Making the Human Economy more Tolerable:

Organisations that put the Environment/Sustainability First

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Abstract

This essay draws upon a recent polemic by Johnson in the September 2008 edition of SEAJ 'Sustainability and Life: How long can the earth tolerate the human economy?' This essay briefly reviews Johnson's polemic and challenges his equating of a business to a natural living system. From there using Johnson's polemic and his views as leaping off point, research findings from an exploratory study with organisations that have environmental/sustainability focused missions are presented. The findings support some of Johnson's views regarding restraint and that a sustainable future will not be populated with publicly traded corporations. However, it also adds to them by exposing how the organisations interviewed operate to a balancing act of mission and money, with money being subservient, but a necessary means to an end. The essay closes with a view that the researched organisations represent a 'future normal.'

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Introduction

This essay has been prompted by a recent polemic in the Social and Environmental Accounting Journal 'Sustainability and Life: How long can earth tolerate the human economy?' (Johnson, September 2008)[1]. In answer to the SEAJ editors' commentary regarding the polemic, this essay uses Johnson's speech as a leaping off point from which to highlight research that was focused upon organisations that

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[1] Johnson's polemic was actually his closing speech to a conference on business and sustainability in 2007 in Portland, Oregon.

have environmental/sustainability core missions, as opposed to them being an addendum. As a result, this essay builds upon the verve in Johnson's polemic, but also adds to it.

The essay begins with a brief review of Johnson's article and exploration of some of the views he expressed regarding equating a business to a natural living system. Following that the research is introduced, beginning with an introduction to the hypotheses that were tested. After this, the interview sample is presented, followed by the findings. This essay then closes with a conclusion that not only summarises the findings and highlights some areas for future research, but also reflects back upon Johnson's original polemic.

A Brief Review of Johnson's Polemic

Johnson's polemic makes the argument that any discussion about sustainable development results in that discussion actually being about economic growth because development is a word drawn from "the literature of neo-classical economics" (Johnson, 2008:92).

Because of this, Johnson prefers the word *sustainability* as opposed to the term sustainable development and he utilises Ehrenfeld's definition that sustainability is "human behaviour that keeps open the possibility that all life on Earth, human and non human will thrive and flourish forever" (Johnson, 2008:93 citation Ehrenfeld, 2004). Thus Johnson argues that *sustainability* and its focus on life should be the "warp-thread that runs through all human behaviour" (Johnson, 2008:93).

Taking this further, he states that social and economic concerns are human systems that are enveloped by "one fundamental support system for all life on Earth" (Johnson, 2008:93), i.e. economic and social concerns are subsets of the environment. As such there is no equivalence between social, economic and environmental concerns, they are not substitutable and the triple bottom line concept needs to be avoided. From here, Johnson argues that a business should be viewed as a "natural living system that thrives in a context of cooperation, restraint and

quality, not in a context of competition, growth and accumulation" (Johnson, 2008:93) and that this change in view will result in sustainability being achieved. Furthermore, to reach this state of sustainability Johnson also foresees that (1) economic activities will need to be focused on the local, regional level and (2) financial and other imperatives must not be allowed to drive growth beyond the capacity of a region to support human activity without diminishing the ability of other life to thrive and flourish. He also adds that this world is not likely to be "inhabited by publicly-traded corporations" (Johnson, 2008:94).

To support the case for more localization Johnson uses the example of Toyota to indicate that companies can "operate at regional scale without suffering high costs" (Johnson, 2008:94). However, it should be noted that Johnson does recognise that overall "Toyota is not a model of how to achieve sustainability" (Johnson, 2008:94). To support environmental innovations more generally Johnson offers an example

from Nike about sewing the soles of shoes to their uppers and in so doing more material could be diverted from waste streams. However as with Toyota, Johnson highlights that this is a small step towards sustainability by Nike and that they need to take many more, with perhaps the next one being local manufacture as opposed to only making shoes in "low wage areas located thousands of miles from the areas where people buy and use the shoes" (Johnson:2008:94). After this Johnson closes his polemic with the statement that "sustainability is the only path to long-run profitability there is for any business" (2008:94).

As the SEAJ editors indicate, Johnson's polemic is a welcome addition to the more general call for business to change its ways and pursue sustainable outcomes. However prior to outlining how his piece provides a leaping off point for the research to be presented, it is worthwhile highlighting one aspect of Johnson's views that are potentially problematic; that is the view that a

business needs to be seen as a "natural living system" (2008:93).

In taking this view, Johnson is potentially equating a business to a form of life. Thus in reflecting back upon Johnson's preferred definition of sustainability it appears that businesses should also "thrive and flourish forever" (Johnson, 2008:93). While there may be nothing inherently wrong with businesses thriving and flourishing forever depending upon how they operate and indeed if they operate to Johnson's preferred mode. Viewing business as a form of life is problematic. As elevating businesses into the same category as other forms of life, even humans, creates a crisis in decision making. As a natural living system (that is a business) that is life results in a situation within the context of Johnson's view of sustainability, where a business has as much right to flourish as an any other form of life, human or non-human. Consequently who makes the decisions of arbitration between these different forms of life (business, human life, non-human life)? While the pragmatic

answer to this question is that it is humans; and indeed Johnson's preferred definition of sustainability places it (the definition of sustainability) within the context of human behaviour. The difficulty of equating business to life via the route of considering a business as a natural living system is that it creates an equation whereby a business and its needs, to enable it to flourish and thrive, need to be balanced against those of other perhaps more readily identifiable forms of life. This is doubtful to be Johnson's intention although it is not totally clear from his polemic. Thus Johnson would perhaps be better served by avoiding stating any views of seeing business as a natural living system but rather sticking to his subsequent statement of viewing "business as a system for providing livelihoods in which humans use their creative talents to serve human needs" (Johnson, 2008:93); that perhaps has operating principles similar to natural living systems. The consistent application of this relegation of business to a subservient level relative to other forms of life avoids any confusion. As if it is

misapplied and businesses are seen as being equivalent to other forms of life rather than servants it would be likely that businesses and by result the economy is not made tolerable but rather becomes the foci of what is to be sustained.

Turning back to other aspects of Johnson's polemic his statements that businesses in a world of sustainability should not allow financial measures to be their sole focus, and that they are not likely to be publicly-traded corporations echoes some of the findings from the research presented below. Similarly, Johnson's call for sustainability to be a 'warp-thread' running through all human behaviour (personal, social, economic, political, educational, religious) is also echoed by the findings from the research although with a slightly different angle - in that the interviewed individuals do not appear to work to separate spheres of concern in their actions and take a more boundary-less, less compartmentalised view of their behaviour and the behaviour of their organisations.

While the research findings support some of Johnson's views, they also diverge from them. For example, the interviewed sample did believe in their growth, albeit they could also demonstrate examples of sufficiency or to use Johnson's term restraint. However prior to outlining the research findings in more detail, the study will be introduced, beginning with an exposition of the hypotheses that were to be tested, followed by an overview of the interview sample.

Hypotheses to Be Tested

The research was an exploratory study with 23 organisations that had environmental integrity or sustainability as part of their core mission, as opposed to an addendum. While the research was exploratory, the hope was that new conceptions and notions of business that would help to facilitate the progression of business to a more Earth tolerable state of operation would be found. Hence the research was built around six core hypotheses that challenged conventional meta narratives

(Cummings, 2005) as outlined in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Hypotheses to be investigated

Organisations that have environmental integrity or sustainability as their core mission…

1. …do not pursue profit maximisation
2. …are familiar with, utilise and can demonstrate elements of sufficiency (enough)
3. …are likely to reject publicly limited status because of the profit demands when listed
4. …are likely to not believe in money as an end, as opposed to a means
5. …may have a world view that is either eco or sustaincentric (as per Gladwin et al's definitions, 1995).
6. …are likely not to see clear lines of demarcation between the inside and the outside of the organisation (the environment)

These hypotheses arose from an extensive review of the literature and without wishing to repeat the fullness of that review, it can be seen that the hypotheses reflect many of the narratives evident in the social and environmental accounting/management literature, as well as those in Johnson's polemic.

The first two hypotheses outline the non pursuit of profit maximisation and demonstrable elements of sufficiency, in this regard they are commensurate with not allowing a financial imperative to rule the decision making in an organisation and restraint, as Johnson alludes to in his polemic. Similarly the next two hypotheses (three and four) flow from this lack of financial imperialism in an organisation, with the third hypothesis in particular being akin to Johnson's view that a sustainability focused world will not be populated by publicly traded corporations. Likewise the fourth hypothesis (viewing money as means) echoes Johnson's statement that business should be seen as "system for providing livelihoods in which humans use their creative talents to serve human needs" (1998:93). As if money is viewed as a means rather than an end, then it is likely that the organisation is seen as something beyond a reductionist money making machine perspective and rather, more about the service it provides to humans.

Hypotheses five diverges from Johnson's piece because it is about paradigms that can result in sustainable development, a concept Johnson rejects in favour of

sustainability. Albeit Gladwin, Kennelly and Krause (1995) who derived the paradigms defined sustainable development as;

"a process of achieving human development (widening or enlarging the range of people's choices) in an *inclusive, connected, equitable, prudent* and *secure* manner"
(Gladwin et al, 1995:878)

In this regard the definition of sustainable development deployed by Gladwin et al (1995) does perhaps have echoes of Johnson's preferred definition of sustainability albeit it is primarily focused upon human life.

The final hypothesis, hypothesis six, is an ambitious hypothesis that aims to explore the interviewees' perception of boundaries and thus how they compartmentalise their organisation and its impacts. It is a hypothesis that aims to explore notions of separateness and it leans upon King's (1995) view that organisations of the future will resemble estuaries where they have no boundaries and "the organisation will

mix with the environment, other organisations, and society" (King, 1995:979). Furthermore "a person may not be able to distinguish when he or she is inside or outside an organization or not, and it may not be easy to tell when an individual is working for the organization, acting as a stakeholder, or engaged in institutional activities" (King, 1995:979). That this hypothesis reaches for a boundary-less, less compartmentalised view does perhaps echo Johnson's desire for sustainability to be a warp-thread running through all aspects of life (political, economic, social, etc).

These six hypotheses formed the core of the semi-structured interviews that were conducted and as discussed the first four hypotheses clearly reflect some of Johnson's views, while the final two are slightly divergent and have a more tenuous link. This essay will now present the interview sample and methodology of analysing the interviews, prior to reporting the findings.

The Interview Sample and Methodology

The 23 organisations interviewed for this study were targeted because their core mission statements were focused on environmental integrity/sustainability, as opposed to these concerns being an addendum. A focus on these types of organisations was taken because of a view that they are likely to be operating to new principles and hence challenge the conventional notions that are behind the hypotheses. The mission statement was used as the identifier because of the view that an organisation is "a social device for efficiently accomplishing through group means some stated purpose" (Katz and Kahn, 1966:16) where that stated purpose is the mission statement. An example of the mission statement of one of the organisations interviewed is highlighted below (a full list of the organisations interviewed, where permissions allow can be found in the appendix, Table 1).

Triodos Bank finances companies, institutions and projects that add cultural value and benefit people and the environment, with the support of depositors and investors who want to encourage corporate social responsibility and a sustainable society. Our mission is; (a) To help create a society that promotes people's quality of life and that has human dignity at its core. (b) To enable individuals, institutions and businesses to use money more consciously in ways that benefit people and the environment, and promote sustainable development. (c) To offer our customers sustainable financial products and high quality service. (Triodos Bank, www.triodos.co.uk)

Building upon the focus on mission statements and given Katz and Kahn's view that an organisation is the "epitome of the purposes of its designer, its leaders or its key members" (1966:15), the focus within organisations was to interview the leaders, founders, managing directors or key managers.

The interviews were conducted between August 2007 and January 2008 and were semi-structured to allow both the interviewer and the interviewee to co-create the territory of what was to be explored. In total 23 interviews were

conducted with 25 individuals[2]. 17 of the interviewees were founders, managing directors or chief executives, 17 of the organisations had less than 50 employees, and 17 were privately held with three being subsidiaries of, or partially owned by publicly traded corporations and the remaining three being a co-operative, a mutual and a charity. With regard to annual turnover, although this information is not available in all cases, the range was from less than a million pounds per annum through to hundreds of millions of pounds.

All of the interviews were recorded with the exception of one, where extensive notes were taken. These recordings realised over 700 pages of transcript. The method for analysing the interviews drew upon a process offered by O'Dwyer (2004) and Spence (2005) and involved multiple layers of data reduction and interpretation. The first reduction and interpretation involved an audio review of the interviews that captured headlines

and the second involved three iterations of transcript analysis using a coding software (NVivo). From this analysis the findings presented below were realised.

The Findings[3]

The interviewees revealed that the primary purpose of their organisations was to change industry and society. In effect to show that "we can be far more adventurous with organisations and helping the planet" (belu, Reed Paget, founder). In this regard the organisations can to a certain extent be likened to campaigners as they took the view that if they can show that their organisation is viable and "that it's credible…that might encourage others [other organisations] to move in there [into the market]" (Triodos Bank, Charles Middleton, Managing Director).

Building upon this the interviewees also expressed a hope that their products and services would change customer mindsets regarding the environment and thus have a potential spill-over effect

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[2] At two of the interviews, two individuals were present.

[3] Please note that in the presentation of the findings, quotes from the interviewees are also presented within the text.

into other customer purchases. As by the very act of their products being in customers hands the hope was that customers might "think about the way they purchase things in a different fashion" (TerraCycle, Jon Beyer, Co-founder). While this hope was stated by the interviewees, its viability has been called into question by recent reports by Crompton (2008) and Crompton and Thorgersen (2009) who outline that the product alone is not enough, a customer's background and their rationale for purchase is also key in creating any spill-over effect that results in the customer changing more of their purchasing towards environmentally friendly options.

Referring back to the campaigning element to the organisations, this begged the question of why be a company as opposed to perhaps typical conceptions of campaigning organisations such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs)? In response to this interviewees were clear that to their mind, companies could make a real difference and that they (companies) get "more done" (Company B, Dale Vince). A view borne from the notion that "if something absolutely fantastic, fantastically ecological or sustainable cannot be done in a rentable way well then you can do what you want but you will never be able to realise it" (Ecover, Peter Malaise, Concept Manager). While this view admits the hegemony of money, money was still seen as a tool to serve environmental and social change. In this regard the interviewees were clear that money was not the purpose of their organisation but a tool that gave them the "flexibility of being able to carry on putting things back" (revolve, interviewee) and in this regard all saw money as "not the end, it comes before the end, it's the means to the end" (Company B, Dale Vince).

These views of money being a tool to realise environmental and social change, clearly puts the organisations on a tightrope between their financial viability and pursuing their missions. In this regard the interviewees were clear that the organisations had to achieve a balance because they "wouldn't be here

if it wasn't economically viable …[and they] wouldn't be here if it wasn't environmentally making some sense… [they would] walk away" (Green Building Store, Chris Herring, Co-founder).

What this balancing act also demonstrated was that ensuring economic viability held the organisations back from pursuing every environmental or social advantage that they could. As interviewees were clear that their organisations could not be idealistic in pursuing every initiative as they would likely end up being insignificant and not achieve very much because there would be no constituency to purchase their products and services. In this regard they demonstrated that financial viability and customer expectations held them back and in effect meant that they operated to the terms of relevance that they both help to create but also that society expects: because to quote one interviewee "I think it's really critical that we do remain relevant, that we don't sort of slide off into some parallel universe" (Triodos Bank, Charles Middleton, Managing Director).

This balancing act between financial viability and their missions and the non-negotiability of financial viability does not result, as may be expected, in the pursuit of profit maximisation. On this the interviewees were clear that if profit was everything then they could be perceived as holding their organisations back as for them "the absolute maximum profit isn't what counts and nor is the timeframe" (Company B, Dale Vince). For them the proposition is "not one about maximising shareholder return, it's about investing in [for example] a bank that is taking a more sustainable view" (Triodos Bank, Charles Middleton, Managing Director). While this view was common to the organisations interviewed, two organisations (Company B, Terra Plana) did highlight how the finance function in their organisations did put financial concerns first: views that perhaps reflect the effects of an accounting education which is invariably focused upon educating individuals to understand companies through a monetary lens.

This pull away from profit maximisation also demonstrated itself by the interviewees providing examples of sufficiency, or to use Johnson's word restraint. Where the organisations offered examples of delisting products that were significant parts of their revenue (Suma and Pillars of Hercules), or had used more expensive packaging options (TerraCycle), or had refused to supply potential customers even though they could deliver significant revenue (Green Stationery Store, Terra Plana, Suma) or had not pursued the selling of congruent adjacent products (Company D). While these maybe examples of organisations making decisions that are purely congruent with their mission statements, they also again demonstrate that financial concerns are not the sole focus for the organisations.

Taking this lack of monetary focus further, it is also perhaps unsurprising that the organisations generally rejected becoming a publicly limited, quoted organisation because of their view that investors "want to make as much money as possible" (BioRegional, Sue

Riddlestone, Co-founder) and that they (the organisations) would be "forced into doing something which might harm the environmental side, because [they're] not making enough money" (revolve, interviewee). Taking this further one organisation (seventh GENERATION) highlighted how it had been a quoted company but the monetary pressures had been so constraining that the company was taken back into private ownership. Similarly, the organisations that were owned or partially owned by subsidiaries highlighted how their degrees of freedom were compromised by their ownership status because for example, as the Ecover[4] interviewee stated; "even our CEO would agree that he also, at times, would like to do things in a different way but he's bound by rules". Nevertheless Company A, a subsidiary of a plc, did highlight that the great thing with their offering is that "we do the right thing and people want us to do the right thing". In this regard, Company A perhaps highlights a nuance whereby, although quoted status may

[4] At the time of conducting the interviews Ecover was partially owned by a plc, quoted company

commonly be perceived to detract from the mission, at the same time the mission demands appropriate behaviour. While the bounds of appropriate behaviour are wide, the quote does raise an interesting perspective upon whether and by how much a parent captures the subsidiary, but also the subsidiary captures the parent.

To close out this discussion on publicly listed, quoted status, it is worthwhile highlighting the experience of howies, one of the companies interviewed. Dave Hieatt the co-founder, highlighted how his company was now owned by a quoted parent (Timberland). However, in his search for a parent because of extreme financial difficulties, he could only find three organisations he would wish to parent howies: with Timberland being an exceptional case because the majority of the shareholding (>50%) is within the original Timberland family hands. Thus in his view Timberland was more able to withstand the short term monetary pressures typically associated with quoted status.

Moving away from financial concerns and sufficiency to other areas, the interviewees were asked how they perceived the relationship between the economy, the environment and society. In particular whether they saw it as nested, intersecting or as three pillars (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Economic/Social/Environment – Nested or Separate?
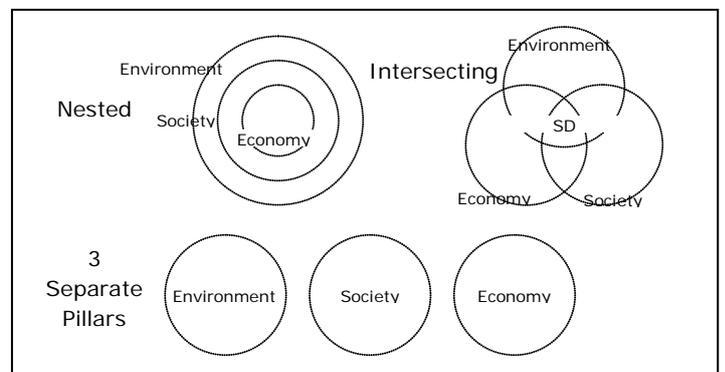
The responses to this line of questioning were mixed with some of the interviewees being clear that their organisation was built upon three pillars, whereas others outlined that in the future the environmental and social pillars will become much more important relative to the economic pillar. However, nine of the interviewees rejected the conceptions completely, saying that they didn't see a distinction and any boundaries are artificial, that a

holistic framework needs to be taken and that whereas for other organisations the environment is "just another category they need to deal with" (Company D, Paul Ellis) for organisations such as themselves the environment is part of their "DNA rather than just [being] bolted on" (Green Building Store, Chris Herring, Co-founder). In this regard their views allude to a more boundary-less, less compartmentalised view of their organisations; views that are beyond making money and incorporate wider concerns. While this may not be unexpected given the mission statements of the organisations, it again indicates that the interviewees view their organisations as having a wider purpose.

Taking this further, this wider purpose also showed itself with many of the interviewees highlighting how they had a love[5] for their work, where it was for example work of "love and attention" (BioRegional, Sue Riddlestone, Co-founder) and that for them "work is a

part of life [and they] don't separate it that much" (Green Building Store, Bill Butcher, Co-founder). Again while this strong affinity to their work might be expected from the individuals interviewed (founders and senior managers). The interviewees also highlighted how the wider purpose of the organisation enabled them to attract staff that they could otherwise not afford and how when individuals join them from larger organisations it is for the new joiners like "a breath of fresh air" (Company D, Paul Ellis). While the study could not verify these claims, as other individuals in the organisations were not interviewed; in taking the claims at face values it would appear that organisations with a wider purpose, are creating a unique and more purposeful environment for the employees.

One final finding to expose from the interviews that pertains to Johnson's notion that in a sustainability focused future companies will not be obsessed with growth. The organisations interviewed were clear that their growth

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[5] Please note the word love is being used here because the interviewees used it. Hence the word is not being used flippantly but appropriately.

was desirable. The belief in their growth arose from a view that in selling more of their products and services they could affect more change and edge out less environmentally benign offerings. In this regard they did not see themselves growing the market but rather replacing the market. Nevertheless they did see the paradox of growth in that "if we grow then the paradox is that we will become more or a problem [referring to their environmental burdens]" (howies, Dave Hieatt, Co-founder). Further they did recognise the conundrum of growth particularly with regards to the desirable size of and number of staff in the organisation, where the concern was how "can we hold the culture together" (seventh GENERATION, Gregor Barnum, Director of Corporate Consciousness). Consequently with regard to growth, the organisations interviewed could be said to not follow a meta-narrative of all growth is good (Cummings, 2005), but rather they were cautious about it.

This essentially closes the findings as they pertain to the leaping off point that was Johnson's 2008 polemic. The findings will now be summarised, the original hypotheses reflected upon, along with some reflection back on how these findings pertain to views expressed in Johnson's polemic.

Summary

The research exposes that the organisations interviewed are pursuing mission *and* money. They are operating a balancing act where they pursue their mission *and* money because of economic necessity. What is also exposed is that the organisations are not operating to *if then* contingencies, based around *if* they realise enough monetary returns *then* they will pursue a particular environmental or social end. Rather the organisations hold the two in balance, yet money is also subservient, but necessary, and a means to their missions' end; with perhaps the real drag on the pursuit of their missions not being money but societal expectations.

In pursuing mission and money the organisations could also be characterised as being "altruistically selfish and selfishly altruistic" (Maturana and Varela

1998: 197)[6]. A biological analogy whereby the organisations interviewed for this research are pursuing missions that will benefit the whole of society (as we all benefit from more sustainable outcomes) while at the same time they are benefiting themselves by ensuring their own survival in the process.

Turning to the six hypotheses at the core of this research, it is clear that the organisations do not pursue profit maximisation, can demonstrate sufficiency, generally reject publicly quoted status and see money as a means. With regards to their paradigm views (eco or sustaincentric), the findings presented here do not support this hypothesis. However, subsequent analysis that does not fit well into the parameters of this essay did reveal that the organisations are predominately sustaincentric in their views. Lastly with regards to them taking a wider more boundary-less, less compartmentalised

view of their organisation, there was some tentative support for this.

When reflecting upon Johnson's polemic, it is clear that the organisations interviewed do not judge themselves solely by financial measures they take a wider view (as their missions essentially demand) and this wider view is a warp-thread running through everything they do. The organisations are also in some agreement with Johnson that being publicly–traded is not commensurate with sustainability. They do demonstrate examples of restraint, but unfortunately perhaps from Johnson's perspective, they also believe in growth, albeit they do question it.

Hence, while this study was only exploratory and there is much more research that could be conducted, for example; widening the interview base of individuals from organisations to verify statements, conducting larger surveys of similar organisations, or more quantitative reviews of the prevalence of these types of organisations and their importance to economies, to name a

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[6] This concept (which draws on biology) is used to describe how herds of animals ensure their safety by having some of the herd act as look outs for danger. Consequently, an individual herd member helps to ensure not only their own survival but also the survival of the group as a whole.

few. When reflecting upon Johnson's polemic it could be proffered that the organisations interviewed for this study are enabling of sustainability and potentially more enabling of sustainability than the examples of Nike and Toyota that he originally offered. In this regard the research does highlight that there are organisations other than Nike and Toyota that can be utilised as examples of enabling a more sustainable future. Further bringing more of the understandings and results from research into these organisations into the academic literature will likely enable different conceptions of business to become mainstream ideas with the students. The students who are going to be the business leaders of the 21st century that have to deal with many of the environmental and social issues that are being foretold and likely to have to realise a new normal way of doing business in the future.

To close, this research can perhaps be best summarised in the words of the interviewees. In that they are organisations where it would appear that traditional thinking is not appropriate:

"The traditional kind of thinking mind does not live here very easily" (seventh GENERATION, Gregor Barnum, Director of Corporate Consciousness)

Furthermore, even though organisations like those interviewed would not exist if the pursuit of profit was always consistent with societal and environmental interests, they are perhaps what 'future normal' will look like. To quote;

"now people say that's green and, and ethical, and I'm like oh well I'm not sure it's either, but I think it should be normal behaviour to try and run your business in as good a way as possible. So, you know, it's not normal to be a polluter or, or at least it shouldn't be. So that's why I'm slightly nervous about all this stereotyping, and you know you're green in your articles, that kind of makes it sound like that's odd behaviour and what I'm trying to achieve is to make that normal" (howies, Dave Hieatt, Co-founder)
[…talking about sustainability and the organisation] "Sometimes when I talk to people I realise that for us what's normal is

not normal for everybody else. I just realise

how far we've come and how much we know.

But I just do think that it isn't weird and it is

just, we're just slightly in the future"

(BioRegional, Sue Riddlestone, Co-founder)

End Note

A fuller exposition of the research presented in this essay can be found in Barter and Bebbington (2009).

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Appendix

The names of the companies that took part in the interviews, where permissions allow, are listed in the table below.

Table 1: Names of Organisations Interviewed

Company Name/Code
1. Pillars of Hercules
2. TerraCycle
3. biome lifestyle
4. Company A
5. Beyond Skin
6. Company B
7. Recycline
8. Green Building Store
9. seventh GENERATION
10. Ecover
11. Company C
12. People Tree
13. Triodos Bank
14. howies
15. Green Stationary Company
16. revolve
17. Terra Plana
18. By Nature
19. belu
20. Company D
21. BioRegional
22. Suma
23. Company E

The roles of the individuals interviewed are summarised below.

Table 2: Role of Individuals Interviewed

Role	Number
Founder/Co-Founder	14
Managing Director/CEO	3
Executive Director (Specific functional area)	1
Commercial/Marketing/General Manager	3
Member/Co-worker	2
Director of Corporate Consciousness /Concept Manager	2

The size of the companies by staff numbers are summarised in the table below.

Table 3: Size of Organisations by Number of Staff

Staff Number Categories	Count
1-10	6
10-50	11
50-100	3
100-200	3

The ownership structures of the companies interviewed is shown below.

Table 4: Ownership Category of Organisations Interviewed

Broad Ownership Categories	Count
Private (Limited)	17
Subsidiary of/Partially Owned by PLC	3
Charity/Co-Operative/Mutual	3