globalising responsibilities and consumption when discussing the notion of subject formation. With the Green Deal asking us to consume ethically in a way that limits our impact on the environment, Rose (1999) notes how in contemporary theories of governmentality, ethical is more about the an individual's personal sense of fulfilment as opposed to citizenly obligation. As Sayer (2005, p.51) notes when dealing with ethical consumption it is crucial to take into account the relationship between the individual, social normality and what matters to them. Through the individual problematisation of the consumption in question as ethical consumption, a sense of self satisfaction is then possible which allows the individual to form an idea of one's self relevant to the discourse of ethical consumption and environmentalism, something which the Green Deal sorely lacked. Energy consumption was rarely problematised as an issue of either justice, ethical consumption or environmental degradation and while the environment did tend to linger at the back of peoples mind's, issues of comfort, care for direct acquaintances and most of all financial savings were at the forefront.

What thus became increasingly clear throughout these interviews was just how difficult it was to conceptualise a notion of care that is applicable across individuals or spaces. Even within the fairly homogeneous sample interviewed the range of answers was immense, conflicting and confusing to say the least. Individuals professed their love for the nature and environmental protection before stating they are not concerned with caring for other individuals beyond their immediate circles.

What also became evident is that trying to establish an ethics of care in a situation or space which exceeds physical connections is exceedingly difficult due to our ability to compartmentalise information which causes us stress. As such anything which allows us to forget about it or push it to the back of our minds is at risk of this happening. This is supported by the literature on
environmental knowledge with Jackson (2005, p.11) stating that retrieval cues and our ability to be constantly “engaging with and elaborating on the subject matter of the persuasive message” are crucial towards positive changes in behaviour.

This is especially true given how the nature of environmental degradation caused by energy generation is for the most part non-human albeit it with human consequences as opposed to something such as Fair Trade which will still being somewhat distant in terms of the separation of producers and consumers still has a human element to it which is perhaps more easily relatable (i.e. the image of a starving 3rd world farmer has a larger affective potential than the concept of climate change).

4.2 - Social normality and an ethics of care and responsibility

As we are starting to see, social normality is appearing increasingly significant in terms of the various motivations individuals have for engaging in pro environmental behaviours. In this section, I explore the ways in which a sense of social normality impacts on efforts generate an ethics of care and responsibility, encourage pro environmental behaviours and using what Barnett et al. (2010, p.116) refer to as grammars of responsibility, to allow individuals to justify their actions and consumption both to themselves and others.

One of the first issues I wish to raise with regards to this is how when directly asked to consider the impact of their energy consumption multiple respondents expressed how they resented being made to feel responsible for environmental problems through average levels of routine consumption when so many people were worse than them thus heavily implying the existence of social norms or at least a form of social comparison when evaluating how much one should care with people seeming unwilling to care beyond what they view as the societal average. This was actually a common theme amongst the research where respondents were often quick to alleviate blame for their consumption by stating how they were better than a lot of people they knew. Multiple respondents made similar observations with one noting

_I am not perfect sure, but I do my bit and I am better than most of my friends or neighbours (GD11, Interview, September, 2016)_

and another noting

_I try but often I think why bother if I'm the only one going to do anything (GD2, Interview, June,
This respondent even acknowledged a tendency to base his actions on those of others noting

*I think generally speaking in life, there is tendency to go along with the crowd [...] I know that sometimes I lose motivation to act a bit more green or whatever you want to call it when you see other people doing nothing.* (GD2, interview, June, 2015)

The crucial point here is that this implies in these cases respondents rather than basing their assessment of their consumption habits on what is objectively sustainable are basing it on relative terms with their neighbours. This implies once again, the importance social norms have in serving to form and assess patterns of behaviour or practices.

This is backed up by a recent study by energy organisation OPOWER (Allcot, 2011) in which residents were sent letters outlining their neighbours energy consumption. The highest users dropped by 6.3% while the lowest only 0.3% which is estimated at equivalent to a price rise of 11-20%. This would seem to imply once again that the affective potential of a local space containing concrete physical connections is far stronger and as such any attempts to frame environmental protection surrounding an ethics of care (especially in the case of inconspicuous consumption) are better off focusing around the generation of care within defined local spaces.

This importance of a sense of social normality can also be highlighted by the earlier examples in this chapter of the women buying ethical skin care products and the man who purchased a hybrid car.

*Me and my friends are very conscious about which brands we buy (referring to skin care) as it is something we all care about* (GD4, Interview, Nov, 2015)

*Ye I just got it recently (referring to the hybrid car), a friend of mine was banging on about his and how great it was and how much money he was saving so I thought why not* (GD10, interview, September, 2016).

In both cases, we see once again how the existence of social norms within a group of friends or acquaintances translates directly into action and the purchasing of more ethical alternatives to traditional consumption.

There were also other examples in the research for this chapter which highlighted the
importance of the existence of social norms in altering consumption habits and behaviour. Out of the 13 respondents, the two most positive examples of what might be considered good environmental behaviour in terms of people who made a real effort with regards to considering the impact of their consumption on the environment both noted the importance of a sense of social normality in transforming their environmental consciousness. During the interviews, I asked whether or not over the course of their recent lives any of them had undergone any significant changes with regards to their perception of energy use or with regards to their habitual consumption and all but two respondents stated that there had been no change beyond what they could afford in terms of comfort. The first respondent who did however note a significant change interestingly, noted how he had re-conceptualised what normal consumption and levels of comfort meant as a result of dating and then moving in with an environmentally conscious partner stating

*I used to be pretty bad but my girlfriend wouldn't stand for it and gradually I started to see a different way of looking at things and it started to get easier and easier* (GD1, Interview, June, 2015)

This is concurrent with the second positive example who noted who a flat share with environmentally conscious flatmates resulted in him changing his behaviour and consumption patterns and also becoming increasingly reflexive with regards to his consumption noting

*It's not like I was the worst when I moved in but I could be lazy like most people and had never really gone out of my way to make an effort. Pretty soon though, I could tell they disapproved of a lot of the things I was doing even if they didn't express it to me directly so I started to make changes and after a while I found it was getting easier and easier.* (GD3, Interview, September, 2015)

The interesting factor here is that in both cases, while increased levels of information were indeed being fed to the respondents from their social circle, the primary reason for a switch a more discursive form of consumption appears to be the existence of strong social norms and the threat of exclusion implying that if social norms can be created at a large scale, there exists a real potential for change. This is backed up by the fact that, by their own admission and by the admission of every Green Deal assessor or installer as an informational tool, increased levels of information had failed to cause any significant change in energy consumption, their attitude to the environment or even their day to day consumption. This was highlighted by multiple respondents who when asked if the Green Deal assessment and the information it provided did anything to alter their consumption
habits almost exclusively stated it had not with one respondent claiming

*Nope. Still doing everything the exact same as before (referring to his energy use habits) (GD8, interview, July, 2016)*

and another noting

*No, I don't think I do anything different. Like I said, we try not to use more than we need anyway so I don't think there is much that we can do! (GD5, interview, March, 2016)*.

Another interesting point to mention is that when questioned even, the respondent who exhibited even the highest level of behaviour change noted how since he has caught up to his partner in terms of environmental awareness, he has no longer felt the need to undergo actions with the same level of discursive consciousness as before stating

*Now that she is happy with me, I would genuinely say that I am better than before but I've stopped analysing everything I do again (GD1, Interview, June, 2015)*

thus implying there is a genuine danger that once one conforms to a new social norm there is a tendency to once again become comfortable with oneself thus alleviating oneself from having to think too hard too often to put it simply. As such policy aimed at influencing the behaviour of many through the creation of social norms must take this into account as a potential pitfall as once norms are met, there may be a tendency for behaviour to stagnate.

Unfortunately, however the Green Deal may be seen as a relative failure in terms of creating any new form of shared understandings. This was clear in the research as when asked if the Green Deal caused individuals to change their perception of what was normal in terms of levels of energy consumption, not one individual replied that it had made a significant difference. When asked if the Green Deal made her feel an increased sense of social pressure to consume energy in a certain way, one respondent noted

*No I don't think so really. I mean if we're talking about energy use at home whose ever gonna know what you do. Clothes, cars etc, you buy them in public, you wear them, people know what you've got but nobody knows how you use your central heating do they. (GD4, interview, November, 2015).*
This was a common theme amongst respondents who noted that the inconspicuous nature of the consumption at hand made the creation of a sense of social normality around it incredibly unlikely. Furthermore, when discussing existing norms regarding energy consumption such as what is the acceptable temperature for a property the vast range of established levels of comfort was apparent. There appeared to be no recurrent theme of comfort throughout the interviews with the range of temperatures at which people heated their homes ranging from around 19 to 23 degrees Celsius (although it should be noted some did not know the specific temperature) in addition to some people I interviewed wearing jumpers, thick socks etc. while others sat around their home in shorts with the heating blasting forth. As such, even when norms do occur, they do not necessarily occur across society with a lack of clear social norms on how we consume energy being apparent amongst those interviewed beyond a desire to be comfortable and not be overly wasteful.

One interesting revelation was the fact that none of the respondents when questioned bar two had actually questioned what was an acceptable level of comfort tending to base it entirely on what they knew and were accustomed to. This highlights as Gram Hanssen (2008, p.1182) notes how the reproduced nature of practices aids us in living a “secure and liveable everyday life, where we are not compelled to do the overwhelming task of reflecting on every single act.” This does not bode well for advocates of an ethics of care through the individualisation of risk which is so crucial to neoliberal forms of governance as it highlights the difficulties one faces when taking a utilitarian view of risk oft proposed by neoclassical economists which assumes an ability to internalise the risks of specific actions through reflexive modernisation.

4.3 - Problematisations of energy consumption

This is something which can be strongly linked back to what Barnett et al. (2010) refer to as “grammars of responsibility” and also the importance of various motivations for undertaking in specific behaviours as highlighted by Sayer (2005). As we saw in the literature, grammars of responsibility refers to the way through which people reflect on cares, concerns and duties of consumption practices. Barnett et al. (2010, p.113) note how this deployment of vocabularies to problematise various practices may be seen as a defining feature of the contemporary politicisation of consumption. It is through these vocabularies that individuals reflect and deliberate about acts of individual consumption and as such they are crucial with regards to forming an ethics of care. In this section I examine the various motivations people have for engaging in pro environmental behaviour and the implications this has for policy aimed at responsibilising individuals in terms of combatting the causes of environmental degradation.
As noted, the ability of policy to formulate an ethics of care and responsibility based around the promotion of a certain behaviour or consumption can be seen as fundamentally linked to the reason an individual has for undertaking a certain behaviour or act of consumption. As Warde (2005) notes, everyday behaviour or consumption is often undertaken at low levels of reflexivity which is problematic for policies such as the Green Deal. With the motivation driving specific acts of consumption often inextricably linked to the level of reflexivity at which it occurs coupled with the fact that the strength of the motivation may be seen to limit the affective potential, it is crucial to examine the reasons behind not just the motivations individual's had for participating in the Green Deal scheme but also more generally for their energy consumption behaviour that the Green Deal seeks to change.

Here, I explore other reasons for participating in the Green Deal and engaging more generally in pro environmental behaviours. The reason this is important is going back to the concept in the literature of “lay normativity” highlighting “range of normative rationales, which matter greatly to actors, as they are implicated in their commitments, identities and ways of life. Those rationales concern what is of value, how to live, what is worth striving for and what is not” (Sayer, 2005, p.6). Acknowledging (Sclater, 2005) the inter-subjective and communicative dynamics through which norms are iteratively performed (Barnett et al. 2010), I seek to outline the dominant rationales respondents had for engaging in pro environmental behaviours in order to further assess how the problematisation of energy consumption typically occurred.

**Comfort**

During my research I encountered four driving motivations or problematisations of energy consumption and investment in energy efficient technologies. The first and most prevalent of these was a desire for comfort. Almost every respondent when questioned, during the interviews with Green Deal takers, on why they heated their house to a specific temperature noted that this was the level at which they were comfortable. As mentioned, they rarely questioned an acceptable level of comfort with this something which was typically taken fore-granted. This can be demonstrated by multiple examples such as on respondent who noted when asked why they heated their house to this temperature

*Is this a trick question? Why does anybody heat their house to the temperature its at? Its what they find comfortable no? Or at least what they feel comfortable with and can afford (GD5, interview, March, 2016)*
and another who noted

*Well its just what's comfortable for me isn't it* (GD8, interview, July, 2016)

and one more stating

*Its just about being comfortable more than anything else. I want to have a comfortable indoor temperature where I feel happy and also where my wife and kids feel happy. There is a bit of a disagreement there as I think I’d probably have it a few degrees warmer than my wife so I think when I'm out she turns it down and then I end up turning it back up though!* (GD2, interview, June, 2015).

It is worth noting that multiple respondents appeared someone taken aback by questions such as this and their responses came across as decidedly defensive as if they should not have to justify why they choose to heat their home to a certain behaviour and almost all were unapologetic about doing so. There was an implication that the demands on modern life were excessive enough as it is without having to constantly consider every little detail about something as trivial as energy consumption with one respondent noting how he had

*..no desire to start thinking about the environment when trying to relax for the evening* (GD8, Interview, July, 2016).

Despite this example, very few respondents actually tried to excuse the limitedness of their actions with the majority failing to see their energy consumption is a negative light.

It should also be noted that in the rare case where an individual had work done under the Green Deal, they ended up being incredibly pleased with the results in terms of an increase in comfort as highlighted by one respondent who noted

*FT1:...our house is so much warmer you cannot imagine. You are seeing it after its been done and we are sitting here, feeling comfortable wouldn't you say?*

*Interviewer: I would yes*
FT1: before this, we'd have been freezing our nuts off, pardon my French or blasting the heating at full tilt. (FT1, interview, March, 2016)

Strangely however, the Green Deal as highlighted by the draft proposal (DECC, 2010) was really pushed in terms of the financial savings it would offer as opposed to increased levels of comfort although it is difficult to say whether or not this would have made a significant difference in its popularity.

Financial Savings

Following on from this, the second key motivation experienced which ties in with expectations from the literature (Lainé, 2011) was financial savings. For the majority of respondents, when questioned why they engaged in energy savings activities such as putting heating on a timer or turning lights off or even getting a Green Deal assessment, a desire to save money was the most typical of answers with only the two most environmentally conscious respondents noting a primary desire to save energy due to the environmental benefits. One respondent noted

We keep the lights off and the heating to a minimum most of the year to keep the bills down you know, energy prices are on the up as well so you need to be careful these days (GD6, Interview, June, 2016)

with another noting (referring to getting a Green Deal assessment)

I was interested in seeing what I could get done and how much it would cost and it seemed like a reasonable way of getting an estimate, obviously after purchasing the house funds are a bit short as well, so we're looking to save a few bob wherever we can and this seemed like a great way to do it (GD4, interview, Nov, 2015).

These were typical responses regarding almost every sort of energy saving behaviour. While other respondents did note a desire to save energy, this was always secondary to saving money. It is also worth noting that this desire to save money may be seen to constrict choice. Certain behaviours which may be perceived as pro-environmental were not necessarily done consciously but were performed under the assumption that given the financial constraints of modern life, there was no choice but to behave this way. One might think that this would encourage people to invest in the
Green Deal but in the case of the Green Deal, the financial savings were almost exclusively tied to very long payback periods coupled with commercial level interest rates. These factors meant that perceived financial savings from taking a Green Deal finance package were actually very low as demonstrated by this respondent who noted

*Well in the end, the Green Deal wouldn't have actually saved us any money for about 10-15 years and who knows where we will be by then. Almost certainly not here. Given that it just didn't really seem worth the risk.* (GD6, interview, June, 2016)

and another who noted that her father told her

*My dad started telling me he'd heard bad things about them and then the cost of the loan turned out to be pretty big. They make it sound like there is not cost to it the way they advertise it with O you never pay more than you would originally but then its still 6 or 7% or something like that....(also) like some people ended up getting incorrect estimates and paying more than they should have or something like that and ye that it costs as much if not more than a regular loan in the end* (GD4, interview, Nov, 2015).

Other respondents also noted that the savings were just not as much as expected with one noting

*My husband took our current energy bills and did a little research into some of the measures the green deal covered and we definitely expected our savings to be higher* (GD7, interview, April, 2016)

As a result the Green Deal actually appeared financially unappealing to many consumers despite the fact that this was meant to be one of the key draws and the fact that financial savings were often quoted as being one of the driving forces behind pro-environmental behaviour.

**Normality**

While I will devote minimal time to this here given that it was examined above, a sense of social normality or at the very least, the persuasiveness of friends or family, was frequently the driving force for numerous acts of consumption such as buying a new car, consuming ethical
skincare products or heating homes to a certain temperature based around accepted norms of comfort. Numerous respondents used the actions of neighbours or colleagues to justify their own levels of consumption in addition to citing this as the primary reason for engaging in other acts of consumption. While certain products such as the ones tackled above had a social dimension to them and could be used to portray a certain image of one's self and were also contributing to notions of subject formation, the Green Deal and domestic energy efficiency sadly did not except in rare cases where dating an environmentally conscious partner or living with environmentally conscious flatmates promoted an increase in reflexivity when considering ones' impact on the environment. Despite this however in cases where strong social norms existed, they proved to be incredibly powerful implying that if one is able to tie energy consumption to a sense of normality there is real promise. With the affective connection to flatmates or romantic partners being so significant, this highlights again how tangible connections, even if they are not necessarily to those suffering as a result of your consumption, greatly increases the affective potential of a space.

Caring for vs caring about

Ironically, the last dominant motivation for pro-environment behaviour coupled with a desire to reduce one's environmental impact was that of caring. This was not however the ethics of care which is brought up as the end goal of new neoliberal forms of environmental governance based around the responsibilisation of the individual and as such was not, with a couple of exceptions, a result of individual's caring for producers or distant communities suffering as a result of their consumption or caring more generally for the environment. The care exhibited here which led to pro-environmental behaviour was as a result of caring for those whom we have direct connections to such as children, friends and family. As such it is crucial to raise the distinction between caring for and caring about. To put it simply, caring for may be thought of as caring for someone or something to which we have a direct connection whereas caring about may be thought of as caring for someone or something in an abstract sense such as the environment or third world communities.

When one discusses neoliberal systems of governance aimed at the responsibilisation of the individual, one is typically referring to caring about. We are asked to acknowledge the impact of our consumption and the injustice it creates and to acknowledge that our gain as a result of this injustice obliges us to care for those who suffer as a result (Pogge, 2001). Unfortunately during the research this was not the case with only two examples from the research for this chapter expressing a sense of care in a more abstract sense. Interestingly, even when engaging in pro-environmental behaviours exceedingly few respondents seemed to specifically realise or acknowledge this
internally as pro-environmental behaviour or exhibiting a sense of abstract care. The invisible nature of not just the consequences of energy use, but also the benefits, made realising a sense of self satisfaction from ones actions anything but trivial and respondents were unable to frame pro-environmental behaviour in terms of a discourse of “caring about.” One respondent noted noted how

*I have the heating on a timer so its off overnight and I turn it off whenever I go out (GD8, Interview, July, 2016)*

yet when asked further on in the interview whether or not he engaged in any behaviours or activities which might be seen as caring for the environment stated without hesitation that he did not. When asked after going through their routines for what reason they engaged in said behaviours, only two respondents noted a sense of care for the environment as a motivating factor with the majority either framing it in terms of saving money or simply that because that is what their parents taught them and what they have always known. This is highlighted by one respondent who when questioned why he bothered turning the heating off when not in the house said

*You know, I’ve just always done it like that for as long as I can remember and I guess it doesn't hurt to cut the bills a bit as well (GD11, Interview, September, 2016)*

There were however multiple respondents who noted how caring for those in close proximity to themselves was a motivating factor for behaviour. Miller (1998) notes how this may be viewed as the contrast between “moral” and “ethical” behaviour with moral behaviour embedded in relationships with loved ones and colleagues for example as opposed to ethical behaviour which is based around the principles of equity, fairness and justice.

What appeared in the research were multiple examples of moral consumption and behaviour with children specifically coming up as the most common theme amongst respondents for engaging in certain pro-environmental behaviours. One respondent noted when talking about the dangers of climate change

*I think having kids really reinforces that [...] as I said the kids make you more concerned as well. We need to do something now or our kids will be left with nothing (GD7, interview, June, 2016)*

and another noted
My house was becoming unlivable during the winter months and with a child on the way I had to do something (FT1, interview, March, 2016).

While the latter individual was talking about improving the comfort of their dwelling, this simultaneously led to reduced energy usage through improving the thermal efficiency of the property.

Interestingly this care for direct friends and family sometimes led to environmentally negative behaviour as well. The same respondent who noted how it was important to tackle climate change as to not damage her children's futures also noted how

The kids tend to have it quite warm, a lot warmer than us actually but we normally give in to make them happy, we can't say no to them (GD7, interview, June, 2016)

referring to how she lets the children have the temperature on a higher temperature than she would otherwise use as she wishes to keep them content. As such, once again, we see how caring for those close to us may be seen not only encourage certain behaviours both positive and negative but may also constrain our perception of available choice with the woman above noting how she was unable to say no to her children as this would make them unhappy. Given the direct connection she has to them as well, this is likely to be far more impactful despite the fact that it directly interferes with her earlier stated intention of mitigating the negative impacts of climate change to provide her children with a better future.

What thus becomes key when designing a policy such as the Green Deal which aims to encourage “ethical” forms of consumption, is to portray (Thompson and Coskuner-Balli, 2007) what might otherwise be considered inconveniences, restrictions and costs of pro-environmental behaviour by reconfiguring them as virtues which can be articulated in line with the concerns of “moral” behaviour. This means understanding the relations of care which are present within a system of consumption and bringing them in line with a more abstract sense of care in order to encourage concrete action. As Barnett et al. (2010) note, consumption is often embedded in networks of obligation, duty, sacrifice and love as well as the ordinary, gendered work of social reproduction and therefore figuring out a way to make consumption relevant to these obligations greatly increases the chances of success.

To summarise this section, the energy consumption studied in this chapter was
predominantly problematised in terms of comfort, money, social normality and care although this care was typically a direct form of care rather than a more abstract sense of care around issues of justice and inequality. The Green Deal was predominantly aimed at tackling the desire of individuals to exploit the financial savings offered by a reduction in energy use which according to the government (DECC, 2010, Lainè, 2011) was expected to be the strongest motivation, an assumption which the research for this thesis does not necessarily disagree with. Despite this, other motivations were largely ignored. The Green Deal did little to advertise itself in terms of promoting standards of comfort, establishing a sense of social normality around energy saving or allowing individuals to engage in a moral form of consumption benefiting those who they are close to. This coupled with the fact that the Green Deal was perceived as failing to offer substantial financial savings meant that very few individuals were motivated to move past the initial assessment phase if that which was largely responsibly for the crippling failure that the Green Deal experienced.

Moving on from this, I will now seek to examine issues highlighted by the Green Deal in terms of neoliberal governance and the privatisation of care occurring within the United Kingdom.

4.4 – The Green Deal and the neoliberalisation of care

As noted, the Green Deal is incredibly significant within the historical context of UK environmental policy as it marks arguably the single greatest leap to date towards the neoliberal privatisation of care and the shifting of responsibility from the government to the individual. While previous schemes based around ethical consumption and altering habits of consumption have predominantly been led by third sector organisations such as Fair Trade, the Green Deal marks one of the first times where this process of privatising and politicising care through individual consumption is a government led affair regardless of the fact that the government is taking a back seat in the actual delivery of the programme focusing on a policy of state-led yet privately delivered neoliberalism. This is also particularly relevant given the critical importance of the success of the Green Deal in terms of the UK government meeting its binding levels of emissions reductions under the Climate Change Act. As such, this section explores the way in which care has evolved under the Green Deal, looking at whether or not care has been privatised or politicised, and how effectively the responsibility to combat the overconsumption of energy has been transferred both to the private sector and to the individual.
The transfer of care and responsibility to the private sector and the individual

With the introduction of the Green Deal, it is crucial to examine the way it represents a shift towards a neoliberal approach to governance and whether or not such an approach is appropriate for solving issues of overconsumption. While the government does not specifically mention the transfer of care in terms of the environment to the individual, they do mention (Lainé, 2011) the desire people possess to be able to do good for the environment while going about their daily lives so long as it does not cause a disruption implying a desire to allow individuals to care for the environment as relevant to the scheme.

Furthermore, the Green Deal exhibits many of the key elements of a neoliberal policy as outlined by Castree (2010). Castree (2010) notes that under a Foucauldian notion of governmentality, the very nature of neoliberal policies as attempting to create free, self-sufficient and self-governing individuals may be seen as representing the “responsibilisation” of producers, consumers, citizens, families and communities. Unfortunately, the Green Deal represented a crippling failure in terms of the uptake of energy efficiency measures with it only achieving a fraction of the energy savings of previous schemes such as the CERT and CESP (NAO, 2016). As such, this section looks at how responsibility was transferred to the individual and with what success.

In its most basic form, the actual transfer of responsibility itself was fairly simple. The government, under the Climate Change Act (2008) had accepted responsibility which was legally enforceable, to reduce UK carbon emissions and other greenhouse gas emissions by 80% of the 1990 baseline by the year 2050. With the UK housing stock representing a significant percentage of these emissions, it is clear that reaching these legally binding targets requires investment in the existing housing stock to reduce the emissions from it. The Green Deal may thus be seen as an attempt to transfer the responsibility to reduce the emissions of the UK housing stock from the government towards the homeowner through the creation of the self-governing enlightened citizen with the use of the Green Deal finance mechanism enabling the homeowner to act.

We are left with somewhat of a dilemma however, as to who should be responsible. While the government is legally responsible for these emissions reductions, the individual homeowner stands to benefit from any increase in energy efficiency regarding their property in addition to the fact that they are the one responsible for the existence of those emissions in the first place. Furthermore, some homeowners use far more than others whereas others are more able to curb their consumption or improve their energy efficiency. In addition to this, the concept of who should be responsible is of little consequence in reality.
As we already saw earlier in this chapter when examining issues of caring at a distance. There was a distinct lack of willingness on the part of individuals interviewed as part of the research for this chapter in acknowledging climate change as an issue of justice and the unequal distribution of resources. This can be additionally demonstrated by other respondents who when asked if they viewed climate change as an issue of injustice in terms of using more than their fair share of the world's resources at the expense of others noted

_No I don't think so, the world isn't fair is it? Some people will always use more than others, that's just the way it is. We need to work something out don't we but I don't think there is any point in even aiming for a world where everyone is equally in terms of the resources we use as that's never going to be a reality is it! (GD9, interview, August, 2016)_

and another who even though he could see the logic in it, he didn't necessarily think like that stating

_Ye I mean I can see your point, its not fair is it. I don't really think like that but I can definitely see the truth in what you are saying (FT1, interview, March, 2016)._ 

In addition to this, as we also saw earlier, even in cases were respondents acknowledged that climate change could be thought of as an issue of inequality and injustice, this rarely translated into any specific action with respondents noting how even though they agreed, this wasn't really practical in terms of how they lived their lives as demonstrated by this respondent who acknowledged how overconsumption contributed to inequality in this exchange.

_**Interviewer:** So do you think it is fair to say that climate change is an issue of injustice, that our consumption of resources in the West has negative implications for developing world in particular and given this we have an obligation to do something about it?_

_GD6: Ye I think that is definitely a fair assessment. I'm sure that the way we live has a knock on effect for people who are less fortunate than us but how does that translate into how I live my life you know? I mean this isn't something that I think about a lot is it, I guess like most people, but even now thinking about that, what should I do? Live in the cold or the dark? I already try to not be wasteful, I already try to not use more than I have to of anything really, so what should I be doing to fix this?_
Interviewer: Well what about taking a Green Deal finance package or having work done to improve the energy efficiency of your house for example?

GD6: Well it's like I already said, the Green Deal wouldn't have saved us any money and we don't want to risk putting a loan on the place if we are going to sell in the next few years and I can't really afford the stuff they recommend myself. It's not that I don't want to is it? I know it sounds like I'm making excuses but you know how it is, things are just never that simple are they or we wouldn't be in this mess. (GD6, interview, June, 2016)

Like other respondents and examples highlighted earlier, this respondent highlighted how they would do something if they could and they did want to but the complexities of modern life such as having to sell the property at some point in the future, being busy and not having enough money were all limiting their ability to do so. Despite the fact that this respondent acknowledged the injustice caused by their consumption, acting on this was viewed as out of their hands highlighting an inherent issue with neoliberal policies based around the creation of the self-governing consumer and volunteerism.

Are individual's accepting the responsibility?

This leads on nicely to the next issue which is whether or not individuals are accepting the responsibility that is perhaps unknowingly thrust upon them by policies of a neoliberal ilk. As we have seen earlier in this chapter and above, there are several issues which we have already experienced with regards to this such as a lack of awareness surrounding the specific impacts of climate change, an inability to recognise climate change as an issue of injustice and obligation, either to other distant strangers or the planet, and also that even if people recognise the issues, acknowledge issues of injustice, and wish to help, sometimes they feel as if it is simply outside of what is reasonable.

This brings us onto the next point. When individuals feel as if what is expected of them is too complicated or unreasonable, they are unlikely to take responsibility for it. Neoliberal policies such as the Green Deal require people to perceive what is happening as a transition of responsibilities and for them to accept those responsibilities. This is not always so simple however given for how long this kind of issue has typically been seen as an area of government intervention in addition to the perceived lack of control over such situations that individuals often experience (Clarke, 2008; Barnett and Land, 2007; Hobson, 2006; Barnett et al, 2007). Blame plays a key part
in the ascription of responsibilities but blame is not something which tends to be rationally attributed with people's internal framing of an issue being subconsciously used to subvert responsibility. As such in the case of global problems such as the environment individuals often believe governments are better placed to deal with these factors (Bickerstaff and Walker, 2002). This leads to them rejecting notions of responsibility based on the fact that as we saw before in the section on vocabularies of responsibility, issues of overconsumption are not being framed around a discourse of environmental degradation or injustice.

This is widely concurrent with the interviews conducted with only two of the respondents claiming that they feel personally responsible for environmental degradation and although the majority expressed a desire to protect the environment as a reason for action, only a further two respondents felt as if tackling climate change was a personal responsibility. Responses ranged from

*I'm willing to help where I can but really its up to the government to fix this isn't it, I mean what do I know about ending climate change* (GD4, Nov, 2015)


to

*What can I do even if I tried?* (GD8, Interview, July, 2016)

to

*What are the government even for these days?"* (GD2, Interview, June, 2015)

Two things became clear. First, that the majority of respondents, while not trying to absolve themselves of all responsibility, placed the onus of fixing climate change decisively on the government. The second interesting fact is that much like the literature suggested (Azjen, 2002), perceived control appeared to be a limiting factor for action. The rest were thoroughly in agreement that any responsibility for tackling climate change and global issues lay squarely at the feet of the government despite their stated desire to protect the environment thus implying that while there is a certain desire for environmental protection amongst at the very least a small part of the population, realistically it is up to governments to make the first move in any sort of solution and in many cases, individuals (whether correct or not) feel helpless to solve such grand problems. One thing that was clear is the fact that the individuals interviewed for this thesis did not view the Green Deal as a realistic solution for the issue of climate change as highlighted by one respondent who noted
I just don't see the Green Deal as a real solution. Sure you might help a few people here or there but with people driving everywhere, factories in China churning out pollution on a daily basis, this isn't going to be what saves us is it? (GD5, interview, March, 2016).

Another issue was that within my interviews, only the two interviewees who stated they felt personally responsible for environmental degradation actually perceived the Green Deal as a deliberate attempt to shift the onus of environmental protection onto the consumer and into the realm of consumption. While this may be irrelevant to some extent in terms of effectiveness given that everyone interviewed had at the very least undergone a Green Deal assessment, it highlights how attempts by the government to reframe care in terms of consumption are not appealing to people with literally every single respondent asked expressing their dissatisfaction with the notion of shifting care away from governments and into the realm of consumption despite the issue at hand being as a result of their consumption. This seemed to be due to a combination of displeasure at perception of the government seemingly shirking on its responsibilities and the increased responsibility faced by the individuals. One respondent noted

I think governments have to take the lions share as they are the ones with the power, the resources and the know-how to do something. I think that if the government wants us to be responsible for this kind of stuff then they need to be clear and let us know what our part is and how we can help, they can't just sit back and expect us to take over.

When asked if the Green Deal was not an attempt by the government at helping people to know what they can do they replied

In a way but they need to be more direct about it. I had the option to take a loan and I didn't for example. If it's so urgent that something has to be done the government shouldn't leave it up to chance like this or they should make it a darn sight more obvious that this isn't something which we can take lightly. Before I started speaking to you, I'd never thought about the Green Deal in terms of climate change or anything like that. I just wanted to cut my bills a bit you know? (GD11, interview, September, 2016).

While it is possible that the government deliberately did not push the angle of climate change with regards to the Green Deal out of fear of how that would come across, the result was a situation where the financial benefits were not perceived as relevant against expectations yet in the majority
of cases (all bar two in this research), individuals were equally unable to recognise the consumption encouraged by the Green Deal as ethical. While that is not to necessarily say that it would have made a huge impact, we see multiple examples both in the real world and in the literature, (Barnett et al, 2010; Guthman, 2007), in particular around food and Fair Trade, where a sense of well-being from the perception of being an ethical consumer has been successful.

The role of the private sector

With it clear that individuals do not seem to be keen on being made to feel responsible for solving issues of climate change or overconsumption in addition to not feeling able in many cases, the next issue to look at is whether or not the private sector is accepting the responsibility. In the Green Deal this comes in two main forms, the energy companies providing the loans and the Green Deal assessors and installers. The role of the private sector has been contentious since the beginning with (Smith, 2010) noting in the draft for parliament that there has been concern over what the private sector will demand for their involvement in the Green Deal. With the exception of the ECO scheme, the energy companies providing the finance for the scheme also had no obligations to hit any specific targets unlike the previously existing schemes such as CERT and CESP where the energy companies were obligated to meet specific levels of energy reductions. Furthermore, from what I saw, they did not made any sort of concerted effort to advertise the scheme in any way. While my research typically did not focus around the involvement of the energy companies, based on my observations during the thesis, very little was done in terms of the energy companies promoting the scheme.

Academically speaking, there has also been some serious doubt as to the involvement of the private sector in environmental policy and more generally around neoliberal environmental policy (Bakker, 2010; Castree, 2010; Bernstein, 2002) with many of these critics questioning the inherent wisdom and practicality of linking the environment with values such as economic growth and free markets with many questioning whether such a link is even feasible (Bernstein, 2002). Despite the fact that environmentalism has been somewhat a of a source of resistance to neoliberalism, governments have increasingly proposed mechanisms adopting neoliberal ideas and thus reinforcing its hegemony (McCarthy and Prudham, 2004, p.279, see Toke, 2006). Bakker (2010) notes how for example, the involvement of the private sector leads often to the deepening of socio-environmental inequalities, something which has been apparent in the Green Deal as a result of the interest rates being charged.

While all of my interviewees were above the mean level of UK income (ONS, 2016), there
was still a disparity amongst the level of investment with the wealthiest respondents using the Green Deal assessments purely as an informational tool before undergoing upgrades themselves using commercially available loans or mortgages at a rate typically lower than that offered by the Green Deal. The two respondents who had actually taken Green Deal Finance packages also wanted to undergo the work privately however given their financial situations, were unable to secure loans at a more competitive rate. As one respondent who rented and had taken a finance package noted

"we actually wanted to get a bank loan for it given the relatively short payback time and the fact we might be moving in the next couple of years but because we don't have a mortgage and I'm between jobs it was just far too expensive" (FT2, Interview, March, 2016)

This highlights an additional benefit of undertaking the loan privately in that the loan was not attached to the property which was also deeply unpopular with respondents as they felt it might damage the resale value of a property if it came with a loan attached. While there are arguments to say that political consumption actually removes barriers due to its low entry threshold and appeal to fringe groups (Clarke, 2008) and that the Green Deal is removing barriers for the less wealthy to exhibit care via its funding mechanism which is potentially valid, in the case of my research none of these cases appeared. This is in line with the findings from interviews with Green Deal assessors who for the most part noted that in their experience from the Greater London area, it was predominantly white middle/upper middle class families who owned homes benefiting from the policy and typically, it was those who once Green Deal assessments had taken place, could afford to undergo the work individually or add it to their mortgage. This was elaborated on by one Green Deal installer and assessor from Surrey who noted

"Its almost entirely people using the Green Deal for information before undergoing the work themselves. I've done countless assessments yet never actually installed anything under the Green Deal (IA1, Interview, November, 2014)

The same installer also advised people to not take Green Deal finance packages instead noting

"I think one of the biggest issues was the price of the credit available. If it had been a lot cheaper then I'm sure more people would have gotten on board’ and “I tell people not to take finance packages if they have alternatives. The interest rates you pay are just far too high (IA1, Interview,
This was consistent with other Green Deal installers and assessors who typically advised individuals to avoid taking a Finance Package if possible. One installer noted

*I would always advise people against it. One of the big things is that you can only pay it back through your bills, so you are stuck with it for 10 to 20 years in most cases. On top of that the interest rates are a bloody rip off for something which is supposed to be government endorsed, someone somewhere is making a tidy sum of all of this or at least they would be if anyone actually took a finance package (IA3, interview, November, 2014).*

highlighting much like in the cases of individuals how the seemingly high interest rates demanded by the energy companies in return for their participation was severely limiting the effectiveness of the policy.

With two notable exceptions (whose businesses were specifically framed around the “Green” aspect of home improvement) as well, businesses did not seem to view the Green Deal as something which was predominantly environmental despite the name. The majority of installers were pushing it on the angle of home improvement as highlighted by one assessor who noted

*I've never really tried to sell it on the environmental angle as I can't imagine that would have much success. People want lower bills, warmer homes, that's what gets them interested. Whenever I speak to potential customers or people who are interested I let them know that this is government endorsed home improvement loan and I tend to leave it at that (IA7, interview, December, 2010).*

This was a common theme amongst assessors who for the most part viewed people as disinterested in the environment. For the majority of assessors and installers, the Green Deal was simply business as usual in that it was simply something which could be used to drum up additional business or in rare cases, could be recommended to an individual who was suffering from financial difficulties although it should be noted that almost all of my respondents were above the average mean income for the UK (ONS, 2016) and could be described as middle or upper middle class. There were however two exceptions to this rule, in terms of installers and assessors, who did mention to customers the environmental aspect of the scheme and the work they were thinking of doing. One of these installers noted
I think it's a big of a misconception that people don't care about the environment. I guess you can say on the one hand that people who seek out a company with a name like ours are probably going to be above average in terms of their environmental awareness but I always tell people about the environmental benefits of what they are doing [...] you know like the energy they will save, and not just in terms of how much money they will save. I think if you actually try to talk to people about this stuff you will find them a lot more receptive than you might think. (IA9, interview, January, 2015).

While the majority of my individual interviews probably leads me to believe that these are exceptions to the rule, it is interesting to note that similar to the fact that there were exceptions for the members of the public who had Green Deal interviews, there were also exceptions in terms of installers who felt that espousing the environmental benefits of energy efficiency upgrades was legitimately effective. What this implies is that in certain cases, while they may be exceptions to the rule, energy efficiency can be legitimised under the logic of environmental protection. The issue however is identifying which cases this will be true for and targetting them specifically amongst the crowd.

What did become clear however is that the involvement of the private sector was very narrow in terms of the Green Deal. It was primarily based around a business as usual scenario with no ambition in terms of moving beyond typical forms of consumption in terms of energy efficiency. Wider issues of care were not integrated into the design or execution of the Green Deal in any shape or form, be it through the energy companies, the assessments or the installers. The Green Deal was sold to the consumer as a way to save money as that is what businesses felt would be most effective. Furthermore, the involvement of the energy companies posed a dilemma of split motivations with the fees they demanded for involvement clearly being unpopular both in terms of the consumer's attitude to perceived financial savings from the finance packages and the willingness of installers and assessors to convince individual's of their worth.

**Politicising or privatising consumption and care**

The last issue I wish to briefly touch upon in this chapter is how neoliberalism through the Green Deal is serving to increasingly depoliticise issues of care and the environment. When dealing with issues of globalising responsibilities and climate change in modern life, this is a crucial issue. With Bell (2005) noting how traditional republican forms of citizenship and political life based around protest, debate and political engagement are increasingly disappearing under neoliberalism, we see
the reformulation of consumption as indicative of new modes of civic involvement and participation with a common view that consumption has come to represent the “the substitution of privatized acts of consumer choice for properly political forms of collective action (Barnett et al, 2010, p.1).” Much like Barnett et al. (2010) however I wish to counter this view, paying close attention to Swyndegouw (2010), when he notes that neoliberal policies tend towards a consensual form of policy-making based around market mechanisms and often serves to evacuate fairer, plural and antagonistic means of solving environmental issues with interests heavily skewed towards capital.

While previous policies such as CERT and CESP were predominantly a top down approach lacking any kind of meaningful citizen participation (Ofgem, 2002), and in certain ways had elements of neoliberal policy given that they relied on the private sector for delivery of the schemes, they represented a far more traditional approach to environmental policy than schemes such as the Green Deal. While it was the energy companies who were responsible for achieving the reductions in energy usage, unlike the Green Deal, these were legal obligations with penalties for non compliance and the level of reductions required was a topic which was debated and finalised by politicians (Ofgem, 2002).

The Green Deal however, while academically speaking, can potentially be viewed as a way to politicise the consumption of energy for the individual through the medium of consumption, removed any sort of debate around the topic of what should be an acceptable minimum standard for the reduction of energy consumption. Furthermore, the policy documents (DECC, 2010, Smith, 2010) indicate there was minimal debate about the design and delivery of the Green Deal, with the way the scheme was rolled out essentially forcing the government to accept whatever outcome came to pass with no legally enforceable means of guaranteeing expectations would be met. As such the issue of what constitutes an acceptable level of energy reduction ceased to become a matter of both debate and certainty with the capitalistic interests of the private sector taking precedence highlighting one of the critical flaws of neoliberal policy.

It also became increasingly clear that with the exception of the most environmentally concerned respondents, the people interviewed did not view consumption as inherently political and rejected the notion of using consumption to signal political will instead taking a far more utilitarian view of consumption (however ironic this may be given the flawed notion of utilitarian consumption). It was evident that people wished to keep daily life and politics separate from each other no matter how futile a task that may seem in terms of geography; something which does not bode well for the privatisation of care and conducting environmental policy under a utilitarian notion of consumption. Contrary to the literature (Pattie et al. 2003, p,61) who found that participation in consumption and contact politics had grown significantly, this did not appear to be
the case in with energy consumption. One respondent noted when questioned if they viewed energy efficiency as an area of life where they were able to express their political or environmental views

_No definitely not. That might be what the government or someone else thinks but I think that is a pretty big overestimation of the Green Deal, at least from my experience with it. I definitely didn't feel like I was contributing to society or playing politics! Saving energy is always a good thing I guess but it never made me feel as if other people should be grateful to me or something like that for what I was doing (GD5, interview, March, 2016)_

with another respondent noting

_GD11: I don't think so no. I cant believe that anyone really sees it like that even if its the governments intention. I think for most people its just an alternative loan and perhaps a useful bit of information. I really don't see it as anything more than that._

_Interviewer: So there is no political dimension to it for you?_

_GD11: Really no, there isn't. That is just way above and beyond what I'm thinking about when it comes to this. (GD11, interview, September, 2016)._  

Respondents were just unable to frame the Green Deal or energy consumption as a political arena or an area of reasonable doubt regarding what is acceptable. With the ramifications clear however regarding a failure to curb domestic energy consumption and the consequences of overconsumption continuing day by day, the failure to turn this into an area of reasonable doubt may be seen as highly problematic and also limiting the ability of a policy to form a more antagonistic or radical solution (Swyndegouw, 2010).

As such any attempts at politicising care through consumption can be seen as potentially hazardous based on this evidence. Given this it would seem more effective to keep care in the realm of the political with politics serving to establish a scenario of minimum legally enforceable standards and rights for those who are suffering where individual decision making and behaviour is less politicised and the debate around what constitutes acceptable minimum standards more politicised in the case of energy consumption.
4.5 - Conclusions: caring through neoliberal governance.

In summary, this chapter contributes to engagements of neoliberal environmental governance through a lens of care and responsibility. The Green Deal represents a bold new approach to environmental policy replacing traditional notions of political responsibility with ideals of individual responsibility in terms of reducing the overconsumption of energy. Using a neoliberal approach to government, market mechanisms, aided by the involvement of the private sector, are employed to correct consumption externalities and to enable the individual to accept responsibility for the negative impacts of their consumption without being forced to deviate from the lifestyle to which they are accustomed.

The primary issue with this however is that as Young (2007, p.181) highlights, responsibility in practice does not simply arise from being connected to events, people, places or processes with factors such as power, privilege, interest and collective ability all having a distinct influence. In the case of the Green Deal, not only did numerous respondents fail to understand or comprehend the link between themselves and the impact of their consumption be it in general terms of damage to far away others, or in specific terms of the damage to the environment, but they also felt a perceived inability to influence the solution of these issues with many examples in the literature (Clarke, 2008; Barnett and Land, 2007; Hobson, 2006; Barnett et al, 2007, Jackson, 2005) noting how a perceived inability to influence a situation makes action less likely to occur.

A major issue surrounding the issue of the Green Deal and an ethics of care was the almost total lack of relational connections within the given space in which it operates in addition to the inherent lack of hedonistic value from it which when combined with the lack of a normative goal frame, seriously limits motivation to participate (Vlek et al, 2004). Furthermore, the government failed to appreciate the few relational connections that did exist in terms of the desire of individuals to care for those in close proximity to themselves such as children or family and therefore failed to frame the Green Deal in any way around this thus missing out on an opportunity perhaps to encourage an increase in the affective potential of the scheme. Initiatives aimed at encouraging a more sustainable form of consumption must aim to reconnect consumers with the consequences of their actions in order to foster an ethics of care. With relational connections being key to establishing a sense of care, future policies which wish to avoid the pitfalls of the Green Deal must realise that the affective potential of a space relies on the ability of individuals to forge meaningful connections within. With the Green Deal failing to establish any form of meaningful connections, the affective potential of the scheme was exceedingly low with it failing to motivate a sense of care at either a local, national or global level and as such was unlikely to succeed.
While the Green Deal acknowledged structural limitations are crucial when dealing with environmentally beneficial behaviour, it seemingly went down a route of oversimplifying the issue and reducing it to a technical problem failing to provide a context of social normality within which to position the scheme. As noted in the research, a context of social normality proved a strong motivator for energy efficiency and general environmentally beneficial behaviour and as such, the failure of the Green Deal to provide any sort of social context around which the individual might be able to frame the scheme has to be viewed as inhibitive of its success. This was not only in terms of changing behaviour as we saw from those respondents whose social relations led them to a more sustainable form of everyday behaviour but also in sustaining current behaviour with the common argument of “Well I'm not as bad as some other people” being a constant justification for respondents levels of energy use. It would therefore be recommended in future to place any form of technological advancement or change in market conditions firmly within a context of social normality thus allowing people to interpret it in a way that is conducive to the goals of the policy. This was not only in terms of changing behaviour as we saw from those respondents whose social relations led them to a more sustainable form of everyday behaviour but also in sustaining current behaviour with the common argument of “Well I'm not as bad as some other people” being a constant justification for respondents levels of energy use. Based on this research, social norms seems to be a relatively strong indicator of current behaviour and as such failure to recognise their importance and the social context within which a policy operates is crucial for success.

The Green Deal also failed to provide any form of hedonistic value. Energy efficiency must allow people to feel good about themselves if it wishes to disseminate effectively and escape from the niche level. It became abundantly clear based on the research that there was a fundamental level of disconnection between respondents and the Green Deal. Despite some people having positive experiences by their own admission, no respondents were visibly excited or motivated to talk about or share their experiences with the Green Deal and as such the affective potential of the scheme incredibly limited. Without the ability to evoke some form affective response or some form of feelings capable of providing a sufficient shock to shake people from their routines, policy is doomed to be ineffective. Simply making sense and being logical is no indicator of success.

Furthermore, as highlighted in the literature, a shift towards market mechanisms and the involvement of the private sector and the interests of capital obscuring more antagonistic solutions to environmental issues may be seen as a defining factor of neoliberalism (Swyndegouw, 2010). While the Green Deal aimed to shift responsibility onto the individual regarding the overconsumption of energy, the individual was not willing to accept this. Individuals interviewed for this chapter failed to acknowledge their share of the blame for issues around the
overconsumption of energy and climate change instead feeling that the government was better placed to deal with such issues or that these issues were of a societal rather than an individual nature. As noted in the literature, there is a tendency to refuse responsibility for “global problems” as individuals believe governments or other individuals are better placed to deal with such issues (Clarke, 2008; Barnett and Land, 2007; Hobson, 2006; Barnett et al, 2007). A failure to acknowledge blame is also key given the importance of blame in the ascription of responsibilities with people's internal framing of an issue frequently used to subvert responsibility. The result was a policy where responsibility was shifted from the government to the private sector and the individual yet was not adequately transferred with the private sector seemingly apathetic with regards to the success of the scheme and the public failing to perceive this as an issue of individual responsibility.

The Green Deal increasingly depoliticised issues of care as a result with the market becoming the means through which to solve the issue rather than traditional forms of properly political action yet individuals failing to construe the political nature of the consumption in question. With a lack of legally enforceable standards in addition to a lack of debate amongst government and society regarding what should be considered acceptable levels of consumption, the issue became hollowed out so to speak which also prevented the creation of new social norms around energy use highlighted earlier. It thus prevented any sort of dialogue from occurring around alternative methods of solving the overconsumption of energy locking yet another area of environmental policy into the dominant discourses of neoliberalism and consumerism.

Finally, another significant issue was the demands made by the private sector in return for their participation as highlighted by Swyndegouw (2010) when noting the tendency of neoliberalism to prioritise capital. Both Green Deal assessors and installers and members of the public seemingly felt the interest rates charged by the Green Deal were far too high which led to the perceived benefits of the scheme being minimal. While in the long run there were potential savings, the fact that anyone who took out a finance policy had to continue paying at the rate of their original bill meant that any financial benefits would be years down the line. In addition to this, the benefits in terms of comfort were often somewhat limited in the case of more affluent consumers such as the ones in my research. These were people who were able to heat their homes for the most part to a comfortable level before having work done. As such there was not any tangible increase in comfort in the majority of cases which may well have led to the lack of hedonistic value with regards to the experience of undergoing energy efficiency upgrades purely to save money or the environment as opposed to someone living in an uncomfortable living environment. As such, any policy in future which wishes to be successful must allow individuals to see tangible benefits as this will increase the ability of the policy to obtain a degree of social normality through which it can travel.
Ultimately, turning to the markets to fix problems of excessive consumption may not be appropriate as it fails to address more deep rooted issues concerning how we live and use resources ignoring our reliance on the planet as a caregiver with finite resources. Much like Shove (2010) postulated, it would appear that the creation of this form of policy comes not from it being deemed the best possible solution but more that it conforms to a commonly accepted notion of the correct way to govern. The Green Deal from start to finish was riddled with issues from the failure to reconnect individuals with the consequences of their consumption, the failure to create relevant social norms and discourse around which individuals could frame the policy, the failure to promote alternative forms of energy efficiency simultaneously and the over-demanding nature of private sector involvement which prevented many individuals from perceiving the Green Deal as beneficial to themselves. Meanwhile the government simultaneously shifts the financial and administrative burden of policies away from itself, an element so attractive that it cannot be overlooked.
5. Energy Performance Certificates: neoliberalism, voluntarism and the illusion of choice

True technique will know how to maintain the illusion of liberty, choice, and individuality; but these will have been carefully calculated so that they will be integrated into the mathematical reality merely as appearances

(Jacques Ellul, The Technological Society, 1954)

In this chapter, I contribute to debates around neoliberalism and choice. With the EPCs representing yet another attempt by the government to instil a sense of care and responsibility within consumption, this time in the case of the property market, I explore the way in which behaviour restricts notions of free choice and agentic consumption. With theories of ecological modernisation typically failing to address the ways in which notions of individual choice, values and behaviour impact on neoliberal policy (Spaargaren and Van Bliet, 2000; Buttel, 2000; Mol, 1995), I explore the way in which new forms of paternalism such as the Energy Performance Certificates impact on our consumption and the implications this has for neoliberal forms of environmental governance. Drawing on the literature from care and responsibility, neoliberal governance, values and behaviour, ecological modernisation and libertarian paternalism, I argue that paternalistic attempts at influencing consumption through the ideals of voluntarism and free choice exhibited by the Energy Performance Certificates fail to understand the way in which structural barriers prevent individuals from behaving as expected and therefore pursuing environmental policy in such a manner comes with substantial risk. I argue that properties represent a prime example of how seemingly free choices are inherently bound by social, economic and cultural structures and individual's perceptions of policies such as the EPCs are far removed from those of the government.

As noted in the literature, ecological modernisation may be seen as a new way of perceiving environmental policy amongst other things and can be heavily linked to neoliberal forms of governance. It offers a theory under which environmental protection is compatible with economic growth and development and may be seen to underpin the concept of neoliberal environmental policy based around the free market. With this in mind, this chapter explores one of the techniques of ecological modernisation and neoliberal green governance in the UK which are the Energy
Performance Certificates. Introduced as a result of the Energy Performance of Buildings directive from the European Union, EPCs are an advanced form of eco-label for properties which aim to highlight the energy efficiency of a property in addition to providing information on which upgrades can be undertaken and previously linking them to the Green Deal. They aim to promote desirable consumption by highlighting more efficient properties and also enabling energy efficiency upgrades to occur. Despite this, my research found that they seemed to have very little impact on the desirability of a property with both estate agents and individuals failing to view them as influential and in many cases desirable. As such, the wisdom of voluntary forms of environmental policy are once again called into question.

In order to evaluate this further, this chapter will be divided into three main sections. I begin by exploring issues of neoliberalism and choice. Choice as noted by Clarke (2010) and highlighted in the literature, has become a key world within the public policy debate within the United Kingdom under the coalition mantra of freedom, fairness and responsibility (HMG, 2010). In this section, I therefore examine the ways in which issues of choice are not as strait-forwards as they might appear by examining the ways choice is constrained and the ways this impacts on attempts at neoliberal forms of governance based around voluntarism. I examine the difference between the property market and more everyday consumption in terms of the activation of intrinsic values and I argue that the research shows that choice through consumption is somewhat of an illusion with the nature and object of the consumption being crucial with regards to how much choice we are able to exert.

Following on from this, I expand on the concept of nudging and new libertarian paternalism in an effort to explore policy based around the notion of free choice and voluntarism. I evaluate Energy Performance Certificates in terms of ecological modernisation and paternalism focusing on how there is a mismatch between the governments intentions and the way these policies are consumed in reality. I look at the extent to which responsibility has been transferred to the individual and issues of depoliticisation and justice surrounding the EPC. I argue that the EPCs have not been received in the way they were intended in addition to highlighting issues of inequality under neoliberalism and that the EPC system highlights the inherent danger in paternalistic forms of neoliberal policy.

Finally, I examine the techniques of governmentality that are employed in search of ecological modernisation and the exertion of paternalistic influence. As Rose (1991) notes, the dissemination of information in order to construct fictive realities for the operation of government may be seen as one of the key techniques of governmentality. I therefore look at how information was communicated to the public through the EPC system and I argue that trust and accessibility are
key when attempting to alter consumption and that the government does not exist in such a privileged position.

In order to undertake this chapter, data will be drawn from the semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 estate agents and property professionals and with 30 members of the public who have recently moved property or were about to move property. The members of the public I spoke to were a mix of friends, previous colleagues and contacts made through friends and family. While as noted in the methodology, this might have been problematic, it turned out better than I had hoped. By having a prior knowledge of the respondents values, norms and characteristics amongst other things, I was able to better understand and comprehend the informants lines of interpretation (Blichfeldt and Heldbjerg, 2011).

**Energy Performance Certificates**

As noted in the literature, the EPCs were introduced as a result of the European Parliament and Council implemented the directive “On The Energy Performance of Buildings” (DIRECTIVE 2002/91/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL). The aim of this was to reduce the energy use of existing buildings in pursuit of reducing the massive contribution the EU housing stock makes to the total consumption of energy. The Department for Communities and Local Government (2017) lists four purposes for the EPCs. These are for householders to check the data on a property, for businesses to create new products and services, for researchers as an indication of energy use, and for policymakers to make data driven decisions. The primary focus however and also the one of most interest to this thesis is undoubtedly the one for homeowners (for the purpose of this thesis although more generally speaking for businesses and organisations as well) who are using the EPC as a form of eco-label as highlighted by the The Department for Communities and Local Government (2017) publication on what is an EPC. It also highlights the recommendations made by the EPC to help homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their dwelling after purchase including the potential EPC score which can be achieved if all recommendations are implemented.

The DCLG (2017) report highlights how EPC assessments are carried out by accredited assessors and take into account factors such as the type of building, age of the building, number of habitable rooms, extensions, dimensions and floors, glazing, materials, roof constructions, chimneys and open fires and heating systems used amongst other factors.

It is worth noting that at the end of 2012 (DCLG, 2012) the Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations were recast in order to maintain up to date with EU regulations. This
included increased regulations around the future energy efficiency of buildings being constructed but did very little to alter the consumer side of the policy which this thesis is interested in.

Given the nature of the EPC as an eco-label, there is very little available data in terms of how effective the EPCs have been as opposed to for example the Green Deal or previous policies such as CERT and CESP which had specific figures detailing the extent of the measures installed under the scheme. As such, trying to paint a picture of the success of the EPCs from secondary data is not something which can really be done. Given this, unlike the Green Deal, it is difficult to say categorically that the EPC system is a failure. Despite this, having previously written my MSc dissertation on the EPC system and as a result of the research, I wish to note going into this chapter that I view the EPCs as being unsuccessful at least with regards to their goal of increasing the desirability of energy efficient properties relative to inefficient properties and in encouraging the uptake of energy retrofit measures.

5.1 – Energy Performance Certificates, neoliberalism and choice

As noted by Clarke (2010), choice has become a central tenant of neoliberal policy with consumer values an important means of injecting accountability into the public sector. From health to education to pension provision, choice has become a method of transferring responsibility to the consumer to self-govern in addition to granting consumers the same standards of efficiency, responsiveness, and personal flexibility that they have become used to in the marketplace (Clarke et al. 2007). As Barnett et al. (2010, p.28) note, the ubiquity of the choice paradigm should be interpreted as a “determined effort to recast the balance of responsibility between the state and its citizens. What has been dubbed the ‘personalization agenda’ now ‘stretches right across government’, encompassing health initiatives and pensions policy. The stated aims of this agenda are to reframe the role of state-led initiatives in terms of empowering individuals to make informed choices, based on information provided by government (e.g., see Pykett 2009). Choice is in turn presented as a means of making service-providers more responsive to the variegated needs of citizens.” The issue with this approach however is that while proponents of the market and consumer choice think that people should act like this, as Barnett et al. (2010) note there is extensive evidence that they do not.

As we saw in the literature, there are a range of factors that impact on our ability to make rational decisions in line with our core values (Agyeman and Kollmuss, 2002; Stern, 2000; Vlek et al., 2004). Amongst these include internal constraints such as knowledge, awareness, attitudes, locus of control, priorities and responsibilities amongst others. There are also a range of external
constraints impacting on behaviour such as economic, social and cultural and structural and institutional factors.

In this section, I explore the evidence from the research to highlight how choice is inherently constrained and not the gold standard of freedom and responsibility which it is often portrayed as under regimes of neoliberal governance.

**Homes: scale, engagement and the illusion of choice**

The first issue I wish to examine with regards to choice is the sheer scale of the housing stock. Scale in this case can refer to numerous different things including the size of the housing market, the price of a property and the importance of a property compared to your other possessions and how we engage with it.

With the majority of products available, we do have a degree of choice or at the very least we feel as if we have a degree of choice. There are exceptions clearly, but generally speaking, multiple products exist within a market that perform relatively similar functions for relatively similar prices. With houses however it is clear that this does not always apply.

One house or home cannot necessarily do the same thing as another and it is clear that people are very specific about what they want from a home. Without exception, every single property professional interviewed noted how the holy trinity of price, location (including proximity to schools or work) and size were the key factors in the desirability of a property. With a home playing such a massive role in our lives from providing shelter, providing a space in which to relax, enjoy privacy or raise ones young, there is a strong argument that can be put forward for property purchasing being less of a choice than one might imagine given the enormous size of the market. This is concurrent with the research where of the 30 buyers or renters interviewed, almost all outlined at least one characteristic of a property on which they were unwilling to compromise on and this typically included fairly restrictive characteristics such as location and price yet never energy efficiency. Doubly strange however is how almost half (13) of the 30 respondents noted how they made a conscious effort to limit their energy use on a day to day basis. This appears to show a significant flaw in terms of an individuals ability to frame property purchasing in terms of environmental concern relative to other aspects of life, a theme that was touched upon earlier in the section on internal barriers.
Price

This is largely to do with the nature of homes and how we engage with them. The most important factor in the research appeared to be predominantly, the importance buyers or renters placed on alternative factors such as price and location. Beginning with price, the cost of purchasing a house is on a scale rarely seen or comparable to any other purchase we are likely to make. This is the first factor which serves to restrict choice. While as noted above, most products have a market in which there are multiple alternatives performing similar tasks for similar prices. In the case of housing however this is not true with a £1,000,000 pound property obviously not serving the same needs as a £500,000 property. Furthermore 25 out of the 30 respondents noted that once their needs are met they did not wish to spend beyond that, with most noting the already considerable expenditure as the primary reason for this. Given this, consumers appear locked in to a price range between a floor beneath which they feel their needs will not be met and a ceiling above which they cannot afford with one respondent highlighting this stating

*If I go below 800£ per month then it will be almost impossible for me to to find somewhere close to work and obviously I don't want to go above it if I don't have to as it is already a lot of money* (M6, Interview, March, 2015).

and another respondent noting

*M1: I think when it comes to the price you don't get much of a choice really do you unless you are very flexible in terms of where you want to live or what kind of place you want. We wanted to be east cos that's where all our friends are and at that point it was basically just about finding something we could afford.*

*Interviewer: What was your budget you said sorry?*

*M1: around £450 per month although we are sharing a room so I guess £900 per bedroom if you look at it like that. These days though that doesn't go as far as you'd think. We only found about 3 or 4 properties in the area that we could afford so we just had to go for the best of those.* (M1, interview, February, 2015).

These examples both highlight how respondents felt that in the area they wanted, it was simply a
case of finding something they could afford and as such, there was not a choice between many properties as the majority were simply too expensive thus severely limiting choice. This was also the case with wealthier respondents ironically as well. While also having a maximum price, as mentioned before, they felt that below a certain price their needs would not be met as highlighted by this exchange.

M13: I'm not sure how typical this is but we had rather specific needs. I needed a large space to work in which was well ventilated and then my wife wanted to be near to Euston as she has to travel so much up north. And then of course we wanted separate rooms for the kids.

Interviewer: So what was your budget?

M13: Up to one million pounds but in the end we had to go ever so slightly over as we just couldn't find anything we wanted in the area for anything less.

Interviewer: So how did you feel in terms of trying to find somewhere within your price range and that met your needs?

M13: Well it's the London housing market so its to be expected but here really wasn't a lot of choice when it came to it. We were not in a rush so we took our time and spent a good few months shopping around but very little came on the market. Finally when something similar to what we wanted did we just went for it as we decided we weren't going to do any better in any sort of reasonable time-frame. (M13, interview, March, 2015)

Location/size

This leads on to the next issue which is location/size (I was surprised that quality was less of an issue however one estate agent explained to me that in many cases quality is seemingly linked to location with wealthier areas for example serving as a hidden statement of desire for quality (EA1, March, 2014). These both served to impose limits and restrictions on price with these two factors being crucial when respondents noted what was a deal breaker for them when selecting a property. As noted above, this came in many forms whether it was proximity to work or school or both in addition to having X amount of rooms. With homes playing such a massive role in our lives and providing so many key necessities such as warmth, shelter and a place to raise ones young it is clear
that there is a monumental sense of importance placed on the decision to buy/rent a property.

As such, the majority of buyers or renters find themselves in a situation where they are set on living in specific areas within a set budget in addition to requiring a room for each child and proximity to a school and all of a sudden, the seemingly endless choice becomes far more restricted. Furthermore while the responses varied between interviewees, there were multiple respondents who chose properties based on seemingly selfless motivations such as one woman who noted how

*I wanted to be closer to my mum as she gets older (M22, April, 2015)*

or another couple who noted how they wanted

*A safe environment for a child to grow up in (M27, May, 2015)*

This has two main implications. The first is that it implies that what we are seeing is not even necessarily even a tendency towards what Crompton et al (2010) deem extrinsic values at the expense of intrinsic values so much as structural constraints preventing framing purchases in terms of the environment. One could argue that this is likely given the greater emotion responses generated and thus higher affective of motivations with direct tangible consequences. This was clear for example in the research with respondents being far more animated and determined when expressing their motivations for selecting homes compared to discussing their experience with EPCs.

What this implies once again is that while there are people who typically act selflessly and are capable of expressing properties in terms of intrinsic values, from the sample in this study, there is an overwhelmingly limited capacity for even these individuals to frame property purchases as an environmental good or bad. This potentially also implies that in the case of housing, it is not necessarily a case of cognitive operations being unavailable in terms of framing housing in terms of intrinsic values as that was shown to occur but more specifically a lack of cognitive operations allowing framing in terms of the environment.

The second implication can once again be linked back to an ethics of care. These were yet more examples of people framing significant acts of consumption under the logic of an ethics of care and in particular cased based around tangible connections highlighting the relational aspect of care mentioned in the previous chapter. In both cases, not only was choice constrained but choice was constrained due to the consumption taking place falling under the umbrella of caring for someone close to the respondent be it elderly parents or young children. Once again, a higher order
objective took precedence over what one might assume to be the basic logic of finding the largest or newest property for the best price. Respondents were willing to sacrifice these things in pursuit of caring for those close to them. The EPCs however fail to take into account the various motivations people have for engaging in acts of consumption instead reducing property purchases to an overly technical and logical problem of finding the “best” property for the lowest price. It fails to acknowledge as Barnett et al. (2010) put it, that consumption is embedded within personal and social practices which are loaded with ethical content of their own. The failure to acknowledge what matters to consumers (Sayer, 2005) when purchasing or renting a property has led to an overly narrow definition of what motivates consumption with the effect being a policy which has had little impact on respondents willingness to select a property based on its EPC score highlighted by the fact that thirty out of thirty respondents claimed that the EPC had no impact on their final decision and while multiple respondents noted that they thought the EPC was a good idea with potential, not one had actually undertaken any work linked specifically to the EPC recommendations or Green Deal.

5.2 - Framing consumption practices – problematisation and subject formation

Continuing on from the section on problematisations of consumption in the previous chapter, I look at how the constriction of choice as highlighted above interferes with problematisations of consumption with relation to property purchases and how this differs so much compared to other forms of ethical consumption which the respondents participated in. In order to explore why there existed such a gap between how people framed different consumption practices, I initially sought to enquire about why for example almost half the respondents were capable of framing grocery shopping in terms of sustainability before at the end of the interviews explicitly asking them why they thought there was a difference. It is interesting to note that thirteen of the thirty respondents claimed to engage in forms of sustainable or ethical consumption on a day to day basis such as purchasing Fair Trade foods or coffee, minimising their use of single use plastics or avoiding stores or chains with a record of exploiting cheap third world labour sources or the environment.

Initially in the case of groceries, the responses tended to lean towards what I would classify as the existence of social norms. While responses varied, these were typically generic and similar to this man who stated

Well it's important to understand the impacts of our consumption and to try to limit them (M16, Interview, March, 2015)
or another woman who noted

*I'm sure you know better than most the costs of climate change so we can't all just go on buying what we like* (M4, Interview, March, 2015)

Others also expressed a notion of subject formation which was sorely lacking with regards to the property market with one respondent noting

*To me, it's just basic stuff isn't it. Don't make other people suffer for the stuff you buy and the stuff you do. Being a responsible consumer is something that is very important to me and it pains me to see how so many people can't accept a basic level of responsibility. I try to lead by example rather than just complaining at people because that never gets you anywhere but then again I'm not sure this has been much more effective in spreading the message.* (M6, interview, March, 2016)

Another respondent also noted

*It's a big part of who I am (ethical consumption). I've seen too many real world examples of the impacts of mass consumption and I had to do something. It wasn't easy as I used to go to Primark about twice a week! But I've gotten over it and I feel a lot better for it now and I think I come across as a better person to people who know me as well.* (M12, interview, March, 2015).

In any case, of the thirteen respondents, all noted a sense to avoid catastrophic climate change as a motivator with the majority noting a sense of there being a feeling of importance surrounding sustainable consumption leading me to believe that within motivated publics, social norms do occur to some extent, at least to the degree of climate change is bad and we are responsible and able to do something about it. Furthermore, in other cases of consumption, respondents were typically able to link the impacts of their consumption to a specific impact or disadvantaged group as opposed to the housing market and the overconsumption of energy where they could not. One respondent for example noted how she purchased all of her groceries in reusable bags noting how plastic bags

*They clog up the ocean and having a major impact on marine life* (M4, Interview, March, 2015)

whereas another respondent noted that they tried to actively boycott clothing stores with a
questionable labour record given

...the awful stories you hear about how they treat their workers, the conditions they live in and the wages they make (M20, Interview, April, 2015)

While this obviously does not universally mean that the ability to link impacts to a specific group of people or ecosystem is an indicator for the affective potential for a space, it does highlight individual cases where there is seemingly some merit to this. In any case, to what extent the ability to link environmental harm to a specifically disadvantaged group increases the affective potential of a carescape remains an interesting area of research.

In addition to this, people must be certain that their actions will make a difference and that they have a sense of control over the situation before they are likely to alter behaviour (Newhouse, 1991). While this ties in with the point above, very few respondents despite acknowledging openly the benefits of purchasing a more efficient property seemed to believe that it would have a significant impact. While as noted, all of the respondents acknowledged that it would help the environment, this was typically along the lines of

Ye sure it will help but I mean its not going to solve the problem is it (M3, Interview, March, 2015)

This was a theme that also arose in the previous chapter with respondents unwilling to overstate the importance of their actions in the case of global climate change. Once again, respondents in the case of this thesis seemed increasingly likely to act positively in cases where they were sure their actions would help such as the woman volunteering at the local women’s organisation in the previous chapter or in the case of ethical clothing where they were increasingly certain that altering their consumption would matter. While cases such as the local women’s organisation are perhaps more straightforward, the case of ethical clothing is slightly more complicated to reconcile as there is still no direct contact between consumer and producer although there is a specifically disadvantaged group. Instead, there appeared to be a greater sense of trust (something which will be explored later on) in the organisation promoting sustainable clothing consumption with the respondent who outlined their intention to buy only sustainable clothing telling me

I think in this case, even though you cannot see the benefits directly, you are certain the benefits are real as there is an established structure in place for making sure the right people get what they need (M20, Interview, April, 2015)
In addition to this, another respondent noted how

*Well if one person buys Fair Trade for example that is one more producer receiving a fair wage but if one person stops polluting the world is still polluted* (M27, Interview, May, 2015)

highlighting the issue with the fact that in the case of the environment and climate change most people seemed unwilling to contribute to a half way solution using this as justification for inaction.

**Frames, values and the housing market**

One thing that was immediately clear is that an individual's values and general environmental awareness seemed to have little to no impact upon ability to frame the purchase of a property in terms of the environment. While I waited until the end of the interview to ask people specific questions about their core values at an abstract level, it should be noted that my initial assessment of the values of the individual's in question where for the most part (with one or two exceptions) completely congruent with how the individual's saw themselves. I am therefore quite confident in saying that I do not believe I have misjudged the values of the majority of these individual's.

The question then becomes, why is it that the housing market is such a difficult area for one to frame in terms of environmental protection and why do ones values have such minimal impact compared to other areas of life?

In order to look at this, we must look at the pre-cognitive nature of values in combination with what (Torelli and Kaikati, 2009) term the accessibility of cognitive operations. The accessibility of cognitive operations is crucial with regards to framing.

As we saw in the literature, values are hierarchical meaning that they are ordered in terms of least important to most important. From our values, it is thus possible to determine attitudes and emotions that will translate into behaviour. As Torelli and Kaikati, (2009) note, in a perfect world devoid of external stimuli, the values that people hold would determine new goal directed activities combined with the amount of effort put into said activities and the choices made between alternatives. The key to this however is that the strength of this is dependent on being able to access cognitive operations or “mindsets” (Gollwitzer, 1996) that facilitate (or impair) defining a situation in terms of the relevant values. As we know, frames “are the mental structures that allow human beings to understand reality – and sometimes to create what we take to be reality. They structure our ideas and concepts, they shape how we reason, and they even impact how we perceive and how we
act (Lakoff, 2010).” As noted earlier in the literature section Vlek et al. (2004) went on to establish three key goal frames, those being hedonistic, gain and normative goal frames with ones values combined with the specific situation likely to determine which goal frame is dominant.

This is particularly relevant to the EPCs and values given the way that people are framing the purchase/rent/sale of new properties. While people may have intrinsic values which are conducive to environmentally beneficial behaviour, if they are unable to frame a situation in a way which allows them to activate the relevant values, then there is essentially no affective potential regarding the EPC system.

Interestingly, when asked why they were unable to apply the same logic to housing as they applied to more everyday consumption, many looked taken aback as if I had asked something insulting and this led to almost universally the same response which was issues of choice like the ones highlighted above were constrictive in terms of respondents' ability to frame property purchases in terms of the environment. Only one of the thirteen respondents who outlined a desire to live and shop sustainably claimed that they turned down a more efficient property stating

*I liked a less efficient one better and I'm not spending 10 years in a house I don't like because it has a better EPC score (M21, Interview, April, 2015).*

The perceived lack of choice led to a diminishing sense of importance with regards to housing and climate change with multiple respondents noting how

*I just think that given how competitive the housing market is, you don't really get to pick the ideal house do you (M9, Interview, March, 2015)*

and another student stating

*I've got £550 per month to spend in central London, you try finding an energy efficient property for that price (M25, Interview, April, 2015)*

As noted, those on higher incomes were also saying similar sorts of things about how they were constricted in terms of their choices by price and location. Seemingly, in my sample, as income went up the demand for larger properties in more expensive locations went up simultaneously thus offsetting the feeling of a greater degree of choice. One respondent even noted how he was considerably disappointed with the energy efficiency in his property but when asked why he rented
it in the first place noted yet again the old cliché of

*Well I didn't have much of a choice in the end. It was pretty much the only available type of property in my price range in the area I was looking at (M11, Interview, March, 2015).*

This would imply that trying to motivate environmental change through consumption can be highly problematic in the case of consumption where the primary motivations are currently incredibly strong. The willingness to sacrifice or compromise on one's main demands is incredibly low in addition to the fact that alternatives are not viewed as legitimate alternatives as highlighted by this exchange

*Interviewer: So let's say that tomorrow you get a call from the estate agent that says a new place has come on the market that is bigger, more comfortable, cheaper and more energy efficient than your current place but its in zone 6 for example. Would you be interested?*

*M18: Never say never but no I wouldn't be. If I moved to zone 6 to get a nicer place it would take me an hour to get to and from work every day. I've done that in the past and I'm just not doing it again, by the time you get home you are knackered and then you have to go straight to bed cos you need to wake up at some ungodly hour cos it takes you so long to get into work in the morning. You lose hours of the day.*

*Interviewer: Is there anything that would tempt you to move further away in terms of a new property?*

*M18: Not really. A castle with an indoor pool perhaps. I think within the realms of possibility though, nothing would convince me to move out to the boon-docks even if the place was considerably nicer than the one I'm in now. By the time I come home from work anyway all I want to do most nights is have some food and watch TV so its not like you need a palace to do that. (M18, interview, March, 2015).*

This again, highlights how in the case of EPCs, the UK government has not fully understood the nature of the consumption they are attempting to affect. Other respondents also noted that they would take an energy-efficient property if it was available to them. Once again, price, availability and the lack of available discourse or retrieval cues (Jackson, 2005) were the main factors seen to
prohibit this as highlighted by the following exchange.

Interviewer: So when you looked for somewhere you were primarily looking for somewhere which was convenient for you to get to work, so close to the central line, and somewhere which had good nightlife, plenty of stuff to do etc.

M10: Ye exactly

Interviewer: But energy efficiency or the environment was never something you thought about?

M10: No it wasn't, I'm not saying it's not important cos obviously it is but I didn't think about it when I was looking for a flat.

Interviewer: So why is this so different to your everyday shopping? Why do you think that you look for sustainable or cruelty free products when you buy groceries or clothes for example but not when you are looking for a house?

M10: I've never really thought about it to be honest. I think part of it is that you always hear about clothing companies getting caught for using sweatshop labour or how were running out of food but then nobody ever says “O we need to stop renting flats that aren't super energy efficient.” If someone had come to me and showed me two flats which were both what I wanted and told me this one was more energy efficient than the other obviously I'd have taken the more energy efficient one but nobody ever brings your attention to it do they. (M10, interview, March, 2015)

Another respondent noted something remarkably similar in this exchange

Interviewer: So why when you make such a conscious effort to shop sustainability in other areas of life, does renting a flat not come across as an area where you can demonstrate the same kind of standards? Obviously our homes use a lot of energy which I'm sure you are aware of.

M17: Ye I mean I am aware but then it isn't something you think about a lot, or at least it isn't for me. I think the biggest thing for me is that you just don't get a lot of options necessarily when looking for a flat. Lets take food as an example. Before I even choose which food to buy, I can already go to somewhere like Wholefoods which I trust to maintain a certain standard. Then once
I'm there I can choose to buy the food which suits me. When you rent a flat though in London, you've been through it enough times, it's horrible. You snap up the first thing that comes close to what you want because otherwise someone else will. You just can't be that picky. I'd love to be able to look at 20 different houses and then pick the best one but even if there were 20 different places, I doubt I'd even have time to look at them. (M17, interview, March, 2015)

These respondents both noted how a lack of choice prevented them from being able to consume property in the same way as they consume other products in life in addition to how it was not something which was often discussed or mentioned which led to a tendency to forget about energy efficiency and the environment when dealing with the property market. Unlike other aspects of life, there was no sense of social normality around the purchase of an energy efficient property and even in cases where respondents desired to find one, choices were incredibly limited. If governments are therefore determined to press on with their policy of de-legislation and ecological modernisation, they must take a serious look at how to transform the housing market into a space in which one is able to express ones values or environmental tendencies. The two main factors of a lack of choice leading to a perceived feeling of helplessness and a lack of relevant social norms allowing us to perform cognitive operations resulting in framing homes in terms of the environment and sustainability raises an interesting question. This is which of these one should tackle first in that attempting to create new social norms is a difficult and complicated process in addition to the fact that if people still feel as if they lack choice, the existence of relevant norms may not have a dramatic effect. Equally aiming to increase the choice of low carbon options available in the housing market may not have the desired effect without relevant social norms allowing for appropriate frames. Therefore further research is needed to determine to what extent a lack of social normality around energy efficiency in the property market is responsible relative to a perceived lack of choice.

5.3 – Nudging, Paternalism and the EPC

Moving on from this, we have seen that the property market represents a unique challenge in terms of encouraging sustainable acts of consumption due to the unique nature of the product in question. Properties represent a purchase on a different scale to almost anything else in life, both from a monetary perspective and also in terms of their importance regarding our ability to function and care for those we love. As we saw in the literature, neoliberal forms of paternalism, such as the Green Deal or EPCs, based around encouraging us to make the correct decision without limiting
choice are one of the preferred methods of governing under regimes of neoliberal governance (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008; Hausman and Welch, 2010; Leonard, 2008). Furthermore, as noted, people who have benefited from paternalism typically tend to acknowledge the benefits of it. In the case of the EPC system however, there was a fundamental disconnection between the governments intentions of providing people with a gentle nudge in the right direction and the way they were received. As such, the first aspect of this I wish to explore is the disparity between the governments intentions for the EPC and the way the public perception of them.

The mismatch of public perception

While it is possible to debate whether or not the EPC system constitutes nudging in its purest form, it represents a clear trend towards a form of neoliberal libertarian paternalism. The issue here however is that the government's aim for this policy seems to be fundamentally different to how it is received in the real world by both the public and professionals alike. While the governments attempts may be well meaning they are hopelessly misguided depending on what you view as the purpose of the EPC system. Looking at government publications outlining the EPCs and their purpose (DCLG, 2017), it seems clear that the government was hoping that by labelling properties with these mandatory eco-labels, that this would to some degree alter consumption habits in the property market by making less energy efficient properties less desirable and vice versa. In addition to this, they are aiming to make this information publicly visible allowing anyone to access either individual or bulk EPC data which one must opt out of to avoid (this could be one of the strongest cases for nudging as this makes properties less or more desirable due to the social implications of everyone knowing how efficient your property is). To the vast majority of the public however, it is either an informational tool at best (although it should be noted that the government clearly intended there to be an informational element to the EPC system as well) or at worst yet another annoyance/cost forced upon homeowners by the government. So while the government is aiming to shift peoples purchasing behaviours, in reality this is simply not occurring.

As noted before, out of the respondents interviewed, thirty out of thirty respondents claimed that the EPC rating had no impact on their final decision and while multiple respondents noted that they thought the EPC was a good idea with potential, not one had actually undertaken any work linked specifically to the EPC recommendations or Green Deal. This is not to say that energy efficiency played not part whatsoever with seven respondents claiming that energy efficiency was taken into account when deciding on a flat yet out of these seven, not one ranked it in the three most important factors which were almost universally, price, location and size/condition. It was
interesting to note just how trivial the EPC was to the majority of respondents and how easily it was dismissed when considering one's options. One respondent noted how

I do pay attention to energy efficiency but obviously there are other concerns when buying a house. I am not about to let whether my property has a B or a C change my mind if everything else ticks the boxes (M7, Interview, March, 2015)

with another noting

The EPC score is just some letter/number in the end. When I visit a property I can tell whether or not I will be comfortable there and I don't need a piece of paper to tell me this (M28, Interview, May, 2015)

This highlights the issue surrounding the government and public perception of the scheme. While the government think they are providing useful information aimed at promoting a self-benefiting form of behaviour and purchasing, to respondents and estate agents the reality is that this is not information which a) they would be unable to find themselves b) is easily expressible as a number or letter with many declaring their personal experience more valuable given the different standards of quality and comfort different people seek and c) would be likely to impact on their decision.

A common theme amongst respondents was that if they had known more about the EPC beforehand or were not so tied down to specific criteria for selecting a house (another crucial point which will be explored in terms of the potential of ecological modernisation) then they might have placed more value upon the EPC score with one respondent noting

I never actually saw the EPC during this whole time and I didn't know much about it but if I had I'd probably have considered it (M21, Interview, April, 2015)

The vast majority of these statements were vague and unconvincing however and I have significant doubt that after completing these interviews the majority of respondents would behave any differently in the future. This is in addition to around one third of the total respondents who simply noted that while they were not against the EPCs they were just simply not interested in it when purchasing a property. This is summed up nicely by one respondent who similar to previous respondents noted
I should care but in reality I have other priorities. If I find the perfect property I'm not going to let it go because it has a slightly below average EPC score for example (M15, Interview, March, 2015)

Another noted how the EPCs were not something of interest and if anything could just be considered an annoyance

I actually just finished having mine updated for my old place recently and that was just another thing I could have done without honestly. I'm pretty sure that the couple who brought the place never even looked at it. I really didn't pay any attention to it at all when I was looking at places. Does anybody though really? Has anyone said they actually used them so far that you've met? I get the point in theory but in reality they just end up sitting on a shelf somewhere gathering dust. No-one turns down their dream home because the EPC rating is a C or D or whatever they use (M23, interview, April, 2015)

While it should be noted that given the large number of respondents who were previously renting properties, I did not attempt to approach respondents on their feelings about EPCs from a sellers perspective, similar to the interview above, all but three estate agents interviewed as part of the research agreed fairly conclusively that EPCs were deeply unpopular with sellers and landlords in particular given the fact that they often dealt with multiple properties at a time.

The fundamental issue therefore remains that while the government throws these policies out in under the guise of shifting purchasing decisions and altering behaviour, the reality is that it remains nothing more than mandatory information which can so easily be ignored. Green governance and ecological modernisation revolve around free choice and information but the reality is that as we have seen in the literature and previous chapter, behaviour is not rational, our choices while theoretically free are constrained in reality (there is of course a constant debate between structuralists and voluntarists with regards to how much) and a lack of available discourse around which to frame the EPC in this case is preventing the activation of intrinsic values even in the case of the most environmentally concerned individuals. It thus seems inappropriate to believe that taking a paternalistic approach such as the EPCs will lead to the change demanded by the ambitious government targets.
Paternalism, ecological modernisation and the risks of voluntarism

This raises another issue that must be briefly touched upon when dealing with paternalistic neoliberal policies which is that of voluntarism. While we may encourage certain behaviours, one of the key tenants for liberal paternalism and one of its frequent ethical justifications is the fact that people are still essentially free to choose from whichever option they want even if the cost of one increases relative to another. This is problematic for a number of obvious reasons, these being primarily that we face a literal catastrophe by failing to reduce our emissions significantly. A recent DECC report (Palmer and Cooper, 2013) states that the UK housing sector is the single biggest energy consuming sector in the UK responsible for more emissions than road transport and more than industry and air transport combined. Not only this but the government has set targets under the climate change act which require an 80% cut in emissions by 2050. Under the governments own admission, “it will be impossible to meet the 2050 objective without changing emissions from homes (Palmer and Cooper (DECC), p.6).”

Given this, it starts to seem unwise to pursue a strategy of ecological modernisation and libertarian paternalism when the evidence suggests that there is a high likelihood of failure or at the very least no guarantee of any kind that it will be effective. While nudging clearly has its merits as a policy tool, the basic issue remains that until you test a nudge out, however much you can hypothesise, you cannot be sure if it will work. Evidence might suggest that it will or that it wont but there is only one sure-fire way of knowing. Furthermore, the concept of nudging is relatively new. While it has shown promise in certain areas (during my introductory interviews with the UK government nudge team for example they highlighted several successful examples such as cycling in city centres or using less cars), there is still significant research and testing that must be done before anyone can start to claim that it is a universally viable strategy. The housing stock would at first glance appear to be one of these situations where it might not be particularly appropriate for a number of reasons listed above and given the highly significant implications both environmentally and legally of failing to cut housing sector emissions, one might question the wisdom of attempting this approach despite it being less controversial than alternatives based around mandated minimum efficiency standards that must be met before a property could be rented or sold. It also stays true to the seemingly undefeatable notion of neoliberal policy being the way forwards as far as the British government seems concerned.
Issues of justice and depoliticisation

Another issue that should also be raised in terms of neoliberal governance and paternalism is that of justice and inequality. This is an issue which is particularly relevant to the EPC system and the housing market more generally and one that came across strongly in the research. This is something which can be linked back to the issues around the illusion of choice earlier in the chapter and has two main facets to it. The first main issue of inequality when discussing the EPCs is one which is inherent to neoliberal forms of ethical consumption which is the rich have increased potential to care relative to the less fortunate. The second is an issue which will be explored in more detail in the chapter on fuel poverty and that is why do those with the biggest houses get to consume more resources in addition to those with less money often paying more in relative terms, be it in terms of their total income, or the interest they are charged or by having higher energy bills.

As we will see in the forthcoming section on the EPC and the role of the private sector, estate agents were almost unanimously clear that quality was a proxy indicator for energy efficiency. This was highlighted by one estate agent who noted

*I think that most of the time, newer or what you might call nicer properties are the most energy efficient. If you see something new, I think there is an inbuilt tendency just to assume it is more energy efficient and most of the time that's true. Not that anyone ever really asks about it but if someone was looking for somewhere energy efficient then just looking for somewhere nice and new would probably be the easiest way to go about it.* (EA6, interview, January, 2015).

Given this, it seems obvious that energy efficient properties are typically likely to be more expensive either in terms of monthly rent or in terms of purchase price. It is unlikely that someone is going to find a rundown property which is both cheap yet also highly energy efficient. In addition to this, estate agents noted that wealthier areas tended to have on average higher quality properties with increased energy efficiency as noted by the same estate agent

*I would say on average that wealthier areas are more likely to have more energy efficient properties with a few caveats. Obviously if its an area with a lot of old buildings then that might not be the case but in wealthy areas with newer buildings I would definitely expect that to be the case, around the city for example* (EA6, interview, January, 2015).

This was less clear cut however than equivalent properties within an area. A dataset released by the
Department for Communities and Local Government (2017) detailing the percentage of dwellings in various EPC bands by year and by London borough for example failed to demonstrate any obvious patterns between wealthier boroughs and more energy efficient properties although no thorough statistical analysis of the data was performed. In any case however it seems clear that a more efficient property is likely to be more expensive. Given this many of the less wealthy respondents for this chapter noted how they would love an energy efficient property but were simply unable to afford one. The same respondent who earlier noted

*I've got £550 per month to spend in central London, you try finding an energy efficient property for that price (M25, Interview, April, 2015)*

went on to note that

*I'd love an energy efficient property given my situation but what am I going to do. I can barely afford to live in London as it is so you don't have to convince me that lower bills are a good thing.*

Another respondent also noted

*M6: I love our new place but it was absolutely freezing in the winter. It's one of the old fireman houses above the fire station and it's god knows how old and is just leaking air from every nook and cranny. We blast the heating on full all winter and it still never warms up. We had to get an electric space heater in the end and stick it in front of the couch during the evenings.*

*Interviewer: So why didn't you look for a more efficient property?*

*M6: We were obviously looking for something better but it just never really came up. We didn't have a big budget and this one came up and it just seemed too good to pass on. Obviously in retrospect I wish we could have got something a bit warmer but not much you can do about it now. The bills during winter were brutal though so I'm glad it's getting warmer again. (M6, interview, March, 2015)*

This highlights the issue around how those with less resources are not only less able to purchase or rent an energy efficient property but then after finding themselves in less efficient properties as a result of not being able to afford something warmer or more efficient, are then stuck paying higher
bills resulting in a system where those with the least warm homes are often stuck paying more on average to heat the place than those with larger more expensive homes.

While wealthier respondents did note a sense of choice being restricted in terms of available properties, this was typically due to very specific needs such as living in a specific area or having a large workspace or being near to a certain school. In the case of those less well off however, choice genuinely did seem to be increasingly restricted even if one was more flexible. The same respondent as above noted how for example they were not bound by a desire to live in a specific area or near to a station and simply wanted the best house they could get for the price. Despite this, they were unable to find somewhere which one would consider energy efficient.

We actually didn't have a lot of requirements which is why it is so frustrating. One of us is at Imperial, another one is at UAL, I'm at LSE and the last one is Camberwell so wherever we lived someone was going to get a raw deal. Because of that we just basically decided lets just get the best place we can. Unfortunately, trying to find a four bedroom house in London isn't that easy and with our budget we had a really hard time finding anything at all unless we went really far outside which wasn't really possible. (M25, interview, April, 2015).

While those with more resources might feel as if their choices are restricted due to their needs, it is self-evident that having more disposable income when looking for a property grants you access to a higher percentage of the total market. Therefore while pursuing policy based on paternalism and free choice might be almost as ineffective for those with more money, the issue there is more about the perception of a lack of choice whereas for those with less money, there is a very real lack of choice both in terms of their perception and what is actually available to them. This is then coupled with the fact that those who are worse off are paying higher bills which in turn takes up a higher percentage of their total monthly expenditure. As such, EPCs are a prime example of how neoliberal policies based around consumption may be seen to be inherently exclusive and disadvantageous to the poor unless designed to work around this (Castree, 2010; Bakker, 2003; Budd, 2007; Prudham, 2004; McCarthy, 2004). As a side note, the Green Deal was specifically designed to try and get around this issue however it failed as a result of the private sector charging such high interest rates for loans that those with the resources to go it alone actually paid less than those who took finance packages.

Furthermore, in addition to the EPCs being unjust given the fact that those with more resources are increasingly able to care and make decisions based on the EPC score should they chose to, framing issues of poor energy efficiency around choice serves to obfuscate a loss of
accountability that occurs through privatisation (Soper, 2008). Soper (p.208) actively notes how using consumption as a policy tool may be seen a “discursive stratagem” which under the guise of citizen empowerment, actually covers up a loss in real choice and a reduction in the equal distribution of public services. To claim that the government have integrated market and public interests is simply untrue as highlighted by the EPC system where choice, be it perceived or otherwise, is a mere illusion, especially for those who are financially worse off. What this means is that there is a lack of debate or lack of attention around the issue of those at the bottom of the economic ladder being unable to afford energy efficient properties. Instead of a recognition of the rights of individuals to have access to comfortable and efficient properties, EPCs shift the blame for an individual having an inefficient property away from the government and the market onto the individual who is at fault for choosing an inefficient property. While this issue will be explored in more depth in the chapter on fuel poverty as I will examine the issue of re-politicising energy inequality through a rights based approach, I wish to note that my research heavily suggests that reducing energy efficiency to an issue of individual choice based around picking the best rated product fails to acknowledge the structural and social conditions that underpin inequality and injustice to begin with. We must therefore look to reignite discussion around how we can provide energy efficiency for everyone, and not just those who can afford it.

5.4 – The EPC and the role of the private sector

Moving on, it is crucial to look at just how effective this policy as been with regards to transferring responsibility to the private sector in addition to the individual. With the individual failing to perceive the Green Deal or EPCs in terms of a discourse of environmental protection and sustainability, the other key participant in the Green Deal system is that of the property professional. Property professionals are required to keep a copy of an EPC for every property they represent with many making them available online for all of their properties as well. Despite this, I argue that in the case of the EPCs, the private sector comprising primarily of property professionals, has no viable reason to promote EPCs and their environmental message and in some cases this can even be counter-productive to their work. I argue that given the mismatch in public perception highlighted earlier, the property professional is reluctant to view the EPC as valuable given the lack of importance placed on it by the consumer coupled with the instances of resentment from certain consumers on top of this.
Estate agents and the EPC

The EPC is somewhat different to the Green Deal in that the private sector does not stand to gain directly from the existence of EPCs. Whereas the Green Deal finance packages earn interest for energy companies, the EPCs have minimal direct benefits for industry and the private sector. As noted, estate agents probably see more EPCs than anyone else in entire country. Their opinion however of the EPC was typically less than enthusiastic. For example, of the estate agents interviewed, only one claimed to take into account the EPC score when valuing a property while the vast majority said they did not take energy efficiency into account when valuing a property with the exception of extreme cases. This is because typically, energy efficiency was linked to how new or how nice a property was with one pointing out

*Yes it does happen but realistically most houses with a poor EPC score are older properties which haven't had a lot of work done to them anyway so there isn't often a need to distinguish between these things* (EA3, Interview, January, 2015)

Despite this, five estate agents did claim to take into account energy efficiency when valuing a property implying that it is not meaningless, just that other factors are considerably more important. Another estate agent noted

*I'm not saying that energy efficiency is irrelevant, if somewhere is draughty and cold or has really high bills then obviously that's not a good thing. Equally that's not to say that most people are likely to notice or pay too much attention to that sort of thing when they are looking around a place for five or ten minutes, especially depending on the time of year. Most people just think, O nobody is living here, I guess the heating is off. When people view a house, all they are thinking about most of the time is how new is this place, how big is it, can I fit my furniture in, how easy was it to get here and that kind of thing. I think that's why it doesn't really make a big difference when you are valuing a property.* (EA9, interview, January, 2015)

One more noted how for her, energy efficiency would only be considered in really extreme cases when valuing a property noting

*I think most people take it fore-granted that overall quality is somewhat of an indicator of this sort of thing (energy efficiency). If you get a shiny new place then you're expecting it to be warm and*
comfortable. New and comfortable are two things which just go together. Because of that I don't really see much of a reason to include energy efficiency in valuations. Obviously there are rare exceptions. We did have one house once which the owner had converted to be zero energy use or whatever the term is, fully renewable essentially so obviously that was a unique selling point but on average I just don't think it has a big impact compared to quality or location. (EA12, interview, February, 2015).

This was particularly true in the case of older buildings with one estate agent noting

*If you buy an older building you are fully expecting a less energy efficient property so to think that labelling it as energy inefficient is going to have any notable impact on its desirability is incredibly hopeful* (EA1, Interview, March, 2014)

What we see is that EPCs are somewhat unnecessary under this scenario with respondents able to afford a newer or more expensive property typically expecting higher levels of energy efficiency and those unable to afford such a property, unable to care.

The vast majority of property professionals interviewed there noted almost universally, that the EPC system was useless in their eyes as anything beyond an informational tool for consumers and that it was ignored too often to even be effective as that. Strangely enough, EPCs were actually quite popular as an informational tool amongst estate agents with all but two stating they found EPCs useful professionally and would keep them unless a better alternative was found however this should not be confused with them being viewed as effective. While it was not always completely clear as to why this was the case, as far as I could tell this seemed to be largely due to the fact that for estate agents, even though they were not viewed as particularly useful or effective, they had relatively little downside.

Whereas for sellers or landlords they represented a combination of economic and temporal costs, for estate agents there was virtually no downside to them as highlighted by one estate agent who noted

*Sure I don't really use them much, but for me there isn't really much to worry about. I get given one of these at the start of the process and then it just sits around. Occasionally as well people ask me specific questions about energy or bills for example and in those cases it saves me having to look for the answer* (EA3, Interview, January, 2015)
Another estate agent noted how she would also keep them because

*Occasionally they give you some useful information and you can look up other properties in the area and often the EPC score of a property bears a resemblance to how nice a place is. On top of this I don't really have to do anything so why not really? If they came up with something more useful I would probably support it as I do think energy efficiency is important but I'm certainly not in a rush to scrap EPCs although I feel as if a lot of our landlords might disagree* (EA2, Interview, May, 2014)

Despite this however, estate agents were quite clear that people paid them almost no attention and they were not a factor in purchasing decisions, similar to the responses from the members of the public interviewed for this chapter. One estate agent noted

*I've never had anyone ask to see one, I've never had anyone ask for an EPC score when looking for a house, I've never had anyone really even mention an EPC to me. I can confidently say that they are not a factor when it comes to people's decisions when choosing a property.* (EA14, interview, February, 2015)

This was similar to almost all property professionals interviewed with another echoing these sentiments stating

*I don't want to say nobody cos I've been doing this a long time and I could have forgotten but certainly in recent memory, I can't think of anyone whose been visibly swayed by an EPC or even energy efficiency more generally. Price, location, size, that's what counts. You can't afford to be picky, especially in London.* (EA4, interview, January, 2015)

In addition to this, the majority of property professionals interviewed noted how if they were to bring attention to the energy efficiency of a flat which had a particularly high EPC score, there was no guarantee they would even mention the EPC (highlighting again how EPCs are useful for estate agents as informational tools but ineffective at altering purchasing). One estate agent noted

*If I had a property which was incredibly energy efficient, like something really unusual, perhaps it had solar panels on the roof, I wouldn't be saying this place has an EPC score of an A or a B because that doesn't mean anything to most people. I'd be saying look at the solar panels, these are...*
highlighting how even though a high EPC score would most likely translate to low monthly bills, there would be a failure to make that logical leap and that framing it in terms of the environment or in terms of something such as an EPC would be less impactful than just telling someone they stand to benefit financially.

Ultimately, structural or external factors may be seen as limiting the effectiveness of EPCs and leading to their resentment. We see three scenarios in which those who are paying for and organising EPCs such as sellers typically resent them, consumers feel they are of no value, and those who are benefiting from them without cost such as estate agents, even marginally, are typically in favour of them. This implies that potentially in the case of EPCs it is the barriers to obtaining them in terms of time and money that limit their palatability and given that buyers are also typically selling at the same time, sometimes this resentment spills over. While I do not know where the money would come from, this suggests that EPCs might be far more popular if they were free as despite only having a relatively minimal cost of around £100 and a few hours of time, the perception of this cost amongst sellers is seemingly quite high with one estate agent noting

*I think from a sellers perspective people just don't see the point in them and paying money for anything you don't see the point in always feels like it costs more* (EA7, Interview, Jan, 2015).

Therefore, while EPCs offer relatively little downside and can be useful in fringe scenarios, they offer very little in terms of tangible benefits and are clearly failing to effectively transfer responsibility to the individual consumer in terms of the greening of the property market. While it would most likely be deeply unpopular, the importance placed on various other factors when purchasing a house and the perceived lack of choice means that unless there are tangible benefits to an energy efficient property beyond long term savings on energy bills or the existence of a strong sense of social normality around the logic of energy-efficient housing, the EPCs are unlikely to be effective.

5.5 - Information and techniques of neoliberal governmentality

The final section I wish to explore with regards to this chapter is that of techniques of governmentality. As Rose (1991) notes, there are two key techniques of neoliberal forms of
governmentality, which are the dissemination of information, and the altering of the structural landscape in which policy takes place. The Green Deal took the latter approach by aiming to alter the structural conditions surrounding consumption by trying to make it more affordable. The EPCs however took the former approach based around the dissemination of information which Rose (1991) notes is used to create fictive realities concurrent with objectives of governments. In the case of the EPCs, this focused around the government highlighting the dangers of the overconsumption of energy and most importantly, pointing out to individuals what they could do both in terms of enabling them to make more informed decisions when purchasing a property and also what options were available to them in terms of energy efficiency once they had purchased or rented a property. Now that we have seen the various issues posed by the design of the EPC, in this final section I wish to explore why the information provided had so little impact and why it was so easy to ignore. This will revolve around how governments attempt to exert paternal influence and pursue ecological modernisation.

**Communicating to those who do not want to listen**

The history of environmental communication to date has not left an easy legacy to overcome. With the majority of reporting to date being viewed as overly sensationalistic and seemingly inaccessible, no clear and trusted channel of communication has emerged between scientists upstream and policymakers and the general public downstream. While the Green Deal, the government's flagship environmental policy for example struggled to get off the ground with an article in the Guardian claiming 61% of the public have never even heard of the scheme, let alone know what it is or what it does (Guardian, 2013)(which based upon my experience throughout this thesis appears to be a fairly generous estimate), time is running out for governments to translate their paternal instincts into real emissions reductions. There are three main areas of interest with regards to the dissemination of information as a technique of neoliberal governmentality. These are the difficulty in targeting intrinsic values in potentially extrinsically motivated individuals, issues of trust, openness and finally, notions of blame.

One significant issue that governments have when operating at a macro level is given the tendency towards extrinsic values found in a lot of society, there is a constant challenge of communicating bigger than self problems to extrinsically focused individuals. Unsurprisingly, in tests carried out (Crompton et al, 2010) found that those primed with intrinsic values possessed a higher “action obligation” than those primed with extrinsic values. The positive, as Crompton et al. (2010) note, is that while we may be inherently leaning towards one set or the other, deep down,
everyone possesses both intrinsic and extrinsic values (though for some they may be buried deeper than others). Therefore the challenge, is to activate those hidden intrinsic values in those who are extrinsically focused.

As we saw earlier the strength of the value behaviour relationship is dependent on the “accessibility” of cognitive operations (Gollwitzer, 1996) or mindsets that allow us to define a situation in terms of relevant values. As such abstract values prove to be far more effective in terms of opening up accessibility to these mindsets (Torelli and Kaikati, 2009). In addition to this, further research from Freitas et al. (2004) found that after an initial activation of a value, there was increased likelihood of these cognitive operations being used in the future to interpret unrelated scenarios (Freitas et al., 2004; Higgins, 1996). While there are practical issues with this given abstract communications are unlikely to provide enough information to encourage any specific actions, if some method of priming abstract values can be attached to more practical and informative communications, it may prove beneficial. What this implies for policies such as the Green Deal or EPCs is that in order for these policies to be effective, in addition to providing specific information such as that found on the EPC or Green Deal assessment, they must aim to also appeal to high level intrinsic values allowing the recipient to understand why the EPC is important.

At the end of the interviews, I took the time to fully explain the EPC to respondents and while this did not lead to any of my respondents actually reconsidering their position to a point which motivated action, respondents did seem largely surprised when I was explaining the EPC system to them when I tried to put into context the scope of emissions generated from residential properties within the United Kingdom and some of the relevant impacts. This does not mean for a second that an EPC should have a picture of a dead polar bear watermarked onto it but equally, there were multiple examples within the research of respondents reacting positively to higher order information with regards to the EPCs. While as noted, this was at the end of the interview when explaining the EPC to the respondent in a deliberately positive manner, several respondents appeared particularly shocked to hear quite how much CO2 residential energy use was responsible for with one noting

*Wow, I would never have thought it could be more than air travel AND industry* (M14, Interview, March, 2015)

and another noting how they would be more considerate of their energy use stating

*I think if I knew it was THAT much that we all use, I would be more careful and this will probably
Another respondent noted that if they had access to this sort of information at a more relevant time, such as when they were looking for a property, perhaps they would have acted differently noting

_Ye that is actually way more than I expected (referring to domestic energy use). I think half the problem is you never have this information when it might be useful. You're telling me this now but it needs to be presented to you when you are looking for a house or you just forget about it don't you. Nobody really brings the EPC to your attention or tries to tell you what it's for. I do think that if I'd known this I would have paid more attention to it obviously (M8, interview, January, 2015)._ 

While this is far from the same thing as a long term change in behaviour and consumption habits, it does highlight how from a trusted source (a point that will be touched upon shortly) information such as this may serve to help contextualise and frame situations in terms of relevant environmental values. It also highlights two things which is firstly, how the respondent noted the importance of higher order motivations, highlighting that explaining to an individual the reason to do something is crucial as well as simply telling them how to do it. The second is that unlike more day to day consumption where perhaps the lessons of environmentalism are more engrained within individual's psyches, in cases of extraordinary consumption, it is beneficial for the information being disseminated to be engaged with directly by the individual as this aids in its retrieval at key moments (Jackson, 2005).

**Framing information**

One thing that it is important to understand is that when dealing with issues of the environment and ethical consumption, information is more effective at encouraging sustained environmental commitments if it encourages framing a situation in terms of intrinsic values (Crompton et al, 2010). As noted, Lakoff (2010) states how frames are mental structures which allow us to determine and understand reality. This means that depending on how a situation is framed, our perception and response to the situation is likely to be highly variable. While there is no golden list of frames complementary to intrinsic or extrinsic values, Crompton et al, (2010) do present a large list of frames which they found were used by extrinsically oriented people to comprehend bigger than self problems when primed with intrinsic values. While I will not go through the entire list, for obvious reasons certain frames such as the value of nature or human life or responsibility to
children proved far more likely in their research to be used by those primed with intrinsic values in
interpreting a situation whereas frames such as financial savings and security were far more
commonly found in those primed with extrinsic values. Given this, organisations looking to engage
intrinsic values would do well to coordinate with relevant experts to ensure communications
strategies are not serving to prime extrinsic values through poorly understood framing of the issue
as even if they are promoting two entirely different messages, the use of extrinsic frames is likely to
be universally prohibitive to combating bigger than self problems, be they the environment, poverty
or whatever else.

Interestingly, in the case of EPCs relevant frames with regards to the environment were
sorely lacking yet extrinsic frames were seemingly not. Out of the respondents, only ten noted the
primary value of the EPC to themselves as a informational tool for reducing energy usage with the
remaining respondents noting how the primary value for them was financial savings. This is not to
say they did not recognise the value in terms of recognising energy use so much as it was secondary
with one respondent noting

I guess generally speaking the main point is to reduce energy but certainly for me its biggest use is
outlining financial savings (EA29, Interview, May, 2015)

and another noting

The most useful part of it is definitely the money saving. In fact its about the only part that's useful
(EA24, Interview, April, 2015)

While again most respondents did appreciate to some extent its value in terms of the environment,
the fact that it was primarily recognised as a financial tool may well reflect on its inability to
activate appropriate cognitive operations.

Trust and accessibility

Another significant issue encountered in terms of the dissemination of information in search
of exerting political power was ironically the source of the information. While this ranges from
person to person, the research I carried out for not only this chapter but also other chapters
highlighted a somewhat alarming lack of trust from the general public towards the government.
While obviously the degree varies from person to person, it is clear that the government is not seen
as a trusted source of information for a large portion of the population and this can be seen as particularly true when it comes to the environment, something which does not bode well for paternalistic policies. One interviewee noted how when it comes to the environment he was

*sick of hearing about it from the government [*] you can never distinguish between the truth and the politically motivated rubbish* (M24, Interview, April, 2015)

While this individual was definitely towards the more extreme end of the spectrum, it is clear that he is not alone in feeling this way.

Estate agents are one example of a part of the chain where perhaps more could be done to promote the Green Deal and EPCs and get the message across. Estate agents noted for example how they had no formal training regarding the EPC, and were not used to bringing it up or engaging with it with potential customers. One estate agent noted

*There isn't any sort of training for it no. I do think that might be a good idea but at the same time unless someone is paying me, I'm not going to sit around explaining them to people so perhaps it's wishful thinking. I do think it would be a good idea though to get people more involved with them, really bring them to people's attention if you are serious about them making a difference. Make them harder to forget you know.* (EA15, interview, February, 2015)

Almost half (14) of the respondents when interviewed stated how if an estate agent took the time to explain the operating costs of a property such as energy use or heating costs they would be likely to take it into account in their decision. This was summed up by one respondent who noted

*Given my financial situation, yes I think if someone told me this house is going to cost me a fortune to live in I would be hesitant to consider it* (M9, Interview, March, 2015)

This brings up two interesting points, the first being that once again, the situation is translated into financial costs thus priming extrinsic values and secondly, this gentleman essentially just confirmed that if the EPC was not an EPC but direct information from an estate agent, he would ironically find it quite useful. While to some extent this highlights issues of trust, this does refer to trust in the traditional sense of the word in that this respondent did not question the validity of the information on the EPC so much as he was unwilling to consider it in the first place. As such I would like to term this openness with respondents exhibiting differing levels of openness to
different sources. While I did not ask every respondent who they would like to get their information from for obvious reasons, there was a common theme amongst respondents with a significant 26 out of 30 respondents noting that they would be more likely to take into account information on energy saving if it came from friends or family. Quite why this was the case for everyone was hard to pin down but the most common response was that one could trust friends and family to have your best interests in mind in addition to the concept of familiarity with one respondent noting

*I think the big thing is that if your mum or dad tells you to do this you know its probably for your own good* (M9, Interview, March, 2015)

and another noting

*I think part of it comes from the fact that you know these people and therefore you are just more likely to believe them* (M19, March, April, 2015)

As such it may well make sense for the government to seek to move communication activities away from itself directly, to other parties.

Another factor which appeared significant was that respondents were clear in that some form of human interaction involving EPCs would be more likely to get them to consider the information. One of the first respondents I interviewed outlined her displeasure with the fact that at no point during process of selling or buying a property does anyone with any sort of relevant knowledge ever explain anything to you. While 28 of the 30 respondents noted how the information available was not confusing and for the most part was easily understandable, 23 respondents noted how they would have liked to have had someone explain the EPC and its recommendations to them. Unfortunately, there is a gap here that is seemingly very difficult to fill. Estate agents have no desire to be this person as they are not prepared or paid to do so. The government is unable to provide people on such a scale and the public will only act if directly questioned and civil society is busy championing countless other worthy causes to the point where I cannot think of many environmental organisations who have time to sit down and explain an EPC to someone. Given the nature of the responses from the research, this once again calls into question the logic of a system such as EPCs when the nature of change required is so extreme and on such a short timescale.

To some extent, this once again comes back to the issue of activating specific cognitive operations or framing in that the EPCs would seemingly be more effective and more likely to
encourage pro-environmental behaviour should they be deliberately brought to light and discussed. As mentioned, the attitude to the EPCs became significantly less hostile and more receptive once we arrived at the end of the interviews and I was able to go over an EPC with the respondents and explain it to them in terms of what it meant and what options were available to them. While I still believe that the primary factor prohibiting framing property purchasing in terms of the environment is the overwhelming cost of doing so in the majority of cases, an inability to have proper awareness or indeed to simply discuss the topic appeared impactful as well. To expect people to simply take an interest in things such as an EPC without anyone placing it in context or discussing it is highly optimistic. As we have seen (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989) knowledge gained through self discovery is more valuable and more likely to have a lasting impact. In the case of the EPC however there is never an opportunity for learning to occur with the EPC seemingly inevitably relegated to obscurity to be dealt with by solicitors.

5.6 – Conclusion: EPCs, choice and paternalistic neoliberal governance

To summarise, this chapter makes contributions to concepts of neoliberal governance and new forms of libertarian paternalism in addition to geographies of responsibility. It examines how the dissemination of information, one of the key techniques of neoliberal governance has functioned in an empirical example, and using the research, contributes to critiques of neoliberalism and neoliberal governance on issues such as justice, care, voluntarism and the illusion of choice.

In this chapter I argued that the neoliberal trend of ecological modernisation as a form of policy tool is highly dubious given the voluntary nature of neoliberal governance undertaken through libertarian forms of paternalism and nudging such as Energy Performance Certificates. Through multiple barriers, both internal and external, consumption is inherently constrained. With a particular focus on the lack of choice experienced when renting or buying properties, respondents were quick to note that they felt heavily constrained in terms of the availability of properties which would meet their needs in addition to being energy efficient or having a particularly high EPC score. With respondents noting high prices, the importance of location and a range of other individual factors around which they were unwilling to compromise, this highlights the very real way that paternalistic policies such as EPCs based around free choice may not function in the way the government intends as free choice is a lot less free than one might assume. Multiple respondents noted a desire for a more energy efficient property but lacked the means to do so while others were simply not bothered. The biggest issue regarding the constriction of choice was the way the housing market was perceived or constructed in the minds of consumers. Homes play such
an important role in our lives, that people are inherently less willing to compromise than with other products in addition to the very real feeling as expressed above that one home is not necessarily a substitute for another in the same way that some products are. On top of this, the design of the EPC was overly narrow and failed to draw any connections to wider issues of care and responsibility despite its best intentions.

While this is not to say nudging has no place as a policy tool or that paternalistic policies are doomed to failure, it is to say that there has to be a more complete analysis of the context in which they operate. While nudging depending on the design of the nudge can be seen as a way to counter the need for good behaviour given that it aims to subconsciously promote a certain behaviour in line with government objectives, it is vital to not overstate the rationality of consumption as with the EPCs. EPCs hoped that by labelling properties similar to the way many other products are labelled with regards to their environmental impact, it would alter consumption however this proved overly optimistic as labels as we saw are meaningless without relevant social norms under which to interpret them (which the research suggests are sorely lacking in the case of property purchasing and residential energy consumption) or if structural factors prevent us from framing them with regards to relevant values. The research highlighted a total mismatch in perception between the governments desired intentions for the scheme and the way it was perceived by the individuals.

An additional issue regarding this was the fact that the EPCs did nothing to connect consumers with the consequences of their consumption or to make the negative environmental aspects relevant (Demeritt, 1998). Members of the public interviewed for this chapter frequently failed to understand the importance of the EPCs and the reason for their existence to some extent which led to them being dismissed far more easily than would otherwise be the case. This raises serious questions with regards to the ability of policies framed around voluntary consumption and nudging in that as noted in the chapter, without first testing a nudge, it is almost impossible to know if it will work. In the case of EPCs it became clear that despite many respondents possessing intrinsic values which one would expect to encourage environmentally beneficial behaviour and consumption, respondents lacked the ability to frame the consumption at hand in relation to these values despite acknowledging that in many cases, other forms of consumption were framed in such a way. With structural issues taking precedence, this suggests nudges will only work if they are able to overcome the vast structural constraints imposed on free choice which in the case of the housing market seems insurmountable. Therefore if the government fails to attach additional mechanisms to EPCs to reward or punish high or low scores respectively (which would likely be highly unpopular) it is hard to see them overcoming the resistance they seem to face.

The EPC system also highlighted some of the inherent issues of neoliberal consumption
based policies in terms of depoliticisation and justice. Through the promotion of choice and the logic that we are all free to choose the best option out of a range of selections, this ignores the fact that we are always choosing from within what Barnett et al. (2010) call a “choice set” or essentially a limited portfolio. Given this, those with greater resources have a greater degree of choice compared to those with less meaning they are more able to exhibit the kind of care and responsibility encouraged by the EPCs. Furthermore, they are increasingly able to reap the benefits in terms of living in an increasingly energy efficient property. Despite having greater amounts of disposable income, they typically pay less for their bills in both real and relative terms thus accentuating the injustice raised by this sort of policy. Furthermore the notion of choice serves to obfuscate accountability in terms of the responsibility of the government to provide everyone with the same opportunity to benefit from energy efficiency or at the very least, it removes the discourse around whether or not the government should indeed have such a responsibility and to what extent this responsibility extends. Under neoliberal notions of free choice, the individual is responsible for finding an energy efficient property and failure to do so rests at their feet rather than the institutions that sustain the pervasive levels of inequality within society.

Finally, it should be noted that the way the information was disseminated was highly ineffective. Not only did it fail to connect with the respondents and fail to allow them to frame the situation of purchasing a property in terms of the relevant intrinsic values required to motivate action, but it also came across as unpopular and highlighted the position of the government as not a particularly trustworthy source of information. Multiple respondents highlighted how they would be keen to engage with information around energy saving in the home should the opportunity arise but many respondents stressed they would prefer this to be with either a relevant professional or with friends or family. When engaging in neoliberal attempts at policy based around the dissemination of information, it is critical to consider the source of the information in addition to how the target of the information will come into contact with it and engage with it. Failure to use a trusted source that motivates the target to engage with the information is unlikely to yield the desired results, something which was demonstrated by the EPC.

Ultimately, the EPC, at least in its most basic form and with its most basic objective of encouraging individuals to purchase more energy efficient properties and to encourage energy efficiency upgrades may be seen as a failure. While that is not to say that having an easily available document for each property on its energy efficiency and what can be done to improve it is not a good idea, more must be done to reinforce the EPC rating and to make it relevant to the individual as right now it is just an arbitrary letter with no real meaning or consequence. EPCs, to be expected to work, must introduce some form of social normality or more concrete flanking mechanisms.
however one must question whether there is a deliberate desire to not go further to avoid making politically unpopular decisions. Therefore while the concept of ecological modernisation as a policy tool is certainly an attractive proposition for policy-makers, it remains questionable in its effectiveness. Despite this, the neoliberal hegemony surrounding environmental policy within the UK shows no signs of abating so understanding how to improve the effectiveness of said types of policy remains a critical area of interest.
6. Neoliberalism and fuel poverty: technocentrism and the depoliticising of care

“People should not be dying in the UK in the 21st century because they can’t afford to keep themselves warm in winter.”

(Dan Jarvis, MP for Barnsley)

In this chapter, I make contributions to the ways in which fuel poverty has been constructed under the Green Deal and more generally under contemporary regimes of neoliberal environmental governance. Focusing on the politics of measurement and technocentrism, this chapter contributes to the ways in which the depoliticisation of the issue of fuel poverty affects attempts to combat the issue in addition to implications regarding social justice and exclusion. I argue that an increasingly technical definition of fuel poverty which restricts access to funding and assistance is not only regressive but offers minimal potential for reducing energy consumption and poverty.

ONS (2016) statistics state that one person dies every seven minutes, as a result of the cold or cold related illnesses equivalent to almost 120,000 deaths across the 4 winters from 2013-2016 with cold related deaths being a “bigger killer across the UK than road accidents, drug abuse or alcohol abuse” (Maria Wardrobe, NEA director, 2016). Despite this stark warning and a seemingly genuine desire from both government and NGOs to solve the problem, efforts to tackle the issue are stagnating at best and at worst going backwards as highlighted by the following chart from the DECC (2015) outlining fuel poverty figures within the UK.

Figure 6.1
Furthermore, fuel poverty is an issue which for obvious reasons, typically not only affects the most vulnerable but also serves to reinforce existing inequalities. A DECC report on Fuel Poverty (2015) estimates that as many as 30% of unemployed people are fuel poor in addition to over 10% of inactive households compared to just below 10% of working households highlighting the vulnerable nature of many who suffer from fuel poverty.

![Figure 6.2](image)

Source (DECC, 2015)

In order to examine the impacts of an increasingly neoliberal and technocentric form of governance on fuel poverty, this chapter will be divided into four main sections drawing from literature on the everydayness of sustainability, fuel poverty, geographies of care and social justice. Initially, it will briefly explore the ways in which fuel poverty has been tackled historically within the UK in order to situate current attempts to tackle the issue within some sort of meaningful context.

Following on from this, I engage with the government definition of fuel poverty and introduce a technocentric view of fuel poverty utilised currently by the UK government. I explore the issue of behaviour as a driver of fuel poverty and the practices of fuel poverty in order to examine the implications of an increasingly technical definition. I explore the relationship between poverty and fuel poverty arguing that it is impossible to separate one from the other and that by trying, we pay insufficient attention the ways through which individuals enter in to conditions of fuel poverty.

The third section contributes to the depoliticisation of care based around the politics of measurement. Exploring the implications of an evolving definition of fuel poverty and its political implications, I argue that through this depoliticisation, accessibility is reduced and exclusion
exacerbated. I highlight how those in fuel poverty are typically vulnerable individuals who feel a certain level of disconnection from the political process and by failing to acknowledge this fact, we risk alienating them. I note how by removing the local political aspect of fuel poverty, we risk failing to identify those in need and risk attempts at tackling fuel poverty being misguided and ineffective.

Finally, I argue that only through the re-politicisation of fuel poverty and an increased acknowledgement of the recognitional, substantive and procedural rights of marginalised groups can we hope to genuinely make an impact on an incredibly pressing issue.

The data for this chapter is taken from the interviews conducted with the head of a local fuel poverty organisation in the Reading area which undertakes voluntary work improving the energy efficiency of properties inhabited by those suffering from various forms of fuel poverty. Furthermore, it draws from five interviews conducted with individuals or households suffering from fuel poverty in an attempt to determine the way in which the depoliticisation of the issue has impacted on their lives, their ability to be recognised in terms of their rights to affordable warmth and their ability to deal with issues of fuel poverty experienced.

6.1 - Efforts to tackle fuel poverty within the UK

In order to begin, I briefly examine the ways in which fuel poverty has been tackled in recent history. This is relevant primarily as it serves to form a greater understanding of how the history of fuel poverty within the UK has led to the current overly technical definition in addition to highlighting changing levels of policy-ambition.

Before the introduction of the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligations (ECO), there were several main methods for tackling fuel poverty at work within the UK. There were primarily the Warm Front, Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) and Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) from 2008 onwards and further back the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) and Energy Efficiency Standards of Performance (EESoP). These schemes typically were obligations imposed on energy suppliers to achieve X amount of emissions reductions over Y years with Z% coming from households on benefits or in low income areas.

The Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) subsequently took over from the Warm Front, Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) and Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT) at the start of 2013 (House of Commons, 2011) making the Green Deal and in particular ECO one of the crucial policies for dealing with fuel poverty within the UK.
Apart from the commercial-rate loans available through the Green Deal, there were a number of other measures included in the Green Deal aimed at tackling fuel poverty, which were grouped under the new ECO or Energy Company Obligations which was the primary new policy for tackling fuel poverty in the UK with grant funding available for those meeting specific criteria (and the Green Deal the alternative for those who did not). ECO outlined the roles of the big 6 energy suppliers under the Green Deal. The ECO comes in three parts, two of which are specifically related to fuel poverty (Ofgem, 2012). Initially, there is the Carbon Emissions Reduction Obligation (CERO). This focuses on measures which are hard to reach such as solid wall insulation and thus cannot be fully funded under the Green Deal. Secondly there is the Carbon Saving Community Obligation (CSCO) which aims to reduce 6.8 million tons of CO2 by providing insulation measures and connections to district heating systems to domestic users living in areas of low income. There is an additional sub-target which states at least 15% of each supplier's Carbon Saving Community Obligation must be achieved through measures to low-income and vulnerable houses in rural areas. Finally, there is the Home Heating Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO). This aims to reduce costs by £4.2 Billion through measures that help low income and vulnerable households to affordably heat their homes. This group is also known as the “Affordable Warmth Group. (Ofgem, 2012)”

Examples of previous policies that have been replaced by the ECO include the Energy Efficiency Commitment (EEC) as well as the CERT and CESP mentioned earlier. These programmes delivered roughly £1 billion per year to households across the UK with the aim of reducing carbon emissions with around £110 million per year going to deprived areas through the CESP. While the energy companies through ECO will minimise the cost of achieving said reductions, energy prices may rise to cover costs making these policies somewhat regressive as they create winners and losers based on who receives measures and who funds them. ECO allocated roughly £1.3 billion per year towards reducing carbon with around 25% of this going towards the fuel poor via the Affordable Warmth Scheme (Hill, 2012, p.109). Despite the DECC claiming the suppliers obligations are of a similar cost and therefore prices in general are unlikely to rise, Hill (2012) in his comprehensive review on fuel poverty believed this to be unlikely.

While exact numbers can be hard to come by given the somewhat disjointed nature of many of the schemes, several things are seemingly abundantly clear. Firstly, these are that the Energy Company Obligations fell massively short of the levels of CO2 reductions achieved under previous schemes. While the HHCRO reductions were noted in terms of financial savings achieved for low income dwellings, the number of measures installed under HHCRO was roughly similar to CERO
and CSCO (DECC, 2015) meaning that one can reasonably assume that the savings under HHCRO were not orders of magnitude higher than the other two. As such CERO and CSCO achieved lifetime savings of 18.33 and 9.87 MtCO2 with one assuming HHCRO achieved something similar given as noted, the similar number of installations. Meanwhile in the 4 years that CERT ran for, CERT by itself not even including the other measures achieved savings of 296.9 MtCO2 (DECC, 2012). As Rosenow and Eyre (2012) note, some of this comes from the fact that as time passes, there are fewer and fewer easily accessible properties to target meaning achieving a consistent level of savings becomes difficult, the gulf in the difference between the CERT and ECO highlights the seemingly radically changing ambitions of the UK government with regards to legislation tackling to home energy efficiency in addition to fuel poverty (ECO 1 even overachieved based on its targets).

With the ECO representing a fall in total fuel poverty spending of roughly 29% (ACE, 2012), it has only dealt with roughly 2.5-5% of the millions of homes in fuel poverty. As such, it is clear that short of the government deliberately ignoring the impacts of fuel poverty, this may be seen as a clear statement from the government that policies such as the Green Deal will represent the new way of tackling fuel poverty with a decrease in direct funding and homes treated under government schemes apparent.

From 10% to the LIHC

In addition to the implementation of ECO the single other biggest change with regards to fuel poverty policy in the UK in recent history was the changing of the definition from the old 10% model to the new Low Income High Costs model (LIHC). As any social scientist will tell you, failure to properly comprehend the construction of a problem is likely to severely hinder attempts to combat it. This is key as recognition of the diverse rights of different groups is fundamental to environmental justice (Fraser 1997; Honneth 2001; Schlosberg, 2007; Walker, 2009) along with understanding of distributional impacts and the right to participation (Hunold and Young 1998).

The original definition of fuel poverty dates back as far as 1979 when two economists at the department of Health and Social Security attempted to identify those consumers who had difficulties paying their fuel bills and to examine their characteristics in terms of income and age (Hancock and Isherwood, 1979). This was followed up by the book Fuel Poverty by Brenda Boardman in 1991 which outlined the 10% indicator that was adopted and used until recently within the UK. The 10% indicator was a remarkably simplistic definition. It stated that if one used more than 10% of ones income on fuel spend, you were fuel poor. Now it is fairly obvious to see why at
a basic level this was problematic as the fact that it was a ratio essentially meant that no matter how rich you were and how much disposable income you had left as a result of your energy spending you could still be classified as fuel poor whereas those on low incomes spending just below the 10% threshold would not make the cut despite having a significantly lower disposable income as a result of fuel spending. Not only this, but changing fuel prices caused extreme fluctuations with a £10 increase in fuel bills being equivalent to a £100 rise in come. This was in addition to the fact that fuel poverty as calculated by the government was frequently at a large discrepancy to that perceived by the public with self reported fuel poverty rising from 6.4% to 7.7% during the years 2004-2007 whereas under the governments definition, it rose from 5.9 to 13.2% (Hills, 2012)

As a result of this, an effort was made to determine a new indicator for fuel poverty to allow for more appropriate targeting of needy families and homes in addition to painting a more accurate picture as to the extent of the problem. To avoid the pitfalls of the previous definitions, the new indicator was designed to be increasingly flexible focusing on properties with a combination of low incomes and high costs. It deals with income after housing costs by stating that anyone spending more than the UK median on energy bills who is below the poverty line as a result is classified as fuel poor. It also raises the issue of the poverty gap introducing the notion of how much higher income would need to be to no longer be fuel poor. The new definition raises new issues however. While it also has inclusivity issues with some houses who spend heavily on energy being discounted for being just above the poverty line, the two biggest issues it faces are that a) it can be seen as a tacit agreement that fuel poverty is incurable and can never be totally eliminated and b) that fuel poverty is fundamentally an issue of technological efficiency (Middlemiss, 2016). This has major implications.

By framing fuel poverty as an issue that is impossible to eradicate in addition to one that is fundamentally technological, this marks a clear change in politics from previous conceptions of fuel poverty as a problem which was to be beaten once and for all (the implications of which are discussed shortly). Furthermore, it marks a fundamental shift towards a notion of fuel poverty in which participation and issues surrounding recognition and vulnerability become pushed out in favour of a unified theory of fuel poverty as being directly attributable to the energy efficiency of ones property with alternative structural factors being heavily discounted.

6.2 - The Depoliticising of fuel poverty: how and why?

The single biggest impact of this switch to an increasingly technocentric view of fuel poverty seen above may be seen as the increasing depoliticisation of the issue of fuel poverty. As
noted, much like in the case of the Green Deal and EPCs which may be seen to reduce the issue of the overconsumption of energy to a technical problem, the LIHC indicator for fuel poverty has similar implications yet unlike EPCs or the Green Deal does nothing to shift the question of caring or for whom to care for to individuals framing the individual as a passive recipient of state aid.

While that is not to say the old definition did not have problems as it clearly did highlighted in particular by the discrepancies between government figures and self reported fuel poverty, the benefits of the previous definition were twofold in that it arguably took into account the impact of behaviour of fuel poverty and most importantly it took into account structural factors such as the cost of energy and wages (although there was definitely an argument for it being over-sensitive to rising or falling energy prices).

With the new definition however and the inclusion of median spend coupled with the fact that you must now be under the poverty line, this means that energy prices or wage levels now have far less impact on whether someone is in fuel poverty. In addition to this, under the new definition of fuel poverty, the government has slashed the number of people in fuel poverty by approximately half (Middlemiss, 2016) through eliminating for example houses with low income but also low costs and houses with high costs but higher incomes.

Firstly, it is vital to note that despite the fact that this change of definition serves to depoliticise the issue of fuel poverty, the decision itself to change the definition is inherently political given the nature of the decision and its implications for the distribution of wealth. As some people are now classed as fuel poor, they may seek funding and assistance whereas others who might genuinely be struggling who were previously classed as fuel poor might just miss out as highlighted by the fact that approximately half of the homes in fuel poverty exited fuel poverty as a result of this definition.

The consequences of this is that there are inevitably winners and losers and as Middlemiss (2016) points out, one of the main winners is undoubtedly the government who now as noted have managed to not only remove half the fuel poor population over night but also through making the indicator fluctuate less (under the LIHC definition, fuel poverty has barely changed over the past 20 years, Hill, 2011) and be increasingly based around technical efficiency, have come up with a justification for their inability to solve the problem framing it as some form of social constant requiring massive amounts of money to overcome. Under the maxim of austerity, this provides the government with a convenient excuse for ignoring the issue as being too costly or impossible to fix while ignoring the very real human cost of inaction. Furthermore, it saves the government from having to confront the reality that the current economic system might be at its core unequal and that deeper social and political issues might need to be addressed in addition to allowing governments to
ignore low income households in energy efficient homes.

This is summed up by Greg Davey (previous secretary of state for energy) who said “with upwards pressure on energy bills caused by rising global energy prices and the diversity of our housing stock, our work also makes it clear that fuel poverty is a challenge of both scale and complexity. It is not a problem that can be eradicated in any meaningful way, certainly not by 2016, and not in any short time horizon. The reality of the current economic situation is that there are only limited resources to tackle the problem. So we need to use those resources effectively (DECC, 2013).” This ties in with the governments reduction in funding with regards to efforts to tackle fuel poverty with a drop in ambition with regards to the the potential to solve the problem being apparent.

As such we see three main issues surrounding the depoliticisation that I will aim to focus in within this section. Initially, as we saw, there is the technocentric nature of new fuel poverty. With one's abilities to alter one's consumption habits or structural factors such as energy price or wage levels having a decreasing impact, fuel poverty becomes less and less an issue about poverty with fuel becoming the key part of the term fuel poverty. As such there becomes less and less debate surrounding the general lack of distributional inequality within society and the role poverty has in terms of causing fuel poverty allowing governments to avoid awkward and potentially complicated discussions about inequality and poverty.

Secondly, following on directly from above, the issue of who to target and the ways to help them becomes increasingly depoliticised. As Ferguson (1994) notes in his essay “The Anti-Politics Machine” when dealing with solving issues of inequality, as important a question as what is to be done is “by whom?” While his essay references development goals in the developing world, there are clear parallels that can be drawn between the fuel poor and the developing poor. He goes on to note how, efforts to fix problems which have an inherently social dimension to them are often ineffective when the social and local dimensions are not taken into account. As such framing fuel poverty purely around energy efficiency ignores the inherently political nature of the issue. With government figures showing such disconnection from self reported fuel poverty (Hills, 2012) it is clear that failure to include local communities, experts and the fuel poor themselves within the discussion may hamstring the governments desire to reach those most in need.

The final major implication of this depoliticisation of fuel poverty that I wish to explore is how this serves to further disconnect groups who are already sceptical of the political process to such a degree where in many cases, the stated aim of helping the most vulnerable becomes jeopardized. With many of society's most vulnerable members feeling alienated from the political
process (Ferguson and Lavalette, 2004), a sense of inclusivity is key with regards to solving fuel poverty. As such I will explore via the research, the implications for this increasing sense of disconnection and its effect on efforts to tackle fuel poverty.

**Technocentrism and behaviour as a driver of fuel poverty**

As Rose (1991) notes, techniques of governmentality are based around the creation and constitution of fictive realities for the operation of government. As such, the definition of the term Fuel Poverty and how we measure it may be seen to have a profound impact on the way we tackle the issue. Basing fuel poverty around what I shall term a technocentric view as we have seen has major implications. Middlemiss (2016) notes that in order to properly understand fuel poverty, it is necessary to first understand the subject of fuel poverty or the fuel poor themselves. By taking on an increasingly technocentric view however this becomes decidedly difficult as the role of the fuel poor in fuel poverty becomes marginalised almost to the point of irrelevance.

The research undertaken on fuel poverty strongly disputes this idea of the role of the individual having no meaning in the construction of fuel poverty. One of the main concepts supporting the fact that reducing fuel problem to fundamentally technical level at the expense of human factors is unworkable is the idea of how we consume energy. This can be due to the fact that as Serret and Johnstone (2006) note in their work on the distributional impacts of environmental policy, that poorer households require a much higher discount rate to make similar investments (Train, 1985) in addition to the fact that the poor do not necessarily use energy in the same way as the rest of society (Boardman and Milne, 2000; Walker and Day, 2012; Santin, 2011). This is coupled with the fact that subsidies and financing are used far more frequently by high income households. What this essentially means that in the case of the Green Deal is that low income households are paying for the finance packages and subsidies high income households are using. Furthermore, the behaviour of different groups with regards to a policy can imply further distributional inequalities (Serret and Johnstone, 2006).

In the case of the research, this proved overwhelmingly true and while I would like to recognise the limited size of my sample, my experience conducting the research was that there was an enormous range of behaviours present amongst the fuel poor. While it was evident in the research conducted that the majority of people living within Fuel Poverty did indeed have modest incomes and energy efficient homes, this was not necessarily the case. As such the tendency of the LIHC to ignore behaviour aspects of fuel poverty may be seen as problematic.

There were clearly households who were constraining their own ability to be both
comfortable and financially secure. While this is not the norm, the head of the local fuel poverty organisation interviewed highlighted several recent cases in particular that stood out. These included a single mother who had been

*Heating her house and then opening the windows when it became too warm* and a family who would *heat their home to 27 degrees Celsius when it was snowing outside* (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)

Despite this, all of these people had called up fuel poverty charities seeking help or had been referred to them through some other means.

This was in addition to my experience interviewing households in fuel poverty where the range of differing levels of thermal comfort was immediately apparent. While the two households with children tended to heat their homes more with one noting that

*It does put a real strain on finances but when you have young kids you can't afford to let them go cold so we just turn the heating off normally when they go out and turn it on when they are home* (FP1, Interview, March, 2016)

Another example of a young woman in her 20's interviewed living in a converted warehouse (converted in the most generous sense of the word) noted how her and her flatmates

..*just wear coats in the winter or two pairs of trousers. We were desperate to live in a warehouse space and after what we pay already for rent, there is no way we can afford to heat it over winter* (FP5, Interview, April, 2016)

Finally, another elderly respondent noted to me that they had

..*no idea really how to control the heating since they installed this new system. I just let it get on with itself* (FP4, Interview, April 2016)

This serves to highlight two major issues surrounding an attempt to frame fuel poverty in terms of purely efficiency. The first is that in some cases, fuel poverty is as much a result of improper energy use such as the examples of family heating their home to 27 degrees or the pensioner having no knowledge of how to control their thermostat. These are two cases of people
whom are suffering as a result of fuel poverty which is not necessarily as a result of energy efficiency. A result, they are also likely to find themselves failing to meet the government definition of fuel poverty given that their calculated energy need will be less than their energy use. The head of the fuel poverty organisation noted that in the case of the family heating their home excessively or leaving the windows open, their bills were estimated at “40% higher than necessary.” In order to fix this, all that was required was a change in behaviour and a little bit of attention paid to making “small constant adjustments” to the thermostat.

The other side of the coin is the people like the woman living in the warehouse whom admitted when I asked her if she received energy efficiency upgrades what would happen replied

In all honesty, we would probably keep the same level of heat and just pay a bit less although as we already don’t actually heat the place I am not sure how much money we would gain. I doubt we would actually see much of a difference around here though in terms of heat. Knowing us we would just take the extra money and blow it the first night at the pub (FP5, Interview, April, 2016)

While the motivations for this differ (I wish to stress I am not implying all fuel poor would blow their money at the pub) this highlights a key issue in that as we saw, the fuel poor do not necessarily use energy in the same way as the rest of society (Boardman and Milne, 2000; Walker and Day, 2012; Santin, 2011). This in concurrent with research undertaken by Boardman and Milne (2000) which estimates that as little as 30% of any energy efficiency upgrades would actually be taken as heat with the rest consumed in terms of financial savings, an issue which will be explored later in the section on practices of fuel poverty.

In order to explore the issue of behaviour and fuel poverty and illustrate some of the points made above I will now examine some of the practices of fuel poverty

The practices of fuel poverty

There is more than a bit of irony with regards to the governments attempts at tackling fuel poverty. On the one hand, we have the LIHC indicator which is an attempt at re-framing fuel poverty as an issue of energy efficiency is an attempt to remove barriers for the poor to participate in the energy market. This indicates that a rational and agentic actor is key to the governments policy with proper choices being key to alleviating energy poverty (Middlemiss, 2016). This is where the irony comes in however in that despite calling for a form of policy based around a rational agent acting as the government deems appropriate, the government has formalised fuel
poverty as a structural issue in which people are inherently constrained in their options or trapped so to speak in an inefficient property. The result is a situation in which all alternatives to tackling fuel poverty are obscured and marginalised due to the fact that fuel poverty is a structural problem yet the solution lends itself to decidedly non structural approach based around rational agency and sticking firmly to a neoliberal form of governmentality in which the state seeks to utilise the individual's “free choice” as a means to conduct policy. Clear parallels can be drawn here to EPCs and the Green Deal were the implementation of choice acted to obfuscate the loss of accountability on the part of the government.

As we will see however, the injustice of fuel poverty needs to be understood in multiple interconnected ways (Walker and Day, 2012, p.73). As Walker and Day note, households are not inherently vulnerable. Instead vulnerability may be seen to develop as a result of everyday practices and norms in addition to structural constraints. As such, this section will seek to explore the practices of fuel poverty in an attempt to better understand how fuel poverty is constructed and to attempt to better highlight the issues that arise by portraying fuel poverty as an issue of energy efficiency as based on the research.

In order to examine the practices of fuel poverty, three case studies from the research undertaken with sufferers of fuel poverty will be examined. Before that it is crucial to remember that under models of behaviour adopted for this thesis such as one's highlighted by Shove (2003), behaviour is not performed for the sake of the behaviour itself but as part of a practice in pursuit of a higher objective and it is largely for this reason that in many cases, behaviour is so unpredictable as the nature of the overarching objective is often seen to have more impact on the behaviour than even say attitudes surrounding the behaviour itself. In order to examine this, I therefore attempted to enquire about routines and to observe what they implied rather than treating respondents actions as representative of crossing a threshold of contemplation and awareness.

The first case I wish to note is that of a mother caring for two young children with a working husband. When asked to outline their energy use before and after having energy efficiency upgrades undertaken, two things became clear. The first of these was that an increase in efficiency as predicted by a lot of the literature did not necessarily equate to an increase in comfort. While there were obvious benefits which did equate to an increase in comfort to some extent such as less draughts, the majority of the time the indoor temperature remained very similar. The woman had this to say noting

Since we have had the work done, I don't feel a big difference. Because of the kids we would
always try to keep the house decently warm when they were home anyway and when they are out, we still feel as if we need to save money by keeping the heating off as there are so many other costs. We save some money which is nice, don't get me wrong but not enough to make a radical difference (FP1, Interview, March, 2016)

This highlights the second point in that the primary motivation their heating and energy use appeared to be the practice of caring for her children with the majority of answers seemingly linked to how she aimed to provide the best atmosphere possible for her children while also balancing her budget. Therefore, while the upgrades were successful in some ways, in that they served to cut energy use, they have done little to lift her out of poverty or increase overall levels of comfort meaning depending on how you view the goal of policies aimed at cutting fuel poverty, it is arguable how successful it has been.

The next example is that of the young woman sharing a converted warehouse with her friends. While they had not had work done as they were unaware what existed in terms of government schemes and did not have a good relationship with their landlord, their heating use and energy use was interesting to say the least. As noted previously, they outlined how they just do not turn their heating on as it does so little and costs so much that for them, there are concerns beyond warmth. These were typically related to social activities and nightlife in the case of this warehouse and interestingly as noted before, when asked what would happen if they had a radical energy efficiency upgrade, their response was still

*I think we would keep the heating off as it would already be a lot warmer and I quite like hardly paying anything for energy bills*

with another agreeing saying

*Ye I think that sounds about right, given that we survive as it is now, I feel pretty confident that if this place was properly insulated, I could survive! (FP5, Interview, March, 2016)*

Once again, the primary motivation outlined with regards to energy use was not establishing levels of comfort with in this case it being about saving as much money as possible in order to pursue a more exciting social life.

While there were two other examples of similar situations in which an upgrade in efficiency did not necessarily translate to a notable increase in warmth, for my final example I wish to note the
most positive example because it is just that, the most positive. In the case of this man, he had undertaken energy efficiency improvements through a local fuel poverty organisation and was the only respondent to note an increase in warmth as a result of increased efficiency although ironically, he actually ended up using almost as much energy. When asked about his energy use pre-treatment he replied

I used to turn the heater on for a quick blast when I got up in winter and then a short burst before I went to bed to help make getting to sleep a bit easier. Basically I just did what I could within my budget to make my flat as bearable as possible [...] Once I had the work done, it was a big difference, I only had to turn the heat on to about half of what it was on before for the same results so now I can have it on for about twice as long every day which is nice as I can put it on when I come home from work and eat dinner etc (FP3, Interview, April, 2016)

This raises two points. The first is that out of the total of my research, it was only the person living alone who was primarily concerned about the comfort of his home when heating his house as opposed to others who were primarily concerned with saving money. Whether or not this is because living alone without children or having a job meant he had slightly more disposable income or whether the fact that he lived alone and therefore was not obliged to care for anyone other than himself or both is hard to say. What was clear is that a relational sense of care or a sense of obligation to commitments made with other members of the household was frequently a motivator for energy consumption in other cases.

The second is that in the case of the research, there was a trade off between increased warmth and energy/financial savings. While the majority of those who had work done failed to see significant increases in comfort (it should be noted there was some small increase), they did typically see savings in terms of energy and money choosing to heat their homes to somewhat the same level as before for a lower cost. Conversely, the one respondent who noted a significant increase in comfort used the same level of energy as before for the same price but for a more comfortable environment.

This lends itself strongly to the notion that poverty may be seen as a driver of fuel poverty as when respondents had the option to heat their homes more without experiencing rising costs, they mainly chose saving money over increased comfort. It also highlights the fact that separating behaviour and practices from fuel poverty is seemingly impossible. Whether it was the practice of caring for your children or maintaining a social life, behaviours which were irrational under the pure logic of energy use and comfort were clear to see. When combined with other examples from
the research such as pensioners unable to understand their thermostat or people fundamentally misunderstanding how to effectively use energy, we see a world in which the LIHC indicator fails to be appropriate. In the case of people who are struggling financially for example yet have relatively energy efficient homes, the LIHC definition would most likely place them outside of fuel poverty given their low costs. The research implies however other concerns such as caring for sick or ill family members or having other more pressing expenses be it (as hard as this is to believe) boozing it up with your friends or repairing your car which is vital to your income, mean that you may choose to deliberately not heat your home in order to save money. Therefore while you are not technically fuel poor under the governments definition, you are likely experiencing many of the effects of living in a cold home in many cases through reasons which you feel are outside of your control. As such it is seemingly impossible to ignore behaviour as a driver of fuel poverty in addition to poverty more generally as the conditions imposed upon people through poverty often lead to a situation where individuals such as a caring mother feel forced into actions they would not otherwise choose.

It is vital to remember that for those fortunate enough to have money, it is not always easy to assume what those who are not so fortunate will do with their money. While the government assumes (DECC, 2015) that energy efficiency improvements will serve to increase levels of comfort and warmth, there were multiple examples of people heating their homes so little to begin with that savings never materialised in addition to highlighting numerous other priorities above warmth for people suffering from fuel poverty. As such, the reality is that the fuel poor are poor in every sense of the word and are subsequently lacking finances for numerous other aspects of life.

This brings us to the next key point surrounding the technocentric approach to dealing with fuel poverty in that it serves to fundamentally differentiate poverty and fuel poverty as two separate issues, one with complex social underpinnings and another which just needs a few hours from a builder to fix.

The distinction between poverty and fuel poverty

As Middlemiss (2016) notes, what this represents is a different way of conceptualising what Rose (1996, 1999) refers to as the problematisation of the issue dealing with how and by whom aspects of the human are rendered problematic. In the case of the government however, they fail to render aspects of human beings as problematic, instead preferring to routinise singular solutions to specific problems into general solutions (Villadsen, 2011). The result of this as we have seen above is the notion that fuel poverty and poverty are two separate things, independent of each other with
different causes and different solutions with one inherently political and the other inherent depoliticised.

The ironic factor out of all of this is that if one takes fuel poverty and poverty in general to be highly related, fuel poverty becomes a trickier issue to deal with as it is inherently linked to the inequalities produced within society, an issue which is most certainly more complicated than increasing efficiency. Despite this, it is since the government has tried to separate the two that they have acknowledged the difficulty in eliminating fuel poverty. This has several implications for attempting to tackle environmental issues through policies centred around technical efficiency.

The first and major implication of this separation is that if we take fuel poverty and poverty to be separate entities which are treated through different means of delivery, then treating fuel poverty becomes no guarantee of lifting someone out of general poverty. While it might serve to increase the efficiency of the UK housing stock and stem the tide of overconsumption with regards to energy, poverty and inequalities remain. This then leads to a situation where governments are effectively forced to make a choice when conducting policy as to whether or not they value energy efficiency above poverty or vice versa as the reverse is equally possible where raising someone out of poverty subsequently fails to improve the environmental performance of their property while also transferring the obligation to act onto the individual through schemes such as the Green Deal.

Furthermore, it was clear from the research conducted that fuel poverty as a concept did not appeal to those suffering from it. Out of the five households interviewed, not one of the respondents tended to view themselves as fuel poor with the common theme being that respondents either viewed themselves as struggling or just regular poor. Not only this but the notion that they were in some way a specific kind of poor which only related to fuel and energy use was met with ridicule with one respondent noting how

*It makes me sound like I drive around in a Ferrari all day and then come home and cannot afford to heat my house (FP4, Interview, April, 2016)*

This respondent noted once again how their financial situation was something consistent across their whole life with choices constantly having to be made and sacrifices made. This could be anything from eating cold food, not heating the house to car repairs or wearing old clothes or not being able to afford transport. As such they were quite clear in that any attempts to bring them out of fuel poverty would do little to nothing to solve the rest of their financial problems being experienced.

Another respondent echoed very similar sentiments noting
I just think its all a bit of a farce really. The biggest issue we face is that we have multiple children, I can't find a job at the moment and my husband's salary is not sufficient for everything we need. Sure you could better insulate my roof and sure I would probably be grateful but the idea that this somehow solves my problems (FP1, Interview, March, 2016)

Finally, the flatmate of the woman in the warehouse also noted that of all the problems he was facing,

Being cold was near the bottom of the list (FP5, Interview, April, 2016)

**Is it possible to separate fuel poverty and poverty?**

This highlights (Middlemiss and Gillard, 2015) the fact that poverty and fuel poverty are almost inextricably linked. As listed in the governments annual report on fuel poverty (DECC, 2016), the government’s views the three main drivers of fuel poverty as household income, household energy requirements and fuel prices. To paraphrase this in the words of Boardman (2010), the author of the previous 10% definition, this can be seen as low income, high fuel bills and energy efficient homes. As Middlemiss (2016) notes, two of these factors can definitely be seen as general drivers for poverty with the main factor separating the fuel poor from the poor is the fact that fuel poverty as Boardman (Liddell, 2012; Day and Walker, 2012) puts it can be viewed as necessitating capital investment. As such Boardman seeks to separate poverty from fuel poverty by highlighting how a lack of capital expenditure may be seen to cause fuel poverty. As Middlemiss (2016) points out however this argument may be somewhat flawed given that a lack of capital expenditure may be seen to lock you out of various other opportunities in life extending beyond fuel and energy efficiency.

As such, the current logic states that by investing in energy efficiency, it is possible to lift people out of fuel poverty and you can only be classed as fuel poor if the poverty you are experiencing can be solved through energy efficiency. This however may be seen as a gross oversimplification of how poverty functions and also a highly convenient distinction between fuel poverty and poverty. While it may be possible that someone has low income yet lives in an exceedingly energy efficient dwelling with almost zero energy costs this seems optimistic.

The real question then becomes, is it even possible to lift people out of fuel poverty without first lifting them out of regular poverty, with the cases outlined above in the section on practices of
fuel poverty implying this is exceedingly difficult. Furthermore, is this even within the scope of policies such as the Green Deal and similar environmentally focused policies? While the tying of energy efficiency improvements to social and economic inequality may well be a noble idea as if we are going to spend public money on energy efficiency then we may as well allocate it to those who are incapable of providing it for themselves, this raises a very real issue of whether policies such as the Green Deal and ECO are appropriate for tackling poverty.

This depends on some extent to how you view the overriding goal of attempts to tackle fuel poverty. There are several possible frames with regards to this. Fuel poverty legislation may either be seen as an attempt to prevent low income homes from the negative health consequences of a lack of affordable warmth, a means of reducing poverty by lowering energy bills or a means of targeting low efficiency properties which given the financial situation of their inhabitants will not happen otherwise.

Unfortunately, for the first two, the implications are not looking good. The first frame is perhaps the most demonstrative in terms of illustrating the complications of separating fuel poverty from poverty as we see here that the two are inherently linked. Houses in fuel poverty in the research, as we saw earlier on in this chapter, noted for example how

*If we got a more energy efficient property, I think we would probably take most of the benefit in terms of lower bills. I am used to living like this now and there are so many other areas where we need the money* (FP5, Interview, March, 2016)

and this is concurrent with the literature with the estimate that as little as 30% of energy efficiency upgrades will be consumed as heat (Boardman and Milne 2000). Therefore increasing energy efficiency is no guarantee of reducing health risks as a result of cold homes.

Secondly, it was abundantly clear that no respondent felt that lowering energy bills would do anything with regards to lifting them out of poverty. That was not to say they were not grateful for lower bills with one respondent who had work done noting

*The lower bills are definitely helpful, don't get me wrong but I am still struggling* (FP2, Interview, March, 2016)

Therefore it is only really under the third more environmental frame of targeting properties which otherwise will not be targeted in which objectives based around fuel policy seem to be somewhat effective. This raises again the question of the suitability of merging policies based around
environmental and social sustainability as in cases highlighted above, issues of poverty and the nature of poverty may mean that the way these policies are interpreted and consumed are radically different from their intended nature.

Therefore while purely from an environmental effectiveness standpoint it makes sense to improve the energy efficiency of low income dwellings much like it does hard to reach properties, one could argue that the notion of “fuel poverty” as a concept is not only not useless to some extent but counterproductive as it creates a feeling of resentment and confusion as highlighted by the respondents opinions on the concept. On top of this it sometimes serves to prevent energy efficiency upgrades from occurring as in many cases, those who are poor and who own low efficiency properties are unaware of the existence of fuel poverty or fall just outside of the definition despite having excessively high fuel costs (and as a result CO2 emissions) or exceptionally low incomes. This raises an interesting question in that one could argue that we might potentially be better off without the concept of fuel poverty recognising that poverty is inherently social and the result of inequalities produced within a society and as such more concrete redistributive efforts are needed to offset the negative impacts of poverty experienced through such things as winter deaths while environmental retrofit policies should be targeting the worst performing homes.

The main issue here as pointed out by Sarah Chapman (New Statesman, 2016), a food bank volunteer within the UK is that based on her experience working in a food bank, fuel poverty and food poverty go hand in hand and therefore to reduce every individual aspect of poverty to some different technical problem would be ludicrous and ineffective. As such if one agrees that targeting not necessarily the poorest but the least efficient homes would have the largest environmental impact, and increasingly fair distribution of wealth within society would have the greatest impact on poverty, the motivation for combining efforts to tackle poverty and energy efficiency together becomes increasingly economic.

One would most likely have a greater environmental impact by introducing new criteria with energy efficiency upgrades focused around the least efficient homes regardless of income and using other policies such as direct payments from the exchequer to energy companies and in home advice visits for households below the poverty line for example to alleviate symptoms of winter cold. Another benefit of earmarking payments directly for energy companies to pay for low income homes fuel bills is that unlike energy efficiency improvements for low income homes which as noted (Boardman and Milne 2000) typically only equate to 30% of said improvements being consumed as heat meaning in many cases, payments such as this would have no monetary value beyond the energy company for whom they are earmarked and as such the fuel poor would have no
reason to withhold heating for financial gain. This may well serve to reduce the excessive number of winter deaths experienced within the UK to some extent by going some way to alleviating issues surrounding the irrational nature of consumption and voluntarism so often experienced by policies such as the Green Deal or ECO which requires self referral and is dependent on individual energy saving behaviour.

This was a concept that was most definitely popular amongst respondents with one noting how

*I would absolutely love it if I could just turn my heat on and not have to worry about bills. It would take so much stress out of my life not having to worry about the kids being cold*

While I explained to her that this would not mean unlimited heat for obvious reasons with regards to overconsumption of energy, this did little to dampen her enthusiasm with her stating

*I don't care, if I could be warm and not have to worry in winter it would be fantastic (FP1, Interview, March, 2016)*

In any case, an opinion echoed by the respondents is that tackling fuel poverty is essentially meaningless from a social perspective without attempts to tackle poverty more generally.

What appears clear though is that this desire to tackle both issues simultaneously has led to the locking in of a neoliberal approach with regards to tackling fuel poverty which has had a double impact in terms of the unequal distribution of resources as the Warm Homes Discount and Energy Company Obligations are funded by levies on energy bills which in turn would require general taxation to offset. As Middlemiss (2016) notes this deliberately encourages the ECO to stay small in order to not disadvantage those it is trying to serve. This once again serves to seriously question the appropriateness for the ECO to tackle issues of poverty, as the greater the scope of its success, the higher the impact it has on the energy bills of the poor including those who are poor but not fuel poor.

### 6.3 - Reaching the right people: the depoliticising of care

Regardless of whether or not one believes the fuel poverty is valuable as a concept and whether or not it is logical to merge programs aimed at environmental protection and poverty in the case of energy efficiency, it raises another key issue of the appropriateness of these policies and
their ability to target the right people.

From an increasing focus on helping the desperately poor to Theresa May's obsession with the “JAM's,” modern British politics is increasingly pushing an austerity maxim of “helping those most in need (Middlemiss, 2016).”

With the government being exceedingly keen to achieve any savings currently at the best possible cost we see the three key aspects to the governments approach to tackling fuel poverty and energy efficiency which is to achieve treating those with the largest fuel poverty gap for the lowest cost while ensuring vulnerability is reflected in policy (DECC, 2015). This is summed up once again by Ed Davey who said “The new way of measuring fuel poverty – the Low Income High Costs approach –ensures we can better target the right people with the right measures, and prioritise people living in the deepest fuel poverty (DECC, 2015).”

Given the limited resources available to government departments, the ability to target those in most desperately in need makes sense to some extent as it allows the limited resources available to have the greatest effect possible. The issue however is that we are left with a form of policy that is both inherently exclusionary and overly assumptive about who needs what.

While the Green Deal and EPCs seek to some extent to politicise care through individual responsibility, ECO and fuel poverty strategies are interesting cases and may be seen to some extent to do the exact opposite. With an increasingly technical definition of fuel poverty, the concept of fuel poverty was not one which encouraged inclusion and participation but once again as noted, reframed the state as a giver of care and the populace as passive recipients, ironically something which many including members of the public from the research in the previous chapters feel might be more appropriate in the context of environmental degradation. While it should be noted that private sector organisations and charities are less rigid in terms of their use of the definition and tend to evaluate cases in a more pragmatic and case by case basis, this did not seem to extend to government policy.

As such, the issue of who we help becomes exceedingly tricky. This has two main elements to it. These include a more social and political aspect and conversely a more numerical or technical aspect.

The politics of measurement

The first issue is that of the complexity of trying to reduce fuel poverty to an issue of technicality while still attempting to express care. As care is something which may be seen as inherently political (Held, 2006) attempting to depoliticise care comes with significant implications.
The first major implication is that by reducing the decision for who requires caring for and who is in fuel poverty to an issue of technicality, this belays the need for the government to consider that there may be a reasonable sense of disagreement surrounding the issue. This is crucial with regards to not only reducing environmental degradation and cutting poverty but also meeting the governments objectives in terms of their targets.

While the government might think that this is an issue around which there is not a reasonable sense of disagreement, my research disagrees. The head of the local fuel poverty organisation whom I interviewed was one of the main critics of this point noting how in his experience

*The definition of fuel poverty is more of an organisational tool. People who are actually suffering from fuel poverty in reality have very little concept of what the governments technical definition means and what it implies for them. What this means is that fuel poverty legislation is frequently failing to target the people who need it either because they are not sure they qualify for fuel poverty, are not aware of an overly specific and technical definition which to them doesn't impact their daily lives or they don't meet the definition for one reason or other despite the fact they are suffering (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)*

Furthermore, there are more technical issues surrounding just how this fuel poverty gap for example is calculated. As we have seen, it is not uncommon given the technical nature of the definition for people who struggle to find themselves just below the threshold for fuel poverty for one reason or other despite struggling to heat their homes. This then means they are heavily restricted to policies such as the Green Deal in order to treat energy inefficiency at home. This can be problematic though. As noted, the fact that the poor frequently consume energy in a manner which is considerably different to the majority of society, means that in order to calculate fuel poverty, rather than using their actual energy use, they use energy need (Hill, 2012; Guertler, 2011). The way this is calculated is through the Standard Assessment Procedure or SAP (DECC, 2013).

The SAP is a method of calculating the predicted energy use of a property based around generalised assumptions and criteria designed to enable amongst other factors, EPC scores and Green Deal finance plans. The major issue with the SAP though is as we know, behaviour can influence the outcome and distribution of policies significantly (Serret and Johnstone, 2006). As such, there are several key factors with regards to the SAP. Amongst these include a lack of flexibility within the criteria used to generate scores such as assumptions about how much time is spent in the house and assumptions and scores generated by floor space as opposed to occupancy.
(Banks, 2008). All of these have the potential to make the Green Deal more or less attractive than it should be to various households.

The main issue here is that of households in fuel poverty and general poverty frequently under-consuming. While this is why it is so crucial for the SAP and the Green Deal to function around supposed energy need, it can spell bad news for the fuel poor (Hill, 2012; ACE, 2010). This is because the fuel poor as noted often consume below energy need in order to save money. When combined with other factors mentioned above with the SAP such as overly generalised assessment criteria and the inherent difficulty in calculating energy need versus actual energy use (EST, 2006; Sanders and Phillipson, 2006; Hong et al., 2006; CSE, 2010), this means that the potential for savings declines rapidly. Given that they use less energy than predicted by sometimes overly generous comfort standards (for example simply lowering living room temperature standards from 21 degrees to 18 could remove 1 million people from fuel poverty (Hill, 2012)), generating savings to repay Green Deal finance packages becomes increasingly difficult as actual savings are nowhere close to predicted savings using energy need (Lainé, 2011).

This is crucial in that this means that in order for them to meet the Golden Rule stating savings equal repayments over a set time, finance companies would be required to subsidise a greater portion of the costs thus making fuel poor households less attractive to Green Deal providers. Furthermore, if people cannot afford to pay their existing bills, simply replacing their bill payments by Green Deal repayment charges would do little to benefit them even if it had national benefits (Hill, 2012; ACE, 2010, Lainé, 2011). This once again highlights the inseparable nature of poverty and fuel poverty by highlighting how a scheme such as the Green Deal while serving to potentially ameliorate ones living conditions, in the case of those who are overlooked by the rigid technical definition of fuel poverty, will do little to lift them out of poverty or increase the affordability of their energy consumption given how the Green Deal locks you in to repayments at your current rate of energy bills.

If anything it might actually serve to reduce the attractiveness of policies such as the Green Deal as you will be forced to continue paying a set level of energy bills regardless of how much energy savings you generate effectively losing you money in some situations. Unfortunately I was not able to find anyone however to interview in this situation and the head of the fuel poverty organisation echoed this sentiment saying

*At least from my experience you are not going to find anyone around the fuel poverty line taking Green Deal Finance Packages. It locks you in to paying a certain amount every month which they will be against and I just struggle to see it doing a lot to help them* (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)
Another key issue surrounding the increasingly technical definition is as noted above, the diminishing impact energy prices have with regards to fuel poverty. As illustrated from the chart below, it is clear that UK energy prices have risen substantially over the past decade.

Source. (HoC Briefing Paper, Energy Prices, 2016)

![Image of chart showing energy prices]

**Figure 6.3**

Furthermore, with prices expected to continue rising over the coming months and years, it begs the question can you really separate market forces from drivers of fuel poverty? For example, if someone spends X on fuel bills while living in an energy efficient home while making a meagre wage and is not in fuel poverty but then X doubles to become 2X at which point they are unable to pay, are they not fuel poor? In addition to this, statistics from the ONS (2013) would lead one to believe that there is increasingly large amount of people unable to afford their energy bills. As Middlemiss (2016) notes, during this period of substantial price rises, there has been an increasingly large number of the British public consuming less energy with residential energy consumption falling by as much as 24%. While we might hope that this means everyone is going green and buying solar powered ovens, the reality is most likely that price is indeed an important factor with regards to the ability to heat ones home and many homeowners are cutting back on energy use in order to save money.

This issue also serves once again to highlight the fact that contrary to what the government would like to imply, there remains a reasonable sense of disagreement around the drivers of fuel poverty with my respondents noting rising energy prices or the price of energy as something keeping them in fuel poverty. The head of the local energy organisation noted multiple cases such as one old man for example who
...went so far as to actually write down his meter readings and rationed his heating to his budget and he is not alone. There are a lot of people right on the edge and a small change can make a big difference (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)

This was echoed by respondents in fuel poverty with every single respondent stating rising energy prices was definitely a factor keeping them in poverty. One respondent noted

*I don't see how the government can say rising prices don't matter. Is it because they rise they same for everyone? In any case I don't get it. If my fuel bills were 100 quid less a month I could probably afford them!* (FP4, Interview, April, 2016)

with another respondent noting

*That's a joke isn't it. How can anyone seriously claim that raising the price of your bills doesn't make it harder to pay them. Double all their bills for a few months and see if they notice a difference!* (FP1, Interview, March, 2016)

The head of the local organisation concurred with this view stating

*I just don't understand who comes up with this honestly. It's just another example of politicians not living in the real world. It just doesn't make sense. I've told you about countless people were they are teetering on the edge and for a lot of them if their bills went up it would be really difficult for them to survive* (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)

Furthermore, one respondent pointed out when discussing this point that she had not always been in fuel poverty so to speak and that a combination of rising energy prices and her switching jobs to a lower paying job served to push her into a situation where she was unable to properly heat her home and while energy efficiency might be one solution to this problem, it was price which caused her to “become”, for lack of a better word, fuel poor.

This brings up the point mentioned earlier in that by removing price from the equation and standardising fuel poverty numbers, we are left in a position where the overall number of people in fuel poverty becomes remarkably steady (in fact under the LIHC definition, fuel poverty barely changes over the past 20 years, Hill, 2011). While it is clear the previous definition had some serious issues and was most likely over-sensitive to energy prices (4 million people most likely do
not fall in and out of fuel poverty from one year to the next), it did highlight an important point in that fuel poverty is not necessarily a constant. People who are not fuel poor become fuel poor and vice versa and this can and does happen almost overnight. As noted by the head of the organisation on fuel poverty “a lot of these people are literally on the edge. It can be hard to imagine but a 30 £ increase in monthly bills can be a huge cost.” This then is multiplied by the fact that as we saw, heating their homes is not necessarily viewed as a priority for those suffering from fuel poverty. Unfortunately this highlights another issue in that financial impacts are directionally uneven as while a £30 increase in your bills might put you in fuel poverty, a £30 reduction might not necessarily alleviate suffering to the same extent meaning that energy prices are more effective at putting one in fuel poverty than helping them exit it.

Fuel poverty as a constant

The implications of this framing of fuel poverty as something constant are significant. The first of these is that as mentioned (Middlemiss, 2016), the government is now able to frame fuel poverty as an issue which is now impossible to eradicate. Because fuel poverty is now a question of energy efficiency rather than the result of wage and class inequality or high prices, this means the government is now able to explain why it is so difficult to fix as it would require massive capital expenditure in order to solve in addition to thousands of man hours of work. As such it can only target the most deserving so to speak pushing the notion that by extension, it is impossible to help everyone (Middlemiss, 2016).

This is particularly relevant given what we are experiencing within the UK dubbed the “age of austerity” by non other than David Cameron himself (Guardian, 2009). With the government having already gone after public services, governments jobs and housing benefits for young people just to name a few, it is clear that public services are increasingly viewed as expendable under the logic of austerity and balancing the budget. This now means the government has the perfect excuse for limiting schemes devoted to solving fuel poverty or for failing to introduce more effective schemes as fuel poverty is “constant” and therefore cannot be solved.

Furthermore, it allows the government to fundamentally ignore the role of inequality and social tension in creating the fuel poor, both socially and economically. As Middlemiss (2016) puts it “the positioning of energy efficiency as the key technology for managing the problem of fuel poverty, is part of a broader strategy which aims to exclude technologies that address inequality or market controls.” As we have seen, not only are the fuel poor at a political disadvantage but they are also at an economic one as well. With a far higher number than average of low income households
using pre-payment meters (3 of my 5 respondents were on pre-payment meters) or unable to change
tariffs given they are in debt (Mummery and Reilly, 2010), the reality of it the situation is that often
price is a key driver of fuel poverty. This fits strait into the government mantra of neoliberal policy
choices. By labelling fuel poverty as inherently (and also quite narrowly) structural and technical,
this removes any possibilities for an approach based around genuine redistribution of resources or
linking it to poverty more generally.

**Depoliticisation: accessibility and exclusion**

This brings us to the next issue which is more of a social/political issue in that it deals with
how depoliticising fuel poverty serves to make it increasingly inaccessible and exclusionary.
Through reducing fuel poverty to an issue of efficiency and removing the political aspect of for
whom to care, the government is fundamentally ignoring the political nature of care as a practice
with winners and losers given its inevitable impact on the distribution of resources. Furthermore,
by removing any potential for inclusive participatory solutions to the issue of fuel poverty, the
government is threatening to alienate large portions of the needy population thus threatening their
own objectives.

My research highlighted two main areas in which the vulnerable were excluded or through a
lack of politicisation of the process, the government defeated its own objectives. These were the
inherently vulnerable nature of fuel poverty sufferers in many cases and the fact that a lack of
participatory process often served to exclude those in fuel poverty from understanding their
situation, and that the governments view of fuel poverty served to de-emphasize the importance of
local knowledge and expertise.

**Vulnerability and disconnection**

Initially, we see a double sided issue surrounding the fact that those suffering from fuel
poverty are abnormally likely to be those whom we would consider vulnerable.

As Middlemiss (2016) points out, the current policy of tackling fuel poverty under the
coalition government is based around targeting the “most vulnerable” which includes those with the
largest fuel poverty gap (between what they can afford and pay) and those who are deemed as
naturally vulnerable such as the old and disabled. Strangely however, the DECC estimates that as
much as 80% of fuel poor households contain at least 1 person classified as vulnerable (DECC,
2015, p.51) which as Middlemiss (2016) points out, makes one wonder why it is even necessary to
make sure fuel poverty targets the most vulnerable other than an attempt to reconcile fuel poverty policy with austerity strategy.

This aside, there is an obvious problem here in that the most vulnerable be it the poor or the elderly or the young, are typically the ones most alienated and disconnected from the political process (Ribot, 1995; Bickerstaff et al. 2013; Bouzarovski et al. 2014). This is problematic in the case of fuel poverty however as the majority of policies aimed at tackling fuel policy are to some extent voluntary in nature in that they require the person in need to actively seek help. There were multiple interviewees for example (out of a very small sample) who had never heard of the Warm Front scheme, Winter Fuel Payments or the Warm Home Discount despite being eligible for one if not all of them implying that in many cases, assuming those in need will take the first step is often overly optimistic. One respondent noted when asked why if they are on a pre-payment meter they did apply for Winter Fuel Payments that

*I've never heard of them? How am I supposed to know about this? (FP5, Interview, April, 2016)*

Harrington et al (2005) conducted similar research to this as did O'Neill et al. (2006) with both finding that in many cases, respondents had not heard of schemes in place to provide them with cheaper fuel bills or energy efficiency grants.

This was a common theme with people suffering from fuel poverty frequently being unaware of policies in place to help them until informed by experts. The head of the local fuel poverty organisation noted this as well saying

*You'd be amazed how many people don't know what's in place to help them but its more than that. Some of them are embarrassed to ask for help, some feel ashamed that they cannot heat their homes and that is a big problem (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)*

This serves to bring up another issue surrounding the disconnection of the vulnerable in that seemingly according to the head of the fuel poverty organisation, it is not rare to see people reject help. He noted that although they offer assistance for free through their organisation

*A lot of people are determined to try and pay something even if it is not much just as a token gesture (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)*

This had a compounding effect in addition, with multiple respondents noting how they were
already sceptical of the political process and their situation served to reinforce this scepticism. One respondent was particularly vocal on this topic noting

*I don't look at whether or not the government can help me cos I already know the answer. They are good for nothing* (FP5, Interview, April, 2016)

Ironically this may be one of the cases where she was able to receive help however her inherent distrust for the government amongst other things prevented her from seeking help instead turning to local organisations. This can also be linked back to issues of trust experienced in previous chapters with neoliberal forms of governance suffering from issues of trust and accessibility. The source of information or advise or even aid in this case is crucial with regards to its palatability, something which the government is perhaps ignoring.

This can be seen to be amplified in the case of certain groups in particular with Bouzarovski et al (2013) noting in a paper on fuel poverty how urban youth are frequently disconnected and often disadvantaged noting how for example some youth would deliberately ask their parents to call for them for example as they feared not being taken seriously. In the paper, multiple respondents noted how they felt that because they were young and students, landlords deliberately ignored fixing leaks or draughts and often left houses in poor condition because they were not concerned about the implications of this. While this case deals with youth, this could easily be extended across vulnerable groups potentially highlighting once again, how the issue of vulnerability can prevent solutions from coming to light.

I questioned the young warehouse respondent as to whether for example she felt confident with minimum standards for landlords renting in terms of EPC scores coming in soon if her landlord might feel pressured to act on this however there was an overwhelming sense of negativity with the respondent noting

*No, I don't think so. He is useless our landlord. Whenever we ask him for anything he says yes and then months later nothing has happened* (FP5, Interview, April, 2016)

When I enquired why she thought this might be there was not a clear sense of any direct reason related to youth but there was definitely a feeling of exclusion as she noted

*I just don't think he thinks that it is worth it. If we leave he knows he can replace us instantly so there isn't really much pressure on him to act. We don't have a lot of money, he knows we want to...*
live here, so what are you going to do?

This not only highlights how a sense of perceived inability to do anything about ones situation makes one less likely to act in future but also how in the case of some people, they feel as if there is not a viable space in which to fight for themselves and express discontent, a theme that will be touched upon shortly.

The final issue surrounding vulnerability and technicality is that in many cases, those who are not vulnerable are aware of the definition or policies available to help them and take advantage of them which subsequently requires general taxation to offset. Hills (2012) for example notes how only 10% of winter fuel payments are received by actual fuel poor households with the rest going to the elderly who are not fuel poor. As Middlemiss notes, this begs the question as to why given that it does not fit their policy objectives of achieving the most efficient savings. The answer can perhaps be seen through the fact that the elderly are viewed as “deserving” (Middlemiss, 2016) and as such may be harder to withdraw funding from as opposed to the poor who are typically far less influential come election time.

The importance of the local in identifying the fuel poor

Throughout the research, a sense of disconnection and a lack of awareness about what was available to help was a clear theme amongst the respondents. As a result, many of these respondents would not have been able to seek help or even understand that help existed if not for local expertise and charities or health services. This highlighted another problematic issue that became apparent through the depoliticisation of fuel poverty in that it ignored local expertise.

One of the key illustrations of this fact is through the local fuel poverty organisation I investigated during my research. Despite the fact that people were able to self refer at any time without being under any technical definition of fuel poverty, the head of the organisation made it quite clear that an absolute minority self-referred with the majority of “clients” being referred through local means. The head of the organisation noted

*The majority of our clients either find out about us through friends or are recommended to us either by local churches, doctors, charities, jobseekers etc (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)*

This was concurrent with the respondents whom in only one case referred themselves for some sort
of assistance. One respondent noted for example

*I had no idea anything was in place to help me really until a friend told me that this service was available and its been incredible (FP3, Interview, April, 2016)*

It is immediately clear once again that even in the case of a local community organisation of sorts people are hesitant or simply unaware help exists for them. As such, targeting those most in need is likely to require a combination of support networks such as food banks, health services and similar organisations in order to correctly identify those who are fuel poor and target them for help as if we wait for them to come forwards, this will not necessarily occur. This has a double impact in not only does it prevent those in need from being helped, but it actively prevents environmental and energy efficiency improvements occurring.

Another issue as noted by the head of the local fuel poverty organisation was a lack of communication amongst different services such as medical and healthcare professionals, environmental officers and welfare services which frequently meant that despite government officials with an interest in fuel poverty attending properties, little is done in terms of the reporting or recognition of their condition. A scheme by the local Reading Borough council however to visit homes called Winter Watch for example requires residents to contact the council and covered around “200 of the 30,000 plus households in fuel poverty (Reading Council website).” There were little to no proactive efforts in terms of identifying low income households and organising home visits or check-ups or asking whether they were sufficiently able to heat their properties and nothing along the lines of the council contacting everyone they represent and saying for example, we know you are out there, if you cannot heat your homes during winter, call us and find out what can be done.

This highlights one of the issues with a technical definition in that it fails to properly take into account vulnerability and its impacts on behaviour and as such, relying on a voluntary form of policy to solve problems with such severe impacts might be seen as problematic. In addition this also serves to highlight the issue with the disconnection many fuel poverty sufferers face and how by ignoring the importance of support networks capable of making appropriate subjective value judgements we run a very real risk of failing to meet the needs of those who are most desperate. While governments often have good intentions, this highlights the issue surrounding policy which assumes peoples needs and behaviour to a certain extent without taking into account their situation and their place within society including factors such the level of political and economic disadvantage experienced.
Research from Banks and White (2011) supported this with many fuel poverty householders actually finding grants offered “too good to be true” implying a level of disconnection so severe that they could not even imagine someone would help them this much. Banks and White (2011) went on to note how in many cases, this was only solved through the interference by local councils or through “first hand” experience of friends or neighbours.

Anderson et al. (2010) actually went on to link this sense of vulnerability to an increasing sense of risk aversion. As a result of the situation of many fuel poverty sufferers, it became clear that they were unwilling to undertake actions which one might expect of normal householders. Examples of this included research by Allmark and Tod (2013) which found that often older people were hesitant to ask landlords to fix things for fear of increased rent and O’Neill et al (2006) found that just the process of switching energy suppliers for example was enough to cause serious concerns. As such more must be done to increase the ease of accessing initiatives to overcome barriers of exclusion and disadvantage.

This is summed up by Reeves (2016) who notes his paper on fuel poverty how the local delivery of support to fuel poverty schemes and the fuel poor are viewed as having great potential but there is a lack of empirical evidence surrounding this topic. He notes however the significant issue of a lack of funding being prohibitive towards the objectives. As such local or professional initiatives such as the organisation studied in this chapter for the research, must rely on volunteers and free labour which is increasingly difficult and especially if we are talking at a national level. Despite this, Reeves (2016, p.13) notes how local professional initiatives are best placed to intervene in many cases given their “greater capacity in terms of skills, knowledge, networks and available resources.” I believe the case study in question here backs up that assumption with significant positive impacts arising as a result of this organisation in addition to the fact that properties are being treated for on average as little as £25 per house thus outlining the potential savings from leveraging existing local networks.

6.4 - A rights based approach to fuel poverty: repoliticising the issue

As we have seen, one of the major barriers to an increasingly technical definition of fuel poverty based around energy efficiency and neo-liberal governance aimed at empowering the population is the fact that this depoliticisation of the issue fails to take into account the very real issues surrounding political exclusion and disconnection. As those in fuel poverty are typically some of the must vulnerable members of society, removing a space in which to debate or emphasize
who is in need of or “deserving” of help to use the coalitions logic, is potentially problematic. The question then becomes what alternatives exist to an increasingly technical definition? If we take fuel poverty to be a matter of social and environmental justice, then as noted before the recognition of the diverse rights of different groups is fundamental to environmental justice (Fraser 1997; Honneth 2001; Schlosberg, 2007; Walker, 2009) along with understanding of distributional impacts and the right to participation (Hunold and Young 1998).

This brings up the notion of what Walker and Day (2012) and Bickerstaff et al. (2013) term as a rights based approach to fuel poverty which is based around an attention to recognitional, distributional and procedural justice. This takes a fundamentally different approach to the problematisation of fuel poverty where instead of framing it in terms of energy efficiency, fuel poverty is framed in terms of “an expression of injustice, involving the compromised ability to access energy services and thereby to secure a healthful living environment. (Walker and Day, 2012)” Therefore addressing fuel poverty obligatorily involves seeking justice in terms of the “cultural and political recognition of vulnerable and marginalised groups social groups and pursuing procedural justice through opening up involvement and influence in decision-making processes. (Walker and Day, 2012).” Boardman, (2010, p.48) makes a very valid point in that in the modern age, lighting, heating and electricity are not “discretionary purchases but absolute necessities” and as such, failure to provide these basic needs for all members of society not only infringes upon their rights and creates injustice but serves to compound disempowerment forcing the fuel poor into a situation which is increasingly difficult to get out of. This is because as noted, the poor “experience many interrelated and mutually reinforcing deprivations – including dangerous work conditions, unsafe housing, lack of nutritious food, unequal access to justice, lack of political power and limited access to healthcare – that prevent them from realising their rights and perpetuate their poverty (OHCHR, 2012, p.5).”

The benefits of a rights based approach

There are several main benefits to a re-conceptualisation of the issue such as this. The first revolves around recognitional justice and the fact that through promoting an approach based on a fundamental right to a comfortable living environment, through proper publication and advertising, there is the potential to increase inclusion. This is because as Walker and Day (2012) note, this approach would focus around the recognition of culturally and economically marginalised groups and as such rather than waiting for those in need to come forwards, would focus on recognising and identifying those who are suffering.
As fuel poverty no longer becomes an issue of technicality and energy efficiency, anyone who feels as if they are not living in a property which meets even subjective standards of warmth can now be aware of the fact that their rights are being breached. While in order for this to truly decrease feelings of disempowerment and disconnection, an institutionally legitimised space would have to be created in which to express discontent and dissent, the potential is there. Furthermore a rights based approach would be increasingly easy to tailor to other fears such as increasing rents and security. By recognising fuel poverty as a fundamental issue of injustice, rules could be put in place which not only guarantee people the right to a comfortable living environment but also protect householders from dramatic increases in price as a result of any improvements up to an acceptable level of comfort and factors similar to this which are frequently ignored by an overly technical definition of fuel poverty.

This is an approach widely favoured by individuals working within the field of fuel poverty in addition to people in fuel poverty in the case of my research. Multiple respondents noted how they would be exceedingly grateful to be able to go before organisers and policymakers to share their experience and their needs. One respondent noted

*I think that is a great idea as I think people in fuel poverty often don't know what the technical definition is but nearly all of them know they are suffering [...] I would love to be able to go before the people who make this legislation and tell them what I have to go through every day and what my kids go through and see if they think that is OK (FP1, Interview, March, 2015)*

Another respondent added to this noting

*I think it would be helpful to some extent just to show the cost of living in fuel poverty. I think sometimes the reality is quite far away from the perception and for those of us suffering to be able to share our experiences might well help them understand what we really need (FP2, Interview, March, 2016)*

This was echoed by the head of the local organisation tackling fuel poverty in particular who noted how a discussion involving those working with fuel poverty such as heads or organisations, charities, and food banks for example would be exceedingly beneficial noting

*I think that for obvious reasons this would be excellent. As I've said, most of our clients come from being referred from doctors, churches, charities and the like so the ability for people like us to be
able to recommend fuel poverty sufferers to government agencies or policies would undoubtedly play a huge part in making sure the right people get what they need as you know a lot of them won't ask or get it themselves (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)

It should be noted that not everyone shared this opinion and while my sample was too small in this case to make assumptions as to whether this represents a trend, it is interesting to note that the younger interviewees were the ones against this highlighting the increased sense of disconnection experienced by youth noted in the literature (Bouzarovski et al. 2013). Several respondents within the warehouse of young urbanites were immediately quick to dismiss this notion under the assumption that what good is going before policymakers who you know will not listen anyway. This was highlighted by two members of the household with one saying

*I suppose I can see why you want a more proactive form of dealing with this but at least with a technical definition they cannot ignore me if I qualify*

and the other noting

*Ye I think I feel about the same way. If I actually thought that someone would listen I would love to be able to give my opinion on what we need but do I feel that way? Not with the Tories (FP5, Interview, March, 2016)*

This served to highlight an issue with basing fuel poverty around a participatory form of procedural justice in that if those it is designed to help are unwilling to participate then it becomes somewhat irrelevant although this would be offset to some degree by the fact that charities and other organisations working with fuel poverty would be highly likely to involve themselves in the political process using their first hand expertise to great effect potentially.

The second major benefit of this focuses on distributional justice and is that it serves to reintroduce a reasonable sense of disagreement as to who is deserving or in need of help. As we have seen, the consequences of reducing fuel poverty to an issue of technicality is that frequently those who are in need are not reached, while those who are not fuel poor are receiving funding at the expense of those who are. By introducing a form of procedural justice to fuel poverty legislation, this would serve to open up genuine debate as to who needs what without reducing peoples needs to numbers, an action which is inherently problematic given the often irrational and complex nature of human behaviour. By failing to recognise the political aspect of decisions with
distributional impacts, the government is neglecting those outside of the scope of the technical definition. Furthermore, it takes an issue which at its core may be seen about distributional equity and justice and as we have seen, often serves to introduce measures which not only fail to correct this injustice but in certain cases exacerbate it.

While numerous examples exist within the literature, I have taken one particular example from Walker and Day (2012) to highlight how who needs what is indeed something which should be constantly up for discussion. In this case, they note how terminal cancer sufferers were not classified as vulnerable and therefore able to seek assistance. Because of the cancer, the husband in one family required increasingly frequent baths and his bedding required changing constantly. This served to increase energy costs beyond what would generally be calculated under energy need as defined by the SAP. Under a technical definition of fuel poverty however the factor ultimately deciding who is in fuel poverty is energy efficiency rather than taking into account the obvious factor of a member of the household having terminal cancer. As such this family may not be able to get support as energy need calculated under the SAP does not take into account extenuating circumstances such as this and while media campaigns have fought in favour of recognising this group as vulnerable, the fact remains that there is no institutionally legitimised space as far as I am aware in which to regularly contest who is in need of help. As such any attempts to force a reconsideration of the definition of fuel poverty or vulnerability may well be slow and bureaucratic which in cases such as this may be too slow.

The final major benefit relates to procedural justice although can be seen as heavily linked to recognitional justice and deals with increased empowerment and legal avenues through which to pursue justice. Currently, those who are suffering yet excluded from the governments definition of fuel poverty have very little they can do from a legal standpoint despite the fact that if we take a comfortable and healthy living environment to be something which should be accorded as a right, they should be able to dissent in a legitimate manner. Through introducing the concept of warmth and health as a human right of sorts, this now not only serves to reintroduce discussions as to who is in need of care but also serves to provide those who are being excluded with a legal means of recourse. With multiple respondents previously noting their scepticism with regards to being taken seriously by the government, the creation of a sure-fire way to express ones concerns and to seek justice if ones rights are being violated might well go a long way to reducing feelings of exclusion and promoting a sense of empowerment among the vulnerable although this would depend of course on the effectiveness of any legal process and most likely successful early adopters.
6.5 – Conclusions: the appropriateness of neo-liberalism for tackling issues of injustice and energy efficiency

To summarise, this chapter makes contributions to the problematisations and constructions of concepts of fuel poverty within the United Kingdom. It uses theories of practice to highlight the very real impact of behaviour as both a driver of fuel poverty and a potential obstacle with regards to efforts to combat it. Drawing from literatures on fuel poverty, social justice and the politics of measurement, I have argued that an increasing technical definition of fuel poverty has exacerbated issues such as exclusion and disconnection from the political process and that a failure to recognise the rights of marginalised groups within society offers little promise for attempts at tackling fuel poverty going forwards.

Despite a seemingly genuine effort from the government and various other organisations to tackle fuel poverty within the UK, very little progress is being made. With the switch over to the LIHC definition imposed by the government marking a change in approach to one where fuel poverty is viewed as almost a permanent fixture of the UK economy, no viable solution appears to be appearing in terms of its eradication.

By fundamentally separating fuel poverty from income poverty and other forms of poverty in addition to the LIHC definition, the DECC has made fuel poverty a technical issue based around the notion that anyone can be lifted out of fuel poverty through capital expenditure in energy efficiency. This however is a gross oversimplification of the causes of fuel poverty and specifically of poverty.

By failing to take into account the importance of behaviour combined with multiple structural factors such as energy prices and wage levels amongst others, we are left with a policy that makes overly generous assumptions about people's energy usage often estimating vast increases in levels of comfort or large scale savings on energy bills. Unfortunately in many cases, neither of these things occur given the heavily constrained nature of energy consumption in fuel poor households as a result of said consumption frequently being in pursuit of practices with different higher order goals.

By failing to take into account how poverty and vulnerability may be seen to develop as a result of everyday practices and norms in addition to structural constraints, governments are fundamentally ignoring the role of inequality and social tension in creating the fuel poor, instead reducing everything to technical problems based around efficiency. We are then left with a situation where the rights and needs of marginalised groups to be recognised, treated equally and offered a genuine procedural presence are increasingly fading away. Not only this, but this serves to further
disconnect groups who are already sceptical of the political process to such a degree where in many cases, the stated aim of helping the most vulnerable becomes jeopardized before we even consider the second aspect of achieving this at the lowest cost.

With a large number of interviewees relying on charities, private organisations, friends and families and in rare cases local governments, it is clear that the coalitions attempts are not anywhere near as successful as they would like to be (highlighted by the 2016 Fuel Poverty report (DECC) and its figures showing fuel poverty remaining almost constant).

Without taking a genuine approach to ascribing equal rights towards energy use and warm homes, success is unlikely as this focus on market mechanisms and neoliberal technologies as noted earlier, simply reinforces the hegemonic nature of neoliberalism amongst policy. It does nothing however in terms of realising or expressing the injustice, anger and indignation of the unequal distribution of resources and fails to appreciate the need to change institutional structures that are key in reproducing the injustice (Dobson, 2007).

Furthermore, this focus on energy efficiency ignores one of the most cost effective methods of improving energy efficiency which is through behaviour. With a number of cases in the literature and the empirical research demonstrating the value of behaviour with regards to CO2 emissions, energy use and energy need, ignoring it seems foolish. In addition to this, through prioritising a purely technical approach, the government has essentially managed to ignore all alternative means of tackling fuel poverty with the DECC consultation (2015) making no reference to alternatives or even discussing whether or not the notion of constant fuel poverty was appropriate.

This has led to the locking in of a neo-liberal approach with regards to tackling fuel poverty which in this case has had a double impact in terms of the unequal distribution of resources in addition to promoting a greater level of exclusion that might be the case with alternative policies.

The final result is a form of fuel poverty policy which is not only ineffective but may be seen to continuously reinforce the unequal distribution of resources that has become part and parcel of modern society.

As such, we must seriously question the potential of neo-liberal forms of governance based around market mechanisms in tackling issues surrounding distribution as it is indeed the very markets themselves being used to solve the problem that are the reason for its existence in the first place. Much like the EPC and Green Deal, attempts to tackle fuel poverty while still retaining a sense of traditional aid, have been plagued by issues of voluntarism exacerbated by feelings of perceived exclusion, a failure to understand that different elements of society respond differently to different scenarios and that an objective definition of fuel poverty fundamentally ignores a reasonable sense of disagreement around who is in need of help. Furthermore, attempts to combine
fuel poverty and energy efficiency have often proven counter-productive with the two objectives seemingly working against each other as respondents were forced to choose between financial savings or increased levels of comfort. As such, as crucial as ascribing legally enforceable rights surrounding the existence of a reasonable level of comfort and warmth in homes, is perhaps the acknowledgement that while economically attractive, efforts to tackle poverty and energy efficiency may be best kept separate.

In any case, something must change quickly as the human consequences of fuel poverty are incredibly real and are experienced in alarming numbers and failure to act now will only serve to deepen the issue further down the line.
7. The neoliberal citizen-consumer and issues of scale: comparing the Green Deal and its alternatives

Each of us has an effect on the environment every day; the key is to make this impact a positive one. We must all take responsibility for our own actions, whether as individuals, or as members of a community or an organization. Let's work together and become good Environmental Citizens! If you don't, who will?

(Environment Canada, 2004).

In this chapter, I contribute to the ways neoliberal forms of governance are being used to create the self governing citizen-consumer who exercises citizenship duties through consumption. Drawing on the literature on governmentality and citizenship, care and responsibility, I argue that attempts to construct the individual as a self-monitoring and regulating consumer face significant challenges however through an attention to issues of scale and spatiality, it is possible to make progress in this regard. While the Green Deal and EPCs represent unsuccessful attempts at transferring responsibility to the individual, the alternatives studied in this chapter may be seen as far more successful. Using criteria developed by Legg (2005) originating from the work of Rose (1996), Dean (1999) and Hindess (Dean and Hindess, 1998) I evaluate the Green Deal and community led alternatives with regards to co-present dimensions of regimes of government in order to determine why the examples studied in this chapter were more successful and the implications this has for neoliberal environmental governance.

With policies seen in this thesis such as the Green Deal and the EPC representing as Peck (2001) notes a hollowing out of the state and a transfer of responsibilities towards individuals, the success of government policy becomes dependent on the ability of governments to successfully transfer their policy goals into everyday individual behaviour. One way this occurs as Bell (2005) notes, is through the ascription of rights associated with citizenship and the subsequent duties not to infringe on said rights for other members of society with the state playing a key role in determining duties and rights. In the case of neoliberal citizenship however this becomes increasingly blurry with rights and duties often expressed through the markets and consumption without ever being expressly attributed.
The Green Deal and EPCs serve as notable examples as highlighted in this thesis, representing a very real attempt at shifting environmental responsibilities away from the government in favour of the responsible citizen where the impact has been exceedingly dubious at best.

Citizens often fail to perceive themselves as actively located within a discourse of environmental protection or social justice and therefore there has been a tendency as Soper (2007; Barnett, Carfaro et al., 2005; Barnett, Cloke et al., 2005; Cambell, 2004) notes to continue to view consumption within the realms of the personal as opposed to the social and as such, attempting to frame citizenship as having active duties and obligations which should be engaged with through consumption may be problematic.

Despite this, there have been notable local cases such as the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network studied in the research for this chapter or the local fuel poverty organisation case study from the previous chapter where an attempt to transition to an increasingly enlightened form of citizenship based around environmental and social concern does seem to have been highly effective.

As such, using empirical examples from the research to contrast the Green Deal and its alternatives, I will argue that seeking to use techniques of neoliberal governmentality in an attempt to create the responsible “citizen-consumer” (Soper, 2007) while not always effective, may have some form of potential, however it is crucial to pay attention to the geographical and spatial level at which this occurs and how the issue of climate change is made relevant with regards to everyday engagements.

In order to pursue this idea, this chapter will be divided into two main sections sections and an introductory section with the goal of comparing and contrasting the Green Deal with small scale community led alternatives in an attempt to determine why one has succeeded while the other has failed.

I begin by introducing the alternatives to be studied in this chapter in order to provide some context as to the forthcoming empirical analysis. I outline the main differences between these alternatives and the Green Deal and EPCs in order to further the discussion later on in the chapter.

Following on from this, the first main section will introduce issues of citizenship and consumption in terms of the Green Deal and the alternatives studied in this chapter. I explore how the Green Deal failed to leverage a sense of citizenship or greater than self obligation in contrast to the relevant case studies for this chapter. This section will also serve to introduce issues of scale and spatiality as key to the creation of a sense of citizenship. I introduce discussions around how climate change and greater than self issues are being made relevant in the context of the regimes of
neoliberal governance studied in this thesis and how scale and spatiality is key in this regard.

The second section of this chapter will empirically evaluate real examples of attempts at different scales to create a form of self-governing citizen consumer and to imbue consumption practices with an ethics of care. I begin by presenting a framework outlined by Legg (2005) based on work of Rose (1996), Dean (1999) and Hindess (Dean and Hindess, 1998) on co-present dimensions of governmentality through which to explore concepts of citizenship and consumption. Using this as a basis for evaluation, alternatives to the Green Deal will be compared and contrasted with regards to their potential for achieving neoliberal policy goals through the creation of a form of sustainable citizenship. This will explore issues surrounding citizenship, obligation, care and responsibility, and scale using examples from the research to argue that the concept of citizenship and the citizen consumer, while having potential, is not universally applicable across different levels of spatiality and those in power must acknowledge this when undertaking projects of governmentality.

In order to undertake said comparison, data will be drawn primarily from two separate sets of semi-structured interviews. These were conducted with organisations which I view as at least in part, alternatives to the Green Deal with attention being paid to the co-present dimensions of governmentality as highlighted in the criteria from Legg (2005). As such, attempts were made to highlight the difference in terms of approaches to energy governance and the implications this has for the design of future policy. The sample size for the first set of interviews conducted with the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network rests at 14 individual semi-structured interviews being conducted with individuals responsible for the creation and management of the scheme and members of the scheme. The second alternative dealt with ties in with the chapter on fuel poverty and was with the creator and head of a community organisation who undertakes voluntary home retrofitting work in the local community in an attempt to eradicate some of the worst cases of fuel poverty in addition to the members of the local community who received treatment from this organisation who were interviewed as part of the fuel poverty research.

Furthermore, given the desire of this chapter to compare the Green Deal with more successful grass-roots alternatives, responses were also used from the interviews with members of the public who underwent Green Deal assessments from the first empirical chapter.
To begin with, I wish to briefly explore the case studies for this chapter in order to highlight in what ways they represent alternatives to the Green Deal, paying particular attention to issues of scale as this will be a key feature of this chapter. In order to properly evaluate these alternatives in terms of regimes of neoliberal environmental governance, it is necessary to first highlight in what ways they represent neoliberal governance and governmentality and in what ways they may be seen as alternatives to the Green Deal and the Energy Company Obligations (ECO, the fuel poverty obligations brought in under the Green Deal).

**WREN**

The Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network is a not for profit organisation run by volunteers in the town of Wadebridge in Cornwall in the south eastern United Kingdom. WREN may be seen as the closest to the Green Deal in terms of being a direct alternative. At its core, WREN is an organisation focused around transforming energy into a collective local asset and local economic resilience (WREN.co.uk). It offers the opportunity for the average consumer to empower themselves in terms of changing their consumption to more environmentally beneficial methods such as renewable energy while much like the Green Deal serving as a trusted source of information for those seeking help or who are a bit lost. WREN operates a small high street shop run entirely by volunteers from the local community where people can join WREN in addition to getting free information on any questions they might have with regards to energy use or energy efficiency. WREN functions primarily as a local energy collective where local renewable assets are community owned thus allowing locals to profit from energy generation as opposed to being passive consumers in addition to altering their own consumption habits.

WREN has been a remarkable success story over the past few years. In a town of less than 10,000 people (CENSUS, 2011), there are over 1130 paid up members (1/3 of the households in the while town are covered by their own estimation) of the organisation who all have equal rights in terms of voting on decisions. They are directly responsible for over 100 Solar PV installations as well as estimating having influenced over 2.6 MW's worth of installations. They have also installed a range of Renewable Heat installations as well as provided crucial information on how to access funding from programs such as CERT for hundreds of homes. They aim to have the entire town powered by local sources by the end of 2020 (significantly faster than the government plans for the
UK). Furthermore, there is a genuine sense of participation with meetings of the group regularly hitting 600 members per meeting.

The similarities in terms of WREN and the Green Deal are clear to a degree in that both promote the reduction of domestic energy use and energy retrofits for properties including helping to provide finance for any such work. WREN however does not provide the finance themselves but instead helps individuals to locate affordable sources of finance as highlighted by this quote from their website (WREN.co.uk)

“If you would like to find out more, why not contact WREN? As a local not-for-profit organisation we can guide you through any schemes available to help finance your energy-saving installations and even refer you to one of our approved installers, so you can be confident you have made the right choice.” (WREN.co.uk)

Similar to the Green Deal and EPCs, WREN provides individuals with the information needed to make informed decisions including information on energy savings, payback times on investments and notably, on approved installers for the measures such as found under the Green Deal. WREN also provides feedback and advise on energy use and behaviour regarding strategies on how to get the most out of your current system or any upgrades that you may undertake, taking it one step further than the Green Deal in this regard.

The first significant difference to the Green Deal is the scope of the scheme. Whereas the Green Deal is a national level policy, WREN, as well as being truly independent from government, is a local scheme benefiting from local knowledge, connections and a sense of community and citizenship which is crucial to this chapter. Furthermore, rather than taking a more reactive approach to curbing the overconsumption of energy such as the Green Deal and the governments attempts to reduce consumption, WREN is clear that they view the transition to a low carbon economy as an opportunity, both socially, financially and in terms of local economic and environmental sustainability.

“The opportunities presented by the low carbon economy are so obvious. WREN is determined to transform the energy economy in its own area, but, more importantly, seeks to show other localities how easy it is to take control of the second biggest resource that they have. Their biggest resource is obviously themselves and their determination to create a wise future for children.” (WREN.co.uk)
The second significant difference is touched on above and that is the how WREN has effectively linked together multiple objectives, focusing on local economic resilience coupled with sustainability. While this will be examined in more detail further on in the chapter, this is in start contrast to the Green Deal which, at least in the eyes of its targets, failed to successfully combine its various objectives into something comprehensible and relatable.

In a way WREN may be seen as something close to the desired outcome of regimes of neoliberal governance. It represents the responsibilisation of the greater public in a way where they come together to self-govern and to combat issues of overconsumption and environmental degradation. In another sense, WREN is itself a project of neoliberal governance in that it represents the exertion of political power and the creation of new social norms (Rutherford, 2007) around sustainable energy consumption. In any case, it represents a fascinating alternative to the Green Deal and in this chapter, I will attempt to assess the ways in which WREN has overcome the obstacles experienced by the Green Deal.

**Draughtbusters**

Following on from WREN, the next case study is an organisation tackling fuel poverty in the Reading area called Draughtbusters. Draughtbusters as noted in the previous chapter, are a volunteer organisation who work to provide basic energy efficiency improvements to the fuel poor within the local area. They offer free advice on every saving as well as undertaking simple refurbishment work at extremely low costs to the occupiers or in some cases for free. It has received a small amount of funding from the local council which it uses autonomously. Its average budget for work done on a property is around 22£ per home and savings from this typically reach around four times this amount in addition to providing a much more comfortable living environment. It finds clients through “Citizens Advice Bureau, the Council’s Winter Watch scheme, local debt advice agencies, GPs, churches and charities” (http://readinguk.org/draughtbusters/our-aims/). While the scope of this organisation is relatively limited compared to government equivalent schemes aimed to tackling fuel poverty (to this day it has covered roughly over 200 homes), in the cases it has covered, it has been successful in providing vital relief for vulnerable people suffering from fuel poverty saving as much as 30% pa on some clients energy bills. It was decidedly popular amongst both respondents and members of the local government whom I spoke to who were quick to praise the great work done with recipients of their services noting for example
It was really fantastic and so quick. Within a couple of hours or less even they were in, did the work and were out and almost immediately we started to notice a difference. They also gave me a lot of tips about energy use and how to heat my home (FP1, Interview, March, 2016)

The similarities to ECO and the fuel poverty side of the Green Deal is clear. They both provide energy efficiency upgrades and advise to those unable to pay for it themselves and those who considered vulnerable. The key aim is to provide basic warmth and comfort to those on the fringes of society.

The key difference however is that Draughtbusters, given their autonomous nature, unlike government backed schemes such as ECO, are not bound by such strict rules in terms of a technical definition of fuel poverty. While they focus on those most in need such as people living in energy poverty, families with young children, the elderly, and people under debt management, they are also free to help others and do so willingly if they have time to spare. Not having to adhere to a technical definition of fuel poverty gives them far more freedom to use local expertise to determine who is genuinely in need and to help them accordingly as we saw in the previous chapter. As such, it reintroduces a discussion around who is most in need of help and is of particular benefit in cases where the technical definition may not be fully fit for purpose.

7.2 – Citizenship and consumption

Throughout this thesis, I have examined themes of the transfer of care and responsibility under regimes of neoliberal governance. With this in mind, in this final empirical chapter, in order to engage with how the alternatives to the Green Deal studied in this thesis proved to be more effective, I wish to examine notions of citizenship. As Bell (2005) notes, citizenship at its core revolves around the ascription of certain rights associated with being a citizen and in return one is expected to perform certain civic duties including not violating the rights of the others. While traditional republican forms of citizenship were based around debate, protest and political engagement, under neoliberalism however we see the reformulation of consumption as indicative of new modes of civic involvement and participation. Under a basic view of environmental citizenship (Dobson, 2007), responsibilities stem from a matter of natural justice, or essentially the objective to not exceed ones given space. Through consuming in a way that fulfils individual needs without inhibiting the ability of others to fulfil their needs, our choices become a matter of politics as every act of consumption is seen to have a winner and loser. Therefore, the desired transfer of responsibilities to self-governing individuals under regimes of neoliberal governance, is essentially
about reconstructing the individual citizen as a citizen-consumer who expresses care and responsibility through consumption.

Despite this, there has been a hesitance amongst geographers to acknowledge the potential of the citizen-consumer with numerous authors questioning the concept (Scammell, 2000; Soper, 2007; Johnston, 2008). The examples studied in this thesis however paint a somewhat contrasting picture with regards to the citizen consumer and indeed around regimes of neoliberal governance more generally. While the Green Deal and EPC did virtually nothing in terms of encouraging a sense of citizenship or an ethics of care towards distant others, the alternatives studied for this chapter showed a clear willingness to acknowledge and accept a more neoliberal definition of citizenship on the part of the individual in addition to the obligations that are part and parcel of citizenship.

As Dobson (2007) notes, one of the issues with neoliberal citizenship is that rights and duties are expressed through the markets and consumption and are often never expressly attributed. While the state plays a key role in ascribing duties and obligations such as in the case of the Green Deal and EPCs, as we saw in the first chapter, there was an evident failure on the part of the individual to recognise these duties, largely given the fact that they were not expressly attributed. One respondent from the Green Deal interviews noted in this exchange

*Interviewer: Do you feel like the green deal has encouraged you to be a more sustainable citizen or allowed you to participate in some form of environmental project? Has it highlighted any responsibilities you may have to limit the impacts of your consumption?*

*Respondent: Not really no. I don't think its anything like that really even if that's what they think. Its useful certainly but if they want that then they should say shouldn't they? If they just put it out there and say save money like this, or we'll pay for your double glazing I don't think most people are going to take that as please help us save the earth! (GD4, interview, November, 2015)*

To the average individual I interviewed during this project, the concepts of environmental justice and citizenship or being a global citizen bore a complete level of disconnection from the practical realities of their lives. As noted, not one respondent felt the Green Deal led to them re-framing their consumption in terms of sustainable global citizenship with respondents typical framing the Green Deal around money and energy savings. This can be seen once again by another respondent who noted when asked if she had ever considered the Green Deal in terms of citizenship and not
exceeding her limits that

Not really. Now that you mention it, I guess I can see how it can relate to that but I had definitely never conceived the Green Deal in terms of me over-using energy at the expense of someone else even though I knew I should use less (GD5, Interview, March, 2016)

Further respondents also noted for example

No, I don't feel whatsoever as if I am participating in some sort of a political project or social goal. Sure, I am partly doing this out of concern for the environment but not in a way where I feel some deep connection with the rest of the world or anything like that. It's as much for me as anyone else (GD8, Interview, July, 2016)

and

I don't get the feeling that from undertaking a Green Deal assessment that I am actively participating in some environmental project or something like that no. For me this is about energy efficiency primarily and it hasn't really made me reconsider my role beyond that (GD2, Interview, June, 2015)

This is in stark contrast to respondents from WREN who were keen to acknowledge the sense of community and citizenship that participation in WREN made them feel. Respondents from within WREN constantly made reference to how it benefits the community, bigger than self problems, and a sense that there was real satisfaction to be had from fulfilling obligations to not just themselves but the society at large. One respondent noted when asked if they felt a sense of citizenship and community around participating in WREN

Absolutely, without question! It's hard to overstate the good it has done for the community. Without doubt you get a feeling of citizenship and community from it! (WM4, interview, June, 2015)

Another member concurred with this noting

Absolutely. I'm not quite sure what exactly you mean by citizenship but there is definitely a community feel to the whole thing. Every time you go to a meeting, everyone you know is there, you
see your friends, it has a definite communal vibe to it. (WM6, interview, June, 2015)

The environment as a common source of vulnerability

A significant issue with regards to the environment, consumption and citizenship arises from what Tan (2005) refers to as the relationship between citizenship and a common goal or enemy if you will. Tan (2005) noted how a common enemy or goal served to greatly increase the strength of feeling of citizenship and community. While people clearly wished to protect the environment in plenty of cases, there was a general lack of willingness or capability to perceive the environment as something which is fundamental to our survival and something that connects us as individuals through our shared dependence and thus giving us some form of common goal around which to base a notion of citizenship. While when this viewpoint was put forwards to interviewees many agreed, it was clear that few had spent time considering what the environment meant to society and them specifically. On the other hand, many respondents tended to view the economy as a shared dependency almost like one might view the environment. There was a clear theme amongst respondents that individuals or companies and governments in particular should not undertake actions for selfish reasons which might endanger the financial or fiscal well-being of others. Rather than individual behaviour being instrumentalised in favour of social goals, there was a clear feeling that actions should be taken only if they benefited everyone. One respondent for example noted that he was vehemently opposed to leaving the European Union as

It will ruin our economy, thousands of people could lose their jobs and it is irresponsible (GD8, Interview, July, 2016)

This highlights the work from Noxolo et al (2011) outlining how based on the socially validated norms operating within the relevant carescape, this man perceived this behaviour to be irresponsible. In addition to this, another respondent noted his aversion to environmental taxes during a discussion stating

I think that while you have to protect the environment, if you start taxing people over everything you risk losing jobs, the economy stagnates. I think you need to get people to understand why it is important (GD2, Interview, June, 2015)

which highlights the fact that this respondent believed taxes to protect the environment were
essentially selfish as they risked interfering with the economy.

Despite the fact that there is such a seemingly clearly existing social norm with regards to appropriate behaviour with regards to the economy as a common vulnerability of citizens within a society, it seems strange that this logic has not been extended beyond this. As such while many feel a duty to not harm the economic well-being of others, few felt a duty with regards to the environmental well-being of others. As such, this leaves us with two main options in terms of policy. One is that we accept that attempting to frame environmental protection in terms of citizenship is a fundamentally flawed exercise on any sort of national or global scale or alternatively, number two is that we need to spend time and effort on determining how we may at a societal level re-conceive nature as a fundamental building block of society and a shared vulnerability on which we are all dependent.

One could argue that this occurs to some extent that due to the fact that unlike the economy for example which directly affects peoples lives in terms of how much they earn or indeed whether they can even earn, the environment has rarely had a varying impact upon our lives. The environment has been such a constant in modern life in a northern European sense with questions surrounding the ability of the environment to sustain us being practically absent from modern life. Furthermore, few respondents seemed to have a clear idea as to the impacts of climate change with regards to how it would impact both themselves and the natural world as a whole. As such there has been no need or natural inclination to view the environment as a shared vulnerability as, for the average British citizen, it has never directly shown signs of vulnerability. One respondent for example, during a discussion on the place of humanity within nature and our impact on it, noted that

*I think perhaps the reason why I have never really thought about it is the fact that I have never had to. I have never woken up and worried about whether or not climate change is coming to get me. Its very easy to ignore in a lot of ways (GD4, Nov, 2015)*

As such, we start to see the environment as a constant or something that is taken fore-granted. Given this, it becomes very difficult to frame overconsumption as something which is inherently threatening to the ability of nature to provide for current and future generations. This becomes doubly true when one considers how long this type of view has been predominant for and the speed at which society adapts to things relative to the speed at which the scientific or academic community adjusts.
Scale, spatiality, and making climate change relevant

This brings us to one of the biggest issues faced by neoliberal environmental policy based around the individual which is that of making climate change relevant (Demeritt, 1998; Slocum, 2004). While the Green Deal and EPCs did nothing to portray the environment as a common goal, or a common source of vulnerability, WREN managed to achieve this by linking the issue of environmental sustainability to local economic resilience, thus framing the environment as a source of common vulnerability using economic resilience, an issue which struck a chord with a lot of its members, as a proxy indicator. While this will be explored later on in more detail, I wish to bring up issues of scale and spatiality now in order to provide a base for what is to come. Scale is crucial when studying issues of governance and governmentality in that it is the means through which attention is paid to not just interactions of power but the spatial levels at which they occur.

The above framing of the issue in terms of a more relevant issue is something which becomes increasingly possible at a smaller geographical scale. As highlighted by Gabrielson (2008) traditional notions of citizenship were based around the existence of a homogeneous demos whereas modern neoliberal citizenship has to take into account the extreme heterogeneity of society and the global nature of contemporary environmental issues. This leads back to the affective potential of a carescape which has to do with how connections are formed between individuals (McCormack, 2007, p.367; Woodward and Lee, 2010; Popke, 2006, p.507) and subsequently how these connections are highlighted through some form of cue (Jackson, 2005). Slocum (2004) notes that this is particularly relevant in the case of climate change for obvious reasons. Given that the majority of the consequences of climate change are not directly experienced and certainly not on a regular basis, this means connecting individuals with said consequences is exceedingly difficult and as such, climate change is often an area of relatively low affective potential.

Therefore, political strategies aimed at countering climate change or global injustice must work to make the global consequences visible at a more appropriate level to motivate action (Slocum, 2004). Scales are as Slocum (p.415) notes “material-discursive representational practices (Jones, 1998) that can be conjured into being (Tsing, 2000).” As such, political strategies may be seen to bring attention to scale and levels of spatiality in an attempt to und777ertake the difficult work of what Demeritt (1998, p.6), calls making climate change more meaningful to different publics. This is difficult as Taylor (1997, p.151) points out, “most people do not have problems of a global nature.” Climate change is unique to some extent however as Slocum (2004) points out given how it is both local and global in nature and the difficulty comes from reconciling these two facts. Slocum thus points out that climate change policy becomes about reshaping global debates
around climate change into discourses that are relevant with the everyday lives of individuals.

To some extent, efforts to tackle this may be seen to revolve around facts (Dumit, 1997). Facts according to Dumit are material objects that travel yet have different values across different levels of community and spatiality. While as we have seen, it is naïve to assume information will motivate a genuine change in behaviour, this highlights how the main issue is to place climate change within a discourse that is relevant to the everyday life of the average citizen. Harding (1986) notes how the strength of this discourse is often based around what may be termed objectivity or more simply, how many people agree with each other. As anyone currently living in the United Kingdom post EU referendum will tell you, objectivity is most certainly relative and is often local. As such, if one continues to move down scalar levels, eventually there is a likelihood of reaching a community tight knit enough for their to be consistent opinions across the community and it is at this stage which it is possible to reinvent discourses which will appeal objectively so to speak to communities and therefore create a notion of citizenship or a cause greater than oneself.

Under this logic, policies such as the Green Deal and EPCs appear to struggle. While the local authorities had the option to take on additional responsibilities with regards to Green Deal implementation (although I saw very little evidence of this in the cases I examined), the core design of the policy emanates from a national and globalist perspective in a way which was unappealing to the average citizen and did little to situate the individual within a discourse of environmental protection and citizenship. On the contrary, this is where schemes such as WREN and Draughtbusters really came into their own. WREN as noted, leveraged a genuine sense of shared concern regarding local economic resilience while Draughtbusters participants noted the visible impacts of energy poverty in their area as motivation for participation. One of the WREN organisers noted when asked about the importance of framing of linking the project to local economic sustainability.

Absolutely, it's immeasurably important. The local economic resilience we talk about is actually the primary goal of the project, that is what gets most people involved and then you get the benefits in terms of people saving money and to the environment at large. But its definitely safe to say that that is crucially important in terms of getting people interested with what we do! (WO2, Interview, June, 2015).

The head of the local fuel poverty organisation also noted something similar stating
The local aspect of it is obviously very important. Getting people to volunteer their time and effort for anything is never easy but the fact that you get to see the good you are doing first hand is a large part of it. I'm sure most people involved will tell you that they are very proud of the work they do and that people really appreciate it (HLO, interview, August, 2015)

In order to further explore issues of scale and spatiality with regards to practices of energy governance within the United Kingdom, I will now examine two case studies from the research which may be seen to be more effective than the Green Deal in order to highlight cases in which neoliberal forms of environmental governance were employed successfully. Using the co-present dimensions of governmentality (Legg, 2005), this forthcoming section will outline the methods of governance used in both the case of the Green Deal and the community alternatives from the case studies in an attempt to determine in what ways the approaches differed and how this resulted in differing levels of success in motivating a sense of participatory citizenship.

While acknowledging the significant contribution previous research has made to this field, this research will also seek to address the critique levelled at it by Mitchell (2006, p.390) that “despite the theoretical call for detailed, in-depth analyses of the circulation of power in multiple empirical sites and despite the intellectual heritage of Foucault, most studies of governmentality are generally abstracted from actually existing subjects and spaces (Frankel, 1997; Larner, 2000; O'Malley, 1996),” which is to some extent ironic given how in this thesis governments have been seen to abstract their subjects from their practices.

7.3 - Co-present dimensions within regimes of government

Before undertaking the empirical evaluation of the Green Deal and its alternatives I wish to introduce the framework that I will use to evaluate them. If we take governmentality to be at its core about the ways in which the state exercises power and control over the population, then it may be seen as the method through which governments construct the version of the consumer or citizen-consumer relative to their time. Therefore, in order to evaluate the Green Deal and relevant alternatives, one of the most appropriate ways is through examining them in terms of the co-present dimensions within regimes of government. This outlines the key and consistent ways across time and space in which governments aim to exert influence over the population which I will then use to assess how effective relevant policies have been in terms of constructing a notion of the citizen-consumer or a sense of citizenship capable of achieving the real reduction in energy consumption that they are seeking.
Legg (2005, p.147) explains this further noting that from the works of Rose (1996), Dean (1999) and Hindess (Dean and Hindess, 1998) we see “certain dimensions which are co-present in regimes of government and that give clues to the governmental rationality which informs the practical attempts to conduct personal conduct.”

The first of these criteria is **identities**, and refers to “the epistemological conception of the people to be governed; their statuses and capacities; the shaping of agency and direction of desire. What forms of conduct are expected? What duties or rights do people have? How are problematisations of conduct made? (Legg, 2005, p.148)” Legg notes how in practical terms, this often relates to the objectification of individuals or groups. By failing to consider local needs or social considerations, populations become naturalised and objectified preventing needs from being fulfilled while others are ascribed which may not exist. It is therefore crucial to avoid top down non-participatory forms of government which fail to involve the population when identifying duties and rights.

The second is **visibility** and this refers to “ways of seeing and representing reality; the practical knowledge of specialists and policy-makers; plans, maps and diagrams. How are some objects highlighted while others are obfuscated? What relations are suggested between subjects and space? How is risk mapped and what are the suggested remedies? (Legg, 2005, p.148)” Visibility has been a key part of this thesis both in terms of the inability to connect with the consequences of our actions and the ability of vulnerable groups in society to make themselves heard. This has been highlighted multiple times such as by Light (2000) who as we saw pointed out how policy based around one dominant world view may serve to exclude others. This poses an interesting question in policy terms in that it can be hard to give credence to all views equally in a practical context yet failure to do so risks exclusion.

The third is **techne** and refers to “techniques and technologies of government; ways of intervening in reality through strategies and procedures in relation to the materials and forces to hand and the resistances or oppositions encountered. Through which mechanism, procedure or tactic is rule accomplished? How are local contingencies incorporated and exploited. (Legg, 2005, p.148)” Techne refers to the more empirically tangible side of governmentality and the specific policies or actions taken in pursuit of goals identified in other categories. In the case of the Green Deal for example or neoliberalism this would most likely refer to the ways in which the market is being used to drive ecological modernisation.

The fourth is **ethos** and refers to “the moral form which distributes tasks in relation to ideals or principles of government; the orientation invested in practices. Who benefits from a regime of government? Where and with whom are values invested?(Legg, 2005, p.148)” Ethos is crucial in
that once again, it can serve to hamstring attempts at policy and provoke feelings of exclusion. Legg highlights examples of colonial governments failing to recognise the division of benefits from policies and how this led to a long and stubborn history which was hard to erase. As noted before, the Green Deal suffered from similar issues in that seemingly the primary benefactors were the energy companies and without those who require assistance feeling a form of benefit, attempts at governmentality are increasingly likely to face resistance.

The fifth is episteme and refers to “distinctive ways of thinking and questioning; the use of certain vocabularies and procedures for the production of truth; the taken-for-granted assumptions of a regime. Which forms of thought, calculation or rationality are deployed? How does thought seek to transform practices? How do practices of governing give rise to specific forms of truth? (Legg, 2005, p.148)” In a simpler form, this refers to the way discursive regimes are utilised to create fictive realities around which to frame government. Legg (2005) notes an example of how basing calculations on census data in Delhi without questioning the use or validity as to whether concepts of class were useful or applicable in this situation. By failing to give proper acknowledgement to ways of knowing and the construction of data, he highlights how we risk mis-problematising issues and potential exclusion. As we have seen, discursive elements are crucial with regards to helping to frame issues around a sense of sustainable citizenship and activate relevant pro-environmental values and therefore, the concept of episteme of vital importance when attempting to evaluate neoliberal policy and the construction of the consumer-citizen.

7.4 - The Green Deal and its alternatives: case studies on governmentality, scale and the citizen-consumer

This section, as noted above, will focus on the co-present dimensions within regimes of government in order to demonstrate how neoliberal methods of environmental governance can be successfully employed. This will focus around how climate change is made relevant to the individual and the importance of the spatial scale at which these regimes of governance take place. It will look at how energy use is problematised and how discursive regimes are employed to achieve governmental objectives.

Identities

In the case of the Green Deal and EPCs, there are several key aspects of this to note. First, we have the fact that problematisations of conduct are based primarily around energy efficiency and
rational behaviour. The government is quite clear in the relevant policy documents (DECC, 2010, Smith, 2010, Lainé, 2011) that the their intention for these policies is based around a rational form of agency where individuals are expected to respond to logical persuasion, information and attempts to remove structural barriers to investment in energy efficiency, something which we have seen across the empirical chapters is overly optimistic. The direction of agency remains focused around consumption with both policies implying an improved form of consumption based around newer technologies is the most effective method of solving issues of energy efficiency and overconsumption. There has also been no effort made with regards to establishing a sense of duty or basic rights. This is highlighted by the work on the Green Deal and fuel poverty. In the case of the Green Deal, no respondents noted a sense of duty or public pressure with an overwhelming sense of participants not viewing themselves as part of a wider social project. One respondent for example noted yet again

*The Green Deal never made me feel as if we were working together to save the planet! I think that is a bit ambitious* (GD10, September, 2016)

Furthermore in the research on fuel poverty it was clear that no respondent felt a sense of having fundamental rights with regards to warmth with one respondent stating

*I don't feel as if I have the right to anything with regards to this really. I don't feel like if I complain anyone is going to listen or at least anyone from the government. I mean the local charities and organisations are great but they don't have to do this and if they chose not to there is nothing I can do about it* (FP2, Interview, March, 2016)

and another respondent noting

*What rights do we have really? When you see what goes on around here, people get away with all sorts, the police get away with all sorts, the landlords get away with whatever they want. What are you going to do about it? What can you do about it!* (FP5, Interview, April, 2016)

WREN on the other hand has taken a somewhat different approach. Rather than trying to push a specific form of agency or frame the consumer as a passive recipient of policy or care similar to the Green Deal, WREN has from the start aimed to base their organisation around participation. Every paying member of the organisation is entitled to equal voting rights at all meetings with
regards to future policy of the group and how they spend their money. As such, members actively participate in decisions regardless of the nature of the decision which as highlighted in previous chapters allows individuals to gain an increased sense of control over their situation which as we know increases the likelihood of someone becoming involved or invested in something (Clarke, 2008; Barnett and Land, 2007; Hobson, 2006; Barnett et al, 2007). This also serves to re-politicise issues of overconsumption with discourse being created around what should be done with the opinion of every individual taken seriously. Unlike the Green Deal were respondents were, as noted, framed as passive recipients of policy, members of WREN were politically active, voting, engaging and making decisions that they felt mattered. This was highlighted by multiple respondents in the research who noted the importance to them of being able to participate and feeling as if their opinion matters with one respondent noting

*I think I speak for others as well as myself when I say that it is one of the reasons (the community aspect) WREN is so popular. The fact that the excess money goes to fund community projects and the fact that everyone can decide on which ones to go for is definitely something which I feel encourages people to not just sign up but keep coming to meetings and getting involved* (WM3, Interview, June, 2015)

It is this notion of community that also first serves to bring up the first way in which WREN effectively leverages its position as a small scale grass roots organisation. While the Green Deal did seemingly nothing to establish a sense of duty and rights with regards to citizenship, WREN is fundamentally framed around citizenship and a bigger than self duty to the local region.

WREN has managed to leverage a genuine sense of citizenship in order to promote energy efficiency and environmental protection. They do this however without ever specifically trying to establish a new form of specifically environmental citizenship instead taking a two fold approach which both redefines energy as a shared dependence and directly relates environmental sustainability to economic sustainability. WREN has heavily pushed the notion of how energy bills are essentially just a flood of money out of a local community as highlighted by this quote from their website

“WREN is therefore primarily a catalyst for local economic resilience. The fact that prevailing energy arrangements are dysfunctional in other ways, for example in risks to climate systems, dependency upon capricious countries, subject to unpredictably increasing costs, and result in short and long term pollution, is here a secondary issue” (www.wren.uk.com)
and that by taking charge energy production and keeping it local, it promotes economic resilience, a notable concern in an area of the UK where it is common practice for example for young people to leave in search of work and opportunities. Furthermore, it has tied the various aspects of citizenship together into one coherent theme where local organisations, energy, economies, food and environment are part and parcel of the same package. This may well be their greatest achievement in that they have taken the environment and energy security and successfully used it to establish what historically has served to rally nations together like almost no other, a common enemy (the threat of economic activity relocating away from the small seaside region) (Tan, 2005).

One of the key points here is that this is one of the ways that WREN manages to effectively utilise the local scale at which it operates to generate a more genuine sense of citizenship as it builds around not only around environmental protection but the notion that as stated by one of the organisers of WREN, that

\[\text{When we are purchasing energy, we are basically just seeing capital flow out of the local economy.}\]

\[\text{Being a small town in Cornwall, local economic resilience and sustainability is key and also somewhat of a big issue. A lot of young people for example will leave in search of jobs in cities as it is not always easy to find work around here so the work we do at WREN has a much greater significance to the local area than just reducing energy use. Its about creating a sustainable local economy for years to come (WO1, Interview; June, 2015)}\]

As such, it makes energy relevant to the local community, something which will be explored more under the theme of episteme. It is also worth noting that this is something which most likely could not occur at a national scale. With as Gabrielson (2008) notes, the extreme heterogeneity of the national population, finding issues of equal significance to so large a sample would most likely be exceedingly difficult if not impossible. Furthermore, trying to achieve a system in which individuals are active participants at a national scale would also be excessively complicated, and most likely financially demanding, thus highlighting the benefits of pursuing such schemes at a more manageable local level.

In addition to this, WREN has not tried to be overly deterministic with regards to issues of efficiency and behaviour. While WREN typically focuses around the consumption and production of renewable energy in addition to providing a similar service to the Green Deal in terms of

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1 Interestingly Tan (2005) notes how a common enemy may be seen as a far more effective rallying point that a sense of common doom.
providing advice and information including trusted suppliers with regards to home energy efficiency improvements, the local nature of the service means advice is increasingly tailored, flexible and is able to take into account the variable nature of behaviour. As such while advice is typically framed around technical efficiency, there is an acknowledgement of the fact that technical efficiency is not the be all end all of reducing overconsumption of energy.

Another issue highlighted by the research in terms of identities is brought up by the local fuel poverty organisation and is that of exclusion. This organisation deals with by the organisers own admission, people who are

*For the most part vulnerable and often too ashamed or embarrassed to even ask for help (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)*

As such, leveraging existing community ties and relationships may be seen as a big factor for success. The fact that these people are volunteering as well as themselves being members of the community makes people feel far more secure about what they are listening to, that they will be taken seriously, and that they will not be treated as just another statistic. Trust is an issue that kept on reappearing within these interviews and as such it seems as if a sense of trust may be seen as a prerequisite for a sense of community and citizenship. As such attempting to leverage a sense of citizenship where no trusting relationships exist may be seen as exceedingly complicated. This is highlighted through one respondent who noted

*The fact that I was put in contact with them by people I already knew made me feel a lot better about it as I didn't feel apprehensive or nervous (FP1, interview, March, 2016)*

Another respondent also noted something similar stating

*I was put in touch with them through the church group I'm in. Someone else who goes there mentioned them to me and told me to get in touch and so I did. I do think that it coming from someone you know helps. I'd never really thought of it but the moment she mentioned it to me, I thought it sounded brilliant! (FP2, interview, March, 2016).*

This was in stark contrast to the government as saw in previous chapters where there was a definite sense of mistrust and a lack of faith as highlighted by this respondent
What are the government even for these days?” (GD2, Interview, June, 2015)

and another who stated they were

sick of hearing about it (the environment) from the government [...] you can never distinguish between the truth and the politically motivated rubbish (M24, Interview, April, 2015)

While positive experiences with the Green Deal and the EPCs could in theory be shared and transferred through individual connections, the fact that the Green Deal and EPCs did little to excite individuals or make themselves relevant often resulted in cases where even when the individual in question wanted to share their experience, others were not interested in listening as we saw in the first empirical chapter highlighted by this respondent who noted

I'd like to tell my mates about it (the Green Deal) as it worked great [...] but none of them were interested one bit in listening. (FT2, Interview, March, 2016)

Visibility

This ties in to some extent with the first criteria in that what we have seen in the case of the Green Deal is the highlighting of neoliberal consumption as the means of solving issues of energy efficiency at the expense of other factors. As we have seen from previous empirical chapters, both the Green Deal, EPCs and efforts to tackle fuel poverty have tended to reduce energy efficiency to a problem of technicality while at the same time obfuscating the impact of behaviour and various other structural and economic factors such as inequality. Subjects are very much painted as consumers and in reality, very few alternatives exist with regards to the Green Deal or ECO for example if one wishes to have government assistance in solving issues of overconsumption of energy. This is highlighted by the respondent who had taken a Green Deal finance package in chapter 4 who noted

We actually wanted to get a bank loan for it given the relatively short payback time and the fact we might be moving in the next couple of years but because we don't have a mortgage and I'm between jobs it was just far too expensive (FT2, Interview, March, 2016)

As such his only option was a Green Deal package. Other respondents who were keen to improve
their energy efficiency for one reason or other yet were unwilling to pay the interest rates demanded by the Green Deal also found themselves with few alternative options as highlighted by exchange

GD7: *We'd love to do something to improve our energy efficiency but in the end the savings under the Green Deal were pretty poor and then when you added in the cost of the interest we didn't feel it was worth it like I said.*

Interviewer: *So have you looked at anything else you can do?*

GD7: *What else is there really? It's Green Deal, pay for it yourself or nothing as far as I can tell and none of those are particularly attractive options.* *(GD7, interview, June, 2016)*

Furthermore, the Green Deal actually served through the Golden Rule and its list of appropriate technologies to actually limit the choice respondents had with regards to energy efficiency upgrades and obfuscated technologies which would not guarantee financial savings despite offering in many cases considerable lifetime carbon savings. One respondent who had undertaken a Green Deal assessment for example when asked if he had considered alternative methods of energy efficiency replied

*No, not really. I wouldn't really know where to start if I'm being honest. The assessment gave me a lot of stuff to look at and if I'm not mistaken, this is stuff with quicker payback times which is a big plus* *(GD5, Interview, March, 2016)*

Another respondent also noted how he had not considered alternatives stating

*I basically had the assessment so that I could find out what was available to me. At this point at least I have not really considered much else. That is not to say I won't further down the line but for now at least the answer would be no* *(GD10, September, 2016)*

Furthermore multiple Green Deal assessors reported cases, albeit rare cases, where respondents requested technology that was not available under the Green Deal and were therefore unable to afford it. One Green Deal Assessor for example noted

*I have had cases like that yes. We had one guy who wanted solar PV for his home but unfortunately*
he didn't get enough sunlight to meet the Golden Rule so it wasn't eligible. I can't think of any of the top of my head right now but I'm sure there are other similar cases (IA3, Interview, November, 2014)

WREN however has been successful compared to the Green Deal is a combination of both trust and visibility in multiple senses. While the Green Deal and EPCs served to obfuscate alternative methods of solving the issue of overconsumption and limited choice by defining appropriate technologies from which to choose, WREN was based around flexibility, something made easier due to the size and nature of the organisation. One organiser highlighted how flexibility was a key part of their approach as it allowed them to best suit the needs of their individual members stating

Flexibility and adaptability are a big part of our success. We treat everyone as an individual so whoever comes in to the store or calls up asking for help, we always try not to just give them the generic advise but to tailor it to their needs. We don't think there is a one size fits all solution for everyone we deal with (WO2, interview, June, 2015)

Furthermore, while the Green Deal was almost invisible and did practically nothing to highlight success stories, the proximity of residents involved in the Wadebridge scheme coupled with the fact that it was run by friends, families and local residents made it spread at a rapid rate compared to something such as the Green Deal. Though working with local organisations such as Food Banks to target the most vulnerable, WREN organisers noted how

the majority of our members are through word of mouth (WO1, interview, June, 2015)

thus adding to the ideas put forward that it was accessible and impartial. In addition to this, numerous interviewees noted how friends and local residents had taken an interest in what they were doing, the savings they were making and also the positive impact they were having on the community. One respondent for example noted how

I have definitely shared my experience with people I know and I also know that plenty of people have been sharing their experiences. I'm saving money and helping the community so I am keen to share it (WM1, Interview, June, 2015)
Given the increased visibility both in terms of a physical presence for the organisation and in terms of people sharing stories and swapping ideas, it does highlight the concrete potential for good behaviour to be spread and for new social norms to be established if a good idea or an organisation that definitively works such as WREN appears. It does however highlight yet again the need for a trustworthy source of information as well as indicate that the more concrete relations we have with an individual, the more likely we are to trust their advice for obvious reasons. One thing that became abundantly clear in the WREN interviews was that while WREN was trustworthy, the government was not. The same respondent above felt particularly strongly about this noting how she was

...more likely to do the opposite of what the government tell me. I definitely don't trust them (WM5, Interview, June, 2015)

Once again, we see the importance of scale with regards to energy governance and in this case the transfer of information. Having a personal relationship and a physical presence meant that the transfer of information appeared far more likely to result in rational changes in behaviour as a result once again of the increased affective potential of the space in which WREN operates. As Shuy (2003, p.2) highlights in an article on research techniques, a lack of face-to-face contact is often restrictive in the development of rapport. As such while the Green Deal felt impersonal, WREN is able to leverage pre-existing personal connections in order to exploit an increased sense of trust and willingness from their members and to highlight positive effects given that said effects were typically experienced within the community.

Ethos

What Legg (2005) terms ethos is yet another area dimension of government where the Green Deal may be seen to be lacking relative to WREN and Draughtbusters. In the cases studied for this chapter, values are clearly invested heavily within the community with the community being the focus of why they exist. In the case of WREN for example, with all assets locally owned and equally shared amongst members, the benefits of becoming a member of WREN are clear, visible and direct. With respondents pointing out how additional funds are allocated for community projects which are voted on by all paying members, there are clear benefits for not just the individual to join WREN but for the community in which they reside. Furthermore, all community projects will receive funding generated by installations within the local area meaning that benefits
of projects are experienced by those living with the initial costs. This is in stark contrast with the Green Deal for example where the main beneficiaries were seemingly the energy companies as noted (Dowson, 2013). In some ways this can be related to what Soper (2007) referred to previously as alternative hedonism where ethical consumption becomes far more about personal gratification that is in line with social goals which if possible, as noted by Tindale, (1994) tends to yield greater results. Given this it is crucial for governance aiming to promote forms of ethical consumption manage to appeal to one of the key goal frames (Vlek et al. 2004), those being hedonistic, gain and normative.

WREN and Draughtbusters for example managed to appeal to multiple goal frames such as a form of alternative hedonism where individuals felt a sense of well-being through knowing they were doing good in addition to normative goal frames where individuals felt as if they had a responsibility to do good. As we have seen in previous chapters, it is incredibly beneficial to any sort of energy efficiency policy for there to be genuine tangible benefits of sorts when undergoing any form of work. As we saw in the previous chapters, the Green Deal and EPCs failed to over any kind of tangible benefits for the most part or at least there was a perception that this was the case. Multiple respondents noted a lack of financial savings compared to what they expected after having assessments in addition to a lack of self-satisfaction from participating in the schemes. This was in stark contrast to WREN and Draughtbusters however. One member of WREN noted the value and self-satisfaction they felt given the community aspect of WREN noting

_The community aspect of it is a big selling point for me. The fact that you know you are contributing as well as helping yourself and the environment is very positive (WM2, Interview, June, 2015)_

and almost all other members shared this sentiment. Another respondent noted

_They've funded a whole bunch of good causes round here. Sports clubs, youth groups, schools, all sorts. Really makes you feel good to be a part of it._

The same respondent also noted how they had saved money as a result of the energy efficiency work highlighted to them by WREN.

_I've also saved a good bit of money myself too or at least I will in the long run. Its been a couple of years now and it's about to pay for itself so in ten years I'll have made a tidy saving! (WM8,_
Once again, we see how the scale at which WREN operates offers substantial values relative to a scheme such as the Green Deal which deals with predominantly global consequences. Given that, it is very difficult to actually make visible the benefits of such a scheme as so many of the benefits are experienced globally. This was highlighted by one respondent who when asked if they had experienced any benefits from participating in the Green Deal and having an assessment done noted

No, not really. I thought there'd be a lot of savings but the reality of it is I'd be paying back this loan for 15 odd years just to see some meagre savings.

When asked if they saw any other benefits to participating or improving their energy efficiency they noted

Not whatsoever! The whole thing was a massive bloody waste of my time if you ask me! (GD9, interview, August, 2016)

WREN on the other hand, through framing the scheme around local economic resilience, has made sure that the benefits are something which are not only shared by everyone within the local region both participating and not participating in WREN, but are visible on an everyday level.

As noted, this is in stark contrast with the Green Deal for two reasons. Initially, we have the fact that there is seemingly very little moral dimension to the Green Deal and EPCs as highlighted by the lack of obligations or duty felt by respondents such as this man who when asked if he felt a responsibility to tackle environmental issues noted

I don't think it should be up to me and quite frankly it bothers me. I go through life trying to do the right thing but how am I meant to know what the right thing is. I got a diesel car because the government says they are better and then someone says now that diesel is the devil. I am sick of being blamed for this when quite honestly it is outside of my range of expertise. Am I meant to thoroughly investigate everything I buy every day? (GD8, Interview, July, 2016)

highlighting how in the case of my research on the Green Deal and EPCs, not only did respondents not feel responsible but actively resents being blamed for something (Evans, 2011; Shove, 2010)
which they for the most part see as inherently out of their control. While in the case of fuel poverty and ECO there are clear moral obligations with regards to the government, this is focused around helping those most in need at the expense of others. The second key point is that the main beneficiary appears to be the energy companies whether through the Green Deal where energy companies provide loans at commercial interest rates or fuel poverty where efforts to reduce fuel poverty can be offset by rising energy bills. Downson (2013) estimates that the average occupier of a property is only likely to see around 8% of the total savings over the lifetime of a measure with 92% of the savings likely to be seen by investors and while the figures are clearly debatable given that they are estimates, the highlight the clear conflict of interest in that the objectives of investors and householders are fundamentally opposed.

This may be seen as largely due to openness to outside influence. Unlike WREN which is fully autonomous and truly democratic, in the case of the Green Deal, the government's desire (or need depending on how you look at it) to work with the major energy companies can be seen as crucial to understanding its failure. Given the fact that the government was reliant on the energy companies for financing the Green Deal, this led to the energy companies having undue influence over the design of the policy. As a result, the interest rates being charged as noted, where far above what was commercially available in some cases or at least for those in the middle to upper classes capable of affording mortgages or home loans making it inherently unattractive. As a result of this, one Green Deal installer even noted how he had been encouraging people against it (GD1, Interview, November, 2015) referring to taking out Green Deal finance packages instead recommending people deliberately forsake the scheme and go it alone.

While individuals do stand to gain in some cases, this gain is often heavily discounted by the time frame over which it occurs. It is clear that the Green Deal's attempts at reducing energy consumption invest values heavily within the market, promoting it as the method through which to end overconsumption at the lowest economic cost, reinforcing the notion that the role of business and the health of the markets is a primary concern, even when tackling environmental issues.

**Episteme**

The next section and perhaps the most important is episteme which refers to the creation of truths based around certain vocabularies. This can be thought of as similar to the problematisations of consumption in previous chapters and is in essence the way that problems are made relevant to the individual. This has been touched upon heavily already in this chapter noting how WREN and Draughtbusters leveraged the local scale at which they operate through framing fuel poverty and
energy efficiency in terms of local issues which appealed to their members. In the case of the Green Deal and EPCs however this is an area which is seemingly sorely lacking. Legg (2005) notes the importance of practices of governing giving rise to specific forms of truth with regards to governmentality yet in the case of the Green Deal and EPCs seemingly this was overlooked. When for example respondents were asked to explain what message they felt was conveyed by the Green Deal, while most respondents did at least note how using less energy is good for everyone, this was typically in the form of some very mild responses such as

Mmm..Use less energy I guess? I don't know if I really got a particularly strong message from it. It just seemed to be about giving me an option to improve my energy efficiency if I wanted to. It never seemed to imply much beyond that to me (GD7, Interview, April, 2016)

and another respondent noting

I guess it's to help people save money. And also I guess to reduce your energy use a bit. A toss up between those two things although I guess most people like me are more interested in saving money. (GD4, interview, November, 2015)

Examining government communications (DECC, 2010, Smith, 2010, HoC, 2011, Lainé, 2011) including the website for the Green Deal for example or even the Energy Saving Trust highlighted a lack of communication in terms of placing policies such as the Green Deal or energy saving measures within a context of environmental protection although this could be intentional.

WREN however as noted was highly effective with how it used distinctive vocabularies framing WREN as an effort to stop the leak of money and people from the local community to the big cities and the protection of local interests. This revolves around what Demeritt (1998) pointed out about making issues relevant to the spaces in which they operate. There is a clear rationality that WREN is not just good for the individual but good for the community. This is tied in to the fact that apart from the clear financial benefits (the organiser noted around 6% return on investments in local energy and tax reductions (WO1, Interview, June, 2015)), there are clear and tangible community benefits to participation which are constantly being made visible in addition to highlighting the dangers of doing nothing. This is key in that WREN unlike the Green Deal, seeks to leverage local connections thus improving the affective potential of the space and carescape in question. The difference with the Green Deal was apparent with respondents from WREN being visibly excited and interested when discussing WREN. It was clear that participants were
overwhelmingly positive with no respondent who had direct dealings with WREN seemingly having anything bad to say about them. Instead there was a genuine sense of commitment to a common cause (something the Green Deal sorely lacked) which was a combination of the environment and the local economy. It is difficult to overstate the importance of this and is perhaps the most relevant distinction in terms of the local versus national scale of the case studies in this thesis. While WREN members typically noted a sense of concern for the environment, there was a distinct sense of the local economic resilience promoted by WREN as being the most crucial aspect of its success. This was highlighted by one respondent, a local store owner, who noted

*When you are in a town like Wadebridge these days, it is not easy to compete economically and its hard to overstate the importance of WREN and what they have done here. Just the fact that they exist has already helped tourism and the town's reputation (WM2, Interview, June, 2015)*

This was concurrent with almost all of the respondents with another noting

*For sure, the good it does for the local economy is massive. It would be unfair to say that it's just WREN but the whole Smart Cornwall scheme has been massive for us and WREN played a huge part in getting us involved in that and I think that's what got a lot of us involved in the first place (WM6, interview, June, 2015)*

One of the the organisers also noted

*I've already told you how important it is (the local economic resilience aspect of WREN) but I should stress it again. A lot of our members really do care about the environment obviously but I think probably the single greatest reason for our success is just how positive this whole project has been for the town and the entire region at large (WO1, interview, June, 2015)*

The crucial thing to note from this is that it demonstrates how neoliberal policies operating at a smaller scale as discussed earlier are able to profit from the existence of an increasing homogeneous demographic and as such a greater degree of objectivity (Harding, 1986). By framing issues of environmental degradation and sustainability around a common goal or enemy (in this case economic resilience), members of the community found common ground over which to bond and which led to increased engagement and an increased sense of obligation and responsibility. One respondent for example noted
I'd never really gotten involved with anything like this, partly because there wasn't really anything like this before, but when I started going to the meetings it was obvious the good it was doing. When you live somewhere like this, in the countryside in a small town, it's not easy to compete these days. All the kids want to bugger off to the cities as quick as they can to find a good job, all the business is being done online and there has been a notable decline in the region compared to 30 odd years ago when I was young. We can complain about the world changing but ultimately it's up to us to do something about it and WREN has been a fantastic example of what you can do if you put your mind to it! (WM9, interview, June, 2015)

Another respondent also highlighted how the importance of local issues which were relevant to her helped to reinforce a sense of obligation and responsibility noting

I think it's different when you come from a big city like London, but around here there is a real sense of community. It's only a small town you know, everyone knows everyone and people are keen to help each other out. I'm a member of the school board, the church group, I do whatever I can really to get involved and make our town a nicer place to live so getting involved with WREN was a pretty obvious choice for me. (WM10, interview, June, 2015)

One of the organisers went into more detail about just how this worked on a practical level noting

So basically as I've said, money has been flowing out of the local economy for too long and this is something which as I'm sure you've noticed from talking to our members and people about town, that is deeply concerning to a lot of us. With the internet though these days, you can reinvent small towns as “Smart Market Towns” which essentially means taking advantage of the benefits of a small town like social cohesion, quality of life and the fact that you are close to where a lot of goods are produced. While there are a whole load of things that entails, its really about keeping local economic assets local to make sure that the money we spend is leaking out of the community and energy is one of the main ways that happens. Now, money spent on energy, stays local and can be reinvested locally into whatever we want on top of allowing people to invest in their own future, both financially and just by getting involved (WO1, interview, June, 2015).

While WREN exist in a somewhat privileged position in terms having such a convenient local issue around which to frame this issue that is so closely tied to environmental sustainability, it highlights
the effective use of appealing to a homogeneous demographic at a small objective scale.

It should be noted that not every respondent in Wadebridge was as positive about the scheme with one non-member I spoke to noting how WREN preaches to the choir implying that the people who were part of WREN were already environmentally and socially motivated yet given the quite staggering membership rates they achieve, I would be hesitant to overstate this. While the members of WREN may well be those more easily reachable, it seems clear that the WREN organisation has done a significant deal in terms of spreading good practice with regards to energy use and consumption and in terms of making climate change relevant. In the final section I will look at how this use of relevant local issues also translated to a greater sense of care for the environment at large.

**Techne**

Following on, the primary ways through which the government aimed to achieve the objectives of the Green Deal was through the provision of information and through altering the attractiveness of particular consumption patterns. As noted however, this took an overly simplistic view with approaches being either overly voluntarist in the case of for example the Green Deal assessments or the EPC (if used as informational tools) or overly structuralist in the case of Green Deal finance. A failure to create a sense of normality around energy efficiency served to constrain the effectiveness of both policies highlighted by the overwhelming majority of respondents who noted how they failed to feel any sort of pressure with regards to behaviour in line with government objectives. Furthermore, local expertise and specific experience relevant to the implementation of policies was seemingly ignored with the Green Deal being applied somewhat consistently across the UK.

WREN on the other hand as we have seen, simultaneously provided concrete incentives for “good” behaviour such as individual financial savings and investment in community projects while also serving as a trusted source of information promoting rational action and has tied these two approaches together in a relatively seamless manner. WREN has managed to exploit the local scale at which it operates compared to the Green Deal through the creation of new social norms and understandings. As we saw in previous chapters, the Green Deal and EPCs fell totally flat with regards to any form of flanking mechanisms designed to place them within a discourse of environmentalism thus preventing the creation of new shared understandings. Unlike any other interviews carried out throughout this thesis, WREN genuinely did seem to push a sense of normality with regards to energy efficiency and the environment. While this is partly because as
noted, they managed to tie these themes to local economic sustainability in addition to environmental sustainability, the fact that as many as one in three homes were represented in WREN showed just how normalised this had become. This was highlighted by one respondent who noted

*WREN has pushed the norms in terms of energy efficiency. There is a real sense around town that we can achieve something better (WM2, Interview, June, 2015)*

and an organiser who noted

*I think compared to most places, you will find a pretty strong sense of the importance of energy efficiency and the environment around here as a result of WREN (WO2, Interview, June, 2015)*

Compared to the Green Deal and EPCs, there was also a sense of importance or urgency around members of WREN when discussing energy efficiency as opposed to the lethargy experienced in previous chapters as highlighted by this respondent.

*I think energy efficiency is really important! WREN actually do a lot of educational stuff for the kids round here and I helped out at one or two of them and some of the things you learn really put things in perspective. It's really made me re-evaluate my priorities, that's for sure (WM11, interview, June, 2015)*

Interestingly, this increased sense of responsibility to the community that WREN seemed to impart, did seemingly lead to some form of prolonged behaviour change and the creation of an ethics of care towards the environment in a more general sense. A number of respondents noted how the increased sense of community they felt from being involved in this project had led them to consider the impacts of their behaviour in other ways. Seemingly, as WREN promoted a culture of bigger than self issues and caring for those beyond your immediate circle (even if it was just beyond), this actually translated into a more general sense of care for the planet and humanity as respondents became used to caring and a sense of altruism. One respondent noted

*While I was already somewhat of a concerned environmentalist, I think it is fair to say that as a result of participating in WREN and the work they do, I have definitely become a lot more concerned with regards to the environment in general (WM7, Interview, June, 2015)*
Another respondent also noted when asked if they had grown more concerned for the environment since joining WREN

*Undoubtedly, it has made me far more aware of what is going on and has definitely helped me to realise that we all have a role to play (WM8, Interview, June, 2015)*

One respondent even noted that their environmental awareness and sense of care for the environment came almost entirely from their involvement with WREN noting

*I used to care about the environment but not in any specific sort of way. I cared without ever really caring if you know what I mean. Now though I actually take the time to think about how my actions have consequences and how I can reduce my impact (WM9, interview, June, 2015)*

This highlights to some extent the notion of framing and learning to frame situations around certain themes through doing and the priming of intrinsic values highlighted by Crompton et al (2010). Throughout the research it became clear that those involved with WREN as noted above where not just learning how to improve local renewable generation but also to frame situations in terms of environmental protection, community benefits and bigger than self problems, an issue which was highlighted with the second chapter on EPCs for example where multiple respondents failed to recognise the environmental aspect of housing provision despite expressing strong environmental motivations.

Draughtbusters also served to highlight the benefits of operating at a more local scale. While the issue of exclusion was raised in the sections above, the techniques of governance employed by the case studies for this chapter highlights a potential solution. As highlighted by the previous chapters, neoliberal policies frequently exacerbate issues of exclusion and injustice. The EPCs for example promote the choosing of energy efficient properties yet they are frequently outside of the price range of those who need them most and ECO fails to reach those who need it most given the level of political disconnection they experience. Here we see how different scales of spatiality affect efforts to tackle the problem of exclusion. As noted by the organiser, the majority of their clients were referred through local means such as food banks or doctors or charities given the fact that many recipients of work were not keen to self refer. As such without leveraging local knowledge and existing networks, there were few options for recruiting clients for lack of a better word. Therefore by failing to take into account the importance of local knowledge in not just
dealing with problems but also in identifying problems themselves we risk excluding those who are most vulnerable. Shove (2010) for example in her critique of ABC notes the importance of having multiple frames with regards to problems as this prevents certain problematisations becoming hidden and as such, the recognising of local perceptions of problems rather than one national problematisation of an issue may well serve to reduce exclusion.

With the smaller scale at which these alternatives occur however, the task of recognising those in need of aid becomes increasingly inclusive given the fact that it is based around tangible connections. On top of this and perhaps most importantly, this lead to a situation where people felt comfortable asking for help. A recipient of draughtproofing noted

_The whole process was just so easy and accommodating. You felt like you could ask them for anything and they would never turn you down if it was at all possible. The fellas who did my place all lived around here and were so understanding. If I had any friends who needed it I’d tell them to get on it strait away, no hesitation (FP3, Interview, April, 2016)_

This was also true in the case of WREN were one respondent noted

_I think the ease of use if you want to put it that way, is one of the best parts about WREN. You can just walk in to the shop at any time and ask for help, whoever you are. Everyone knows about it now, everyone likes them and you can just drop it at any time you please (WM10, interview, June, 2015)_

highlighting how WREN acts as a legitimised and trusted space in which individuals can come and seek help should they need it. There was a definite feeling amongst the respondents that solving problems of energy efficiency was simple and that nobody was excluded from participating or made to feel unwanted.

Another major benefit of working at a local grass-roots level in this case again was the level of efficiency with which schemes took place, something which should surely appeal to the government given their obsession with achieving every saving at the lowest possible cost. As the organiser of the scheme was a local building engineer and had existing relationships with many local suppliers, this served to drastically reduce the cost. As such, supplies would be purchased on a case by case basis, avoiding waste and leveraging existing relationships for favourable prices. Not only this but the labour was volunteer and therefore had no cost to it. In addition to this, working as a local building engineer, the organiser had specific knowledge regarding the construction of many
properties within the area that they covered. As such, assessments were typically increasingly accurate and efficient in terms of both time and money. This led to a cost on average of a mere 25£ or less per property to achieve 100£ + in savings per year and which is a remarkable achievement and dwarfs any kind of efficiency figures achieved by the Green Deal or ECO. Given the severely limited resources available to governments currently to enact policies, there are clear benefits in terms of working at small scales which leverage local knowledge for increased efficiency. While it is clear that one cannot hope to have a nationwide policy of small voluntary schemes such as this, it is important to take the lessons from it which are how local forms of governance serve to increase inclusivity, decrease costs and increase efficiency. Furthermore, the efficiency was something noted to be desirable by respondents. One of the main complaints aimed at the government during the project was the overwhelming complexity, bureaucracy and waste involved at every stage of everything. While some people were scathing of the government and their efforts, others were simply confused and the complexity and bureaucracy experienced frequently put people off. By contrast, this organisation was the polar opposite, with volunteers according to the organiser.

*Able to arrive at your property, complete the work and advise you on your future energy use within a 90 minute period in some cases (HLO, Interview, August, 2015)*

7.6 – Conclusions: scale, space and the sustainable citizen-consumer

To summarise, this chapter contributes to theorisations of green governmentality, citizenship and issues of scale through the analysis of empirical examples of neoliberal forms of environmental governance at varying spatial scales. While examples in this chapter have shown that neoliberal forms of environmental governance can be effective when employed properly, this is not without caveats. That being said however, this demonstrated clear examples of self-governing citizens who exercised care and responsibility through their consumption in a way concurrent with objectives of neoliberal forms of governance.

The first point to take into account is that of the means through which neoliberal rule is applied. While the government, in the case of the Green Deal and EPC has aimed to exert biopolitical power through techniques of governmentality such as the provision of relevant information and altering the effectiveness of various consumption options, there is a lack of awareness with regards to subjectification and the ability of citizens to situate themselves within relevant discourses of environmentalism and sustainability. While the government has aimed to promote the concept of the sustainable autonomous citizen, the way that they have gone about this
has been through placing the individual as a passive recipient with regards to governing who while able to exercise “free” choice, may only do so within the confines of what the government deems acceptable. Climate change or a broader ethics of care and responsibility towards distant others is not made relevant or raised as a discourse around which to frame acts of consumption.

This however is the primary strength of organisations such as WREN and Draughtbusters. Both manage to link issues of climate change, energy efficiency and environmental sustainability to crucial local issues such as local economic resilience, community improvement and poverty, which in turn encourages individuals to engage with the organisations as these are issues which have a far higher affective potential initially. As we saw in the case of the EPC or Green Deal, respondents failed to view themselves as part of a global community or as global citizens thus failing to properly appreciate the space in which their consumption existed despite the far reaching implications. The respondents for the Green Deal or EPCs failed to acknowledge the environment as a common source of vulnerability or really to acknowledge anything that linked the individual form of consumption to the world at large, whereas members of WREN and Draughtbusters were able to rally around a common vulnerability or a common enemy, be it economic resilience or poverty. As noted, this was made increasingly easy given the higher level of objectivity that exists at lower spatial scales given the increasingly homogeneous nature of the population experienced and thus facilitates framing issues in a way which is more likely to have general appeal.

Furthermore, multiple respondents noted how the sense of doing something good for the community or helping those around them in poverty provided a sense of genuine well-being highlighting the relational aspect which can be seen as crucial to the formation of an ethics of care. There was a genuine sense of citizenship that existed at smaller spatial scales and exploiting this sense of community was crucial to the success of these alternatives.

As a result of this, many respondents then went on to become better environmental citizens in the long run, as they learned to frame issues of consumption in addition to more general issues around greater-than-self problems and a sense of obligation and responsibility towards something other than themselves or their immediate circle. Through a balanced discursive regime and an attention to specific local conditions, issues of environmentalism may be raised in ways which are relevant and financially rewarding without diluting an ethics of care and environmentalism.

Two crucial factors are the fact that there are real tangible benefits to be had from participating in these schemes both in terms of self-satisfaction, and financially in the case of WREN, and the fact that both these organisations serve to reinforce or create new social norms around energy efficiency and equality. Both organisations are deliberately participatory and serve to engage individuals in debate and decision making rather than framing them as passive recipients
of public policy. This is something which has led to a far greater sense of satisfaction. In addition to this, values are heavily invested within the community the benefits being increasingly real and visible. While the Green Deal seemed to benefit the energy companies most of all under the final terms of the scheme, both WREN and Draughtbusters provided clear benefits to the local communities in which they operated. This was noted by multiple respondents to be a crucial factor regarding the success of the schemes in addition to helping respondents in terms of constructing themselves as ethical individuals.

In addition to this, the fact that these schemes operated locally also served to exploit an increased sense of trust and accessibility which existed within the communities in these case studies. Whereas the Green Deal and EPCs suffered from an overwhelming lack of trust in the government and their motivations, both WREN and Draughtbusters were viewed as trustworthy and reputable organisations which encouraged participation. Whereas individuals resented being told by the government that they were responsible for solving issues of environmental degradation, individuals conversely revelled in the increased responsibility they accepted through membership of the organisations studied in this chapter, largely due to the source of the information being provided to them given that they trusted these organisations to be acting in pursuit of both the public's and their own interest.

Ultimately, while at a national level, attempts to create a sustainable self governing citizen may be exceedingly complicated given the lack of tangible connections that exist within global space, the extreme heterogeneity of the population that prevents objectivity around the framing of an issue, and the lack of visibility in terms of both benefits and impacts, at a more local level, there seems to be potential. This however requires an increasing recognition of the importance of the local in the creation of shared understandings used to promote forms of governance in addition to a genuine hollowing out of the state. For as long as neoliberal governance remains a facade of a rollback of state intervention, there seems to be limited potential for genuine citizen involvement based around participatory forms of government. As such governments must be more willing to distribute responsibility to a range of spatial levels in order to motivate a more genuine sense of environmental citizenship which is increasingly relevant, has more tangible benefits and promotes a sense of duty and obligation through shared goals and vulnerabilities instead of simply incentivising certain consumption patterns and assuming the population will respond. The case studies in this chapter served to re-politicise the issues in question through participatory forms of governance which in turn led to a far greater sense of engagement, and most importantly, to make issues relevant again to those who mattered.
8. Conclusion

This study set out to contribute to the issue of engaging climate change through neoliberal policies focused around personal choice and citizenship-focused consumption using the empirical examples of the United Kingdom's Green Deal, Energy Performance Certificates and Energy Company Obligations in addition to two grass-roots alternatives. I approached this thesis with the view that theories of practice and governmentality provided a more novel and well-rounded method of evaluating behaviour and consumption than information deficit models and might serve to further our understanding of the ways in which environmental governance occurs in a neoliberal context in a more complete manner.

With a few notable exceptions, studies on governmentality and have typically been largely theoretical and have neglected the real role of the individual in the circulation and application of governmental power. With this in mind, drawing on the deep theoretical grounding that exists, I have engaged with multiple empirical case studies surrounding the transfer of neoliberal governmental power and the ways in which the individual engages with attempts to regulate and influence their behaviour. I have taken an inter-disciplinary approach to the study of governmentality and behaviour as I believe that this is key with regards to developing a more complete understanding of the ways in which the individual seeks to navigate the complexities of modern life. Through this multidisciplinary approach, I have taken into account multiple problematisations of consumption and energy use under regimes of neoliberal governance in an attempt to assess in what way they have been successful or not and to provide a critique of neoliberal forms of environmental governance. I have contributed to the relevance of social normality with regards to regimes of governance and how issues of climate change and energy efficiency have been made relevant to the time and space in which they are located.

In addition to this, I address another gap in the literature with regards to the study of ecological modernisation as a form of policy tool and an expression of neoliberal environmental governance. While critiques (Pepper, 1998, Buttel 2000) of ecological modernisation exist, rarely have these dealt empirically or individually with the way in which it is enacted. I have addressed the ways in which ecological modernisation is carried out at individual level through the Energy Performance Certificates and contributed by engaging with criticisms surrounding the ability of markets to promote environmental protection and recognise rights. Through empirically outlining
the ways in which choice is constrained, I have highlighted the inconsistencies of a paternalistic approach to environmental governance aimed at incentivising and promoting certain patterns of consumption at the expense of others.

I contributed to geographies of care and responsibility in addition to geographies of emotion and affect, elaborating on how the level of discursive consciousness at which behaviour is undertaken impacts on our ability to form meaningful connections within a space. I explored themes of the caring practices of consumption and the use of different levels of spatiality and scale in order to foster an atmosphere in which an ethics of care can be generated in addition to empirical examples of engaging green governance through the lens of an ethics of care.

Furthermore, I have contributed to how neoliberal forms of care affect inclusion and accessibility and the implications of an increasingly privatised notion of care based around the new (and often weak) ways attempts are made to connect us to the global context of our consumption. I have examined issues surrounding neoliberalism and justice and how the depoliticisation of care and responsibility in terms of who should care and for whom should they care, has served to remove a reasonable sense of doubt around issues of both environmental and social sustainability.

I have contributed to conceptions of the neoliberal citizen-consumer exploring the ways in which techniques of governmentality have been applied across various scalar levels in order to construct the new form of citizen-consumer and with what levels of success. With the literature on green citizenship once again occurring at a largely theoretical level, I have empirically engaged with the ways in which citizenship, consumerism and environmentalism are tied together under a neoliberal form of policy. I contributed to the ways in which citizenship is generated through co-present dimensions of government and how this is affected by concepts of scale and spatiality.

Crucially, I have also engaged with the ways in which several key UK neoliberal environmental policies have been received by the public. With the Green Deal representing an exceedingly important policy in terms of the British governments environmental ambitions (from a desire standpoint rather than impact), understanding the reasons for its failure and the lessons in terms of the way members of the public have engaged with it is vital. With the future of our planet at stake, there is little room for successive failures and as such, an understanding of its flaws is crucial moving forward. Furthermore, there has been very little research into this area with minimal sustained research into the implications of this flagship environmental policy. In addition, EPCs and ECO represent a major part of the UK's strategy of tackling climate change moving forwards and the ways in which they interact with the British public are crucial for attempts at tacking issues
of climate change, fuel poverty and the excessive consumption of energy. With the government seemingly determined to maintain a neoliberal market driven approach to environmental governance, it is crucial to empirically evaluate ways in which to improve this approach.

This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first will summarise my findings from this thesis relevant to the research questions asked in chapter 1. Following on from this, I briefly outline the general conclusions from this thesis and suggest a series of recommendations for policymakers and future research.

8.1 - Green governance and energy use: neoliberalism in search of the "responsible citizen" and the practices of the UK carbon economy: an overview

In this section, I discuss the main findings of my thesis based on the four research questions posed in Chapter 1.

In what ways is an ethics of care and responsibility generated under the Green Deal?

The ability of neoliberal forms of governance to create an ethics of care and responsibility around which to interpret consumption is highly questionable in the case of the Green Deal. With an ethics of care seemingly reliant on our ability to form meaningful connections within a space, the context of the global space in which neoliberal environmental policies operate immediately highlights the complexity experienced in terms of the ability of such policies to generate an ethics of care. What was clear in the research is that respondents who had taken out Green Deal finance packages or assessments rarely did so out of any great altruistic sense of care or concern for the planet, the human race or nature. The Green Deal, as studied by this thesis, highlights the opposite with respondents routinely failing to consider the impacts of their consumption in terms of its effect on distant others or the environment. Furthermore, there was an almost complete level of failure to recognise energy consumption as an area in which injustices were generated around which to acknowledge responsibility and subsequently develop a sense of care. Unfortunately, the reality of one's connection to an event or a process is not sufficient to guarantee a sense of responsibility towards it.

As noted, while the Green Deal operated within the spatial confines of the United Kingdom, it aimed to tackle problem of the over-consumption of energy, a problem with global ramifications. As a result of this, the space in which it operates may be considered to be the entire planet arguably
as pollution and climate change may be seen as a global problem which requires the cooperation of all nations to combat. The issue surrounding an ethics of care however is the issue of visibility. This comes in several forms. Initially, it comes in the form of the relationship between consumers and producers. As noted, respondents were unable to acknowledge in all but a few cases that their energy consumption promoted inequalities and injustices. They failed to realise that the consequences of their consumption were felt outside the confines of the energy market and the Green Deal did little to connect consumers with the impacts of their consumption in that all it did was distort price in an effort to make energy efficiency more financially attractive. This highlights a fundamental issue in using market mechanisms to undertake policy in that the markets are unable to translate the wants and needs of various diverse populations by themselves. While other attempts to generate an ethics of care such as Fair Trade bring a discursive regime looking to highlight the connection between consumer and producer the Green Deal did not. The Green Deal did nothing to locate energy use and energy efficiency within a discourse of environmental sustainability or responsibility with respondents failed to perceive the policy in this way or at the very least perceiving this as a secondary aspect of the scheme.

What was also apparent was that multiple respondents did consider the injustices created by their consumption in other areas of life however these were typically framed around a specifically disadvantaged group either human or non-human. While third world producers not making a fair wage led to feelings of guilt and a perceived injustice, this was not the case with the over-consumption of ones allocated environmental resources. Furthermore, taking on a second aspect of visibility, there were few notable benefits offering any form of hedonistic value. With consumers failing to gain so to speak from the Green Deal in a meaningful way, this prevented consumers from experiencing affective responses which subsequently prevented engagement. The financial savings offered by the Green Deal were typically experienced a significant time in the future and the failure of the scheme to provide an immediate and tangible benefit was critical. While consumerism may well be seen as the issue here, other aspects of respondents consumption highlighted in some cases how despite the tendency towards consumerist values, the increased level of engagement with a product increased the level of discursive consciousness surrounding it.

This highlights the next pitfall in that a low level of engagement prevented a sense of social normality which may be seen as crucial to establishing an ethics of care and responsibility. With other examples of caring consumption typically being framed in terms of some form of social normality either between friends, families or communities, the Green Deal offered little in this way. Social normality may also be seen as a strong motivator for an ethics of care. The respondents who acknowledged to some extent the injustice generated through their consumption implied that this
was the result of environmentalist tendencies inherited through a search for social normality which subsequently developed into a global ethics of care. This also came through engaging with these topics themselves rather than the top down approach of neoliberal policy. On the whole, individuals were hesitant to accept responsibility for global problems and typically believed the government better placed to deal with them. This lack of social normality around a degree of injustice was crucial given how people's internal framing of issues was frequently used to subvert responsibility.

**What are the implications of an increasingly privatised form of care under neoliberal regimes of governance?**

Following on from above, the implications of this increasing privatised form of care such as the one experienced in the case of neoliberal policies such as the Green Deal, were also significant in terms of its ability to achieve the reductions in energy consumption that it sought. The first implication that is that this transfer of responsibility to the market and the individual sought to obscure any alternative solutions to energy efficiency, both from a governmental standpoint and an individual standpoint. This is also something which may be seen as defining factor of neoliberalism. With the issue of the overconsumption of energy being reduced a technical issue which could be solved by capital investment, this delayed the need for individuals to accept a share of responsibility and to acknowledge the importance of their behaviour with regards to this issue. Care was increasingly privatised as opposed to politicised which contributed to the lack of discourse surrounding issues of energy efficiency. While proponents of a neoliberal form of environmental governance and consumption may wish to believe that ethical consumption represents the politicising of consumption through an ethics of care, the case studies in this thesis for the Green Deal highlighted how individuals rejected the notion of consumption being inherently political and a means through which to carry out one's citizenly obligations. While in the case of WREN, individuals were more willing to accept responsibility, this was largely due to the existence of social norms around the importance of the local community in addition to a more traditionally political form of engagement in tandem to the consumption through the democratic engagement of the organisation.

In addition to this, there were also significant implications surrounding the involvement of the private sector, most notably in the case of the Green Deal. There was a clear issue of split incentives with the energy companies providing the finance exercising an obligation to shareholders before an obligation to the public or the environment. In return for participation, interest rates were demanded which proved to be a major stumbling block of the Green Deal with both respondents,
installers and assessors noting how interest rates prevented people from being interested in finance packages. The interests of capital were put before the interests of the policy which is arguably the most prominent reason for its failure and its inability to gain traction. This is highlighted by the fact that the pilot projects of the same nature were so successful with zero percent interest rates. While people were handheld through the pilot projects and provided with far more direct individual contact and engagement, it is interesting to note the difference in success. This is an issue which is potentially inherent to neoliberal policy focused around the private sector as well given that the obligation to shareholders and to capital is in many cases likely to clash with the obligation to the environment. There is also the potential for this to widen inequalities within society given the fact that those who are typically politically or socially disconnected are less likely to engage with such a scheme. While my sample was too small to draw a generalised conclusion, my sample was notably homogeneous in terms of race and economic/social status. Assessors and installers also noted how the Green Deal for example typically appealed to middle/upper middle class predominantly white families in the case of London and the surrounding area.

Ultimately, while there were positive examples of neoliberal environmental governance in this thesis, these were based around the involvement of motivated publics and volunteer organisations using a grass roots bottom up approach as opposed to involving a more typical notion of the private sector. Schemes like the Green Deal which can be thought of as having a more traditional sense of private sector involvement represented a clear issue with regards to how neoliberal market based policies fail to understand that all rights cannot be ascribed through markets in addition to the fact that the primary objectives of the market and environmentalism are often in direct conflict. As such, it is crucial when designing neoliberal policies based around the market to understand the motivations for participation in terms of the private sector and to make sure they are concurrent with the governmental objectives.

To what extent can a new form of neoliberal paternalism overcome the irrational nature of behaviour and consumption in pursuit of ecological modernisation?

The extent to which paternalism can overcome the irrational nature of behaviour is a pressing question. With policy increasing paternalistic, yet in a neoliberal form based around free choice and voluntarism, what is clear is that a key area of study is the way in which the individual respondents to paternalistic attempts at persuasion. Energy Performance Certificates however once again offer little hope in terms of the research question above.

The basic issue with regards to a paternalistic approach to environmental policy is that of
choice. While me may possess predominantly intrinsic values and wish to consume in an ethical manner, our ability to consume in conjunction with our values is inherently constrained by our ability to interpret consumption in relation to our values in addition to numerous structural factors which will be explored further on. The research from the second empirical chapter highlighted how despite the majority of the respondents possessing seemingly dominant intrinsic values, there was an almost total inability to frame consumption in terms of said values. Despite numerous respondents noting how they undertook more routine or everyday consumption and other forms of consumption in line with what would be considered self-transcendent values, when it came to the purchase or rent of a property, this was quite simply not the case. A total lack of social normality appeared with relation to properties which prevented the relevant values from being activated. With alternative forms of consumption which were engaged with through intrinsic values typically framed around some form of social normality or affective connections, a lack of discursive regimes surrounding properties prevented the correct framing of the consumption at hand. Frames are most certainly key here as they effectively dictate our perception of an issue or act. Our framing of an issue is highly related to the motivation for which we undertake an action. If we frame an issue around personal gain for example then we are unlikely to activate anything other than extrinsic values. If we frame an issue around an ethics of care, we are likely to exhibit intrinsic values given that the motivation for undertaking an action transcends the self. Frames can also be seen to be heavily tied to normality. Framing of alternative consumption was often based around what was considered normal within the space in which the consumption occurred. Therefore for EPCs to be relevant in decision making, there must be a sense of normality around the desirability of energy efficient properties even if this relates to the impact on oneself. This certainly appeared significant in that the public perception of EPCs was far removed from that of the government. Individuals failed to situate themselves in a discourse of sustainability similar to other consumption despite the massive impact of energy use in the home and this was something EPCs did little to address.

One of the vital points that should be raised regarding libertarian paternalism is that it is inherently unreliable. There is no right answer in a universal context. Everyone responds to nudges differently, based on their ability to frame an issue or act of consumption around a relevant discourse. Perhaps one person simply lacks the intrinsic values to motivate them to care, one is able to afford to consume in a desirable manner yet unable to frame the issue correctly due to a lack of social normality and one feels constrained by choice. Each of these require a different kind of nudge to overcome. One requires incentivisation, one requires engaging with discursive regimes and the other requires an increase in the provision of socially desirable goods. The range of motivations highlighted in this thesis outline how nudging, while seemingly beneficial in certain
situations, requires a somewhat homogeneous reason for why individuals fail to behave against the wishes of policy as only then will one fix be applicable across the board. What is important to note is that the individual and the importance of individuality must be taken into account when conducting environmental policy aimed at influencing behaviour or patterns of consumption. The fundamental point is that our ability to activate relevant values, to act in a reflexive manner and to consider the impact of our consumption is reliant on the motivation for which we undertake action which is reliant on our framing of the issue at hand. With such a range of motivations occurring, nudging therefore may be seen as unreliable with regards to overcoming the irrational nature of behaviour.

It is also critical to note that the source of information when seeking to disseminate good practice is crucial with regards to nudging and paternalism. With the government failing to exist in a privileged position in terms of trust and accessibility, paternalistic approaches from the government are often less likely to be successful than from local organisations as highlighted by the research for this thesis were alternatives to the Green Deal and EPC were increasingly successful in engaging with individuals. Therefore when seeking to employ paternalistic forms of neoliberal governance based around the dissemination of information, some individual or group in a privileged position of trust or accessibility greatly increases the chance of success.

**How does the constriction of “free” choice influence the effectiveness of the Energy Performance Certificate system and what does this imply for neoliberal policy based around voluntarism and market mechanisms?**

Following on from above, one of the major issues around paternalistic policies such as the Green Deal or EPCs as Haq (2008) noted, is that individuals are locked in to unsustainable consumption patterns through a lack of choice. Free choice as highlighted by new paternalism is in fact not free at all. Despite the EPCs being fundamentally about choice and the ability of the individual to make the right choice for themselves, respondents typically noted a lack of choice. With alternative factors clearly taking precedence, consumers felt as if their ability to consume in line with their values was constrained. Through primarily price, location and size, respondents often felt as if for what they could afford, the possibility was simply not there to be selective with regards to energy efficiency. The government therefore fundamentally failed to acknowledge the way in which individuals engage with a property. A property represents more than than just a purchase, it is a space of comfort and security crucial to survival and well-being. It is not something which is just consumed once then forgotten about and furthermore, given the significant
cost, is not something which can be swapped or re-purchased should it not work out. Therefore while respondents typically noted in hypothetical scenarios how they would consume in line with their intrinsic values, they felt helpless to do so in reality.

In the cases studied for this thesis, it is important to note the existence of both internal and external (psychological and structural) factors which may be seen to limit choice. While certain individuals felt the need to be close to a certain area or to live close to friends or family for example, others simply lacked the financial resources to purchase an energy efficient property despite the fact that they would have liked to. In other cases, energy efficient properties were simply not available in the area around which they were living in. To assume that energy efficiency is a matter of choice is to not only assume that every individual values energy efficiency above all other motivations when undergoing an act of consumption but also that the market provides a set of choices which allows the individual to make a decision in line with governmental objectives which was categorically untrue with regards to both points in the research carried out for this thesis.

Another issue highlighted by the implementation of neoliberal policies based around choice was the widening of social inequalities and injustice. Given that individuals were choosing from within a specific range of choices in terms of what was available and in most cases, what they can afford, certain individuals, typically those who were the wealthiest, had a far greater choice than those who with less disposable income. While it is worth noting that psychologically speaking, the wealthy often felt as if their choice was just as constrained as anyone else, in real terms, clearly the more money you have then the wider the range of properties you have to choose from. Not only this, but those with more money were therefore also ironically, increasingly likely to benefit from increased energy efficiency meaning paying lower bills and using a lower percentage or their income on fuel costs. This highlights how in the case of neoliberal policies based around choice, there is an inherent advantage for the wealthy both in terms of their ability to express care as desired by neoliberal forms of governance and also to benefit from them.

Ultimately, this once again highlights how policies based around paternalistic neoliberal approach to governance must take into account the fact that choice is not as simple as just making the “correct” decision. There are a range of factors, both psychological and structural, which inhibit decision making and prevent individuals from making decisions or undertaking acts of consumption in line with their values and/or government objectives. The difficulty in accurately predicting how individuals perceive choice once again demonstrates the inherent unreliable nature of paternalistic policy and therefore, when undertaking such a policy, once must be ready to accept a degree of uncertainty. It is therefore questionable logic to pursue such a policy in cases of extreme urgency such as the troubling overconsumption of energy within the UK.
What are the implications of an increasingly technical definition which depoliticises the issue of fuel poverty, with regards to justice, exclusion and energy efficiency?

The implications of the government's switch to an increasingly technical definition of the issue of fuel poverty cannot be understated. This was immediately obvious given that the new definition removed almost half the fuel poor population of the UK overnight thereby restricting their access to relevant policies in place to assist those in fuel poverty. While not everyone who has originally classified as in fuel poverty were in fact fuel poor, the sheer scale of the change cannot be ignored in terms of the political and social implications.

There are several key points which I have argued throughout this thesis and in particular in the third empirical chapter based around this question. The first is that by depoliticising the issue of fuel poverty, the government is removing the notion that there is a reasonable sense of disagreement around the project. Through a technical definition, the limit of where to stop viewing someone as in need of assistance becomes very clear cut. If you are below this line you need help, if you are above it you do not. This is far removed from the reality of the situation in which there are numerous people suffering who are not technically classified as fuel poor for some reason or other and as such are unable to receive assistance despite being in need. By making the definition increasingly technical, the government lowers the potential of individuals to participate in the political process and to express dissent with their situation or for individuals working with those in poverty or fuel poverty to contribute to its construction. This highlights a criticism by Shove (2010) in which she states that a single unified problematisation of an issue obscures certain aspects or individuals from view and as such increases the potential for exclusion.

Furthermore, by pushing a technical definition of the issue, the government is fundamentally failing to acknowledge the importance of the social, cultural, behavioural, and economic factors contributing to fuel poverty instead framing it around energy efficiency, a problem which can be solved through capital investment. This is a gross oversimplification of the issue and one which is not without consequences. Respondents noted in numerous cases that fuel poverty and poverty are not things which can be separated in their opinion and are also not concepts which should be separated academically or politically. Fuel poverty, much like poverty is driven by the inequalities and injustices created through the markets and neoliberal economic systems. Much like fuel poverty, poverty can also be categorised by a lack of capital limiting one's opportunities in life.

This is increasingly highlighted by the fact that the fuel poor do not consume energy in the same way as others. An increase in efficiency will not guarantee an increase in warmth as poverty overrides improvements with financial savings more important than increased levels of comfort and
warmth in many cases depending on the level of poverty experienced. It is therefore impossible to not only separate fuel poverty and poverty but to separate fuel poverty from issues of behaviour and culture as priorities are often a result of social norms. This fundamentally ignores the construction of fuel poverty and the context in which sufferers live their lives and it raises serious questions about the ability of neoliberal policies such as the Green Deal or ECO to tackle issues of fuel poverty. If the only objective is energy saving then they may function but if an end to poverty is also desirable they fall miserably short. Not only this, but there might be far worse offenders in terms of energy inefficient properties which may not be targeted. Therefore the logic of the governments attempts to tackle fuel poverty are increasingly economic rather than based on the effectiveness of said policies to lift individuals out of poverty and tackle energy efficiency to the best of their abilities.

There is also a strong argument for an increasingly technical definition failing to understand the vulnerable nature of those living in fuel poverty. With the term itself appearing somewhat meaningless with regards to those suffering, it may be seen as more of an organisational concept than something possessing social or cultural value. As those who suffer are often vulnerable, young or old and in many cases somewhat marginalised, they frequently find themselves disconnected from the political process and as such unable to properly engage with overly technical definitions. This results in a failure to understand the options available to them and for them to receive help available to them. With the governments policies to tackle fuel poverty requiring individuals to self-refer if you will and thereby recognise their own rights, this seemingly does nothing other than obscure the substantive rights of those in fuel poverty which they are asked to recognise. Not only this, but it prevents local expertise and those working with fuel poverty to help contribute to the construction of the issue despite the fact that they are quite possibly better placed than anyone to do so.

The final issue of this increasingly technical definition that I wish to list is that it frames fuel poverty as a constant. Something which cannot be eradicated in any meaningful way. With energy efficiency the problem and capital expenditure the solution, under a maxim of austerity it is easy to claim that the problem is insurmountable. As such, much as with the Green Deal, the benefits of this new neoliberal approach are questionable with regards to the population it tries to serve.

To what extent is neoliberal policy an appropriate method for tackling issues of injustice and energy efficiency

Neoliberal environmental policy, as studied in this thesis, provided an exceedingly poor
method of tackling issues of injustice and energy efficiency. The reason for this was twofold, as highlighted above, in that not only do neoliberal policies have a tendency to increase inequality given issues of exclusion and disconnection, but they also fail to target the worst offenders in terms of energy efficiency in many cases. With the solution to energy poverty once again framed in terms of choice and consumption, albeit at essentially zero cost, this fails to recognise how the young, the old and the vulnerable are disconnected from the political process to the point where many are unaware of the very existence of the schemes in place to help them. Neoliberal policy such as the Green Deal or ECO does nothing to provide a legitimised space for dissent or in terms of provoking debate around for whom should we care.

Similar to the main scheme of the Green Deal as well, there was a clear conflict of interest in terms of the involvement of the private sector with regards to ECO, the government's new policy aimed at tackling energy poverty. With ECO being financed by a levy on fuel bills, it is inherently constrained by its necessity to remain small in order to not harm those it is supposed to be helping as the larger the scheme, the higher the levy on fuel bills which in turn are experienced by those in poverty. This also extends to those who are in general poverty but not classified as fuel poor specifically as they will also be paying the levy on their fuel bills. This once again highlights the needs of capital being placed over the needs of the environment or those in energy poverty in exchange for the involvement of the private sector. In the case of ECO therefore, the more successful the scheme in terms of the more people it reaches, the more it disadvantages the poor. Once again, it is crucial to remember as well that the levy on energy bills will be disproportionately experienced by those who are poor given that it represents a far greater share of their total disposable income relative to those who are wealthier.

Draughtbusters, the local organisation working to tackle fuel poverty however, do represent a more positive example of a more neoliberal form of governance in practice. This is largely due to the fact that they work at an increasingly local scale, and are formed primarily of volunteers representing the responsibilisation of the public that neoliberalism so craves. The crucial difference here is unlike the energy companies financing ECO, there is no conflict of interest between their organisation and the goal of combatting fuel poverty. Furthermore, the local scale at which they operate allows for a more pragmatic case by case analysis of whom to help as opposed to the overly technical definition of fuel poverty employed by the government. This case by case method allows for a more nuanced approach where impacts on justice and equality can be considered and debated to avoid issues. Therefore while large scale attempts at neoliberal policy funded by the private sector are likely to represent a conflict of interest, in the case of small scale approaches to environmental governance, there is potential.
How do issues of scale and spatiality impact on attempts at creating a self-governing form of citizen-consumer?

With an increasing focus on the ability of policy to create a form of self-governing sustainable citizen who exercises obligations through consumption, this thesis focused on numerous ways in which the governmental power was transferred to the individual through a range of neoliberal policies and libertarian paternalism. This last question focuses on the ways in which geographical concepts of scale and spatiality affect the ability to create a self-regulating citizen.

I have argued that small scale grass-roots style alternatives to national projects such as the Green Deal offer a far more concrete and reliable way of promoting a sense of citizenship in line with bigger-than-self objectives for multiple reasons. Contributing to work on the citizen-consumer, governmentality and issues of scale, I have identified several key reasons for this.

The first comes back to the first empirical chapter and the way in which the Green Deal was unable to generate any meaningful affective connections within the context of the global space in which it operates. Unlike the Green Deal, WREN and small scale alternatives offer an increasingly workable route to a sense of community and citizenship. The first and more important issue is that of making climate change relevant as outlined by Demeritt (1998). While this will be explored in more detail in the next question, both WREN and Draughtbusters framed the issues of climate change, energy efficiency and fuel poverty in terms of prevalent local issues which encouraged engagement and interaction.

This comes from some extent to the fact that as noted, in a local space, it is far simpler to create meaningful affective connections as the space in which a policy operates is inherently relational. With the research for this thesis highlighting how an ethics of care and responsibility was far easier to generate in cases where tangible connections existed, there is a strong argument for local spaces being more effective in terms of changing behaviour and consumption patterns. Not only this but assuming the issue is framed around local needs and wants, the consequences of failure are visible, direct and tangible. Furthermore, the benefits are locally experienced, direct and tangible.

Ultimately, the ability to reconcile notions of consumption with citizenship at an individual level are questionable with a disaffection with affluent consumption remaining preferable in terms of solving the vast overconsumption of resources however this is most likely wishful. While many acknowledge the environmental injustice occurring in the world, the lack of visible consequences or moments of injustice in conjunction with a lack of available social norms through which to interpret
said injustices, prohibit it from being perceived as an issue of citizenship. WREN however does provide an example of a situation where consumption and citizenship have been reconciled to some extent through the use of discursive regimes to add a dimension to consumption which transcends the individual. Much like was noted in the first section of this conclusion, the key aspect of this consumption is that the goal of the consumption has been changed with the motivation for said consumption becoming not just about personal gratification but a sense of care to the community. It is important not to view consumption as an deliberate act necessarily but as part of a larger practice and understanding the motivation behind acts of consumption is crucial to being able to influence them. The redefinition of the goals driving consumption however is exceedingly difficult without the use of a local space in which strong affective connections and pre-existing relationships occur as the ability of consumers to connect themselves to global space is questionable. We should therefore remain sceptical of the ability of consumption as a tool for registering commitment and fulfilling obligations of global citizenship as concepts of the global-citizen have not discursively materialised in reality.

How are issues of climate change and energy efficiency made relevant in the case of alternatives to the Green Deal?

Going back to the point made above, the primary way in which the alternatives to the Green Deal and ECO studied in this thesis were able to encourage engagement and generate an ethics of care was through framing climate change and fuel poverty in terms of local issues. With the majority of individuals taking part in the Green Deal failing to understand the significance of the scheme beyond financial savings or energy saving in a very abstract sense, there was a failure to situate the consumption undertaken for the Green Deal within relevant discourses of sustainability and greater than self problems. WREN however for example, through the use of clever discursive strategies, took the global issue of climate change and tied it to the pressing everyday issue of local economic sustainability. With the economy representing such a major part of everyday life in a way which is far easier to perceive and connect with than the environment which is often taken for-granted, people undertook energy efficiency upgrades, invested in renewable energy and altered their consumption patterns despite the primary motivation for the scheme being to protect the local economy. Draughtbusters, took a similar approach, linking energy inefficiency and energy poverty to poverty in a more general sense and community improvement. With a focus on helping those in the local area and reducing poverty and inequality, this was a message that resonated with the volunteers and members of the local community. The key way in which issues of scale can be
applied to this is the fact that the creation of a successful discursive regime is reliant on a sense of objectivity amongst individuals as to the validity of the regime. Therefore in the case of national schemes such as the Green Deal, this becomes increasingly difficult as different geographic regions and spaces are unlikely to share a sense of objectivity. With the town of Wadebridge remarkably united behind the goals and objectives of WREN however, their discursive regime struck a clear chord. This seriously questions the ability of policy operating at a national level to be effective in creating a sense of citizenship around which to frame consumption given that citizenship thus becomes reliant on a sense of once again, social normality, which becomes increasingly complex to identify and appeal to at a national level (hence why some areas of a country vote one way, some another etc.)

It is interesting to note that this did not have to necessarily relate to the issue of climate change even. While we have seen appealing to intrinsic values is desirable, framing policies at tackling climate change around local issues can make sense as long as the local issues it is framed around are not individualistic. With WREN focusing on local economic resilience, this was still a call to arms for a cause which transcended the self and as such local residents became acutely aware of bigger-than-self problems and their ability to impact on them. This seemingly led to a greater tendency to frame issues under an ethics of care in a more general sense as they became accustomed to a less selfish and individualistic way of thinking.

While for obvious reasons, we are in need of change at a national scale, the case studies from this thesis highlight how a more local approach or focus to national level policies, especially in terms of implementation, may prove to be far more effective in terms of encouraging participation and action. Through appealing to more meaningful discursive regimes, it is possible to engage issues of climate change and energy efficiency at an individual level in addition to generating an ethics of care and responsibility which can translate into a broader sense of care for the environment and distant others as people learn to frame issues in terms of intrinsic values. Doing provides one of the most effective forms of learning and cases such as WREN demonstrated that if you manage to make issues relevant and generate a sense of objectivity around local issues, this can act as a springboard to sustained global change.
8.2 – General conclusions and advice for policymakers

In this section I briefly outline general conclusions relating to the objective of this thesis and provide advice for policymakers looking to avoid the pitfalls of the Green Deal.

Free choice isn't free – voluntary neoliberal forms of governance are a gamble, not a certainty

The research in this thesis highlights quite clearly that individual choice is inherently constrained. There are a range of factors which serve to influence our decisions beyond simply our values, attitudes and emotions. With the saliency of available frames, the tendency to revert to previous behaviours in cases of uncertainty and the structural limits of what is available to us at any given time just to name a few, it becomes clear that individuals cannot be relied upon to make choices which are considered logical under traditional notions of logic. Everyone is different and the way individuals respond to certain policies, stimuli and situations will always be different. For this reason, aiming to build environmental policy around notions of free choice, free-marketism and voluntarism that rely so heavily on the individual to interpret and enact governmental power in a desirable way is a gamble. While the benefits of ecological modernisation to policymakers are clear in that it allows a continuation of the status quo along with promoting traditional neoliberal notions of economic growth as compatible with environmental protection, EPCs highlight the way in which policies often fail to be interpreted as they were intended. While at a theoretical level, the argument that better more efficient technologies will use less resources in the long run might appear logical, this neglects to consider the importance of behaviour when applying ecological modernisation as a policy tool. With neoliberal forms of governance offering no guarantee of any kind that reductions in resource use will occur while simultaneously reducing the accountability of government and transferring blame to the consumer, an entity which frequently fails to recognise itself as responsible for environmental protection and governance, the wisdom of pursuing such policies is exceedingly questionable.

Neoliberalism is questionable in terms of its ability to formulate an ethics of care and responsibility

As we saw in the empirical chapters, there were numerous examples of neoliberal policies such as the Green Deal and the EPCs failing to generate an ethics of care and responsibility
amongst respondents, either in terms of a sense of care for other people or for the environment. With individuals who took Green Deal assessments, finance packages or EPCs frequently failing to frame them within a discourse of environmental protection, sustainability or more generally in terms of intrinsic values, this led to a situation where the majority of the time, members of the public were unable to experience an affective response from their participation. Furthermore, individuals often felt powerless to solve issues regarding the overconsumption of energy, climate change and pollution while frequently resenting blame being attributed to themselves when they felt the government was better placed to deal with it. This highlights the inability of the markets to properly attribute risk and for individuals to perceive and assume responsibilities and obligations. While modern life is increasingly based around choices where there are winners and losers, individuals reject the inherent politicisation of consumption and fail to interpret consumption in a way to exhibit care. Consumption remains for the most part, about the pursuit of self interest and the examples studied in this thesis failed to properly align that self interest with the public good. In the positive examples studied in this thesis, consumption was re-politicised through participation in democratic organisations and through relevant discourse harking back to a more traditional notion of citizenship. Furthermore, the nature of the consumption in question was highly relevant given it was a space of low affective potential and highly invisible benefits and consequences. Subject formation rarely occurred as a result of participation in the Green Deal or EPC schemes compared to WREN for example where it was increasingly prevalent given the higher affective potential of the space in which it operated.

**Behaviour and consumption must be properly situated in the social, economic, cultural and structural context in which it operates**

Neoliberal forms of environmental governance are inherently hypocritical in some ways as a policy tool in that they promotes the individual as the focal point for governmental power under the guise of the informed citizen-consumer who when given a little nudge in the right direct is capable of making informed decisions yet also tends to reduce problems to technical issues devoid of problematisations of human behaviour. While informed choice is promoted as the solution to our problems, uninformed choices are neglected with regards to the cause. As such, it is impossible to view behaviour as independent of the social, economic, cultural and structural context in which it is situated. It is crucial to properly understand the motivation behind the undertaking of acts of consumption as consumption itself is not always carried out in a reflexive manner. A combination of social normality, availability, affordability and appropriateness are just some of a range of factors
which serve to construct the ways in which behaviour unfolds. EPCs do little to affect the purchase of a property because when people are looking for a property, they are not doing so out of a sense of care for the environment but out of a desire to provide a comfortable and secure living environment for themselves and potentially their families and therefore if we wish this to change, social norms must be established around framing consumption as an expression of care.

**Understanding what matters to the individual is key in changing behaviour and patterns of consumption**

If we therefore wish to alter consumption patterns and see sustained behaviour change there must be a fundamental acknowledgement that understanding why acts of consumption are undertaken is crucial with regards to this goal. If consumption is to become an activity infused with care and the means through which to express citizenship, it is no good the government enacting policies to this effect without the public acknowledging their role in the process. Until there is sufficient change in discursive regimes around climate change and the environment to a degree where environmental protection and sustainability becomes the norm, asking individuals to consume in a way that benefits society and the planet is futile as to the individual there is not a problem to begin with. Whether as a result of a search for social normality, a desire to reduce the distributional inequalities generated through consumption or through affective connections being established on a global scale, only when a desire to engage in environmentally and socially beneficial behaviour becomes a core objective of consumption are policies based around the citizen-consumer likely to function as intended. With an almost complete level of disconnection between government objectives and public perception, key neoliberal environmental policies currently in place or those which have ended such as the Green Deal have failed to reconstruct the notion of the consumer relevant to the time and place in which they operate and therefore fail to have the desired effect.

**One of the best ways to learn is through doing**

There is one consolation here in that the research has indicated that there is potential to for individuals to learn through engaging. As in the cases of WREN or literary examples such as the London congestion charge, individuals, once policies were enacted, were able to experience the benefits directly and engage with them at which point they became increasingly popular. Not only this but in the case of WREN for example, members became increasingly accustomed to framing
issues in terms of the greater good. Therefore with a tendency to favour familiarity and accessible cognitive operations, if policy takes on a more authoritative dimension which forces a certain system upon a public even unwillingly, as long as the reality turns out to be positive and there are clear tangible benefits, there is a chance that over time the level of engagement will rise and attitudes will change. One might therefore state that while notions of choice and enlightened consumerism are attractive, they are somewhat utopian. In the long run, through forcing individuals for lack of a better word into certain patterns of behaviour or practices, there is the chance for these practices to be internalised, normalised and then in future provide a more stable platform upon which to build an increasingly voluntary form of environmental policy.

8.3 – Areas for future research

In this thesis, I have empirically engaged with the ways that neoliberal forms of environmental governance have engaged with climate change through means of voluntarism and free choice. As noted by Rutherford (2007) and Mitchell (2006) despite the abundance of theorisations of governmentality, studies of governmentality are often lacking in the production of of normalised subjects and therefore this study has attempted to empirically evaluate the circulation of power through neoliberal governmentality with a focus on the individual. With the blurring of citizenship and consumption appearing to accelerate rather than subside and with a strong tendency towards free-marketism, an understanding of the ways in which the consumer is being constructed relevant to the age we live in becomes increasing crucial. As such much of the areas of interest for future research also revolve around the notion of the importance of empirical research with this thesis calling for increasingly varied studies of governmentality, power and practice.

While there is a substantial body of work on geographies of care and responsibility, these often fail to take into account the way neoliberalism seeks to responsibilise individuals and transfer said responsibility away from the government. With so much environmentally damaging consumption occurring at such a low level or reflexivity, further examination of the ways in which issues of climate change and sustainability are made relevant with regards to consumption and promote discursive consciousness is an area of great importance.

Despite a growing body of work on the theorisations of ecological modernisation and its different constructions, few studies have empirically engaged with it as a policy tool despite acknowledging it as such. Research based around the empirical study of the ways in which ecological modernisation serves to obfuscate the loss of accountability through privatisation,
specifically focusing on constructions of blame and responsibility with regards to tackling environmental degradation would make an interesting topic.

Future attempts at studying neoliberal policy and ecological modernisation would also be well served to focus on issues of depoliticisation and exclusion. Neoliberal forms of governmentality frequently serve to depoliticise issues and populations through the use of technical problematisations of the world. Following on from how ecological modernisation may be seen to obfuscate a loss of accountability, an interesting area of governmentality research would be the ways in which this may serve to increase exclusion with certain narratives gaining prevalence over others and the ways in which subjectivity is disconnected from its social location (Rutherford, 2007).

While this thesis has attempted to provide an examination of the impacts of scale and spatiality on governmentality, this has been limited in scope. With geography so well placed to investigate this topic, debates around the impact of the spatial level at which governmentality is applied focusing on the ability of the local to provide increasingly objective spaces in which to pursue policy goals is potentially beneficial.

Finally, the real potential of engaging climate change through new forms of green governance and libertarian paternalism based around free choice and voluntarism remains questionable. With the consequences of the failure of these policies so high, any attempts to empirically evaluate the potential of neoliberal governance with regards to the transfer of biopolitical power in search of the responsible citizen will be welcomed!
The politics of the Green Deal and Energy Performance Certificates: Neoliberalism in search of the “responsible citizen” and the practices of the UK carbon economy.

We would like to invite you to participate in this original research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

- The aim of this study is specifically, to determine the impact of the Green Deal on the Energy Performance Certificate system as well as on residential carbon emissions. In more general terms, it aims to look at the impact of monetary and information based policy as an advocacy tool and aims to assess its strength in reducing residential emissions. The main hypothesis being tested is that while the Green Deal should theoretically remove key barriers to investment in energy efficiency, a combination of poor knowledge, public apathy and the gap between knowledge and action will prevent any real progress from occurring with the Green Deal in its current form.

- This project will involve interviews from members of the public, property professionals, energy suppliers, Green Deal upgrade providers, relevant experts and members of government.

- Participation will involve short (most likely 15-30 minute) semi-structured interviews. Follow up questions may be asked in some cases but this would most likely be via phone or email.

- There should be minimal risk in participating in this project given the lack of requirement for identification of respondents as well as the nature of the material being asked.

- A copy of the final report can be requested by any respondent.

- All Data will be stored under compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 which can be outlined at your request. Any information stored will be made clear during the interview process although this will most likely involve any information given during the interview/further correspondence.

- Please note that King’s College London is a public body and is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This means that the College has a general legal duty to make its information public and this can include research data. Personal and confidential material is excluded though and need not usually be disclosed.
In addition to withdrawing yourself from the study, you may also withdraw any data/information you have already provided up until it is transcribed for use in the final report (April, 2017)

Interviews will be recorded, subject to your permission. Recordings of interviews will be deleted upon transcription.

If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

If your participation is anonymous it will not be possible for us to withdraw your data once data has been collected.

Permission for the research team to use the data collected in future work may be granted if the participant allows it.

If there are any questions please contact:
Alex Edwards
Flat 25 Rathnew Court
alex.edwards@kcl.ac.uk
London E2 0QG h:0208 983 0026
5 Meath Crescent m:07969 639 675

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

If this study has harmed you in any way you can contact King's College London using the details below for further advice and information:

Maria Halas Lisoy
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Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: The politics of the Green Deal and Energy Performance Certificates: Neoliberalism in search of the “responsible citizen” and the practices of the UK carbon economy.

King’s College Research Ethics Committee Ref: REP(GSSHM)/12/13-1

Thank you for considering taking part in this research. The person organising the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part. If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You
will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

5. I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data up to the point of publication [OR insert date if stated on Information Sheet].

6. I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be handled in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.

7. I consent to the research team being able to use the data collected for future work. As with this project, it will not be identifiable in any reports.

Participant’s Statement:

I ________________________________

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed __________________ Date __________________

Investigator’s Statement:

I ________________________________

Confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and any foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the participant.

Signed __________________ Date __________________
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