Pushing for Peace
A case study on Fairphone as an exploration of conflict-sensitive consumerism

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Conflicts, territories & identities

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ABSTRACT

As citizens are seeking for new means to express their political values and concerns, do-it-yourself political activism by means of consumption in the global North against violent conflict in the global South has so far remained understudied. This explorative research on conflict-sensitive consumerism bridges academic literature on conflict resources, the global embeddedness of ‘local’ conflict, political consumerism and cosmopolitanism. Based on this theoretical framework, this thesis explores how conflict-sensitive consumerism can be understood and how it is linked to political consumption as an expression of cosmopolitanism. For this, the case of Fairphone has been used to explore the meanings and values of consumers and makers that can be linked to their purchase and production of what is considered the first step towards a conflict-free phone. A phone produced with natural resources from mines outside the reach of armed groups.

By means of a discourse analysis of 49 blogs, four videos and website information, an online survey with 107 respondents and seven interviews with Fairphone and customers, the conclusion can be drawn that the vast majority of Fairphone buyers can be seen as both political consumers and cosmopolitans. They embody corresponding values and behavior in line with global accountability and global solidarity beyond their national borders and a strong belief in the political power of the consumer.

However, as can be learned from the case of Fairphone, conflict-sensitive consumerism cannot, in contrary to the hypotheses of this research, be considered as an autonomous trend within political consumption. The vast majority of the buyers of Fairphone have not based their purchase on values and meanings primarily concerned with peace and violent conflict. Instead, the conflict-free elements of Fairphone have been included in the more inclusive and holistic concept of what is considered as ‘fair’. This shows that Fairphone buyers are mostly driven by a broader socially conscious lifestyle. Even though consumers did not consider conflict as their main motivation for their purchase, they did express to feel responsible as consumers for violent conflict. They have expressed a desire for more transparency and information about the link between conflict and consumption. This has implications for civil society organizations, business and governmental institutions involved with and working in conflict regions in the global South. They are the ones that ought to develop strategies towards the structural global approach of ‘local’ violent conflict.
PREFACE

As this five-month academic journey has come to an end and this finished master thesis is now in front of you, I would like to express my gratitude to the people whose support and help I have enjoyed throughout my research. First of all, I would like to thank the Broker, for having me as their first research trainee and giving me all the freedom I needed for my academic mission. I have enjoyed the time at the office with colleagues as I could, as a welcome distraction, have many discussions on Dutch development cooperation during lunch breaks. In particular, I am grateful to Karlijn Muiderman, who as my supervisor kept me on my toes as I tried to find my research focus. Her intelligent and critical questions have helped me starting my research. And of course Saskia Hollander, who gave me the opportunity to write a blog for The Broker on my first research findings for the Power Dynamics and Natural Resources dossier.

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“If nobody buys the conflict stuff,
There is no money for the conflict stuff”*

* Quote of participant from online survey with Fairphone customers
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1. INTRODUCTION

Imagine a group of students. Not all students in a group have the same learning success, thereby showing that the students must be different in some respects. There will be student-specific factors leading to a better performance by some, and worse performance by others. However, this does not mean that circumstances influencing the whole group are irrelevant. It could be the case that all students would perform better if they had a different teacher, another building or a better-equipped library. Moreover, the male students might perform better if they received the same attention from the teacher as the female students received.

This analogy made by Pogge (2007) can be applied to a countries’ ‘success’ as well. The chances of a country achieving peace and overcoming conflict depend on both local and global factors. Many people, however, believe that their chances of living a prosperous life depend at least as much on processes that move beyond the borders of territorial states (Fraser, 2000). During analysis of international development, ‘global’ factors interacting with peace and conflict are often understudied in comparison to the study of ‘local’ factors.

The study of so-called ‘fragile states’ serves as an example of this. In the field of international development and conflict studies, the term ‘fragile state’ has been commonly used. This label of a state being ‘fragile’, suggests that the responsibility of violence and instability lies with the national government of the country in crisis. As stated by Verkoren & Junne (2012, p. 129): “‘They’ (local leaders) have failed and ‘we’ (the rich countries) come to the rescue. We do this out of moral goodness and last but not least, as is more often under discussion, out of enlightened self-interest. However, it is forgotten that rich countries themselves play an important role in the causation and continuation of violence and conflicts in poor countries” (translation by author). The global arms trade serves as an example of this. Through (inter)national peace missions, bilateral development aid and projects of civil society organizations such as NGOs, rich countries have focused on the symptom treatment instead of addressing the causes of conflict which can be found closer to home.

As conflicts are integrated within our world system, they should be studied accordingly. The world-system approach, as one of the frameworks that connects underdevelopment with development worldwide in a correlative manner, has been influential in the 1970s within development studies. Current approaches and theories, however, show a conceptual disconnection between poor and rich countries (Verkoren & Junne, 2012) and as a result neglect the structural causes of conflict worldwide.

The reasoning for symptom treatment of conflict and the neglect of the structural causes of conflict can mainly be found in the self-protective tendencies of nations. Archibugi (1998) poses that the main driving force of international politics is national interest. In this scenario it is unlikely that a government will give priority to a conflict if it does not serve national interests. For countries to work together on the structural causes of conflict, it is important that none of these states receive benefits from continuing the conflict. On top of that, the advantages of sustainable peace should be made particularly clear. Individual countries would benefit from global stability in the long run, by for example decreasing refugee flows and reduced threats of terrorism. Nevertheless, modern democracies often show a prevalence of short-term interests. The hesitation of states to engage in issues of global stability and wealth shows how governments are struggling in their balancing act to foster their own national prosperity while at the same time...
involving themselves in urging global dilemmas, which do not generate direct positive results for their national development.

Moreover, within the current complexity of our global economy, governments are struggling with their regulatory effectiveness. As a result, trends can be observed of citizens getting involved with the dysfunctions of the capitalist economy that touch upon global inequality. Consumer behavior has been one of the tools used to foster global change on issues in which citizens feel their government to be ineffective in tackling (Føllesdal, 2003). These citizens use the global market as an arena of action, political participation and social and economic regulation. They have engaged themselves in the boycott and ‘buycot’ of producers and products with the aim to use the market to vent their political concerns. This development has become known as political consumption.

Political consumption, or ethical consumption as some name it, has become an increasingly relevant form of consumerism and political engagement, but has only recently been taken up by scholars within social sciences (Stolle et al. 2005, Micheletti et al. 2003). Political consumption can be defined as “the consumer choice of producers and products based on political and/or ethical considerations” (Micheletti et al., 2003, p. xvi). Political consumers seek for specific producers and products with the aim to change institutional or market practices. “They make their choices based on considerations of justice or fairness, or on an assessment of business and government practices. Regardless of whether political consumers act individually or collectively, their market choices reflect an understanding of material products as embedded in a complex social and normative context, which can be called the politics behind products” (Stolle and Micheletti, 2005, p. 1).

The politics behind products often extend beyond national borders and focus on production chains involved with workers all around the globe. Political consumers are thus concerned not only with their own needs, but with those of others involved in the global supply chain as well. Therefore it is no coincidence that political consumption has been studied together with cosmopolitanism.

As defined by Nussbaum (1996), cosmopolitanism refers to a ‘moral commitment to universal values’. Less abstract definitions have been formulated by others scholars, brought together by Llopis-Goig (2013):

“Cosmopolitanism is a cultural disposition that implies an ‘openness’ towards people, places, objects and experiences of other cultures (Tomlinson, 1999), as well as the search for, and delight in, the contrasts between societies, rather than a longing for superiority or uniformity (Szerszynski and Urry, 2002, p. 468). It is argued that such an attitude is expressed by an emotional and ethical commitment towards universalism, selflessness, worldliness and communitarianism (Skerbis and Woodward, 2007, p. 730)” (Llopis-Goig, 2013, p. 482).

Based on empirical studies with Spanish consumers, Llopis-Goig (2013) states the case that political consumerism can be considered to be an expression of cosmopolitanism. Through political consumption these consumers put flesh on the bones of the abstract notions of cosmopolitanism. However, studies on political consumption and cosmopolitanism have mainly focused on the consumption of organic and fair-trade products. These products are mostly concerned with issues related to working conditions and environmental degradation.

When it comes to violent conflict and peace in the global South, consumers in the global North seem to feel less inclined to admit their (negative) role in it or even doubt whether they are
in the position to do something about it. The attention that was asked for the consumption of ‘blood diamonds’ or ‘conflict diamonds’ in for example Sri Lanka, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the turn of the twenty-first century, however has brought conflict closer to home. Production, consumption and trade of natural resources play a distinct role in conflict. These natural resources are part of our national and global economy. This makes it very clear that the handling of these minerals should play a more structural role in peace building or even conflict prevention. Consumers, being users of these minerals in for example tablets and mobile phones, should be included in the issue of handling them as well.

1.1 Research objective and research question

The aim of this thesis is to gain an understanding of conflict-sensitive consumerism. Conflict-sensitive consumerism can be defined as consumption motivated by political and ethical values that contribute to peace and conflict prevention. As consumers are extending their political action repertoires to the field of consumption, the findings of this research will serve as a first exploration on to what extent consumers are sensitized on the global embeddedness of local conflict through the consumption of conflict resources. By doing so, this study aims to position conflict-sensitive consumerism in relation to political consumerism as an expression of cosmopolitanism.

In short, this study also aims to open up the (academic) debate on the embeddedness of ‘local’ conflict within the global system and the development of new opportunities for global-political consumer action for peace building and conflict prevention. The following research question has been formulated to provide initial focus to this research:

How can conflict-sensitive consumerism be understood and how does it relate to political consumerism as an expression of cosmopolitanism?

This comprehensive research question will be divided into several smaller research questions that have been distilled from the theoretical framework of this study. These will be discussed in chapter two of this study.

In order to provide with an answer to this research question, an instrumental case study has been selected that forms the very core of this study. As this study explores conflict-sensitive consumerism, the case of Fairphone was chosen based on a number of criteria. It is a mobile phone for the consumer market produced by a social enterprise that raises awareness on conflict minerals in mobile phones. It has committed itself to building a conflict-free phone. Their customers' opinions and the meaning they attach to the conflict; their consumption and their general motivation to buy the Fairphone; and finally the philosophy used by Fairphone itself regarding conflict and consumption, provide valuable insight into the mechanisms of conflict-sensitive consumerism and its relation to political consumption as an expression of cosmopolitanism.
1.2 Academic relevance

Over the past few years, the workings of political consumption have become an increasingly relevant topic within social sciences. Within this field of study, political consumption has been considered an expression of cosmopolitanism. This notion is supported by citizens seeking for means to deal with social, cultural, economic and political complexities they are confronted with in the context of an increasingly interconnected and globalized world.

However, research on political consumption has been predominantly focused on consumers buying or boycotting products for environmental sustainability and/or the improvement of labor conditions in the global South. So far, research done on consumption particularly targeted at alleviating and or preventing violent conflict has been rare. This research can therefore be seen as an attempt to bridge a knowledge gap, literature on conflict resources, global embeddedness of local conflict, political consumerism in the global North and cosmopolitanism. Even though these subjects have been studied independently within academic research, there is a lack of research on how these concepts can be linked in both theory and practice. Generating insight in the mechanisms of conflict-sensitive consumerism opens up a promising framework for our understanding of the nexus between conflict resources, the global embeddedness of conflict and political consumption as an expression of cosmopolitanism.

1.3 Societal relevance

As we live in an increasingly interconnected and globalized world, people are seeking for means to deal with the social, cultural, economic and political complexities surrounding them. Political consumption is considered to be one of these means by which people put flesh on the bones of their cosmopolitan sentiments concerning these global complexities. So far however, there has been little knowledge of the behaviour and opinions of citizens engaged in so-called conflict-sensitive consumerism. As a result, conclusions of this study will be relevant for various societal levels.

For civil society organizations concerned with armed conflict, this study is a valuable repertoire of contemporary reflections and behaviour expressed by socially engaged citizens with respect to armed conflict in the global South. As this study is exploring a new field of political engagement, an understanding of conflict-sensitive consumerism is key in order to keep up with current developments on how citizens in the global North wish to engage themselves in armed conflict in the global South.

For (international) governmental institutions an understanding of conflict-sensitive consumerism underpins an effective and comprehensive policy on worldwide conflict prevention and peace building. If citizens are to engage (in)directly in conflict management, through their consumer behaviour, both international and national governmental bodies should be responsive to this trend and seek for ways to include consumers & consumer behaviour in (inter)national peace and security policies.

For commercial and social businesses this thesis increases their understanding of current opinions of conscious consumers regarding corporate responsibility in conflict areas. Many businesses, especially in the field of technology, are entangled in global supply chains including suppliers working with conflict resources, such as tin, tantalum and tungsten. Understanding
conflict-sensitive consumption by their potential customers is essential both from an ethical and a commercial point of view.

1.4 Research outline

This research question is embedded in a theoretical framework, which will be discussed in chapter 2. This chapter will bring together theory on the global embeddedness of ‘local’ conflict, conflict resources, political consumption and cosmopolitanism. These combined concepts provide us with a theoretical interpretation of the conflict-sensitive consumer. Whether or not this conflict-sensitive consumer exists and how conflict-sensitive consumerism can be understood best, will be explored by using the research questions discussed by the end of chapter 2, followed by the conceptual framework and the hypothesized outcomes of this study. Chapter 3 will justify and elaborate on the chosen case study research method and the process of data collection by the use of discourse analysis, interviews and a survey. In addition, this chapter provides an anecdotal introduction to the case of Fairphone. Chapter 4 will present the results obtained by the discourse analysis of 49 blogs, 4 videos and website information of Fairphone and an elaboration on the interviews held with the four team members of Fairphone. Chapter 5 will provide with an overview of both the qualitative and quantitative results of the online survey with Fairphone customers followed by a discussion of the three follow-up interviews with Fairphone customers. In chapter 6 the results will be analyzed by giving answers to the respective research questions as formulated for this study. This thesis will be completed by chapter 7 with a conclusion and reflection on the results, thereby providing us with an answer to the main research question, followed by recommendations for future research and practice.
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several theoretical concepts and theories form the basis of this research. Therefore this chapter will discuss the theoretical framework in which conflict-sensitive consumerism has been positioned.

2.1 The global embeddedness of ‘local’ conflict

As already discussed in the introduction, contemporary conflicts in the world have often been analyzed by zooming in on the ‘local’ roots of conflict, thereby neglecting the global context. World-systems analysis offers a way of looking at our global system at a macro level: with the world-system, instead of single nation states, as its main focus. The world-systems perspective gained momentum by the work of for example, Immanuel Wallerstein, whose interpretation was mainly focused on the transnational division of labour, dividing the world in core, semi-periphery, periphery countries (Wallerstein, 1974).

Wallerstein’s world-systems analysis builds upon dependency theory, a neo-Marxist theory founded upon the notion that the resources of natural resource-rich countries from the periphery of poor and underdeveloped countries in the South move towards the core of rich states in the global North. This results in the enriching of countries in the global North at the expense of countries in the global South. Within this dual system, countries in the periphery provide natural resources and cheap labour and serve as a market for developed nations of the core (Wallerstein, 1992). This argument is further discussed by dependency theory thinker Andre Gunder Frank, who states that development and underdevelopment are opposite sides of the same coin, and “that both are the necessary outcome and manifestation of the contradictions of the capitalist system of development” (Potter et al., 2008, p. 110). According to dependency theory, without these ‘benefits’ people in developed nations would not be able to enjoy the same living standard as they do now. In general, it is not so much about the fact that developing countries are not integrated within the world system or only partially, but more about how they have been integrated (Chandhoke, 2005).

These structural inequalities can be seen through several global divisions of labour. Galtung (1984) states how, for example, technology operates within a ‘code of structures’. These structures are not just a mode of production and therefore neutral. Instead, Western technology demands from its industries to be capital-intensive, research-intensive, organization-intensive and labour-intensive. This code creates a ‘centre’, mainly occupied with a high research and capital intensity, and on the other side a labour-intensive ‘periphery’. This division of labour within technology industries can still be seen today in the production of mobile phones.

World-systems analysis and dependency theory have been dominant in social sciences during the 1970s, but have nevertheless been replaced by theories that pay less attention to the macro-level of international development. However, this school of thinking still has applicable elements for today’s global challenges. Hoogvelt (2002) explains how within current debate on conflict, two broad theoretical perspectives can be observed: those that emphasize the external factors, such as the historical, structural and economic links with the capitalist world system, and those that emphasize the internal factors of for example economic mismanagement and political deficits, such as corruption and megalomaniac dictators. Hoogvelt brings together both
perspectives by the discourse of imperialism, described as the “deliberate transnational political interference for the purpose of the mobilization, extraction and external transfer of economic surplus from one political territory to another. According to Hoogvelt, these forms of imperialism of the global North in the global South result in Africa being excluded from the latest phase of world capitalist development. This statement by Hoogvelt then corresponds with the claim made by dependency theorists. It is not so much about the complete exclusion of the global South. It is rather its problematic inclusion in capitalist development that results in structural global inequality.

Dependency theory and the world-systems approach offer a theoretical framework to interpret global dynamics. It shows the several ways in which countries, regions and continents are interconnected through global processes. For example, and particularly relevant to this study is the impact of wealthy countries on developing countries in their search for natural resources. The ‘local’ wars of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone were inextricably linked with the trade of diamonds and other minerals such as coltan. Another example could be the war on terrorism, trade barriers or global price shocks. According to some critics (Verkoren & van Houtum, 2011) global challenges such as conflict, poverty and food security cannot be solved without addressing the structural context in which their development takes place. Symptom treatment will therefore not lead to sustainable solutions.

Furthermore, finding more structural solutions concerning for example conflict in ‘fragile’ states is beneficial to more countries than just the geographical location of the conflict. ‘Local’ conflict does bring the ‘here’ and ‘there’ closer together, since instability elsewhere manifests itself through flows of refugees, rise in oil prices and possibly terrorist attacks worldwide, since ‘fragile’ states are seen as a fertile soil for terrorists to organize themselves (Verkoren & van Houtum, 2011).

In short, as clearly put forth by Beck (2000, p. 102), “nothing which happens on our planet is only a limited local event; all interventions, victories and catastrophes affect the whole world, and we must reorient and reorganize our lives and actions, our organizations and institutions, along a ‘local global’ axis”. This ‘local global’ axis is particularly relevant when studying conflict-sensitive consumerism, as it potentially provides a means to link the ‘local’ (violent conflict) with the ‘global’ (for this study consumption worldwide).

2.2 The resource curse

The worldwide use of natural resources in particular asks for a ‘local-global’ axis of thought and action. A large and growing body of literature has investigated the correlation between conflict and natural resources. The extraction and excavation of natural resources do not only have environmental implications. According to some authors the presence of natural resources in a country increases the risk of civil war (LeBillon, 2005, Collier, 2007). A study of fifty fragile states by Collier (2007) claims that dependence upon primary commodity export, such as oil, diamonds and other minerals, substantially increases the risk of civil war. Within literature this has often been referred to as the resource curse.

Several mechanisms are at work, which makes a country dependent on natural resources more prone to conflict. As stated by LeBillon (2001), societies confronted with specific environmental conditions - scarcity or abundance - have a higher likelihood of being affected by violent conflicts. This is referred to by LeBillon (2001) as the political ecology of war. The
supposed attenuating effects of having either too many or too few natural resources on national economies and governments lead to distributional conflicts turning violent. LeBillon (2001, p. 564) considers this to be “quasi-environmental determinism”. Several aspects of natural resources make its exploitation worthwhile.

First of all, some resources have proven to be easily monopolized by a government (e.g. oil, gas, minerals). As a result the recourse revenues are tightly linked with competition for control of the state by violent means (e.g. coup d’état or secessionist war) (Kamphuis, 2008). Moreover, Kamphuis and Verkoren (2012) explain how governments depending on resource income do not rely on their population through taxation. Resource revenues provide (political) leaders with a means for staying in power. They have established a regime organized through a patronage system that awards followers and punishes opponents (Bates, 1981; Byrant & Parnwell, 1996 in LeBillon 2001). Therefore, there seems to be no incentive for accountability and/or democratization. As a result, the integration of the natural resource market within the global economy does not lead to positive effects for the populations of those ‘fragile’ states and is not invested in peace and security. Big resources revenues thus weaken the need for political support, since governments do not depend upon taxes for finance.

Furthermore, regardless of the roots of the conflict, opposing parties once involved in the conflict need financial capital to sustain their rebel movements or militaries. The looting and selling of natural resources have turned out to be a ‘successful’ revenue model. Natural resources, such as diamonds, tin and tantalum are suitable for looting and its exploitation can be easily done by unskilled workers without machines. On top of that, minimal bureaucratic infrastructure is needed. The smuggling of these minerals is relatively easy and has therefore played an important role in conflicts such as in Sierra Leone, Angola, Cambodia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kamphuis, 2008).

However, whereas these natural resources were first considered as a means for funding and waging armed conflict driven by political motivations, armed conflict has increasingly become a means towards individual commercial enrichment by gaining access to valuable natural resources (Keen, 1998; Berdal & Malone, 2000). As a result, individual soldiers, local commanders and their political advocates have a stake in sustaining the conflict as this anarchy power politics provides them with access to resources of wealth. Usually this leads, as discussed before, to violent competition. Nevertheless, it can also lead to a ‘comfortable military’ stalemate in which both opposing factions finding a mutual benefit in the current situation, resulting in a ‘stable’ conflict station (Zartman, 1993 in LeBillon 2001).

The work of LeBillon and Collier among others have opened up a debate within conflict studies on the economic functions of violence and the socio-political causes of conflict, often referred to as the greed versus grievance debate. However, these studies have been praised and refuted at the same time by critics, as some have doubted the robustness of the link between civil war and natural resources (e.g. Ross (2005) A shared assumption among conflict scientists within this greed versus grievance debate is that “even where natural resource predation features strongly in conflict dynamics, it is seldom the sole or even main cause of conflicts” (Balentine & Nitzschke, 2005, p. 4). Although, relatively few wars are initially motivated by competition over the control of natural resources, many conflicts show dynamics in which natural resources have become an integral part of the political economy of war.
Whereas it would be shortsighted to reduce violent conflicts to greed-driven resource wars, as grievances such as economic inequality or political deprivation are key factors, the (armed) control over resource wealth does influence the strategies of warring factions (LeBillon, 2001).

2.2.1 Conflict resources

Tin, tantalum and tungsten, often referred to as the ‘3 T’s’, together with gold can be considered the four most prominent conflict resources. These minerals are all to be found in the mines of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): a country that has been involved in protracted violent conflict for the past fifteen years. The exploitation of these mines has funded armed control groups who have control over these mines. Its revenues are used for buying weapons and keeping its armed forces financially viable. As the DRC is a clear example of a political economy of war built on natural resource revenues. Economies like this, are often taken up in extensive networks involving mostly private groups, such as international organized criminal organizations, transnational corporations, governments of foreign countries, especially regional or former colonial powers and consumers from importing countries. As a result of the international involvement in the political economy of countries in conflict, international NGOs and other parties have questioned transnational businesses on their corporate responsibility as they have become involved with natural resources.

Specifically the electronics industry has been confronted with this issue. In 2007 the European campaign MakeITfair addressed the sector in respect to its responsibility for the conditions under which minerals are mined. In recent years, several international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have lobbied for more due diligence in the supply chains going through conflict areas. These advocacy programs were mainly focused on conflict minerals originating from the DRC (Steinweg & Ten Kate, 2013).

As a result, several guidelines have been set up to serve more or less as moral compass for commercial businesses working in conflict areas. In 2000, the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights were established, a set of principles designed to guide companies ‘in maintaining the safety and security of their operations within an operating framework that encourages respect for human rights’ (Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, 2014). This guideline was followed up by a 2010 OECD guideline on the due diligence of supply chains of minerals from conflict-affected and high-risk areas and a 2010 United Nations Global Compact Guidance on responsible business in affected and high-risk areas. It has however, not merely limited itself to guidelines.

As a result of international lobby against conflict minerals, in July 2010 the American Congress consented to the Dodd Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, of which section 1502 requires companies to know the source of the natural resources used in their products. If a company knows or has reasons to think its sourced materials find their origin in mines from the DRC, the company is obliged to conduct ‘due diligence’ research on its supply chain and origin. The outcomes of this research then need to be checked by an independent private sector audit agency and filed in a Conflict Minerals Report. In response to the Dodd Frank Act, many US based companies stopped purchasing minerals from the DRC leading to social unrest as a result of many mineworkers losing their livelihoods (Global Witness, 2011). The
handling of these conflict minerals is complex and asks for an integration of both local and global regulations. NGOs such as the ENOUGH project and Raise Hope for Congo have been occupied with bringing together local and global partners to address the human rights abuses surrounding natural resource mining and trade. Several initiatives have been launched aimed to set up secure closed supply chains in the DRC. One of the initiatives, Solutions for Hope, started in 2011 and established an entirely conflict-free tantalum supply chain. In 2012, industry partners and the Dutch government launched the Conflict-Free Tin Initiative, which has as its main aim to set up a closed supply-chain for conflict-free tin from South Kivu, an eastern province of the DRC. Both initiatives have said to be successful in achieving a conflict-free supply chain from the mines to its end-users.

Although recent developments show considerable progress towards corporate responsibility in conflict and high-risk areas, the majority of these initiatives are mere guidelines that are not binding and/or laws that can be simply surpassed by a de facto embargo of conflict areas as can be learned from the Dodd Frank Act case. Therefore this should be considered as one of the means through which corporate responsibility can be achieved. As companies are highly dependent upon their customers for market reputation and sales results in general, consumer demand for corporate responsibility in conflict areas is a valuable and powerful tool. For consumers these guidelines and legislations provide handhold in making a strong case for human rights in the mining industry.

2.3 Cosmopolitanism

“Humankind is bound together morally, if not materially, in a politics of ‘spaceship earth’” (McGrew, 2003, p. 413)

The growth of citizens caring for their global ‘others’ has not remained unnoticed. As discussed in the introduction of this research, the past decades have often been described as a time in which people as a result of globalization processes feel more engaged with people on ‘the other side of the world’ than ever before. People have developed and are still developing individual outlooks, behaviour and feelings that stretch beyond local and national boundaries (Llopis-Goig, 2013). These dispositions have been often positioned under the umbrella of cosmopolitanism.

A study by Woodward et al. (2008, pp. 208-209) has identified three main skeins in the literature on cosmopolitanism, reflecting its institutional, political or cultural dimensions. Discussing what is seen as the macro level of the phenomenon, cosmopolitanism describes “an ambition or project of supra-national state building, including regimes of global governance, and legal-institutional frameworks for regulating events and processes which incorporate, but have impacts beyond any one nation”. On an institutional level the cosmopolitan project aims to make clear institutional arrangements to make those sites and forms of power accountable for the operations that move beyond the democratic control of one nation-state (Held 1998).

The political dimensions of cosmopolitanism are characterized by inclusivity, hybridity, multiplicity and an acknowledgement of cultural diversity. Cosmopolitanism as a political project aims to effectuate greater public accountability in the processes and developments of the contemporary world (Linklater, 1998). This way it develops a global civil society in which interest
groups are engaged with global affairs such as economic development, peace, environmental issues, consumer affairs that extend beyond nation-state borders (Köhler, 1998).

Lastly, cosmopolitanism as a cultural phenomenon can be defined as an openness towards other cultures, values and experiences. Cosmopolitanism as a cultural disposition has shown most consensus among scholars and has been associated with new forms of mobility of people, products and capital (Beck 2006, Hannerz 1990, Szerszynski & Urry 2002). It implies an ‘openness’ towards people, places, objects and experiences of other cultures (Tomlinson, 1999) and relaxes the longing for superiority or uniformity of societies, and instead finds pleasure in the contrasts between societies (Szerszynski and Urry, 2002). In line with this definition, Held (2000, p. 425) defines the cosmopolitan citizens as “a person capable of mediating between national traditions, communities of fate and alternative styles of life”. The attitudes of so-called ‘cosmopolites’ as a result show attitudes, which express an “emotional and ethical commitment towards universalism, selflessness, worldliness and communitarianism” (Skrbis and Woodward, 2007, p. 730 in Llopig-Goig, 2013).

Llopig-Goig (2013) has added a definition of cosmopolitanism applicable in daily life, so-called ordinary cosmopolitanism. Whereas cosmopolitanism used to be mostly associated with and reserved for well-traveled wealthy elites with greater economic, cultural and political resources, ordinary cosmopolitanism indicates cosmopolitan values not exclusively experienced by the relatively better-off. Ordinary cosmopolitanism refers to those behaviours and competences ‘ordinary’ people perform in their daily lives in order to deal with the social, cultural, economic and political complexities encountered in the context of an increasingly interconnected and globalized world. These behaviours and competences show moral orientations and values, which reflect an allegiance to society as a global community.

For Appiah (2008) a global community of cosmopolitans would consist of people willing to learn about other ways of life by making use of novels, movies, newspapers, radio, television and the internet. However, this allegiance to society as a global community does not necessarily mean that cosmopolitans feel no attachment to either regional or national identities. Cosmopolitans can experience an attachment to their own home and its cultural particularities while at the same taking pleasure in the presence of other people, places and cultural practices. Appiah (1997) refers to this as ‘patriot cosmopolitanism’. This shift within academic literature towards interpreting ‘ordinary’ cosmopolitanism and patriot cosmopolitanism reflects how the concept of cosmopolitanism is moving towards a more inclusive understanding: as a sentiment not merely experienced by a small elite group but by ‘ordinary’ citizens as well, who are embedded in “intercultural practices of everyday life in culturally complex societies” (Noble, 2009, p. 48).

However, as can be read from these interpretations of cosmopolitanism there is a strong emphasis on cultural diversity and tolerance, thereby reflecting the cultural skein as discussed by Woodward et al (2008). The cultural dimensions of cosmopolitanism serve as a useful framework for understanding the motivations of political consumers for their consumptive behaviour as it refers to those behaviours and competences ‘ordinary’ people perform in their daily lives in order to deal with the complexities described earlier.

Complementary to this, the political dimensions of cosmopolitanism are relevant as well. As this study explores the workings of conflict-sensitive consumerism, cosmopolitan political theory provides us with a framework for understanding people’s motivations for global democracy and justice. The next paragraph will discuss this political dimension more in depth.
2.3.1 Cosmopolitanism and global justice

According to Appiah (2008) the ideals of cosmopolitans are rooted in the modern idea that each human individual has ultimate responsibility for her or his life. Human dignity is then based on his or her capacity for and right to self-management. The responsibility felt by cosmopolitans combined with a person’s capability to mediate between national traditions, religious communities and alternative lifestyles as was described by Held, leads according to Held (2000) to citizens as political agents able to reason from the point of view of others. Therefore cosmopolitans, Held states, might be better equipped to resolve complex transnational issues and processes in a fair way.

For Held the role of these cosmopolitan political agents is important within the grander cosmopolitan project as this project attempts to “specify the principles and the institutional arrangements for making accountable those sites and forms of power which presently operate beyond the scope of democratic control”. This way it is different from the cultural dimension of cosmopolitanism, as the political cosmopolitan project is mainly focused on making accountable contemporary forms of power, such as transnational corporations, which are most often not democratically regulated. As these transnational businesses affect us all – nationally, regionally and globally – through for example (even though maybe unintentionally) environmental degradation, human rights abuses, the cosmopolitan project strives to make these sites of power accountable through democratization, a cosmopolitan democracy (see Held, 1995). Within this cosmopolitan democracy people possess different layers of democratic citizenship – local, national, regional and global – and live in a world ruled by a democratic global government (Tinnevelt and Bal, 2012). The accountability that is striven for in the cosmopolitan project stems from the central place global justice takes up within the cosmopolitan discourse.

Globalization has changed the way we argue about justice. According to Fraser (2000) during the heyday of social democracy, issues of justice were mostly played out within modern territorial states as societies were mostly concerned with equality between fellow citizens. Due to heightened awareness of globalization and post-Cold War geopolitical instabilities, Fraser states that citizens are now observing how the social processes around them, more often than not move beyond territorial borders. Therefore, it is no longer self-evident to consider the modern territorial state as the exclusive unit for thinking about issues of justice.

Without exploring the philosophical debate around global justice in depth, it goes without saying that the strongest disagreement on global justice is between those who think that people have duties beyond state borders and those who pledge ethical concerns cannot cross boundaries. From the cosmopolitan point of view, territorial sovereign states are considered to be an obstacle for the establishment of global justice (Nagel, 2005).

The renowned work of Rawls, Law of Peoples (1999) following from his earlier book Theory of Justice (1971), discusses a strong belief in global justice and seeks to find an answer to how people can peacefully live together in a just world in which each citizen has the same civil and democratic rights. A world in which people are entitled to an adequate share of the world’s resources (Thompson, 1998). This cosmopolitan position then holds a certain moral reasoning, as it wishes to create a world, “a common system of institutions”, in which the same standards of fairness and equal opportunity are realized as one would wish to realize for one’s own society (Nagel, 2005).
In short, two dimensions of cosmopolitanism have been discussed which are relevant for this study – the cultural and political skein of cosmopolitanism. But how do these rather abstract notions find expression in everyday realities? The next paragraph will discuss one of means used by an expanding group of citizens to express their concerns with global realities of injustice and feelings of global interconnectedness.

2.4 Political consumerism

Böstrom et al. (2004) argue that the arena of consumption has increasingly become a means to express non-economic values through the market arena. Surveys such as conducted by Stolle and Micheletti (2005) found that consumers do not only consider their own needs when buying a product, but reflect on their own position as consumers as well. The modern market is therefore said to be moving from a predominantly economic space to an area “of moral action, a tool of regulation and social participation” (Gulyas, 2008, p. 25) and a space to exercise political values and concerns (Shah et al. 2006). People have found new ways to express their ideals regarding issues such as global solidarity, human rights and sustainable development. As stated by Hoogvelt (2002, p. 26): “consumer power is becoming an effective weapon in the struggle for environmental preservation”. The market then serves as a potential new arena to express these political opinions and exert political influence.

Within academic literature these emerging action repertoires have been referred to as ‘political consumerism’. Micheletti and Stolle (2005, p. 1), precursors in the research on political consumerism define political consumers as “people engage[d] in boycotts, ‘buycotts’ or in discourse about market practices with the aim of using the market to vent their political concerns”. The narrow definition of political consumerism as defined by Micheletti et al. (2003, p. xvi) sees political consumerism as “the consumer choice of producers and products based on political and/or ethical considerations”. These political consumers base their choice of products and/or producers on certain institutional or market practices: they either boycott products that they feel do not match with their ideals, or ‘buycott’ those producers and products they consider to be more in line with their political and/or ethical values.

“They make their choices based on considerations of justice or fairness, or on an assessment of business and government practices. Regardless of whether political consumers act individually or collectively, their market choices reflect an understanding of material products as embedded in a complex social and normative context, which can be called the politics behind products” (Micheletti and Stolle, 2005, p. 1).

Political consumers take responsibility for global development by means of their consumer power. Through this ‘do-it-yourself’ activism, political consumers take individualized responsibility for global injustices (Micheletti & Stolle 2013). Gulyas (2012, p. 30) has listed six forms of action in political consumption: (1) non-consumption, (2) value-based regular shopping, (3) positive boycotting (‘buycotting’), (4) boycotting, (5) usage and (6) disposal/recycling. The difference between non-consumption and boycotting is the relationship with the producer. Whereas boycotting reflects dissatisfaction with the performance of a company or product, non-consumption reflects the ambition of consumers to consume as little as possible in order to reduce the global effects of consumption. Value-based shopping refers to buying environmental-
friendly alternative products on a regular basis, whereas the ‘buycotters’ picks one particular product to support one particular issue on a more occasional basis. Disposal and recycling refers to the saving, recycling, preservation and waste collection for environmental reasons. But not only individual consumers move around this new arena of political action. Shah (2006) highlights how social movements and corporations have politicized consumption as well by developing their actions and initiatives around services and products, through for example boycotts, ‘buycotts’ and online consumer activism.

2.4.1 The political consumer

Who are these political consumers then? Research by Anderson and Cunningham (1972) on socially conscious consumers has suggested that the average political consumer is a pre-middle aged adult of relatively high occupational attainment and socio-economic status, which is relatively ‘more cosmopolitan’ than his less socially conscious counterpart. Many discussions on both cosmopolitanism and political consumption have therefore focused on whether these practices are only reserved for particular elites. The political consumer is seen as a social type, an intellectual and social elite who has the means to practice an eclectic consumption pattern (Noble, 2009). Characteristics of political consumers resulting from the widening of solidarities beyond an individual its hometown or country, towards solidarities of greater universality may look very different for elites than for those with fewer resources (e.g. money to travel or buy exotic products)(Calhoun, 2003). This discussion shows resemblance to the critique on cosmopolitanism discussed earlier, as it is often associated with the relatively elite positions this group has within society.

A recent study by Micheletti & Stolle (2013) has confirmed the findings of Anderson and Cunningham. The two scholars have identified some of the average characteristics of the political consumer. By using cross-national analysis of all European countries, Micheletti and Stolle found that political consumers are mostly politically interested, female, middle-aged, educated, and a bit more wealthy, politically left-leaning and urban than non-political consumers. As political consumerism has been associated with a lack of trust in formal forms of political participation, this research, however, shows that political consumers do not necessarily trust electoral political institutions less. They do however believe more in the reliability of consumer agencies. On top of that, they believe, more than non-political consumers do, in the power of consumers and corporations and in the responsibility of citizens to make conscious consumer choices. Compared to other citizens, political consumers in general share corresponding beliefs regarding law and order, but differ from other citizens by being more solidarity-oriented and adhering more to solidarity beyond borders than other citizens.

Most political consumers can be found in Sweden, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland and Germany. In Portugal, Italy, Poland, Hungary and Greece political consumption is relatively low compared to other European countries (Micheletti and Stolle, 2013). However, these statements are based on a recent single cross-national study and have not yet been confirmed or invalidated by other researchers.
2.4.2 Political consumers and cosmopolitanism

In the previous chapters cosmopolitanism and political consumerism respectively were discussed in depth independently. A recently published paper by Llopis-Goig (2013) has attempted to bring these two concepts together. In his research, Llopis-Goig explores how cosmopolitanism can play a role in the development of social participation behaviours, such as political consumerism. This stemmed from their hypothesis that the ‘cultural openness’, which can be found among cosmopolitans, might act as a framework that generates an awareness of ethical, social or political criteria leading to actions such as political consumption.

His study on Spanish consumers has shown that these political consumers do indeed have a higher level of cosmopolitanism than those consumers who do not show this kind of consumptive behaviour. Furthermore, this study has suggested that cosmopolitan values manifest themselves through political consumption in the daily lives of ordinary people. This way ordinary cosmopolitanism contributes to this new form of political action: political consumerism. Saran and Kalliny (2013) have recently developed a scale that enables measuring cosmopolitanism among consumers. In previous research, different scholars have attempted to measure cosmopolitan attitudes among consumers in a variety of ways (Riefler & Diamantopoulos (2009), Vida et al. (2005), Riefler et al. (2012)). Saran and Kalliny (2013, p. 289) have in response to these measurement scales, constructed a comprehensive scale to identify and differentiate between consumers who are cosmopolitan and consumers who are not or to a lesser extent. Through confirmatory factor analysis and testing for construct reliability the ‘COSMOSCALE’ has been constructed. With this scale the level of cosmopolitanism can be measured through six items. The ‘COSMOSCALE’ consists of six propositions:

(1) I think it’s good to spend time with people who are willing to talk and learn about other cultures.
(2) I think I respect others’ culture the way I respect mine.
(3) I think if people have a positive attitude toward other communities, there would be less conflict in the world.
(4) I think to be successful, one needs to be able to use materials, information, knowledge, etc. from other cultures.
(5) I am ready to learn about other cultures through listening, observation, thinking and reflecting.
(6) I think reading about world events is worthwhile.

As can be read from these propositions, the measurement scale constructed by Saran and Kalliny measures the ‘cultural skein’ of cosmopolitanism: it is mainly focused on consumers’ opinions and levels of openness towards other cultures. It thus neglects the political dimensions of cosmopolitanism concerning opinions on global justice and accountability. Therefore, this study will use not only this scale to measure cosmopolitan values with consumers, but will complementarily search for political expressions of cosmopolitanism, as discussed in the previous paragraph as well.
2.5 Theoretical interpretation of conflict-sensitive consumerism

Theory on the global embeddedness of ‘local’ conflict, conflict resources, cosmopolitanism and political consumption discussed in this chapter, will provide the theoretical framework in which conflict-sensitive consumption can be embedded. As a result, a theoretical interpretation of conflict-sensitive consumption can be distilled from these concepts. Looking from a world-systems perspective, conflict-sensitive consumption is a means towards connecting the ‘local’ and the ‘global’, the ‘core’ and the ‘periphery’ in order to tackle the structural causes of conflict. A conflict-sensitive consumer thereby brings violent conflict back home. He does so by acknowledging the embeddedness of its causes within our global economy, in this case the trade in conflict resources. This way the conflict-sensitive consumer looks beyond national borders and reflects on the effects of his consumption on other people around the world. He takes individual responsibility for these injustices through consumer behaviour. The conflict-sensitive consumer therefore adjusts his consumptive pattern based on ethical and political values that promote peace and conflict prevention. These values and behaviours show strong similarity to those values and attitudes found in political consumers and cosmopolitans. The theoretical conflict-sensitive consumer thus does not only show cultural cosmopolitan values such as openness towards other cultures and lifestyles, he demonstrates allegiance to society as a global community based on equality and fairness as well.

However, as this is merely an interpretation of the theoretical conflict-sensitive consumer, the existence of the conflict-sensitive consumer remains to be explored and therefore stands at the core of this research. Moreover, since its main theoretical characteristics show similarities to political consumerism as an expression of cosmopolitanism, this study will explore how conflict-sensitive consumerism, in the case of Fairphone, relates to political consumerism and how it is embedded within this cosmopolitan discourse.

2.6 Research questions & hypotheses

The following research question will therefore be guiding for this study: How can conflict-sensitive consumerism be understood and how does it relate to political consumerism as an expression of cosmopolitanism? In order to provide a comprehensive answer to this central research question, several sub questions have been formulated.

(1) What meanings do consumers of the Fairphone attach to their purchase?
(2) What role does violent conflict play for the consumer in their purchase of the Fairphone?
(3) How does conflict-sensitive consumerism relate to political consumerism?
(4) To what extent can conflict-sensitive consumerism be considered to be an expression of cosmopolitanism?

The conceptual model as presented in figure (3.1) shows how the three main concepts of the theoretical framework will be studied within the case of Fairphone. Exploring these concepts within the context of Fairphone, will lead to an understanding of conflict-sensitive consumerism.
Based on the theoretical framework of this research several hypotheses can be formulated with regards to the research questions described above.

**Hypothesis 1:**

If consumers are mostly driven by their concern and knowledge on violent conflict worldwide, then conflict-sensitive consumerism can be considered as an autonomous trend within political consumerism.

Alternative hypothesis: If consumers are mostly driven by a broader socially conscious lifestyle, then conflict-sensitive consumerism can be considered as part of mainstream political consumerism.

**Hypothesis 2:**

If the discourse used by Fairphone and the opinions and values expressed by its customers reflect cosmopolitan values, conflict-sensitive consumerism can be considered as a means for the expression of cosmopolitanism.

Alternative hypothesis: If the discourse used by Fairphone and the opinions and values expressed by its customers do not reflect on cosmopolitan values, conflict-sensitive consumerism cannot be considered as a means for the expression of cosmopolitanism.
3. METHODOLOGY

For this research a qualitative method of data collection has been used. Qualitative methods are considered suitable if the aim is to describe, interpret and to explain behaviours, experiences and ‘products’ of a selected research group (Boeije et al., 2007, p. 253). As formulated in the research question, this research aims to create an understanding of conflict-sensitive consumerism and how this phenomenon relates to political consumption as an expression of cosmopolitanism. As there is yet a lack of scientific knowledge on this specific topic, this study will be exploratory by nature as it seeks to develop theory on conflict-sensitive consumerism instead of testing it to preliminary research.

At the basis of this research lies an actor orientation (Giddens 1984; Long 1992 in van Leeuwen, 2008). This means that this research starts from the premise that social actors have agency. With this agency people reflect upon their experiences and surroundings and use their knowledge and skills to interpret and respond to this. “An actor orientation recognizes the large range of constraints that impinge on social actors – such as persons, place and role in the social system or the values and norms of a society – but emphasizes that such constraints operate through people” (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 8). Conflict-sensitive consumption is a socially constructed phenomenon, involving different groups of social actors. The meanings people give to consumption are embedded within norms and structures, reproduced and maintained by people in their daily lives. An actor-oriented approach allows analyzing how actors give meaning to particular social realities and reflect upon their consumer behaviour and the interaction with their personal values and attitudes. In order to explore the meanings and opinions of people, which underlie conflict-sensitive consumer behavior, this study will make use of a case study in which these behaviours are performed.

3.1 Case study as a research method

Case study research is considered to be an appropriate method for this study as it provides us with a more informed basis for theory development than other qualitative methods (Bonomo 1985; Eisenhardt 1989; Yin 1989) when used in newly developing areas of research. A case study focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings (Eisenhardt, 1989) and has as its main objective to develop and construct (novel) theory (Riege, 2003). It has been useful in providing description and testing theory as well. As a result, case study research provides an in-depth understanding of a particular case (Creswell, 2007). This research method is particularly useful since it is considered to be appropriate for explorative research. It does not require extensive theoretical propositions at the outset of the research.

Case study research can be used to study a case in a holistic manner or analyze a case at different units of analysis. The last one is often referred to as an ‘embedded’ case study. Within case study research, the researcher can make use of qualitative data, quantitative data or both and combines several data collection methods such as interviews, archives, questionnaires and observations (Eisenhardt, 1989).

This study will analyze both the consumers of Fairphone, the team of Fairphone and the information given by Fairphone on their website and will therefore make use of a single-case
embedded research design. In this study a single case study is preferred as a result of a lack of relevant cases that make comparative or multiple case study research possible.

3.2 Data collection & analysis

Within this case study multiple sources of evidence and methods have been used for data collection (interviews, blogs, videos, a survey and website information) and data analysis. This will lead to a stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses in the phases of data analysis and theory-building. This ‘triangulation’ of different sources of evidence has been applied to secure the internal validity of the research results. Other measures to secure internal validity of this research will be discussed in chapter 3.3.

3.2.1 Discourse analysis

As this research aims to study the meaning people attach to their purchase of the Fairphone and how this is related to the concepts of cosmopolitanism, political consumption, the global embeddedness of local conflict and conflict recourses, discourse is particularly relevant. Within this research discourse is understood as the “ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena” (Gasper and Apthorpe, 1996, p. 2) leading to diverse representations of social life (Fairclough, 2012).

Discourse thus refers to the way people speak about the world. Moreover, by reproducing these representations it has effects on the world in which it has its roots (Wittgenstein, in van Leeuwen, 2008). Discourse is a social practice in itself, “produced through everyday conditions and activities and thus constantly subject to change and to the agency of individuals” (Gardner, 1997). The combination of the actor-oriented approach together with a discourse analysis of the data retrieved of this research will help to provide insights into how the organization of Fairphone gives meaning to the Fairphone initiative.

The blogs, videos and information on the Fairphone website have been analyzed (see Appendix A). This method has been used specifically for these data, as it reveals the language used by Fairphone to give meaning to their ‘conflict-free’ phone and how it positions the phone and organization with regards to the discussed theoretical concepts of cosmopolitanism, political consumption and the global embeddedness of local conflict. Since they have generated these data themselves (blogs, videos, website information), they are in this sense ‘objective’ data as the researcher has not controlled its content, as is often the case with interviews. Therefore, the method of discourse analysis has only been applied to these specific data.

In this study, the case of Fairphone is used to explore how conflict-sensitive consumerism is to be understood and positioned in relation to political consumption as an expression of cosmopolitanism. Therefore the definitions of cosmopolitanism and political consumption together with the thematic discussion on conflict resources and the global embeddedness of local conflict as discussed in the theoretical framework have been used as coding tools. The analysis of the data has been done by sceptically reading and questioning the

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1 For example, in one of the blogs Fairphone stated, “consumption is a political act”. This was then coded as “political consumption”.

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During this research phase the focus has been on how Fairphone uses language to give meaning to their initiative and how it positions itself through discourse. To what extent does the language used show resemblance to concepts discussed in the theoretical framework of this research? To what extent does Fairphone reflect on the global embeddedness of ‘local’ conflict and the role of conflict minerals? Does Fairphone express values and meanings resembling cosmopolitan values? And how does Fairphone give meaning to the role of the consumer in conflict and to what extent is consumption associated with politics? By using these questions, the texts and transcripts of the videos have been coded and these codes have been thoroughly analyzed and examined for regularity and variability in the data. The coded data used for the analysis of this research have been recorded in a database and can therefore be consulted for inspection via the author.

### 3.2.2 Survey

Whereas the discourse analysis is focused on the discourse used by Fairphone and how it positions itself through discourse with regards to the concepts of cosmopolitanism and political consumption and the global embeddedness of local conflict, the online survey has been executed with the aim to reveal the motivations and values of the Fairphone customer. What is it that motivated them to buy the Fairphone? They were interrogated on their values and opinions on the politics of consumption and the link between consumption and conflict. As there is not any knowledge on conflict-sensitive consumerism to build upon yet, a survey was an adequate tool to gather large amounts of information in a short period of time.

For this survey, respondents were recruited by means of a call on both Twitter and Facebook. Since the target group for this survey was Fairphone customers, Fairphone has assisted by sending out a Tweet to its online followers. This resulted in an initial sample of 123 participants. Despite the relatively large size of this sample, no generalizations can be made beyond this group of participants, since there are no data available yet on the total population of Fairphone customers, which this sample can be tested against.

The survey consisted of 28 questions, 17 being multiple-choice and 11 open-ended questions. The survey questions have been enclosed in Appendix B. This survey has led to both qualitative and quantitative results, which have been discussed and shared with the thesis supervisor and research internship supervisor of the author and can be consulted for inspection via the author.

### 3.2.3 Interviews

In addition to the methods of data collection discussed previously, this research has made use of semi-structured interviews with the team of Fairphone and the buyers of the Fairphone. For the interviews with Fairphone, four team members were selected based on their availability. An implication of this might be that this is not a representative sample of the Fairphone crew. This has been overcome by using the interviews with Fairphone only as additional empirical data to the discourse analysis.

Additionally, three survey respondents who said to be willing to contribute to this research have participated in a follow-up interview. The advantage of conducting follow-up interviews was that it allowed for a better understanding of the motivations and opinions of the
Fairphone customer expressed in the survey. The interviews have helped to ask follow-up questions in the case where the use of language or particular expressions were unclear.

For these interviews a semi-structured interview guide has been developed. The interview guide for both the interviews at Fairphone and the interviews with the customers of Fairphone have been added to the appendix of this document (see Appendix D and E). These guides have been used relatively flexibly. Questions could vary for each interview, depending on the focus that was put by the interviewee on specific topics as a result of personal specializations (such as conflict mineral research or community engagement in the case of Fairphone). This semi-structured approach has been chosen to develop an understanding of Fairphone and its customers that is as inclusive as possible. The following members of the Fairphone team have participated in an interview:

- Bas van Abel (Founder and Chief Executive Officer Fairphone)
- Bibi Bleekemolen (Research & Outreach)
- Joe Mier (Community Manager)
- Roos van de Weerd (Public Engagement)

Three Fairphone customers interviewed will be discussed anonymously as this was asked for by themselves. This has no further implications with regards to the value of this data. The total of seven interviews will be used as additional empirical data to the results in the discourse analysis (in case of Fairphone interviews) and survey (in the case of Fairphone customer interviews). The transcripts of all interviews can be found in Appendix F and G.

3.3 Quality of collected data

This research has built upon a singular case study, which has implications for the external validity of this research. Therefore, theory building should be done prudently without grand generalizations on conflict-sensitive consumerism in other contexts and by different means as practiced in the case of Fairphone. However, according to Flyvbjerg (2006) single case studies can often be generalized. Moreover, “the case study may be central to scientific development via generalization as supplement or alternative to other methods. But formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas “the force of example” is underestimated’. This study does not claim to be generalizable beyond the Fairphone context, but does nevertheless serve as a ‘force of example’ as it is the first study to explore the workings of conflict-sensitive consumerism.

During the research process of this study, several steps have however been undertaken in order to secure the internal validity and transferability of this study.

1. Triangulation techniques

This research will make use of multiple sources of evidence and methods during the data collection (interviews, survey, blogs, videos, website information) and data analysis. This will lead to a stronger substantiation of constructs (construct validity) and hypotheses in the phases of data analysis and theory-building (Christie et al., 2000).

2. Debriefing thesis supervisor and internship supervisor

Throughout the research the collected data and intermediate conclusions have been presented to
supervisors to give them the opportunity to look into interview transcripts, parts of the data analysis and comment on unclear aspects, as to effectuate subsequent credibility.

3. Self-monitoring and positioning of the researcher
Given the qualitative and often-considered subjective nature of case study research it is important for the credibility of this research, that the researcher takes into account her own (theoretical) position and worldview while collecting and interpreting data (see discussion).

4. Case study database
Even though this research will make use of a single case study, it is important to transparently document the ‘chain of evidence’ during the data collection phase. Therefore a case study database has been created that can be consulted for inspection. This results in both transferability of the research and provides transparency on the multitude of collected data.

3.4 Case study Fairphone

In 2010, Waag Society, Action Aid and Schrijf-Schrijf launched the project Fairphone. Fairphone started out as an awareness campaign on conflict minerals in mobile phones and the conflicts that the sourcing of these minerals are fuelling in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The idea to actually produce a conflict-free phone came three years later. In the fall of 2013 Fairphone started a crowd funding campaign. In order for the first batch of Fairphones to be produced, at least 5000 people had to pre-order the phone. This led to 10,000 items sold before their actual delivery months later. By the end of November 2013, the first batch of Fairphones was sold out with 25,000 people having pre-ordered the phone for its estimated release by the end of 2013. The initiative has received much media attention in both the Netherlands and was picked up by other reputable newspapers and magazines in Europe such as Der Spiegel, The Guardian and Financial Times. Now that the actual production of the first Fairphone has become a success considering the sales figures, the second batch of Fairphones is planned for the spring of 2014.

By producing a ‘fair’ phone, Fairphone wants to uncover the story behind the complex supply chain of smart phones and has put more than three years of research into finding the story behind the sourcing, production, distribution and recycling of electronic devices. A smartphone is considered by them to be a means to an end. As stated by Fairphone on their website: “You can change the way products are made, starting with a single phone. Together we’re opening up the supply chain, and redefining the economy – one step at a time.” (www.fairphone.com).

In their communications, Fairphone has been honest about the fact that at this stage of product development, it was not feasible to call their phone entirely ‘fair’ and ‘conflict-free’. The production of mobile phones is namely part of a complex supply chain burdened by a multitude of abuses ranging from toxic e-waste dumps in Ghana to child labour in the Congo mines.

3.4.1 Justification for chosen case study
This research aims to bring together theory on the embeddedness of conflict, conflict minerals, political consumption and cosmopolitanism. Fairphone is one of the first and only products aimed to create awareness in the global North on conflict minerals from the global South. Therefore Fairphone is considered a suitable case to create a stronger understanding of conflict-sensitive consumerism.
4. FAIRPHONE DISCOURSE

All information on the Fairphone website, blogs and videos have been transcribed and coded. This resulted in the collected data of 49 coded blogs, seven pages of website information on the Fairphone project and four either promotional and/or educational videos on the Fairphone. The blogs, which have taken up the largest share of data in this discourse analysis, are an integral part of Fairphone’s means of communication to their customers and community. All blogs are publicly accessible through their website. These blogs have been mainly written by the different members of the Fairphone team and reflect on and give updates on the five themes Fairphone involved in building a ‘fair’ phone.²

The aim of this analysis is to gain an understanding of the role the concepts discussed in the theoretical framework have in the discourse used by Fairphone. These are the global ‘embeddedness’ of local conflict, conflict resources, cosmopolitanism and political consumption. The encoding of this data has been carried out in line with these theoretical concepts and associated characteristics as well.³

4.1 The global ‘embeddedness’ of local conflict

"You can change the way products are made, starting with a single Phone. Together, we’re opening up the Supply Chain, and redefining the Economy – one step at a time.”

(Fairphone)

This statement by Fairphone, is put forward as the central story of Fairphone. In this statement, the phone is clearly positioned as a means. A means for ‘changing the way products are made’. Throughout the blogs, videos and website information, ‘the system’ was often mentioned. It was used in phrases like "understanding the system", "changing the system" and "opening up the system". In the majority of the fragments, it refers to the production system of the mobile phone. However, in others it seemed to refer to grander systems influencing the production of the phone:

"It’s already been a long journey, and with every step I get closer to understanding the complexity of the economic and political system needed to produce a phone and start to better understand my stuff.” (blog 25)

² The themes being (1) precious materials, (2) lasting value, (3) clear deals, (4) smart design and (5) made with care (for a more detailed description see www.fairphone.com - shortcut “road map”)

³ For example, as can be read in the next paragraph, Fairphone in their blogs often referred to ‘the system’. These lines have been coded as ‘systemic approach’ and have later been added under the general code of ‘global embeddedness of local conflict’.
Fairphone considers information and knowledge key to changing the way systems work. In this case, understanding the system means understanding the supply chain. In their line of thought, by understanding the supply chain, adjustments can be made to this supply chain so that it becomes more in line with what they call ‘social values’.

The supply chain of the mobile phone plays a central role in the *Fairphone* narrative. The supply chain of the mobile phone is what makes the story an international story, a story of global interconnectedness and interdependencies. Through imagery and detailed descriptions Fairphone visualizes how conflict(-free) resources and other phone components travel around the globe to find their way into ‘our’ smartphones used at home.

### 4.2 Conflict resources

The definition of conflict-free has been defined and used by Fairphone in a consistent manner. In their communication conflict-free resources are explained as natural resources coming from a controlled supply chain outside the reach of armed groups. It thus refers to natural resources that explicitly do not financially fund armed groups through mineral trade in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other than that, the conflict in the DRC has not been further elaborated on. Whether this was a conscious choice or not is unclear.

> **“Conflict-free” means establishing a supply chain that guarantees sourcing minerals from areas that are free from violence and armed guards.” (blog 9)**

Throughout their videos, website information and blogs Fairphone holds on to the notion of conflict minerals, but adds a new one as well: ‘precious materials’.

> **“We call them precious, because we value them not only for what they allow us to achieve technologically but also what they could allow many people in poorer countries to achieve socially and economically – if only there were a fairer playing field.” (blog 4)**

‘Precious materials’ refers not only to conflict-free minerals but entails a more subjective interpretation. According to Fairphone precious materials are “conflict-free, fair resources, that put people first”. It has thereby extended the definition of conflict minerals by expressing their ambition to have the revenues of mineral exploitation finding its way back to the local community. Fairphone expresses their aim for a win-win outcome for ‘us’ (Fairphone) and ‘them’ (people in poorer countries).
4.3 Cosmopolitanism

“By sharing our message, following our story, and buying the Fairphone, you are part of the group that shows there’s a demand for products that are concerned and accountable for social and environmental impact.” (blog 28)

“Because by buying and owning this phone, you can make a difference. You become a part of change. Buy a phone. Start a movement.” (video 2)

The informal character of both the Fairphone website, their blogs and videos comes together with the popular and personal way in which the audience of Fairphone is addressed. This creates feelings of belonging. The reader is referred to as the “group of movers and shakers” (blog 28), willing to “shake up the industry” (blog 28). Through this, Fairphone is framing the readers of the website as the community of Fairphone, a like-minded group of people that is part of the global change Fairphone is aiming for.

The main goal for Fairphone is to “make interventions in the global supply chain and life cycle of the mobile phone and create social impact” (blog 34). Both “supply chain” and “interventions” have been often-used concepts. Their aim to intervene in this supply chain or combined with their grander ambition for a ‘fairer’ economy leans towards a strong belief of the “makeability” of a social and economic reality, that is more in line with their social values for global prosperity:

“Why can’t we create value in the market around these interventions that make their contribution for a better world, and try to bring everything together in one product? Let’s take shared responsibility, let’s not turn away from complex issues, but find a way to work together towards something that is BETTER.” (blog 11)

Fairphone has created a ‘moral community’ around their product and mission, a community not connected to a specific country or place. Only once, Fairphone has explicitly mentioned in a blog to be based in Amsterdam. More often it is stressed that their team consists of a multitude of nationalities working across the globe.

4.4 Political consumption

“In the end, consuming is a political act, but to make the right decision you need to understand how your products are brought to life. We aim to open the systems behind what we consume, so that you can make the right decisions. This phone is yours: if you can’t open it, you don’t own it.” (blog 11)

Fairphone explicitly frames consumption as political. Understanding the supply chain is considered here as key towards making a conscious choice on what to consume. Fairphone
positions itself as provider of this information towards the consumer. Creating a different relationship between the product and the consumer is a core objective for Fairphone. This reflects the belief of Fairphone, that consumers ought to know where their product is coming from and under what conditions it has been produced.

“Our aim is to give consumers as much access and insight into the processes behind the production of their devices, so that they can form new relationships with the things they own.” (blog 37)

To summarize, this discourse analysis shows that Fairphone reflects on the role of global supply chains and how these supply chains connect different people and systems. In their videos and blog images, Fairphone shows how conflict minerals are part of this global supply chain as well and by doing so connect mobile phone users with violent conflict in the DRC. In their communication, Fairphone has tried to attract an internationally diverse moral community of like-minded people around the idea of conflict-free phones. In addition to this, Fairphone gives expression to a more general mission as well: a fairer economy. This is reflected in their use of the word ‘precious materials’ instead of ‘conflict minerals’ to address the use of natural resources in mobile phones. With regards to the role of consumption, Fairphone has expressed in their blogs to consider consumption a political act and therefore consider information and transparency key in order for people to know where their products come from so they can form a new relationship with the products they own.

4.5 Interviews with Fairphone

As discussed in the methodological chapter of this research, four interviews have been conducted with four members of the Fairphone team. These interviews aimed at gaining additional insight on the opinions and motivations of Fairphone on how it for example sees itself related to other ‘fair’ products in the market and how they consider the role of consumers in political issues such as conflict. All four interviewees have a different position within Fairphone. This influenced the content of the interview as the focus of the interview was most often in line with their personal daily focus within Fairphone as a social enterprise.

When asked what Fairphone is, three out of four interviewees emphasized that Fairphone started out as an awareness raising campaign on conflict minerals. While Fairphone in the past had taken up more of an activist and informative role, over the past year it has been evolving into a social enterprise, a business that is ‘part of the game’ as well and needs to satisfy its customers like any other service-providing company. The interviewees said Fairphone is still trying to find its way in this ‘new format’.

Beyond the organizational structure of Fairphone, all interviewees interpreted Fairphone as a smartphone that serves as a means to an end. The relationship that people have with their product is put central by Fairphone and needs to be changed, because people in their opinion have no clue where their products are coming from nowadays and how and under what conditions it has been produced.
All interviewees expressed a certain degree of discomfort with Fairphone being compared with other fair products, explicitly those going under the label of Max Havelaar’s Fair Trade. This was mainly explained by the complexity of the smartphone product, which was according to the interviewees incomparable with the relatively less complex supply chains of Fair Trade products like bananas or chocolate. On top of that, certain uneasiness was felt with the term ‘fair’, since it has a lot of different interpretations. The use of ‘fair’ under the Fair Trade label is considered as a certification method specifically used as a means to quantify working conditions. What is considered as ‘fair’ by Fairphone is said to be dynamic, a continuing process of defining and redefining to find an understanding of fair that includes not just working conditions, but recycling methods, e-waste, designer principles and conflict-free resources as well.

“It is not a single ingredient product, as I always see, a phone is something you make together.”

“So it is a product [Fairphone] that is always in beta, and a banana is ready. Coffee is ready. And this is a product that always evolves. So it makes it much more like a platform, it makes it much wider and richer also and more complicated, but totally different from traditional Fair Trade.” (Bas van Abel – CEO)

It was put forward by all interviewees that exactly this inclusive understanding of ‘fair’ has brought together a diverse group of people with different motivations for buying the phone and/or taking part in Fairphone’s online platform. The interviewees express how the roadmap of Fairphone offers people, initially interested in only one of the five themes of the road map, the opportunity to learn about the other four as well. The interviewees have emphasized how the boycotting of conflict minerals is only one of the many themes Fairphone is working on and expect that the average buyer has not bought the Fairphone merely as a result of its conflict-free ambitions.

“So I am not saying that everyone bought it because they feel aligned with the conflict minerals problem. It’s not that everyone bought it out of social..., the social awareness, I think a lot of people bought it because they see it as a different kind of approach and that they can be part of something that is changing. Something they are not satisfied with, and that could as well be the financial crisis. Could as well be the economy. Could as well be that we are fed up with big companies.” (Bas van Abel - CEO)
In their opinion the buyers of the Fairphone are a diverse group of people. A summing up of the expectations of all interviewees about its customers led to an image of the Fairphone buyer as relatively younger compared with the buyers of Fair Trade products, worldly and eager for change, but most of all diverse.

“People who are a bit aware of the effects that trade has on individual countries, people who have travelled, but really like I said because of the variety of Fairphone’s issues, its designers, its NGO’s, its business, its students, its social and ecological, all kinds of backgrounds and people. But I think you have to have a sort of idea, hey I would like to be involved with something that’s changing the economic system of today. I think you have to have a bit of that in you.” (Bibi Bleekemolen – Research & Outreach)

This eagerness for change has been linked with consumption by the interviewees. It was felt that people have grown more critical of the products they use and have more knowledge about it than twenty years ago. The consumer as a result feels to have power to change things politically and economically.

“So the kind of people that bought the phone are the people that see it, that they can actually change things by consuming, or by…that consuming is a choice, that is a political act in a way. I think that people who bought the phone see it as a political act.” (Bas van Abel - CEO)

In short, the interviews with Fairphone confirm the conclusions of the discourse analysis. Fairphone places great emphasis on the relation the consumer has with the products he/she owns. In addition to the discourse analysis, Fairphone emphasizes that their product should be considered as different from products that are considered as Fair Trade under the Max Havelaar label. This is in their opinion mainly caused by the complexity of their product as compared to chocolate or bananas. Furthermore it is estimated by the team of Fairphone that their average consumer is socially aware of unequal global processes and has an intrinsic motivation to change this. CEO Bas van Abel explicitly mentions that he expects the average Fairphone buyer considers his purchase as a political act. Fairphone has however not based these estimations on an analysis of their customer base, as there is not yet much data available on their customers. The next chapter will provide with more insight on the characteristics of the Fairphone buyers.
5. Fairphone through the eyes of its buyers

Information on the buyers of Fairphone has been retrieved through an online survey. Not all respondents have completed the entire survey, resulting in 159 respondents having initiated the survey of which 107 people until completion. Given the qualitative nature of the questions in the survey, all incomplete surveys have been taken into account as well, since not using those would result in loss of valuable information on the Fairphone buyers. In this chapter, first the quantitative results will be presented, followed by the qualitative open questions of the survey.

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY RESULTS

5.1 Characteristics of the Fairphone buyers

The group of survey respondents consisted of 61 per cent male and 39 per cent female Fairphone buyers. The educational background of the respondents reflects a relative high percentage of respondents having enjoyed or still enjoying higher education (84%)(see appendix C). The age of the respondents, as can be seen in figure 5.1, is relatively low, with 47 per cent being under the age of thirty and 79 per cent not older than 39 years old. The ages of the respondents ranged between 15 and 58 years old.

The relatively young age of the respondents is reflected in the answers on the professional working field of the respondents as well. A quarter of the respondents are student. Other dominant working fields were research and education (24%), social enterprises (12%) and NGOs (10%)(see appendix C). About 17 per cent of the respondents have said to be working in a combination of these professional fields.

![Figure 5.1: Age of respondents in years (%)](image)
All respondents live in urban areas, but spread across a great diversity of seventeen European, one North American (Canada) and one South American country (Peru) (see figure 5.2). Together with Germany (30%), the Netherlands with 40 per cent, houses the biggest percentage of Fairphone respondents for this study. Summed up, this leads to, as the largest group, 51 per cent of the respondent living in Western Europe, followed by 32 per cent Central European, 9 per cent Northern European and 6 per cent Southern European inhabitants.4

The respondents were asked by a multiple choice question what would best describe their geographical identity. This was to explore what proportion of the respondents would choose for an identity that extended beyond their national borders. This could then predict solidarities and values beyond state boundaries. Of all respondents, 37 per cent chose for world citizen, shortly followed up by European (35%) and 28 per cent expressing their national identity to be most dominant (see figure 5.3). Although not part of the multiple choice options, eight per cent

4 Regional divisions based on World Fact Book (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/)
filled out in the ‘other’ column they felt the ‘human’ identity was best fitting. Since this result was relatively larger than the predetermined category ‘citizen of my city/town’, it has been taken up in the survey results.

5.2 The buyer and the Fairphone

Several of the multiple-choice questions have asked the respondents on their knowledge and considerations to buy the Fairphone. As discussed, Fairphone has built a roadmap consisting of five themes they have focused on while building the phone. When asked which of these five themes they considered most important, 50 per cent answered ‘precious materials’, referred to by Fairphone as “conflict-free, fair resources that put people first” (see figure 5.4). Around one third (31%), chose for ‘made with care’, defined by Fairphone as “building relationships for better practices, from working conditions to recycling”. The remainder of respondents has chosen for ‘clear deals’ (11%), ‘lasting value’ (6%) and ‘smart design’ (2%).

Following on this question, respondents were asked to estimate the knowledge they have on the Fairphone roadmap. As can be seen in figure 5.5, the vast majority (74%) described their level as ‘some knowledge’, whereas 21 per cent of the respondents estimated their knowledge as deep. Only two respondents (about 2%) considered themselves experts on the roadmap of Fairphone and three respondents have said to have no knowledge on the roadmap. All information on the roadmap of Fairphone is freely available and explained in their blogs and in the general information on their website.
It was also asked if the respondents bought other ‘fair’ products as well, to which 90 per cent responded with yes and just 10 per cent said not to. The reason behind not buying other fair products was mainly explained by the lack of options for fair trade products in their marketplace.

5.3 Their purchase and conflict

All respondents were asked to describe in their own words what Fairphone is. These answers cannot be quantified easily. However, these answers have been quantified to the extent as to how many of the respondents explicitly mentioned ‘conflict’ or ‘conflict-free’ when explaining what Fairphone is. As it turns out, 17 per cent of the respondents have used ‘conflict’ in their description of the Fairphone, whereas 83% has not.

The story of conflict minerals told by Fairphone has been predominantly focused on minerals coming from the mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, more specific from the South Kivu region. Therefore, respondents were asked how they would describe their knowledge of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As can be seen in figure 5.6, about 15 per cent said to have no knowledge, and only one respondent considers his or herself to be an expert on the DRC conflict. About 76 per cent said to have ‘some knowledge’ on the conflict, compared to 9 per cent estimating their knowledge to be ‘deep’.

5.4 Cosmopolitanism

As has been explained in the theoretical framework of this study, the ‘COSMOSCALE’ as developed by Saran and Kalliny (2013) has been used to measure the level of cosmopolitanism among the Fairphone buyers. The six items (in the form of six propositions) have been taken up in the survey with a Likert-scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree’. Since these propositions have no statistical meaning independent of each other, the answers have been analyzed by making sum scores per respondent. All answers on the Likert-scale received a specific score. Since the item scale of Saran and Kalliny (2013) contained no cut off point, for this research the minimum sum value was set at 24. The maximum sum score was set at 30, meaning that all propositions have been answered with ‘strongly agree’ by the respondent.
Likert scale  
| Points |  
|--------|---|
| Strongly disagree | 1  
| Disagree | 2  
| Neutral | 3  
| Agree | 4  
| Strongly agree | 5  

Table 5.1: score allocation for propositions ‘COSMOSCALE’

Tabel 5.2 shows a frequency table of the scores. All scores above 24, which means a minimum of 6 times ‘agree’, can be considered as scores indicating cosmopolitanism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>60.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>90.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Frequency table ‘COSMOSCALE’ scores of respondents

As a result it can be concluded that 77.4 per cent of the respondents can be considered to be cosmopolitan whereas 22.6 per cent cannot. Additionally, the respondents were asked directly, whether they would describe themselves as a cosmopolitan. The answers were strongly divided with 43 per cent saying they see themselves as cosmopolitan, whereas 22 per cent does not and 35 per cent does not know (see Appendix C).
QUALITATIVE RESULTS

5.5 Perceptions of Fairphone

Respondents were asked to describe Fairphone in their own words. This led to a variety of interpretations of what Fairphone is. The majority of the respondents, however, explained Fairphone as a product:

“A smartphone with higher ethical standards than the average smartphone.”

“A smartphone, capable of doing anything a regular mid-range smartphone can do, but a lot more sustainable.”

As can be read from these fragments as well, most respondents complemented this answer by explaining what made Fairphone as a smartphone different from other smartphones in the market. Other answers explained Fairphone as something beyond being just a product. The four most prevalent answers described Fairphone as (1) a project, (2) a company, (3) an organization and (4) as an idea or as a combination of these elements:

“A phone, a company, a movement, an idea, an attempt to change the industry.”

“It is a project with the goal to create a more transparent and fair supply chain in the industry of electronic devices (in this case mobile phones). Fairphone will try to reach this goal by creating its own phone.”

5.6 Motivations for buying the Fairphone

Since respondents were asked to answer the open questions as extensively as possible, the results are in-depth explanations of personal motivations to purchase the Fairphone. These could be categorized in six categories presented in table 5.3

In the last category ‘environmental and social values’ the respondents combined both social and environmental values and said it to be the main motivation for them to buy the Fairphone. Within this broader theme, working conditions and exploitative practices (both human and environmental exploitation) were often explicitly mentioned. In these answers some respondents referred to the recent tragedies in the Bangladesh ready-made garment factories. Most often was referred to Chinese factories by respondents and their wish for better working conditions.

As can be read from these cited fragments, respondents often combined different themes, thereby showing that these themes are not mutually exclusive. Other motivations worth mentioning given their frequency, are the (1) repairability and durability of the phone, (2) open operating system and (3) simply needing a new phone.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations in themes</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethics &amp; own conscience</td>
<td>“I cannot with a good conscience buy products where other people have been mistreated or abused during production in order to save a little bit of money.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I prefer having and using products which are ethically produced (as much as possible).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a statement towards other consumers and/or companies</td>
<td>“I wanted to make a statement about the way we use materials and the labour put into all the electronic gadgets utilized in the world.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“To make a statement that I don’t agree on how mobile phones are produced at the moment and that I would like to change something.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict resources</td>
<td>“Ever since my teacher in high school told us about the war in Congo and the way coltan-money fuels that war I have been looking for a phone like this.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I needed a new phone (mine went under a London bus) but hated the idea of just replacing it and taking up more resources, especially those from conflict zones, such as the DRC.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>“The ‘Fair’ stamp on it. Want to make the world a better place for more than me alone.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It seems logically to me to make the choice that is best option on fairness. On empathic grounds. It’s only fair!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the initiative</td>
<td>“To show support for a company trying to make a difference.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Supporting the idea was the main motivation, getting a phone out of it was rather an added benefit.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expressions of global justice and solidarity

As was discussed in the results of the multiple choice questions of the survey, 90 per cent has said to buy other ‘fair’ products as well. The follow-up open question asking for their motivation for buying other fair products, combined with the answers on their motives for buying Fairphone, has shown a pattern among the respondents, best described as feelings of global justice and solidarity.

Opinions on global justice and feelings of global solidarity have often been put into words by referring to the discomfort experienced by the respondents for having certain luxuries (such as smartphones) at the expense of less privileged people. These answers most often referred to bad working conditions.

Table 5.3: Motivations of respondents for buying the Fairphone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental and social values</th>
<th>“I think we have to care for the world and for other world citizens together”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Not wanting to support oppressions of labour and ecologically damaging production models”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I know that someone makes sure that the people who manufacture the product are not exploited and I, as a consumer, do not contribute to the suffering of people in other parts of the world”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Fair labour conditions are a basic human right. I feel it is my responsibility to make sure this rights is not violated as a consequence of my consuming behaviour”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6.1  Expressions of global justice and solidarity

As was discussed in the results of the multiple choice questions of the survey, 90 per cent has said to buy other ‘fair’ products as well. The follow-up open question asking for their motivation for buying other fair products, combined with the answers on their motives for buying Fairphone, has shown a pattern among the respondents, best described as feelings of global justice and solidarity.

“Because for me it feels unfair not to share my wealth, since I am in the financial position (even just a little bit) to buy these products, so I feel like I should make a choice that’s better for other people as well, not just me (so not just cheap).”

“I feel responsible for the well-being of all human beings.”

Opinions on global justice and feelings of global solidarity have often been put into words by referring to the discomfort experienced by the respondents for having certain luxuries (such as smartphones) at the expense of less privileged people. These answers most often referred to bad working conditions.

“I can’t stand anymore, that people working for my luxury work and live under bad conditions.”
In these fragments, an ‘us’ versus ‘them’ division can be read based on an unequal relationship experienced as unfair and uncomfortable. The second fragment depicts an example of a specific location (Bangladesh), however, most respondents did not refer to specific countries or locations when expressing their solidarity, but spoke in more general terms such as ‘all people’.

5.7 Fairphone and ‘geographical’ identity

As a followup to the multiple choice question “What identity would best describe you?”, respondents were asked to what extent they thought this identity did or did not influence their purchase of the Fairphone. Unfortunately, this question was not understood by approximately 20 per cent of the respondents. Those who did understand the question, most often answered the preceding multiple-choice question with ‘world citizen’, ‘European citizen’, or ‘human’. The majority of this group of respondents answered by referring to their feelings of responsibility and compassion for people on the other side of the world, regardless of the territorial borders dividing them.

“I think it is important that other people who make our clothes, chocolate etc., have to earn fair wages and have to work in safe working conditions. As we saw in Rana Plaza, Bangladesh, a clothing factory was collapsed. More than 1100 died and many people were injured. This is not the only disaster, it happens too much…It cannot be that people die because they make our clothes etc.”

5.8 Consumption and conflict

Respondents were asked how they would describe the role of consumers towards violent conflict. This led to statements, which addressed consumption in general. The majority of the respondents expressed consumers should take responsibility for the products they buy and where they are coming from.

“I am aware of the fact that my consumption can have deep impact on the other side of the world and I feel the responsibility.”

The majority of the respondents adhered to the belief that consumers have the power to change and move the economy. As examples, respondents said to see their power as a consumer in their consumer demand by boycotting ‘bad’ companies and others in the industry not abiding fair values and ‘buycotting’ those who do.
Some respondents were however sceptical of the power of consumer demand and said only legislation and policy will stop companies from behaving ‘unethically’. For conflict, however, respondents did consider their role to be significant. Almost unanimously the respondents considered the consumer as the ‘fuel’ for conflict. They envisaged a direct relation between consumer behaviour and natural resources-fed conflict worldwide.

“In the end, if consumers would decide to not buy stuff that contributes to violent conflict, the conflicts would probably decrease. On the other hand, many consumers are not aware of the relation between production and violent conflict.”

“The consumer is like fuel for these conflicts. As long as there are consumers, there is money to continue the war. There is always an economical reason involved with war and we, the consumers, are this ‘reason’.”

However, for people to make the make a conscious decision, it was felt that information on the effects of consumption is key.

“We need to be informed about the conflicts (...) and we need to be aware of how our demands ‘here’ impact on supply ‘there.”

“As much as possible consumers should be able to make an informed choice about the origins of their products. It is then up to them to decide morally whether they are prepared to spend a little bit less money on an ethically dubious product.”

It is not made clear by whom this information should be provided.
5.9 Interviews with Fairphone customers

Three buyers of the Fairphone have been interviewed and will be, due to agreed anonymity, discussed using pseudonyms. These interviews were meant as complementary to the online survey. The first interview was with Adán, a 32 year-old man living in Germany but born in Spain. The second interview was with Janneke, a 21 year old woman from the Netherlands and the third interview was with Nadezhda, a 22 year old woman, living in the United Kingdom but born in Bulgaria. All three were part of the first group of 5000 people who bought the Fairphone. All three interviews were personal accounts on their Fairphone purchase and personal values and motivations.

All three would like to see themselves as world citizens. Whereas only Nadezhda sees herself as a complete world citizen, both Janneke and Adán relativize their initial choice by stating to really love the Netherlands (Janneke) and feeling very European (Adán) as well. Nevertheless, all three interviewees expressed a sense of responsibility and loyalty towards other people beyond their own national borders.

They expressed different motivations for buying the Fairphone. Whereas Adán was mainly attracted to its open operating system and transparency, Janneke saw Fairphone in line with her concerns for both environmental and social issues. Nadezhda bought Fairphone as an extension of her work in the Fair Trade movement and her concerns for labour conditions in the global supply chain.

All three said to buy products that are in line with their personal social values, be it transparency, fairness or environmental reasons. In reflection to their consumer behaviour all three interviewees link their personal consumption ‘here’ with the effects it has ‘there’, on the people involved in the global supply chain.

“For instance, if I go shopping, let’s say to do groceries. Five or six years ago I would go for the cheaper let’s say tomato sauce. Now I tend to look for what we call bio-products or fair trade products and I don’t mind paying a bit more if this is going to make a difference (...).” (Adán)

“(…) you just have to choose for the right things and only buy the things that are made with values on how you want that the world is and I don’t want the world to be like with war, with people have to work under horrible conditions so I try not to buy these products that are made in those conditions.” (Janneke)

Their reasons for doing so are grounded in a strong belief in the power of the consumer. All three have expressed their general belief in the power of demand and supply.
All three expressed an “appetite for change”, as Adán described it. However, more generalizations on their beliefs and values are difficult to make. Whereas Nadezhda and Janneke said to be fully aware of the conflict minerals involved in smartphones and the ambition of Fairphone to have conflict-free components, Adán only read about the conflict mineral part of the Fairphone after he bought the phone. All three said to have bought the phone not specifically for the conflict-free parts, but because of its holistic approach. Ellen’s answer on to what extent the conflict-free mineral part of the Fairphone was important for her buying the Fairphone was:

“All three expressed an “appetite for change”, as Adán described it. However, more generalizations on their beliefs and values are difficult to make. Whereas Nadezhda and Janneke said to be fully aware of the conflict minerals involved in smartphones and the ambition of Fairphone to have conflict-free components, Adán only read about the conflict mineral part of the Fairphone after he bought the phone. All three said to have bought the phone not specifically for the conflict-free parts, but because of its holistic approach. Ellen’s answer on to what extent the conflict-free mineral part of the Fairphone was important for her buying the Fairphone was:

Furthermore, Nadezhda and Janneke said human values beyond national borders were the values behind Fairphone, whereas Adán said it to be about openness and transparency in which he emphasized that by this transparency people can gather information and can and should base their conscious consumption choices based on that information.
6. ANALYSIS

This chapter will provide with an answer to the four research questions that have been discussed in chapter 2.

6.1 Consumers and Fairphone: holistic interpretations of ‘fairness’

1. What meanings do consumers of the Fairphone give to their purchase?

As could be read in chapter 5 the customers have expressed a variety of motivations for buying the Fairphone, ranging from making a statement to environmental and social values. All these answers contain a high degree of idealism. Idealism not in the sense of having lofty unrealistic ambitions, but in the sense of having a mental image of what the world should be like, with regards to for example transparency in business or labour conditions. Fairphone in this, is considered to be a vehicle for global change, and is therefore supported by those looking for ways to put flesh on the bones of their idealism.

These varieties of meanings have also shown the use of the word ‘fair’ in the context of Fairphone. According to the New Oxford American Dictionary the word ‘fair’ means “in accordance with the rules or standards; legitimate; just or appropriate in the circumstances; gentle; not violent”. As this definition shows, the meaning of fair thus depends to a high extent on the context and subject the word fair is applied to. During the interviews, Fairphone said their definition of fair is under a continuous defining and redefining process, with the aim of finding a definition that is as inclusive as possible. Since Fairphone has mainly focused on opening up the supply chain, ‘fair’ in this sense refers to all processes and people involved in the involved supply chain, ranging from the handling of e-waste to conflict minerals. This has resulted in a rather generic and holistic use of the word fair.

This is reflected in the meanings the buyers give to their purchase of Fairphone as well. Most motivations are non-specific and generic in their nature, often expressing their willingness to contribute to a fair(-er) world with regards to humans and the environment. These notions of fairness with regards to humanity and the environment, however, are often relatively abstract, thus not necessarily stating anything particular about the consumers of the Fairphone. Nevertheless, the use of ‘fair’ and its holistic interpretations have been characteristic for this group.

6.2 Conflict-free on the conscious consumer’s checklist

2. What role does violent conflict have for the consumer in their purchase of the Fairphone?

These generic meanings people have given to their Fairphone purchase has its effect on the specific role of violent conflict in their purchase as well. As the survey results in chapter 5 have shown, half of the respondents said ‘precious materials’ is for them the most important element Fairphone is working on (figure 5.4). However, as discussed in the discourse analysis the understanding of precious materials has a different meaning and refers to more than conflict minerals. Whereas conflict minerals refers to the involvement of armed groups in the supply
chain of minerals such as tin, tantalum and tungsten, precious materials are defined by Fairphone as conflict-free, fair resources, that put people first. When these findings are put next to only 17 per cent of the respondents explicitly referring to the conflict-free ambitions of Fairphone when asked to describe Fairphone, it becomes clear that the respondents seem to be more interested in the more general notions of fairness. Surprisingly, this study has therefore been unable to demonstrate that conflict-related issues have for the consumers been the main driver for the purchase of the Fairphone.

However, this does not mean that the customers have no concern in the role of violent conflict in the production of the Fairphone and its role in their consumption in general. As Fairphone started out as an awareness campaign on conflict minerals, their main effort has been, especially during the first two years, to increase knowledge on the role of conflict minerals in electronic technology. This is reflected in the amount of blogs and videos that have been published on their website. Although it is at this point in time difficult to see to what extent this has led to attitudinal and behavioral changes with their customers, 74% of the customers is confident enough to say they have some knowledge on the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As discussed in the discourse analysis, Fairphone has not provided with information on the DRC conflict beyond the economic stings it has in the mineral industry. This could explain for the relatively low percentage of customers with either deep of expert knowledge on the conflict. Whether this has certain implications for the effects conflict-sensitive consumerism in general will be discussed in the paragraph on recommendations for future research.

Notwithstanding, as became clear from both the interviews and survey, the Fairphone buyers do see consumers and consumption as a trigger of conflict in natural resource rich areas. They think if consumers change their consumptive behaviour, it will have effects on conflict through the workings of global supply and demand. The respondents thereby acknowledge the global embeddedness of ‘local’ conflict. However, as became clear from both the survey and the interviews, consumers feel they should be provided with more information and transparency on the relation of consumption with conflict and how they as consumers can have a role in this. 

As for this research question, from the case of Fairphone can be learned that customers have taken part in conflict-sensitive consumerism, but the vast majority of the group of respondents cannot be classified as a conflict-sensitive consumer. Contrary to the expectations, the results from this study thus invalidate the hypothesis that conflict-sensitive consumerism can be considered as an autonomous trend within political consumerism. As Fairphone has moved to a more holistic, multi-level approach while building the phone, the conflict-free dimensions of Fairphone have become one of the many themes the customer has become interested in and is starting to become familiar with. The third research question will provide with an answer to how then conflict-sensitive consumerism is to be understood in relation to political consumerism.

Nevertheless, as one of the pioneers in the field of conflict-free production, Fairphone has been able to widen the ‘consumer checklist’ of what can be considered as ‘fair’, by integrating conflict-free as a pillar in their story. In this way, this study contributes to current levels of knowledge on political consumerism and how consumers put flesh on the bones on their longing for a fairer world, in which peace has an important role as well.
6.3 Political consumption by the Fairphone buyers

3. How does conflict-sensitive consumerism relate to political consumerism?

The case of Fairphone is used as a case to create an understanding of conflict-sensitive consumerism. Although the research done on Fairphone is extensive, it is still a single case study and therefore generalizations beyond this case (and even beyond the group of respondents) should be made prudently. However, from this study some tentative conclusions can be made on the relation between conflict-sensitive consumerism and political consumerism.

Both the meanings provided by the buyers of the Fairphone and the role of conflict in their purchase, as discussed in 5.2 and 5.3 have provided with answers useful answering the third research question. The findings in the survey, interviews and discourse analysis have been used to contrast with definitions and characteristics of political consumption discussed in academic literature.

From the answers to the first two research questions, it becomes clear that the buyers of the Fairphone have based their purchase on considerations of fairness, not just for themselves but for others involved in the global supply chain as well. This corresponds to the considerations of justice and fairness political consumers make in their consumption choices (Micheletti, 2003). The meaning they put on their purchase, as can be read in paragraph 5.6, have shown expressions of global solidarity and justice, which refers to caring for people and the environment beyond their own national borders. These expressions have been considered characteristic of the political consumer by Micheletti and Stolle (2013).

Furthermore, at least 90 per cent of the Fairphone buyers have said to buy other fair products as well. This shows that their purchase of the Fairphone is not incidental, but an extension of an already existing political consumptive pattern.

Although Fairphone explicitly states it has not been certified by Max Havelaar's Fair Trade and is on top of that, very different by nature from Fair Trade products, the Fairphone customers do make associations between Fairphone and Fair Trade in their definitions and meanings of Fairphone in the survey and interviews. As a result, Fairphone is often considered to be an extension of already existing fair and/or Fair Trade products towards the field of (mobile) technology. As buying Fair Trade products is considered as ‘buycotting’ and thus political consumerism by Micheletti and Stolle (2013), buying the Fairphone, as an extension of fair products, can be considered as political consumption as well.

Consumption is by Fairphone explicitly framed as a political act and Fairphone furthermore expects its customers to think the same. Although this has not been directly questioned in that manner, from the survey and interviews it becomes clear that the customers acknowledge how their consumption is embedded within complex social and political structures. Although customers express how companies and governments should therefore take responsibility through legislation and policies concerning production, they see that consumers have a vital role in this as well. Therefore, a sense of responsibility for what is consumed and how this has been produced is strongly felt among the respondents.

Contrary to expectations, the results of this study thus show that conflict-sensitive consumption as performed by the Fairphone buyers should be considered as an extension of political consumption and not as an autonomous trend within political consumerism. As the Fairphone buyers are mostly driven by a broader socially conscious lifestyle, conflict-sensitive
consumerism can be considered as part of mainstream political consumerism. These findings thus confirm the alternative hypothesis of this study.

Nevertheless, this study provides with considerable additions to current levels of knowledge on political consumerism. Even though it is difficult to state that the Fairphone has attracted other kind of political consumers than other socially conscious products have, this case has shown that the consumers have integrated a ‘new’ aspect to their checklist when buying products. This then shows that political consumers not only are willing to account for environmental degradation and humane working conditions, but sustainable peace as well.

One other unanticipated outcome was that some of the features of the Fairphone customers can be considered as different from the general features of the political consumer. These deviations are concerned with the age and gender of the group of respondents, as compared to the characteristics of political consumers as described by Micheletti and Stolle (2013). With its relatively young customers of 79 per cent under the age of 40, and high share of males (61%), the characteristics of the Fairphone customers are different from the middle-aged female political consumer described by Micheletti and Stolle (2013). Although this has not been explored any further, these deviations could be explained by the technological and modern nature of the product. With regards to educational background and country of residence, the group does not show remarkable differences with political consumers, although this was not possible to test statistically.

6.4 The cosmopolitan Fairphone shopper

4. To what extent can conflict-sensitive consumerism be considered an expression of cosmopolitanism?

As stated in chapter 2 of this research, it was hypothesized that conflict-sensitive consumerism can be considered as a means for the expression of cosmopolitanism. In line with this hypothesis it was thus expected that the buyers of Fairphone could be considered as cosmopolitans and embodied values and dispositions in line with cosmopolitan values, such as having outlooks and feelings that stretch beyond local and national boundaries, accountability towards global processes and values reflecting an allegiance to society as a global community (Llopis-Goig, 2013).

The first three answers to the questions of this research have shown that Fairphone is inherently a global project as it tries to integrate all global processes involved with the production of a smartphone towards a transparent and foremost fair supply chain. As can be seen from the results, this has led to a group of consumers interested in and concerned with issues beyond their own borders.

Not only has this originally Dutch project attracted people living across at least nineteen different countries, 80 per cent said their main geographical identity stretches beyond their national borders. They often expressed opinions on global injustices and exploitation in general and in relation to consumption. This was then often considered as an uneven interplay between those who consume and those who produce. Consumption is placed by them within a cosmopolitan discourse, as it is felt that their consumption and consequences following from this

5 Respondents chose for either ‘world citizen’, ‘European’ or ‘human’
consumption, stretch beyond borders and therefore should be accounted for by them.

Combined with the expressed values of global justice and solidarity it is not unexpected that, as measured by the ‘COSMOSCALE’ (Saran and Kalliny, 2013), about 77 per cent of the respondents can be considered to be cosmopolitan. Interestingly enough only 43 per cent said to consider themselves cosmopolitan and 35 per cent does not know. The correlation between these two results have however not been tested. A plausible explanation for this is that most respondent might not have (enough) knowledge on the concept of cosmopolitanism and therefore do not associate him or herself with it.

As could be distilled from the discourse analysis on Fairphone, the language used by Fairphone is embedded in a cosmopolitan discourse as well. Through their blogs, videos and social media use, Fairphone has not only created an international community, but a moral community as well. Fairphone’s story is a story on taking collective accountability for global injustices with the aim to create a better world for everyone involved. It is a story of ‘connectedness’, not only between an individual and a product, but on the interconnectedness of countries and people as well.

As was mentioned in the literature review, the cosmopolitanism concept consisted of several aspects of which the cultural and political aspects of cosmopolitanism were considered as most relevant to this study. The results of this study shows that both dimensions have shown to be significant in relation to conflict-sensitive consumerism. However, most expressions of cosmopolitanism were focused on its political dimensions, such as global accountability and justice and an adherence to a global moral political community. A possible explanation for this might be that the story of Fairphone is more a political story and product than it is about cultural hybridity and diversity.

In sum, from the previous chapter could be learned that the results of this study show that conflict-sensitive consumption as performed by the Fairphone buyers should be considered as an extension of political consumption and not as an autonomous trend within political consumerism. Consequently, the Fairphone buyers are mostly driven by a broader socially conscious lifestyle. Therefore conflict-sensitive consumerism should, at least in the case of Fairphone, be considered as part of mainstream political consumerism. As political consumerism has within previous research been associated with cosmopolitanism (Llopis-Goig 2013, Micheletti and Stolle, 2013), this research confirms these findings, since the vast majority of the Fairphone can be considered as cosmopolitans.
7. CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

This explorative research on conflict-sensitive consumerism aimed to bridge the academic literature on conflict resources, the global embeddedness of ‘local’ conflict, political consumerism and cosmopolitanism. For this, the case of Fairphone was used to explore the meanings and values of consumers linked to their purchase of what is considered the first step towards a conflict-free phone; a phone produced with natural resources from mines outside the reach of armed groups. This chapter provides an answer to the main research question of this study:

*How can conflict-sensitive consumerism be understood and how does it relate to political consumerism as an expression of cosmopolitanism?*

First the results as discussed in chapter 6 will be integrated in order to give a comprehensive answer to the main research questions. This chapter will then conclude with recommendations for future research.

7.1 Fairphone: the cosmopolitan political consumer pushing for peace

This research has used Fairphone as its case study. As mentioned in the literature review, political consumption has been considered a practical expression of cosmopolitanism. For this study it was hypothesized that conflict-sensitive consumerism would show considerable differences from general political consumer behavior and therefore needed to be considered as an independent trend within political consumerism. Furthermore, it was expected that conflict-sensitive consumerism could be considered as an expression of cosmopolitanism.

By executing a discourse analysis of 49 blogs, 4 videos and website information, interviews with the Fairphone team and customers and an online survey, an understanding has been created of the motivations and values of the people behind Fairphone and their purchase.

Contrary to the expectations, this study did not find significant differences between conflict-sensitive consumption and political consumption. As this research has shown, the Fairphone story has been embedded in a discourse showing both links with cosmopolitanism and political consumerism. Consumption is clearly framed as a political undertaking embedded within complex social and political structures, by Fairphone mostly referred to as ‘the system’ or the supply chain. Fairphone has built a roadmap, which tries to improve the conditions in the supply chain in order to make it more ‘fair’. Through their blogs and videos on their website they have created a moral community, a group of like-minded people saying to be willing to take accountability for the consequences of their own consumption. Moreover, 90 per cent of the respondents said to buy other fair products as well. The reasons given for doing so mainly referred to their willingness to take individual responsibility for their consumption in order to change the market more in line with their values and ideals of ‘fairness’. Resulting from these findings, it can be concluded that the vast majority of the Fairphone buyers can be considered to be political consumers.

This group of people, the Fairphone buyers, has expressed values and ideals in line with global justice and solidarity beyond their own national borders. Opinions on global justice and feelings of global solidarity have often been expressed by referring to the discomfort experienced
by the respondents for having certain luxuries (such as smartphones) at the expense of less privileged people. The following two citations are exemplary for this conclusion:

“Somehow when you stop thinking about lands, you start thinking that you would not like having a neighbour or a relative work like a slave for you to get a cheap product.”

“I am aware of the fact that my consumption can have deep impact on the other side of the world and I feel the responsibility.”

These values of accountability, global justice and solidarity have in academic literature been associated with cosmopolitanism (e.g. Llopis-Goig, 2013, Linklater 1998). Through the ‘COSMOSCALE’ as developed by Saran and Kalliny (2013) it could be concluded that indeed the vast majority of the respondents (77%) can be considered cosmopolitan. In short, this thus leads to the conclusion that the vast majority of the Fairphone buyers are both cosmopolitans and political consumers. However, the role played by conflict in the purchase of the Fairphone has led to unexpected outcomes.

It becomes clear from both the discourse analysis, interviews and survey that people have expressed a variety of interpretations of what is fair and are moving towards a more inclusive and holistic understanding of what ‘fair’ entails. For both Fairphone and the Fairphone consumers, it refers not merely to better working conditions (as was the case for Fair Trade products), but also to other topics such as reduced environmental impact and transparent pricing.

This inclusive understanding of ‘fair’, applies to conflict-free components of the phone as well. Although much is said in their blogs and videos about conflict minerals, on the Fairphone website, conflict minerals are referred to as ‘precious materials’. This concept encompasses not only conflict-free minerals, but has been defined by Fairphone as conflict-free, fair resources that put people first. It thus entails a more inclusive understanding, not only referring to the involvement of armed groups and violent conflict. From the survey it could be learnt that 50 per cent of the respondents said to have bought the Fairphone mainly for its ‘precious materials’.

The conflict element of ‘precious materials’ is however scarcely mentioned in individual motivations and understandings of the Fairphone in the open-ended survey questions. Only 17 per cent of the people explicitly mentions conflict or conflict-free in their motivations for buying the Fairphone. For some respondents the conflict-free parts were thus a specific trigger to buy the Fairphone. However, for the vast majority of Fairphone buyers the conflict-free components of Fairphone are considered to be one of the many aspects of improvement Fairphone is working on. This does not mean that the Fairphone shoppers are not concerned with conflict. They feel responsibility as consumers for violent conflict and express a desire for more transparency and information on the link between conflict and consumption. Furthermore, the respondents considered the consumer as the ‘fuel’ for conflict. They envisaged a direct relation between consumer behavior and natural resources-fed conflict worldwide.
The following citations are exemplary for the way the Fairphone buyer considers its role in conflict:

"The consumer is like fuel for these conflicts. As long as there are consumers, there is money to continue the war. There is always an economical reason involved with war and we, the consumers, are this ‘reason’.”

"In the end, if consumers would decide to not buy stuff that contributes to violent conflict, the conflicts would probably decrease. On the other hand, many consumers are not aware of the relation between production and violent conflict.”

In sum, conflict-sensitive consumerism, as performed by the buyers of the Fairphone can thus be seen as an extension of political consumerism and as a practical expression of cosmopolitanism. Contrary to the hypotheses of this study, conflict-sensitive consumerism cannot be considered as an autonomous trend within political consumption. The buyers of Fairphone have not been mainly driven by values and behaviours specifically concerned with peace and violent conflict. Instead, the conflict-free elements of Fairphone have been taken up in the more inclusive concept of ‘fair’.

This case study research has contributed to our empirical and scientific knowledge on conflict-sensitive consumerism. Fairphone served as an exemplary and pioneer ‘socially conscious’ product that is consumed in the global North and produced by countries in the global South involved in resource-related armed conflict. The case of Fairphone thus serves as an example on how globally embedded conflict in the global South can be linked with consumption in the global North by using consumption as a political means to express cosmopolitan values. The results of this research provide us with a deeper understanding of the behaviours and values of people involved in political consumption. Whereas previous research was mainly focused on political consumers’ values on environmental and human rights issues, this explorative study has shown how conflict-sensitive consumption aimed at fostering peace and stopping war through consumption, is becoming part of a broader socially conscious lifestyle. This study has therefore not only explored the workings of conflict-sensitive consumerism, but has created a valuable repertoire of contemporary reflections of consumers in one of the growing fields of global political participation: political consumption.

7.3 Recommendations for future research and practice

As Fairphone is one of the pioneers involved in conflict-free production and consumption, this is the first explorative study specifically focused on conflict-sensitive consumption in relation to political consumption as an expression of cosmopolitanism. Further case study research on equivalent cases, preferably comparative case study research, would further strengthen the results of this research.

Furthermore, the workings of conflict-sensitive consumption take place on different levels. Whereas this research has focused on the motivations and values of consumers in the
global North, further research should be focused on the actual effects conflict-sensitive consumption has on the targeted conflict regions in the global South. As this study shows that both Fairphone and its customers consider consumer power as vital in changing industries and systems, its effects should be studied as well. Especially with regards to the effects of the relatively low levels of knowledge people themselves estimate to have on the conflict (as was in this case the DRC).

On top of that, as this research has shown, consumers feel more information should be provided on the link between conflict and consumption. As political consumption, including conflict-sensitive consumerism, is gaining momentum as a new means for political participation, research on its effective implementation as a potential structural approach for conflict prevention and peacebuilding would be a worthwhile contribution to academic research. But not only for academic research these findings are relevant.

This research has implications for NGOs and businesses as well. For businesses involved in fair production, the arrival of conflict-sensitive consumption leads to an extended checklist for the consumer on what is considered as ‘fair’. These businesses would do well to take note of this trend and adjust their approach accordingly because political consumers are growing more aware of the link between conflict and consumption.

NGOs and other civil society organizations working on conflict-related projects or programs could take several lessons from this research. Firstly, this research shows there is a growing interest between the link of consumption and conflict worldwide and these citizens have expressed a need for more information on this specific topic. NGOs and other civil society organizations could use this to their own benefit and consider it a new means to engage their audience. Secondly, as many NGOs are themselves too strongly focused on the local aspects of conflict in the global South, this research provides valuable starting points on how conflict can be both researched and tackled from a global perspective. Development cooperation should not be seen as something that needs to be solely done far away in exotic countries but should be found closer to home.

For national governments and international governmental institutions smart enough to acknowledge the power of the consumer and its growing significance, the results of this research can provide with handholds on the more structural approach towards peacebuilding. Opinion polls have shown that the number of people interested in forms of direct political participation, issue-oriented citizen initiatives and social movements is on the increase (Köhler, 1998). Trends show that nowadays citizens seek for more direct channels of involvement through for example business or alternative movements without intervention or encouragement from policymakers. This claim has been confirmed by Dekker and Hooghe (2003) whom admit that even though conventional political elite-led participation shows a downward trend, this has been abundantly compensated by the upsurge and spread of new forms of political participation. Norris (2002) states that participating in these ‘unconventional’ political initiatives is gaining ground. Political consumption, and thus conflict-sensitive consumerism, should be considered as one of these new forms of political participation. Now citizens have started to use their consumption as a means to express their global solidarities and consumer responsibility with regards to armed conflict worldwide, governmental institutions should seek for ways to support this development.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES
# APPENDIX A

List of data Fairphone discourse analysis

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<td>Bas van Abel</td>
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APPENDIX B

Survey questions

Introduction:

Hi!

Thank you for taking interest in this survey. This questionnaire is part of a research study on political consumerism. As you have bought a FairPhone I am interested in your personal reasons for buying one. This survey will take about 10 minutes of your time. It would help me if you could answer the open questions as extensively as possible.

Thanks in advance for your help!

Lisa Olsthoorn
Master student Conflicts, Territories and Identities
Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands
Research intern at The Broker Online

Just to make sure:

Question1. Have you pre-ordered a Fairphone?
- Yes
- No

Ok let's get started!
Question 2. Please describe in your own words: what is Fairphone?


Question 3. What were your motivations to buy a Fairphone?


Question 4. What element of the Fairphone roadmap do you find most important?

1. Made with care (building relationships for better practices, from working conditions to recycling)
2. Precious materials (conflict-free, fair resources that put people first)
3. Smart design (open and responsible design for fair electronics)
4. Clear deals (fair, transparent pricing and production plus an opportunity to support change)
5. Lasting value (addressing the entire lifespan of mobile phones)

5. How would you describe the knowledge you have on the themes described in the previous question? (Precious materials, lasting value, clear deals, smart design, made with care)

- No knowledge
- Some knowledge
- Deep knowledge
- Expert

6. How would you best describe your identity?

- World citizen
- Citizen of my country
- Citizen of my city/town
- European
- Asian
- African
- South American
- North American
- Middle Eastern
- Oceanian
- Other

7. To what extent do you feel this identity has influenced your decision to purchase the FairPhone?
8. How would you describe your knowledge of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo?
- No knowledge
- Some knowledge
- Deep knowledge
- Expert

9. Do you buy products labelled as ‘fair’ more often?
- (10) Yes: what are your reasons for buying other fair products?
- (11) No: what are your reasons for not buying other fair products?

12. What do you think is the role of consumers in violent conflict?

Now six propositions will follow
Likert scale under each proposition:

*Strongly disagree – disagree – neutral – agree – strongly agree*

13. I think it's good to spend time with people who are willing to talk and learn about other cultures

14. I think I respect others’ culture the way I respect mine

15. I think if people have a positive attitude toward other communities, there would be less conflict in the world

16. I think to be successful, one needs to be able to use materials, information, knowledge etc. from other cultures

17. I am ready to learn about other cultures through listening, observation, thinking and reflecting

18. I think reading about world events is worthwhile

19. Would you describe yourself as a cosmopolitan?
- Yes
20. Where are you located?

- City/town

21. What is your age?

22. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other

23. What is your educational background?

- No educational background
- Elementary school
- High School
- Intermediate vocational education (mbo)
- University of Applied Sciences (hbo)
- University (wo)
- Other

24. Why have you bought a FairPhone?

- Personal interest
- Professionally involved with issues such as sustainability, conflict, transparency, human rights
- Both

25. What professional field do you work in?

- Social business/enterprise
- Non-governmental organization (NGO)
• Non-governmental development organization
• Education
• Government
• Research
• Student
• Other

**Completed**

That’s it! Thank you for making the effort.

**In case you are interested in the results of this study, please enter your e-mail address here:**

26. Would you be willing to take part in a thirty-minute interview for this study? (in person or via Skype)
   - Yes
   - No

27. If you have any comments, please feel free to let fly in the box below:
APPENDIX C

Circle diagrams survey results

**Why have you bought the Fairphone?**
- Personal interest: 25%
- Professionaly involved with issues such as sustainability, conflict, transparency, human rights): 3%
- Both: 72%

**Professional working field respondents**
- Student: 25%
- Research & education: 8%
- Social enterprise: 6%
- NGO: 12%
- Government: 10%
- IT: 5%
- Unemployed: 3%
- Non-governmental development organisation: 3%
- Media: 2%
- Commercial business: 2%
- Other: 2%
Educational background respondents

- High school: 11%
- Intermediate vocational education: 5%
- University of applied sciences: 13%
- University: 71%

I think it's good to spend time with people who are willing to talk and learn about other cultures

(X = 115)

- Strongly disagree: 2%
- Disagree: 0%
- Neutral: 3%
- Agree: 40%
- Strongly agree: 55%
I think I respect other's cultures the way I respect mine
(\(X = 115\))

I think if people have a positive attitude towards others communities, there would be less conflict in the world
(\(X = 115\))
I think to be successful, one needs to be able to use materials, information, knowledge etc. from other cultures

\( (X = 115) \)

I am ready to learn about other cultures through listening, observation, thinking and reflecting

\( (X = 115) \)
I think reading about world events is worthwhile

(\(X = 115\))

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<td>Strongly agree</td>
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Would you describe yourself as a cosmopolitan?

(\(X = 115\))

- Yes: 42.6%
- I don't know: 34.8%
- No: 22.6%
APPENDIX D

Interview guide Fairphone

1. Could you describe in your own words what Fairphone is?

2. What were your reasons to work for Fairphone?

3. How do you see the role of Fairphone as a social enterprise?

4. How do you see the role of Fairphone as a company/enterprise?

5. How do you see the role of Fairphone as a collective of consumers themselves?

6. How would you describe the relationship between the Fairphone and the consumer?

7. How does Fairphone stand in relation to other fair products?

8. Which processes does Fairphone try to influence?

9. How do you see the power of the consumer?

10. How do you see the influence/power of the consumer towards conflict?

11. Is there any such thing as conflict-sensitive consumerism?

12. Where do you think movements such as the Fairphone are coming from?

13. Could Fairphone have been such a success let’s say twenty years ago?
APPENDIX E

Interview guide Fairphone customers

1. First of all, could you tell me something about yourself…

2. Why have you bought the Fairphone?

3. When have you bought the Fairphone?

4. Which theme of the roadmap was most important to you?

5. Why, if you had to pick one, did you pick this one?

6. What values do you think are behind the Fairphone?

7. What personal values made you buy the Fairphone?

8. Would you consider yourself a world citizen?

9. How would you describe your role as a consumer?

10. What kind of people do you think have bought the Fairphone?

11. To what extent are the conflict-free materials of Fairphone important to you?

12. What do you think is the role of consumers in conflict?

13. Have you ever bought other products from producers who were working with conflict-related materials?

14. Do you have any questions for me?
APPENDIX F

Transcript interviews with Fairphone

INTERVIEW BAS VAN ABEL
November, 12th 2013

L: I'll do my research in English, so the interview as well. Is that a problem?
B: Nee, no
L: Good, well my research question is actually about conflict-sensitive consumerism so I am researching whether there is any such thing as people buying products because they know a lot about conflict etcetera ... as my study background and therefore I will not be looking into whether Fairphone has been successful in changing conflict or whatever, but the meaning people give to buying the fairphone
L: And I do that with you guys as well to see why you have started the Fairphone and that is perfect that I am actually talking to you because you were the initiator of the whole project, so ...first-hand and the people of the survey, I will also have some in-depth interviews with them as well.
B: Ok
L: So to make sure that everything is balanced, get to talk to you, get to talk to the people about the Fairphone etcetera.
B: Ja. So to see if the perception is the same ... or to see any discrepancies between what we do and what we think we are doing and what people.....
L: Mmmm, not necessarily actually. It's very explorative, it is not to look for contrasts between the two, not really actually, ehm...I guess you are probably on the same line as people who bought the Fairphone, I don't know...
B: Well, I think the expectations are a little bit higher as...
L: I heard that from Bibi as well yeah yeah ..ok. My first question is if you can describe what is Fairphone?
B: What is Fairphone?
L: What is Fairphone.
B: Ehmm, pfoee...to me Fairphone is a research in itself. Everything but ehhh .... no it's a phone of course, it's a phone. But on the other hand it is not really, it's not the focus. The phone is a means to an end. It's trying to find out how the supply chain works, what kind of issues are there and by ehm...seeing what kind of issues are at hand ehh..we also try to
see the solutions to it. That is very practical oriented at what, you know, what is the status quo and whether there is space for improvement, but in the bigger picture I think Fairphone is about trying to challenge the economy as a whole and finding out if social values can be equivalent to profit in business wise

L: Ok, and why have you started the Fairphone?

B: It started as a campaign against conflict minerals, well not against, but to create awareness about conflict minerals and from there it grew into something much bigger and something that is more close to me as a designer as well. And so the first question came from an NGO, a development agency called Action Aid, and they asked Waag Society media lab together with the communication agency Schrijf Schrijft to develop something, a campaign based on social media and gaming, much more media-oriented, to create this awareness. For me as a designer it made much more sense to look at the whole system, because you can change something ...you know conflict minerals and put some focus on the problems there in the Congo but in the end there is a relation between consumerism and conflict minerals, there is a relation between design of the phone and the way it is put into the market and all these things together make it .... it is the whole circular economy thinking. That all the actions within the whole supply chain affect each other.

B: The problem is that it is not visible and the chain of the whole supplies but also the minerals come from and get into our phone is so complicated and complex that people say don't even start doing it. But in the end, the phone is there, so we thought well you know, fuck it, let's just make a phone.

B: (laughs) because it beholds all the complexity already.

L: Have you always been interested in the complexity behind products?

B: Yeah, so my background as a designer is that ...I don't know if you know Fablabs, a fabrication laboratoriums, so I always looked at the relation between the virtual communication systems, sharing, I have been very active with creative commons for examples, such kind of models, licenses just to be able to share information

L: Open source...

B: Open source, ehhhhmm, and on the other hand I have a fascination for products, electronics, industrial design, the physical world and what I have noticed is that there is a huge gap between the culture around physical processes and the division of labour, the economy around it, and the whole economy around digital media, which is much more flat, kind of peer to peer organised thing with communication models that are peer-to-peer and not centralized television and just sending, it is transforming into something which is much more interactive, information is kind of freely available.

So ehm...fablabs, when I started a fablab here in Amsterdam, so I set up a fablab here in Amsterdam, first fablab in Holland. Fablab, the basic thought behind fabrication laboratorium how can you use the principles of sharing peer-to-peer development within,
making a physical product and were are using computer controlled machines, so you can actually share things all over the world....and ehhh produce them locally. So it was, fablab to me was the first connection between those two worlds, where it actually made sense. Where it came much more together, so from that perspective I got interested in all the supply chains and even you know...especially the...and I don't what to sound to Marxistic, it is not my intention to praise the Marxist model or something, but what you see is because of the industrial revolution we have this division of labour and for me as a designer there is a huge distinction between being a designer, being a maker, being a consumer and that didn't make sense. I got a lot of inspiration from making stuff, the processes and looking at the ... and I found out that you know ..in the fablab, through making stuff it's really, can you really see that, you get inspiration from it.

B: And the digital world already noticed that, you know, you just make something, you share it and you can iterate and you change it and beta products, beta websites and systems are ...

L: More trial and error

B: Yeah more trial and error, it is more like common practice. And I thought well, let's take that idea to the physical world and then Fairphone came and the questions and that is great because it is not open source, it is open resource, you know. If you really want to go into your phone, it's like where do these resources come from? How can we open up those systems? So ehm...so I see fairphone as platform for experimentation on new models looking at the supply chain and the physical production of goods. Which are related to our economy and our very old-fashioned industrial model.

L: And that comes back to what you said earlier, it is a means to an end, so this telephone, it is a telephone but it could have been any other product with a very closed supply chain.

B: Yeah, but the phone is one of the sweetest paradoxes you can get, because it has those two worlds in it ...

L: Yeah

B: It is the communication model which I am talking about, which gives us the opportunity to freely share information, to be online, to leapfrog into a new...you see it in Africa, to leap into a new digital world and on the other hand it is the symbol of a messed up production

L: Hmmm

B: So as we know now, it is one of the most complex productions and it is the same production as when you are talking about Bangladesh and the factories you know, there is no difference between that, it is just that a phone is more complex.

L: Yeah, ok...and as you said earlier Fairphone started as an awareness raising campaign, but it slowly turned into a social enterprise.
L: How do you see Fairphone as a social enterprise?

B: Ehmm, well, it is very easy, I mean, we see, I see Fairphone as a company that uses a commercial model to create social impact, so for us, if you talk means to an end, the commercial model is also a means to an end, it is not our goal to be, to get our shareholders rich, or to create profit for the shareholders. I mean, it is our goal to create profit, but the profit is actually part of the impact we can create, because with that profit you can actually do things again, so if you look at the step by step research we are fuelling our research and our production development and all the intervention we can do with our profits model, so in that sense it is a real social enterprise. It is entrepreneurial, it is doing it yourself, it's...what I have been thinking about it, and I have been working in the NGO world for I think 10, 12 years. I never worked in a commercial company actually. So this is the first time I see a commercial...I really use the commercial model myself ehmm...the great thing about it is that the responsibilities you have are towards your customers. And there is a very direct relation between your customers and what you do. Some people ask us yeah, ok, so how do you make sure that if you...you are not going to misbehave as a company and you are going to get rich. What is it that you take care of in your company that it is a real social company?

B: Well, you don't. The nice thing is that the customers are, is our lifeline. You know, working with customers is the fact that we can exist as a company. So if we are going to misbehave and not going to be fair towards our customers, then the whole engine stops, so there is control mechanism which is very clear and which....working as an NGO, you always had three-party systems of more. You had your funds, you had your target group and you had...well...your own work. And sometimes, the work you were doing was actually more focused at funds because you had criteria and you had to do it, then the actual target group and that made it really weird. Because your customer, your target group or whatever you wanna call them was not your first responsibility.

L: Would you then describe Fairphone also as an initiative by a collective of consumers?

B: Ehmm...yeah! It is very clear that if we didn't have consumers, it wouldn't have been possible. No I think that, the consumers were looking at...they are a special bunch of people, because ehmm....they are kind of crazy as well in a sense. Because they...

L: took a leap of faith

B: It is a leap of faith, it is a huge risk they are taking. And it amazes, it really amazes me that people are so altruistic and eager for change, socially oriented that they are actually buying a phone from a company that never made it before. And a phone that doesn't existed. So I think that is a lot of trust people put into it. That is trust that I feel as a responsibility that keeps me awake at night as well. Sometimes I can't even believe it that so many people put trust in something, but it is also a very valuable thing if you look at it, because it is a...it is not about the amount of money that they put in, but it is still a big amount of
money so that means that there is a huge kind of stresses the step they are willing to take.

L: Yah..

B: And that's great, so in that sense, it's...they don't even have the product in their hands. So that makes it for me much more a movement, at this point, a statement of people than it is the average consumer who buys the product and expects it to work and...besides the fact that it is our responsibility to make a phone that works. And works well, which we'll do. But still, it's haven't been proven until the point that we actually have it in the market.

L: And what kind of people do you think is your audience? What kind of people have bought the Fairphone?

B: The general, I think it is not on the demographics or the specifics of the age or that kind of things. It is much more on the attitude, so the kind of people that bought the phone are the people that see it, that they can actually change things by consuming, or by...that consuming is a choice, that it is a political act in a way. I think that people who have bought the phone see it as a political act, ehm...and that's, that's what we aimed at as well. Because I think it is better to have that group of consumers from the start, that people see it as more than just buying a phone, that you know... that we are happy with the group of people who have bought the phone and that doesn't say anything about the differences between people because it's kids....I get people from my son's class for example, kids that have been saving for the Fairphone because it's so cool and they want it and the whole story behind it. And they see... how it's made, the made on demand is an important aspect and the connection, relation with the products, so I am not saying that everyone bought it because they feel alligned with the conflict mineral problems. It's not that everyone bought it out of social, the social awareness, I think a lot of people bought it because they see that it is a different kind of approach and that they can be part of something that is changing. Something they are not satisfied with, and that could as well be the financial crisis. Could as well be the economy. Could as well be that we are fed up with big companies. So we are supporting a smaller company.

L: Do you think there are certain ideals that motivated the people to buy the fairphone?

B: Yeah sure, I mean, like I said, these ideals are so wide, as we say, as I said before, we focus on so many areas, and even open source could be a reason for people to buy this phone, but I think if you take it to a higher level you always get to the point that people know it's a small company that tries to change things. And that by supporting this small company and buying this phone, they can, they have a voice into changing things in the bigger picture. And the bigger picture is we are fed up with the economy and how it works....and that doesn't, that makes it that the person who buys the phone for open source reasons, kind of have the same ideal as people on the higher level than the people who buy it for humanitarian reasons, because of the phone having conflict-free minerals. So, I think their very different in ages and the reasons and you know, the real practical
approaches of people and their background on why they buy it, but in the end it all comes down to making a statement that things have to change in the bigger picture.

L: Ok and how do you see Fairphone in relation to other products who are labelled as fair such as bananas, or chocolate or clothing?

B: Well, most of these products are labelled as Fair trade, so there is a big difference between that. There is no fair trade for minerals at the moment, just for gold, they just signed a setup. But I see it as a big difference in terms of how we define fair, if you compare it to Fair trade. It is not a single ingredient product, as, I always see, a phone is something you make together, the ...I have been working at open design for a while. How can you collaborate, how can you use design processes as a collaborative process to solve wicked problems, like the big problems. The problems we cannot solve by ourselves, the problems that multi-stakeholders, how can you design processes to do that. Well, by making a phone and looking at the systems behind it and I think the phone in that sense is a product you can collaborate on and you can really work on it as, as I was talking about the communication model, in a beta kind of sense. So it is a product that is always in beta, and a banana is ready. Coffee is ready. And this is a product that always evolves. So it makes it much more like a platform, it makes it much wider and richer also and more complicated, but totally different from traditional fairtrade because fair trade, Fair trade is a mechanism wherein is already defined what is, what are the requirements to call this fair trade, it is a certification method, it is not a product development. And it doesn't cover, labour conditions in factories, it doesn't designer principles, it doesn't cover e-waste, recycling problems. In that sense it is different. On the other hand, I do see of course a comparison, and that is, if you look at Fair Trade as a pioneering, especially on the pioneering role they had in the 60, 70s I think, we are doing kind of the same cause I think at that time, Fairtrade was just an idea, a concept and the first bananas weren't as fair as they are now

L: Yeah..you have to start somewhere

B: You have to start somewhere. So that is I think the attitude into changing, changing something, changing systems is the same, it is just that the product is just different.

L: I asked this question also to the other three. How can the success of Fairphone can be explained. But as you already said, the Fairphone is always a beta version. It is not an end-point yet, it is a process, it is a platform.

B: Yeah. Well I mean it is a process and it has end results as well.

L: Yes, the phone will be there in December

B: Yeah, exactly, so the phone you have like instances, this is where Fairphone is now and than you got a phone and that is an end-product.

L: Yes, but I have heard some problems with the word success, because it is not necessarily yet a success because there is so much more to gain.
B: It depends on where you look at, I mean the, depends on how you define the success eh...

L: Of course, I wanted to talk about the success of the movement, so not so much whether you have succeeded in making a conflict-free phone but that so many people took this leap of faith.

B: That's successful, you can call that.

L: Do you think this would have been possible ten years ago?

B: No.

L: Why not?

B: Because you didn't have the communication channels. You didn't have the economic crisis. So it's several things. The communication channels weren't there, the economic crisis wasn't here, so there wasn't an attitude of people wanting to change things. You see Occupy movements and people fighting against this invisible something and this makes it visible. It makes it very tangible for people to actually channel their anger towards the systems. And then you have the awareness is much higher than it was ten years ago.

L: Why is that you think?

B: That is because NGOs did a good job into surfacing the problems in the supply chain and it also has to do with the economic crisis, you see that the economy is starting to show its failures.

L: Hm hm

B: It has been showing its failures for a long time but we were satisfied with it, because we were still wealthy. And now you see that, you have your problems locally and you have on top of that the problems you had always. They were always present already, like the problems in the factory and finding the cheapest labour and everything.

L: You mean the global problems?

B: The global yeah, which are all connected to the wealth of nations Adam Smith kind of thinking. So that's old, the problems we have are old. The only thing is that, because of all these things coming together, you know the social term of perfect storm, where everything comes together and creates a storm which is perfect because every single element does what it's good at and I think that is what we are looking at here. So it's not the awareness itself, it is not - why is there more awareness? Well, because the other things are at stake as well. We wouldn't be where ..... 

L: Ok, my final questions is more focused on my general research question. Do they think there is anything such as conflict-sensitive consumerism?

B: No. Well, it depends on how you ... I think ..
L: Is it something new? Is it different from other kind of conscious consumption?

B: No, I think it's about, again about, I wouldn't, maybe it 20, 30 years from now this wouldn't be possible as well. Because there has to be somekind of unrest in people that the world and the big companies are kind of screwing them to be able to pull something off like this. And I think that it's much more in line with political consumerism, that is bigger than just conflict-related. And it is also...what is the source of the conflict. Well the source of the conflict is very political, and it is also..what is conflict to you in this sense. You are just talking about the minerals conflict?

L: No, conflict in general. Conflict between peoples, between ethnic groups, within countries or between countries. Not one person to one person, not that conflict.

B: Ok, so not within ...so factory workers against their management, is that a conflict?

L: By certain definitions it would be yeah..

B: So, then I'd say, it's yes and no, depending on how you are defining conflict, so that's the hard nut for you to crack, what is the scope of what you call conflict and is it related to countries who are in war because of minerals, or is it much wider into other conflict.

L: I looked into a lot of theory on political consumerism, and I was exactly wondering if conflict-sensitive consumerism is

B: A sub-group, oh yeah yeah yeah

L: A sub-group, but has its own features, which makes it different from, you know, environmental consumption - like consumption to save the rainforest.

B: No no, okay. Yes, if you put it that way, definitely yes, I think there is...if you look at the discussion going on. I think there is a big difference from people looking at it from an eco-friendly perspective, people looking at it from an open source perspective, look at it from a conflict-minerals perspective. And they all have their reasons to buy a Fairphone in that sense. But again, if you put it on a more abstract level, I think they all do it for the same reason and that is conflict-related, of the tension between the public and the private, even, when does something become political? It becomes political when your private, when your own private gains on an equal...I don't know if you read, Hannah Arendt, she describes a lot of political frictions on power and labour, espesecially on labour she wrote a lot opposed to Marx, she is very different from Marx. What she said is that political sphere is kind of the arena where the private gains and the common gains are discussed. That is why this interface between you and the world. That's politics. If there weren't politics, there wouldn't be roads. You would not build the road yourself, you leave it to the system, so I think looking at it, if you define conflict also as something between your personal gain and the public, the world and what they want ... because that is most of the time where conflicts come from - then everything political is conflict-related.

L: Yeah, that's an interesting view on it as well.
B: It is just how you define it. For me it is semantics or it becomes philosophy. Depends on how you want to approach it for your thesis of course.

L: That is important to...

B: Yeah you can go into the whole philosophical discussion about what is conflict and how does it relate. Or you can see well this is my scope and this is how I define it and this is just want to find out very practically what are the reasons why people do this, well then you have a big difference between people that buy it because of open source or buy it because of conflict minerals or not conflict minerals...

L: Well, I took the last approach but it does not exclude thinking about maybe there is such thing as conflict-sensitive consumerism but with a different definition of conflict - that would be interesting as well.

B: Yeah yeah yeah, conflict is also ..... the secret service issue that you have right now, is it related to a conflict or is it not? You know, is it the fact that they are looking into ehh..into our phones and information, because they want to find out if people want to do bad stuff, is that related to ....

B: That's a huge group of people is actually worried by that and they buy a Fairphone, because .... we use Google, but they still buy a Fairphone because..

L: They think it will change..

B: Yeah it is their only way to say fuck you. So ehm...yeah.

L: Well, thank you very much

B: All right

L: Do you have any questions or any unclear things about my research?

B: No, no... I am looking forward to the results.

L: Yeah, me too.

**INTERVIEW JOE MIER**

November 7th, 2013

L: I'd like to record my interview for my transcript, but I want to let you know I will not use it for any other purposes, but I need your consent ... If I'm allowed to ...record it.

J: Yes, you have my consent.

L: Ok, cool.

J: Is it ok if I do this orange?

L: Definitely
L: Ok, I will do a short introduction about me, because you have probably any idea about where I am coming from.

J: Ok

L: I'm a taking a masters in Conflict Studies at the Radboud University of Nijmegen and well, of course interested in conflict, Fairphone was very appealing to me when I heard about the initiative and I wanted to study what you can do about conflict at home. So of course, I came at Fairphone and did a lot of desk research from September onwards and now I am here at Fairphone. I have been in contact with Bibi from the very beginning actually since June, so I am very happy that I am now get to talk to you, and Bibi and Roos and hopefully Bas, because I talked to him yesterday at TEDx so I'll get a more complete picture also of people behind Fairphone. And of course my survey, which will be about the buyers of Fairphone.

J: That's balanced..

L: Yeah hopefully,

J: Hearing both sides.

L: Definitely, it is not a research intended to look at the impact of Fairphone or whether it is succeeding or not, it's about the meaning people buying the Fairphone give to their purchase. So, there is no right or wrong in answers, I am just interested in the way people give words, give expression to how they think about Fairphone.

J: Ok, I did my masters at New Media at UvA and mine was similar, brand and value and the way that people put personal sentiment into a brand, especially one that is into ethical consumerism. So you probably read different articles, but...

L: Well, yeah I read a lot about ethical consumerism as well. But you are of course from a media point of view, yeah ok. I want to start by asking you if you can describe what Fairphone is in your own words?

J: Ok, hmm...Well Fairphone started as a research project which I think is always good to know, that we are not a phone manufacturer but we're started with a research background to raise awareness about conflict minerals but when I entered it, it was an actual social enterprise. So I would define Fairphone as a social enterprise that puts social values first and wants to uncover the system behind where are products come from. And we really use the phone as just one example. I mean it's a...we chose it because it is an ambiguous everyday item that almost everyone has and everyone can relate to. But the core message isn't about making a phone, but about uncovering the systems behind making a phone itself.

L: Ok, how have you come to the decision to go work for Fairphone?

J: So I was doing a two-year research master at the UvA and in my last semester when I was doing my internship, sorry my thesis, I decided to do an internship related to the thesis.
And it's hard to say which came first, they sort of ... it was really sort of a nice coincidence that I got an internship in community management, social media around November before my thesis began, and so then I, because of that I really wanted to tap into community that Fairphone is building because at that time it was really small and very local, Amsterdam and Holland. And now, because we were releasing a project and becoming a bit more international I really wanted to see how it can be build upon social networks.

L: So it was the international community that really appealed to you?

J: Yeah, and that the way, basically the way that a community or especially around a brand, is build on around social networks. So my study was studying Twitter specifically.

L: Ok, you said that Fairphone is about social values first. How do you feel about those social values?

J: Yeah, ehm... I think it's important to think of social values as something sort of broad it is, and that is appeals to different parts of peoples sensibilities, so for me it really means you know developing technology that matters in our whole global system, in our global economy and i might not specifically be about just conflict minerals, about people working in mines in Congo or just about labor conditions in China. It can also mean opening up software that we use, being more engaged with the developers communities. There might be a sort of niche all the way to figuring out where phones end up, after you use them. So that sort of holistic approach I really like about Fairphone and that I like, it tries to be as inclusive as possible. And for me, maybe you are going to ask this, I don't know if I even ... I heard about blood diamonds, I've heard of just some sort of ... we need to be aware where resources come from, in all over the world, especially Congo. But I don't really know so much as when I started at Fairphone, so that's also what I like. It started around conflict minerals but it's really becoming a much bigger thing because a phone has so many different processes and stakeholders.

L: You already described that Fairphone, before you were actually were working with Fairphone, it started as an awareness campaign and now it is a social enterprise. How would you describe the role of Fairphone as a social enterprise?

J: Yeah well, the term is social enterprise, is I think quite new and maybe it means that it is a company that reinvests its profit into social issues. I think that is the technical definition, but for us it also means that we sort of separated ourselves between a company and a foundation. The foundation is sort of the root of what we did with research in the past and, but every phone we make, regardless of whether it is considered going towards fair trade cobalt research it will be, it will contribute to the whole Fairphone movement, so in a way that is what social enterprise means, we are always reinvesting in social issues and you know, the whole movement of technology that matters yeah.

L: And you are talking about a movement. Whose movement is it? who is the owner of this movement?
J: For someone who's, myself, who didn't know much about conflict minerals before, who might not have known about e-waste and all these issues, I think we are, Fairphone is a platform for these people who already existed, who already cared about all these issues. So we're not really, it does not stem for Fairphone but we just of gathered all these people together. So of course it is, all these peoples movements, it is a movement who gathers all these people who have different entry points into the same sort of activism, or same sort of passion for changing things. And knowing more where their stuff comes from. If you think about it as a community, which I always say that is everyone who is in on the Fairphone internal team, I think it's really collaboration, it's really something that is shared. And that we always feel that when we communicate, that we're talking to people 1 on 1, or in a very inclusive way. And not like, this is something we have decided and you have to follow it. But rather it's a dialogue and something collaborative.

L: So by community you mean the team of Fairphone?

J: By internal I mean the people who work and are paid by Fairphone, even with my research it was always hard to figure out the difference between the community and the Fairphone team internal, because a lot of us, I mean we are all at Facebook and twitter talking to people anyway, but I mean of course I think share similar values, we really want the phone to come out, that sort of thing. But maybe I mean you can just divide it by people who are paid, and are on the staff and building the phone and people who are...I call the community. Which we talk usually to social media like facebook and twitter, and also a lot through direct e-mail, personal e-mail or the info e-mail. On the info e-mail we get something like, maybe a 100 e-mails per day, on average.

L: That's a lot

J: Yeah..

L: I always understood that by community you meant everyone who bought the Fairphone or ordered the Fairphone.

J: Hmmm..yeah that's difficult to say because maybe we're gonna have to think about when we communicate but it was difficult to talk to people because we didn't know at what stage they knew about Fairphone. How are we talking to them? What is our audience? And also during the campaign period this year, it was hard to know if they bought the phone or not, so we want to thank them for the support but also people thought I bought the phone, you don't need to thank me anymore like, stop trying to convince me. But I think we, in a way, we have to have good customer service, which we're developing and haven't done before because moreso there used to be broader community engagement and public engagement and not sort of making someone so special because they bought the phone. I mean, we have to thank them more, i think, in this initial stage, for giving money to making it happen and the pre-order campaign, but I think in terms of telling the story, we wanted to be something that involves everyone, so we don't want to divide it between the community of everyone and the buyers. So the buyers in our communication is only for ...if you would buy something from Amazon..., or like an order system. For
now, it's mostly like buy a charger, or get a sim adaptor, I mean we try.... The mission is about communicating our story, we do all that in the (...) sense of putting it on our blog or putting it in a news letter and not....it would be silly to only let in the people who bought the phone. And to tell them the secret of how we built the phone. We want that knowledge to be shared with everyone.

L: Ok, and so far I have read about Fairphone and I've been to a couple of workshops and presentation about Fairphone. It is always about that Fairphone to a certain extent is the product of the consumer itself. We as people who wanted to buy the Fairphone or are interested in the Fairphone, we made it happen. Of course, there's a team working on it, but that idea about that it's ...the ownership lies with the people. How do you think about that?

J: Yes it's true, whenever I think of these things, I always play the cynical, critical eye of the maybe the community, or people who bought the phone, who might question what it means to own the movement or own a phone. I mean, there's only, because we really needed the first kickstarters, and we thank them alot and they are the owners who started it, it is such a big movement. I think that they would respect that we in our communication we keep it open until everyone in the story. But I really, in terms of ownership, I mean you can deny that they kickstarted the movement, and we needed those initial backers of. We needed 5000 people in May June, and their initial support got us there. And when we put our webshop only around like almost 6 in the evening we had no idea if anyone would buy a phone. So, of course the phone only had a few pictures. There's tech specs but it didn't exist yet and they hadn't touched it. And so, that kind of confidence in a movement took us far. Really did something special that you can't replicate after 10.000 people bought the phone, because by 10.000, the next 10.000 has the trust that it is something legitimate but the first 5000, the first 5 people, really had some trust in the movement..

L: Yes, and then there is this tipping point...

J: What do you mean?

L: Well, that there are more people trusting Fairphone because the first 5000 took the first step and then yeah...

J: Yeah that's it. I believe that they own it. They're words. I don't wanna. I don't know how much more we can make it tangible. I would like to. Like the ideas of shares or something is really nice, really cool to think of it in like cooperative co-opt system where we can really be like by into membership of Fairphone but for now in terms of membership of the community I think it's still very broad. It would be strange to say, you don't need a phone, but you should buy one. Or you don't have enough money but you really should buy one so you can be part of the community. Because that seems discriminatory so that's why we keep it very open.
L: Yeah. It's a movement of consumers who want to know what's on the inside of their mobile phone, but it developed into a social enterprise. How do you see these two roles, which Fairphone has in it.

J: Well, maybe you can see social enterprise as a special kind of company that like I said cares about social issues, will be more transparent, will talk to their buyers and community in a very open way and similarly those consumers are very different. They expect that it might take a while. They expect that they have to pay the money first and pre-order. So in that way, I think the customers are a special and unique. I don't think ... do you think there is a tension between the community and the buyers?

L: No, I am just interested whether there is one.

J: Ok. Fairphone is a platform and when I studied in social media in platforms both are very similar that they are a platform like any other kind of political platform can change, can alter, it's very unpredictable. On Twitter, you don't know when is things are going to happen, they could be very fast, could be slow. Things could grow fast or just become stagnant. So Fairphone as a movement I think you can never really, say at one fixed point like the half year before it became a social enterprise, that really was the real Fairphone movement and this is not so much the movement. It is always evolving. I mean our team is sort of, as our community manager, we have to guide it, we have a fixed point in Amsterdam and with our communication channels that we can control. And in those ways we are kind of the gatekeepers of these channels that can switch and change a lot. I think it's only....we just put up a blog post last week about a production update, the November production update, and we hinted that there could be a possible delay if something else happens. If something bad happens basically. That we ran out of all our margins, but that we still expect to deliver the phone, ship it the second week of December, to deliver around Christmas. I was surprised that so many comments were positive. Almost no one, a few people said that's poor planning, I am disappointed. But so many people said of course this is your first phone, of course this is such a revolutionary thing, it's gonna have some weeks and months off. So that, I think really shows that people are patient and people for this kind of crowdfunding project have a unique understanding of the way the difficulties of any kind of activism of changing the system.

L: As you said, in December the phone will be hopefully here. How do you think the Fairphone stands in relation to other fair products? Which are there for a longer time, such as fair trade coffee, the more Fair Trade labeled products.

J: I thought about this and people talk about this a lot. I think the difficulty is that our industry is technology. And that, for that's industry it's very different from food or jewelry, because it is your quality. At least right now, I mean fair trade bananas have been around for quite a while, maybe there is some difficulties at the beginning like what we're having. But there is still some sort of...tech people really treasure quality in general, top of the line, really fast, really perfect. In terms of technical innovation and in general technology is harder to develop. And that is different from quality of food. That is really
just about paying people more. And I think in terms of the speed of building technology that is very difficult to maintain then paying people properly and you know can think about we have to pick a factory that we think will, we will have a long-term relationship with and follows a certain social assessment criteria and really believe in our values and at the same time, we really gear to technology, I mean we have chosen one that has good technology but maybe not the one level up from that. And I think that definitely, I don't know the ins and outs of it, but I think it was some sort of balance, maybe we have visited a factory that had much better technology, but we didn't feel we had a good relationship in terms of social assessment. So I think that might be the different compared to other fair products.

And it might even have a different audience of buyers which is also important.

L: What kind of audience do you think?

J: Well, I think it's easier to walk down the isles of a grocery store, see fair trade products and pay a euro more rather than the only device that you carry around all the time for a year, two years, more than two years and really commit to that product. Also something that is very expensive and has to last longer, whereas the banana lasts like a day, your choice. And this choice is a really intense and expensive choice for people.

L: It's a bigger commitment?

J: Yes, it's a bigger commitment

L: And how in your opinion can the success of Fairphone be explained?

J: It's funny when I talk to my friends, see how successful it is and we have a lot of people on Facebook and twitter and we are on the news a lot, and they always say that, isn't it so easy for you guys in communications, because the story tells itself and the products sells itself. And I will take just that, regardless of any work that I have to do or that any communications people has to do. We do have a product, the idea and the concept already existed before we came along. And in that respect it's a, it was bound to be, intriguing the people. I don't know whether it is successful, successful in terms of publicity, I don't know yet if its successful in terms of people, everyone liking us or something, we are selling a lot. Because 25.000 phones is still pretty small if we think of that we are selling to all of Europe. It still might be pretty small. But in a way I do think that basically the community and the idea already existed before the phone came along and so it was just a matter of us having this platform, presenting this phone and saying ok people, who wanted this? come on and buy it. And then it happened.

L: And where do you think this interest of people was coming from?

J: Well, I think a lot of people, like when I talked about the difference between fair trade food and fair trade technology, there is a niche of people who might now have bought technology like this before, might never had a smartphone. That's my hunch. That most
people, not like three quarters, something like sixty, my guess is sixty percent of the people have never had a smartphone before and that they waited...

L: Yes, I saw one comment also in my survey of someone who said I never had a smartphone and this one even has two cameras

J: Yeah, so I mean to these people it is just amazing that they never really thought about having a nice phone. But then they think oh, a company that shares my values and will invest in these initiatives. I will buy a phone just to support them and not because I necessarily need one and I think that is very important when people compare us to bigger companies that have strong innovations. That release a phone every few months or half year. Of course we are not going to have people who want the best, fastest camera. That's because that's not our focus. And we can't convince them and we shouldn't try to convince them because our interest lie in this other field of social values.

L: Do you think there is something like conflict-sensitive consumerism?

J: I never heard that word. Conflict-free consumerism?

L: Conflict-sensitive consumerism

J: Yeah I think that's just a more specific way than ethical consumerism right. To me.

L: Specifically concerned with conflict.

J: So, I think it exists. It's funny how, i don't know how the chain works but I guess some intelligent research body goes into these areas, figures out the problems, uncovers some truth and then like an NGO takes hold and then they have a campaign and then it goes to the people and that's maybe how blood diamonds like as a term became known. Conflict minerals is also something like a term that was created to make it more specific, to identify it, so that is what I think is interesting, it taps into the kind of people that are interested in improving conditions of people who are oppressed or who are unjustly served. So I think, they will be there until things are fixed but also their interest could also go into labour conditions in China or that kind of thing.

L: Ok, these were my questions for now...

J: Ok yeah we talked for a while right.

L: Yeah, 28 minutes. Do you have any questions yourself?

INTERVIEW ROOS VAN DE WEERD
November 7th, 2013

L: First I would like to ask for your permission to record the interview. I will use it for my transcript and will not use it for any other purposes. So I need your consent

R: It's ok
L: I want to research whatever is done on conflict at home, starting at home. For now I did a lot of desk research from September onwards until now, now I am actually collecting data on how conflict is coming together with consumption and then of course I came across Fairphone and started to research Fairphone. There is a survey online now for the buyers of the Fairphone and I also wanted to interview with you guys to hear the story about the Fairphone. And I will look into the impact of Fairphone, whether it will be a success or whether it will change anything or whatever but the meaning people give to the initiative, to the movement. Why have they bought the Fairphone, what are their motivations, ideals etc.

R: Regardless of the impact..

L: Yes, to me that doesn't really matter, I would like to know more about the movement. So first of all, I would like to start with asking you if you can describe in your own words what Fairphone is.

R: What is Fairphone..I think for me, Fairphone is a movement that triggers a awareness, an awareness around the products we use an awareness more specific, it begins like that. What is behind our stuff? And then Fairphone specifically goes into the device you use daily. So your phone. We love the phone, we hold the phone in our pockets. The phone is next to our pillow. When it's gone it's oh my god my phone's gone. And we hold the devide. It think its the technological device that is most close to us, literally. And we don't know anything about it. Fairphone is about a movement that creates more awareness about that beloved device. And Fairphone is I think, very short, that is Fairphone for me. A movement around whats up this things, what's happening behind it.

L: And why is it important to know what's behind it?

R: Because we have lost track of the products we use. We live in a advanced society but we lost the connection of where stuff comes from. Or an airplane. I have no clue how a airplane is made but that is a very complex...I mean, a lot of people don't know where an airplane comes from. we have become alienated from our product and a society where we live in now, around a crisis and people don't know the systems they live in so they have lost the track literally. And when something goes wrong, like the economic crisis, they have nothing like what should I blame, myself? my bank? my government? They lost the track and if you don't understand the system you cannot change it. If you think there's something wrong, where do I fix it? And I think therefore it is important to know what's behind a product. Not because it's close, that is true, if you don't understand the system you cannot change it. I think therefore it is important, but not only on the phone but more broader than that.

L: And why do you work at Fairphone?
R: I knew the product. Just like Joe, I studied new media and digital culture. And I by doing that study you know a lot about the studies Waag does, because it is really connected to how do you connect media to...

L: UvA as well?

R: No, UU. And how do you connect technology and society and how do they blend? And where can you....where do they blend? They blend everywhere...but how do you integrate those too more, where it is good for both parties. And Fairphone was a project and Tessa I actually knew from Picnic and I spoke to her and actually it didn't start because .... I wasn't aware about what's behind my phone. I became aware because of Fairphone and why did I stay? Maybe that's then a better question. For me I was just like a lot of other people. i didn't know about this story behind my product, my phone. And every single day here, I hear something new and for me that's....it's so complex and the complexity grows and for me it's about...I stayed working here under very bad conditions, under pressure because I learn about not only my phone but also my systems, a world we live in, about how people use their products, about very holistic take. So, I want to be part of that movement.

L: And why do you want to be part of that movement?

R: Because I think it's good for everybody to know a little bit more about what's behind the stuff you use. About the story.

L: And you said that's already bigger than this phone? So it's a bit of a coincidence that you are now busy with phones because the whole...

R: You could take another device...for that mission. But a phone is something that is really close to us, so it's a very good device to tell that story with. But I don't want to say it's not about the phone, because it of course the bigger...how do you reconnect people to their products, could be with another device as well. But for me personally that is a bigger motivation. That is, it's a conversation starter. First maybe about the phone, but it is about all the products we use.

L: Yeah. Fairphone at first started out as an awareness campaign specifically on the conflict minerals of the phone. What is your relation with this conflict side of Fairphone?

R: From my own background?

L: Just in general, for you in general

R: I didn't know anything about this side, because I didn't study it or anything. My relation to that part is...I wanna know more about it. I want us to be a change starter in that sense.

L: Fairphone?

R: The platform Fairphone. So all parties involved. Everybody that shares that value, that it should be more ethical for example.
L: Why do you want to know more about it, you think?

R: Because I think that we're abusing that side of the production chain. And that part of the chain gets really abused...another part - the consumers. They are just blind for that spot, so I think it's very important that we connect that to each other. So yeah, how about conflict. I think we are just about at the beginning where we should go to. I think we are first making people aware of that there's tin and tantalum in their phone for example, gold, other minerals. And we just have two conflict minerals now, 2 out of 30 or something. A lot of people ask me, so how is it percentage. Could you give me an...NO. I could not quantify that. It's just a small start and if you really ask how fair is this device we've made...it's just a start. Very not so fair still.

L: As I said earlier, Fairphone talks about having evolved from an awareness campaign into an actual social enterprise who's gonna build this phone, or who actually build this phone. How would you describe the role of Fairphone as a social enterprise?

R: I think we are figuring that out at the moment, because we just... I think we are still in our minds in the transition of being a lot more than just the awareness campaign. I think what we still do...we do awareness still, but we are selling the phone as well and I think that the transition from being a social enterprise, so that the phone is not only a means to an end. It is a real phone. And we are a company and we make profit. And it's something in our minds that still needs to...we are just selling these phones 4 or 5 months and we're making money and people ask how much money do you make? For us that's still a bit, how do I describe this in words...We are just getting used to transit. So how is it to be a social enterprise? I think for me it feels good to be, to make money, to not only raise awareness but to really be in the market as a player and then a social enterprise, the label that you put on being a player in the market and while being a social enterprise. It feels valuable that the effort put into a product, goes into the product and not into the pockets of us. So that's about the company side. The making money...because that's different of course, because first we didn't make money and now we make money literally. And the impact. I think if your driver is social impact instead of profit and growth, you can change a lot more or you can go into a process very differently.

L: As you said, you are now player in the game. I think that you than mean in the..

R: the industry

L: Yes, the industry of technology

R: Yeah

L: In this case mobile technology

R: Hm

L: Do you see a tension there, between the role that Fairphone has and is still discovering as a, they used to be an awareness campaign and now that they are this player in the field.
R: They don't clash at all. It is the same driver they have. You didn't become a company for profit and growth but you became a company that wants to create social impact. So those two are aligned.

(The interview was interrupted by an emergency alarm)

L: Continue....

R: So I was answering the question on if there is tension on our side from the transition from an awareness campaign to being a company or a social enterprise. And I think that I said that our mission is aligned because we both want to create social impact. Or that stayed the same. But now we do actually do sell phones, so there is something changed in our minds that we grow more aware of the fact that we really sell a product. And we don't sell a story anymore. We sell a story behind a product. But the product is just as important for the consumers maybe. In our minds we want to continuously point at that it's about the story behind the phone and that the phone is a means to an end but the phone also is a phone and people buy the phone because they need a phone, so I think internally sometimes, because we have technological people in the company and we have more visionair or idealistic people and that they need to get used to eachother and I think there is a tension of course. But i wouldn't describe it as a tension, more as a challenge to realise that your not just a campaign anymore, you are also literally in it as a player. So you need to deliver just like other companies.

L: Hm hm, and how would you then at that time, or at this time, describe the relationship between Fairphone and the consumer?

R: I think that differs. Can you specify?

L: Specifically for the people who bought the Fairphone, what is the relation between Fairphone, and the consumer, so the people who bought the phone, who ordered the phone.

R: I think it's an extraordinary relationship. If you look at literally statistics of news letters we send out and how much are they opened and how much response we get on posts on facebook or blog posts on our website. We try to engage people in what we do. And I think the response rate is very extraordinary high, so first apart for the sentiment they have with Fairphone I think it's, it can be shown by the statistics that people are very involved.

(The interview was interrupted for the second time by the fire alarm)

R: sooo..I was talking about an extremely high response rate. If you take a lot at studies of companies on their response rates you had certain average percentages. We have a response rate of I think 60% or something and that is insanely high. If you compare it to 3 or 6% but that is what we can literally see in numbers. And then an all, because we take the holistic approach, so it's not only about conflict-free minerals or conflict in countries like ...in China you could call it conflict as well. Congo, China, it's also about how do you...
take an approach on open design, how do you take care of the circular aspect of your product. How do you also address the end of the lifespan. So you speak to a lot of people who have different interest. It could be someone who's a hacker and who thinks it's really important that his phone is rootable and can do stuff with it and it's not just a black box that he's getting or that he has to do with whatever is coming. And to other people the environmental footprint is more important. Because of the holistic approach a lot of people can relate to Fairphone. By every communication we do, we try to explain people how things work. What have we encountered in our process and we share these experiences with people and I think because of us involving other buyers of Fairphone and what happens behind the process of production, people feel aware of the ...some reactions are I have never been so in contact with a process before I got the products and the response rate on or the sentiment on comments on whatever part we publish is insane. People really going to dialogue, with us, with eachother, so how would you describe the relation? I think that Fairphone then could be seen as a platform where people are not afraid or know where to find us when they have questions or when they want to address a painful point for them. I think people want to be heard and a lot of companies are not acting as a platform but just as a topdown communication purpose and I think we show that we are open to two-way. So if they have their own opinion of things, they give it and sometimes people correct eachother or add insights to eachothers comments and than it grows to more than just a blog post of us. Every single post then is a small discussion platform.

L: And how would you describe Fairphone in comparison with other products labelled as fair? Such as bananas, chocolate, coffee, tea.

R: That's very difficult for me I think, talking to a lot of external parties. I continuously have to explain that we are far off from certified, fair trade certified electronics and people in the same sentence, they mention fair trade bananas, fair trade coffee and fair trade phones...NOOOO. It's very difficult and I think it is because of the connotation around the name.

L: What connotation?

R: Fair, the meaning of fair. I think that is what we're talking about. Fair phone insinuates I think, fair has a lot of meanings behind the word. You see fair different than I maybe and everybody has their own ...fair isn't an absolute term, it is something we make. Fair is not like glass. Fair is a word that has a meaning attached to it. So I think we are struggling to explain or to cover the content that fair brings with it. People might directly assume, if they don't really understand the complexity, oh this phone is fair. Ok, but what is fair then? Maybe for that person, fair means that it's totally without child labour, everybody gets a perfect wage and the factory that we have found is perfect, oh that's such a misconception and we are constantly trying to fight against the assumptions people have around the world with the word 'fair'. With press, by research, even by researchers, some people already take their assumptions with them and then you first have to open up and break a question because sometimes people are already very direct - what is fair about this
phone. And then you have to take a step back, what do you think we mean by fair? So being in the same line as fair trade bananas and coffee as telephones is difficult because then you touch...I want to touch upon the discussion of what do we think is fair. And do we then really think that our phone is fair trade, can be fair trade certified. I am not sure if I am answering your question but ...

L: Yes you are, thank you.

R: Ok

L: And do you think there is a .....if you would compare, is the audience for fair products such as bananas or whatever, different from or the same as fairphone's audience?

R: No. I don't think so. Maybe audience is then the wrong word. Maybe really buyers. That's maybe more concrete. I think it shows what we do, share, is the fact that people who buy these products are willing to invest in change. I think that covers the same...they are willing to spend their money on something that isn't already perfect, but it is a way to address those issues. And for them it might be then, and then you are touching the point that you want to address, political consumerism, I don't want to say that all buyers of Fairphone are like that, because I don't think that's true, but I think for a part of the buyers that goes. That are people that could also buy these other products.

L: And how do you see the influence of the consumer, in fact the buyer of a product, not specifically Fairphone, but on conflict?

R: It's of course indirect influence...I think, I must say I am not really sure, I am just telling what I think it is. I think that people are becoming more critical of the products they use in general. So you see the rise...I think the timing is very well. You see the rise of clothing that is more ethical, or has a more ethical take. food, same. And now, and I feel now electronics is up.

L: Where do you think it is coming from?

R: I think it is coming from different points, but what I mentioned before, that people aren't aware of the systems anymore.

L: What systems do you mean?

R: Economical system, those bigger systems...Really a system could be anything I think. But I think that people want to be, how do I explain this well. Because we are talking about consumer influence. I think they are now aware that they can make a change by their own acting. That they grow aware of the fact that they can be, they also have a voice in this part. So looking at conflict and influence, people that really have an intrinsic environmental saviour feeling, or conflict, working conditions, that they do want to spend money on their, where they can change. They want to make that decision and then I think that the economical crisis does help, because companies....It is so big. I am trying to find the right explanation. People are sick of being in systems they don't understand. That's
what I feel. I feel an urge for innovation where they can be part of...you have top-down and ...

L: Bottom-up

R: Bottom-up. A more bottom-up approach. You see that everywhere. You see that companies are forced, they feel that they need to engage more...because they otherwise might lose them.

L: And who do you think these people are, who are fed up with the systems as you said. Can you say something in general about people interested in Fairphone?

R: I think they are sick of not being able to, not being heard as a consumer.

L: Would that then be any consumer? Or is there something specific about this group of people? I mean not what they think but who they are and where they are coming from?

R: Yeah I think it's the Western, higher educated...that's what I think at least. If you really talk in target groups...but I am thinking of, I think always that people who are able to make these decisions in their consumerism, they have more money to spent, more knowledge, more resources, and then they can make a decision with fair principles. So I think it's people who are more aware of processes, and are willing then to act upon their opinion about these processes. So if you....go on.

L: I wanted to ask how would you explain this growth of this movement of this Fairphone. What circumstances have helped Fairphone to become where they are right now?

R: Ehmm...on several levels there are circumstances. Dodd Frank Act, Bangladesh, all these things that are now high up in the news, they add to a movement that Fairphone is.

L: Would this have happened 20 year ago?

R: No

L: Why not?

R: Because I think at that point the system wasn't ready...I think we grow, we are in a time that change is needed. We see systems collapsing around us and we feel that there is a point that we can act. And I think twenty years ago it was different. We weren't at this critical time. Maybe an other time. I think products go really hand in hand with their time and the group they have...shares it.

L: What made it possible for us to grow so critical of products?

R: I think that goes by knowledge and being able to really make a. I think we have as a consumer, we are gaining that power to have a say on things like that. I think if being critical comes out of having knowledge and then you can become critical about certain parts. So I think because of an information society, in where we have much more knowledge on what happens on the other side of the world directly, and not just two
weeks after, but we are kind of connected. I think in that sense, in the sense of being more close to that part of the world and having a say, because it's closer it feels closer, it literally is closer in time and space, it's not something that just happens very far away. Overnight as well. I think we can relate to it much more than 20 years ago, to what's happening and for example with, looking at conflict, we might be more aware of these specific things then we knew twenty years ago. We weren't dumb then, but we know more specific things now, such as there are conflict minerals that go into your phone, did you know that? And by educating people or by all these input that people get, they learn more or maybe see more and you can talk to them on an other level.

L: Well thank you, those were my questions.

INTERVIEW BIBI BLEEKEMOLEN
November 7th, 2013

Bibi and I met a couple of times before, so there was no need for an introduction.

L: So, my first question is if you can describe in your own words what Fairphone is.

B: Ok, to me Fairphone in short is a mean to achieve a fairer way of doing business and to open up the complex system behind the production of an electronic device like a smartphone.

L: And why are you working for Fairphone?

B: I got involved with Fairphone in 2011 when I was studying basically conflict minerals and the effect on the trade in the Eastern Congo and in that year Fairphone also just started as an awareness raising campaign and they organized a trip to Congo, visit the mines and talk to mineworkers and so on, and they had a sort of election for people who were interested in joining that fact finding mission and because I was working with my thesis and really interested in the topic I applied for the competition and then I was able to go with them on the first trip in February 2011.

L: Ah I didn't know it was a competition

B: Ya, it was. It was, there was not that much candidates actually, I think there were even six or seven.

L: Unimaginable at this time.

B: Exactly, and that was only like two or three years ago so I think if you would put a competition like that now, then we would have got a thousand applications probably. But two or three years ago the topic was not that in the big interest, in the media and known by people. After that, after the trip to Congo basically was representing the idea and I spoke in lectures and did some workshops, things like that as a volunteer. Because at that time it was still an awareness raising campaign and now since February this year, I work for the actual company, but that is only because it just started as a real company in 2013. Before it was just a campaign, so that is a bit of my background.
And it is the concept of conflict minerals what drove me.....

L: That was your interest?

B: Yes yes.

L: And you said, indeed, that Fairphone now is a company or a social enterprise as you more often call it. How would you describe that role of Fairphone, as a social enterprise?

B: Yeah. I think for us being a social enterprise is about impact maximization rather than profit maximization, but since we feel to be sustainable and to really become a credible actor in the field you also have to be healthy business. So we do make profit and we want to make profit, because it also shows that it is a product that people want to buy and that people want to have and that there is a demand for it but on the other hand it is not about the product. It is about the impact we can generate in the supply chain so this profit is then again reinvested in trying to increase the interventions in the supply chain. And I think that what makes the enterprise social is that it doesn't have a stakeholder group of people who are demanding profit or whatever, actually the consumer has become the stakeholder, by buying upfront the phone that is now going to be delivered to them but in the sense, we have to pay, we have to be accountable to our consumers in that sense and not to stakeholders.

L: Can you elaborate a little bit more about the consumer as a stakeholder in the Fairphone?

B: Yeah, I think we all...we don't really speak about them being consumers, because that would be to little credit, also for them. These people more than 20.000 people are way more than just a consumer, I mean they have bought a product that does not even exist from a company that has never made a phone before.

L: What is then your understanding of the consumer?

B: I think that they are more an enabler and the community. I mean if you buy a Fairphone or you help us out with writing an article about us, or researching something in Congo. That is all part of our mission to make interventions in the supply chain, so buying the Fairphone as a consumer is only one of the means of our community to be involved in this improving of the supply chain. If these people would only buy the Fairphone and would not be engaged on a broader sense, the idea would not work. Because it is about changing attitudes and about changing behavior and mobilization and so we can engage lots of people with it and that companies within the industry but also designers and people like you and I, who have a conflict-related or international relations background. So I think it is a very wide community of people and some of them buy the Fairphone to contribute to the community and others help us in other ways.

L: How do you see them as a stakeholder?
B: Eh, well because they are the ones who have purchased the Fairphone, they already paid for it so in a fact they sponsor or they pay for the whole Fairphone company so we vhave to be accountable to those people who have already bought it, otherwise we don't have a right to exist basically. Because they are the ones that made it possible, not some big investor or some other capital.

L: So do you then see it more as accountability of the Fairphone to the people who bought it or is there a certain ownership with the people who bought it as well.

B: Both, both. It is a accountability, because in our blog posts for example we really want to be honest of all kinds of challenges in the production, things that are improved already, so really we want to, we want to inform them and take them with us in this journey to open it up because basically, we with this small team we really need those people to come further, because we don't have all the answers and we need this big community of all varying people to help us also with knowledge, but also with capital, with networking, with all kinds of activities. So in that sense, they own the product more than you would for example have with the product that you don't have a relationship with. Now you have, basically, participated the birth of a product, you have made it possible and you have seen the challenges along the way and I think that is very important to create ownership for someone and to be engaged with his product.

L: Ok, and in December the phone will probably be here. How do you see the Fairphone compared with other products labeled as fair.

B: Hm...sorry?

L: How do you see the Fairphone in relation to other products, coffee, bananas, chocolate, labeled as fair?

B: Ok, well in that sense, a smartphone consists of various individual products and a banana or a coffee bean is a product in itself. It grows on a tree and there you have it, it is a banana, and a smartphone is build up from all these different kind of products, you have chips, you have capacitors, you have a battery, you have a screen, all these different components and aspects have their own minerals, and there are some of these individual products, like the tantalum capacitor that we have integrated conflict-free tantalum in it. So, we cannot say the Fairphone is a fair product, but we are trying to integrate as much improvement as possible starting with these smaller individual components that are in the phone. Yeah, so therefore there are now only two components conflict-free from all these, maybe of the 250 or even 300 individual components, so compared to a fair trade banana it is not fair at all but it is also highly more complex product and complex production system around it and I think also by choosing a more complex product you can really be nuanced and realistic about the problems that you see I think, because it includes environmental and social, it includes resources in Africa, manufacturing in China, the end of life, and that's what makes a smartphone very tangible as a product change, to maybe change the system.
L: Yeah, and to what extent do you think that you are targeting the same audience?

B: That I find a difficult question. I think Fairphone is basically the first electronic product that is looking into these things, we are trying to include these fair aspects. So basically, we now just come to see a bit of the market of these kind of products, but I think it's a bigger market, or maybe it's attracting other kinds of people than the regular fair trade shops, I think. But on the other hand there might be a lot of people buying people from these fair trade shops who do not really, maybe understand or I think, Fairphone is really something for a bit younger generation maybe also. Like everything below 40 and I think with fair trade bananas is a bit everything above forty, but that's my personal feeling. I don't, I do not have anything to back that up.

L: Where do you think this is coming from?

B: Well, the nature of the product. Coffee and banana are of course different products than a smartphone. My grandma also doesn't use a smartphone. She doesn't know how to, but it is basically another type of product and also because we include a community around it, so for example designers, that can think along with us on how to design a phone, how to design the software, but also these conflict minerals. I think it has more aspects to be interested in than just a fair trade scheme of paying a community of farmers, paying a premium over one product.

L: And could you elaborate a little bit more about which processes Fairphone tries to influence?

B: Ehmm. It tries to influence the electronic industry from within, but also from outside. So basically you have something from within, from outside kind of approach.

L: What is the outside here?

B: Well, for example the consumers - if you raise consumer and community awareness and they are going to ask questions to their own phone companies than that's pressure from outside. On the other hand, if you offer conflict-free tin to your, one of your sub-suppliers saying hey, we have found it, can you integrate in our phone but perhaps also in other products that you make.

L: That's the inside part?

B: Yeah, the inside part - yeah, so basically from both sides you want to facilitate some changes in the decisions-making, attitudes, and really in thinking outside the box and more in a circular way also.

L: How do you see the relation between this movement from outside and this movement from the inside?
B: Yeah it's basically ...Fairphone always says we work with people, not with organizations. So we have basically lots of people wanting to help out or engage a network and some of these people are in the industry and some of these people are out the industry and basically by both connecting and engaging with people we try to come up with solutions and alternatives that is that fits within their background also.

L: And how would you describe the role the consumer has towards conflict?

B: Hmmm, yeah I think putting the topic up the agenda, create demand also for products like this, but on the other hand it is, consumer also makes it possible to create and easy fixes and the consumer really likes to have one fair trade stamp, no need to think about it any further, I mean a lot of people think it is complex that it is a fair'er' phone. Not a totally fair phone.

L: They think it is complex?

B: Yes, that it is complex, how can you call it fair when in China it is forbidden to organize labor union, or how on earth can you have fully conflict free minerals from Congo, a country that is really poor as hell. So, there are a lot of things that people think how can you call it a fair phone, or they want to think it is a total fair phone and like oh yes I bought a fair phone, I am not supporting child labor anymore, and then we say, yes you do, it's not totally fixed yet, there is only some small steps that have been set now and I think with these, with consumers the fear is also that they take answer for granted too soon. They have to continually ask if it's a good product and if there are things that can be improved more. I mean getting a fair way does not necessarily imply that it is safe or that it is without any form of slavery or that there are not other things wrong in the system. Conflict-free also does not say anything the wages, about the child labor, about the safety conditions in the mines, it just says it has not funded rebel groups. That is the only thing it says. People regret ...people think yes we have a total solution, no, it's only conflict-free. It's not fair trade yet, so...On the other hand, they really have the power to really ask questions and to set it on the agenda, on the other hand they also have the power to put it ...hun hoofden in het ....

L: 'to put their head in the sand'

We talked about this earlier - about the fives the themes of the roadmap of Fairphone. What do you think people who bought the Fairphone think is the most important theme of this road map?

B: That depends on their background I think. To a lot of people clear deals is I think most important, to start. Because showing what's going on and opening up the system is basically the first step in also highlighting problems and trying to find alternatives. So i think clear deals is really something this valyue, the blog posts, the cost breakdowns that we publish and everything that shows the process of how we come to make this phone. But then for the other four, that really depends on your background. For me, it was precious materials. For a design person it's smart design, for someone who is really...
involved in qualitative environmental research would really like the everlasting value research that we are doing, so I think for everyone there is something in it, and what makes it then really interesting is that there is also something new for that person.

B: So you have a connection, so people think oh I am a designer, I really like this design part of Fairphone, but then they learn about conflict minerals, and they learn about Asian working conditions, learn about the e-waste problem, and that is the same with if you like, or if you are interested in e-waste then you learn about these other topics also, and you see that this whole one product system, is touching upon all these different issues and I think that makes it a very educational and informative for people to join.

L: I would like to take a more abstract look on Fairphone, so not really into the social entrepreneurship kind of angle. What do you think, how would you explain the success of Fairphone?

B: I think being honest, what I said about these clear deals is really important step. Thus also acknowledging that there are so many things that we cannot fix and ask people hey, we don't have to answer - let's try it out together, let's try if we can find an answer together. If people have criticism for example, if people say hey why don't you include the labor union with regard to your discussions in China and then we engage in discussion with these people and then you re-engage them also in thinking along with solutions, so some people may at first have criticism but then you engage in a discussion and try to include them in finding alternatives, and that is really a strength I think to combine these talents and all these different background and also it is new, it is first as I said, compared to the eighties where you had the fair trade bananas, the nineties where you had the fair trade clothing a bit coming up and now it's time for electronics to step in.

L: Would the success of Fairphone have been possible twenty years ago?

B: I am not sure. I am not sure. It is also, people already talk about success, many people. Not just you, but really, everybody says its such a success, such a success, there is not even a product yet. The first phones have to come in December so, but also what i said with people really wanting to have an answer or sort of solutions for this anomised global economy that we don't have a clue where our products come from and that we want to have one solution and say thank you, now I can go on with my shallow things in life, but that's yeah, it's not that easy. You really open up the discussion and I think that that part is really an important part of the success ...

L: When I am talking about success I don't mean that the product is will be there in December and that it in itself is already a big accomplishment, but the success is lying in the attention it is receiving, not so much the product, but the movement. I am interested in why this movement and this specific time is getting so much attention and why people are obviously interested in it. Where is this coming from, what do you think?

B: I think because these problems in the global economy are very complex and not very tangible for people, and with this smartphone you make it a bit tangible because one
product shows all these different aspects and i think that is what people want in this time and need in this time is a more explanatory way of what is wrong with the world? Maybe they don't get what's happening around them. And I think with phone you make it a bit explanatory and a bit tangible. It makes it easy for people to engage in the discussion and to have an opinion, or to have an idea to share and i think that is really something of this time. People don't want to yeah, been told something, they want to have an opinion and they want to be engaged with something, with crowdfunding something of the last years, if you just, if you believe in it you are going to do it yourself, I think that is more something of this past few years. And I think Fairphone really fits in that trend or yeah idea...

L: Do you think it is possible to say something about the audience of the Fairphone in general? Who do you think is interested in the Fairphone?

B: I think...if you should name a term then it is worldly people. People who are a bit aware of the effects that trade has on individual countries, people who have travelled, but really like I said because of the variety of Fairphone's issues it's designers, it's NGO'ers, it's business, it's students, it's social and ecological, all kinds of backgrounds, and people. But I think you have to have a sort of idea, hey I would like to be involved with something that's changing the economic system of today, I think you have to have a bit of that in you.

L: You said worldly, I assume you mean that you mean that someone knows a lot about the world.

B: Yeah, yeah....not 'wereldvreemd' zeg maar. And not strange of what is happening around them and not only looking in their own village you know.

L: What then would make them interested in Fairphone?

B: The Fairphone connects all these different countries to the Netherlands in this case, but also to other European countries of course, but it connects the system, so you become more involved with the person who made the phone in China for example. And if you have no idea a person is even making something for you in China, then you would not have the desire maybe to get to know more of their his or her situation and I think if you are a bit aware of the relations, the international relations that exist, then I think this Fairphone makes it nice to come closer to this system.

L: Do you think there is any such thing as conflict-sensitive consumerism?

B: It may come I think. I think Fairphone is one of the first products that put conflict-free material on the agenda and we also show that it is highly complex to have on the one hand a fair mind that doesn't, there doesn't exist something like a fair mine at this moment, in Africa, so it's on the one hand really something about creating more alternatives, and on the other hand I think lots of companies and organizations are now
picking up this idea of conflict-free is also something that you can think of. Not being totally fair trade at once, because that are very big step ahead of conflict-free, so I hope there is more awareness of conflict-free consumerism, especially with regard to the tin and the copper and those kind of materials.

L: How do you see this kind of conflict-sensitive consumerism in relation to other kinds of political consumerism?

B: Yeah it fits in the same scale probably.

L: Is it the same as for example environmental consumption - for example, people concerned with the environment for example.

B: Well I think the same as we said with the banana and the coffee, the Fairphone audience or community, is more diverse I think then...ecological friendly consumerism would also interested in Fairphone because we also address dual SIM, not giving adapters, changeable batteries. All these things also have an influence on the ecological footprint of the device, so therefore you combine all these different interests. And in that sense you can relate it, but I think the Fairphone is a bit more nuanced, somehow. It shows more issues and in a more nuanced way than a product that just does this one thing, or this one thing.

L: Well, ok. I have asked you all the question I'd like to ask you. Do you have any things you'd like to clarify or any questions for me?

B: I think it was pretty clear. It seems you have a clear idea about the things you need to hear and you need information on.
APPENDIX G

Transcript interviews with Fairphone customers

INTERVIEW ADÁN
November, 21st 2013

L: I wanted to start by telling you something about the research just to make sure that you have an idea of what I am actually doing. And I want to ask for your permission if it is ok if I record this so I can type it out after the interview.

A: Yes you have my permission (laughs)

L: As you may have read in the survey, I am a master student in Conflict Studies at the Radboud University in the Netherlands. And I am doing research on political consumption, so actually people buying products not because of economic reasons but because of political motivations. And I chose Fairphone as my case study. Therefore I have done interviews with the Fairphone crew, a survey with everyone who bought the Fairphone and now I am doing in-depth interviews with people who responded to the survey. And you are one of the people I will be interviewing.

A: I see

L: Thank you very much for that again. And of course I have a lot of questions and some will be a repetition of some of the questions I have asked in the survey but this gives you the opportunity to answer them a little bit more in-depth because it is always different than typing in a box of course so feel free to speak your mind. And I wanted to start by asking if you could tell something about yourself.

A: Yeah a lot, that’s a very generic question. I am 32 years old, living in Germany, Spanish born. I work, well I am basically a computer guy. Since I moved to Germany I work for a bit in customer service but before that I was in a consultant firm in Spain. And I don’t know what would qualify me, what adjectives I would…let’s say I am mostly interested in the technical part of hardware, but since I tend to read the news of what is new and what is coming up of mobile phones, I tend to accumulate quiet some gadgets for myself, but since four or five years I went the other way around and I think I already have too much. And I wouldn’t change my gear if I wasn’t sure that I really needed it. So as a consumer, I belong to this group of consumers that basically already got what I wanted and so know comes the time that I need to upgrade my gear and I tend to feel that I don’t need that many things in my life. I just need to focus on making the right choices. Why should I have a computer, and a mobile phone and a tablet if I could have one thing with me all the time, these decisions…

L: And is it then more that it is just practical to have one device instead of three or are there other reasons?
A: It’s basically practical. I tried to synchronize all the devices at once, this really takes a lot of time to do. And also when moving around, going to work, travelling and so on, I feel it is much better if you have one device, and maybe a back-up device like I don’t know, I could have anything with me in my mobile phone but I would go back to my computer if I would go something further, but both of them would be at least as practical.

L: How did you hear about the Fairphone?

A: I don’t remember. I think it was the wire.com or one of those news aggregator ....readit. I somehow came the Fairphone and at the time I was actually..I had already bought my smartphone, which I didn’t want for some years. And it was a real cheap smartphone. It was a very cheap smartphone, well it was made in China, with probably really cheap labour at hand. I wasn’t that content with what I had bought so it actually fitted alright.

L: Do you remember when you bought the Fairphone? What number of customer were you?

A: Well, they had this time when they would, they were not even sure if they were going to do it. The first badge was..10.000 right?

L: 5000, if they would sell 5000 they would go into production

A: Then I was of the first 5000. Because I remember, that it was June maybe, that they had these countdown and said, if we don’t make it, then sorry we are not going to build it.

L: Yes exactly. And you of course talked about it a bit already, but why have you bought the Fairphone?

A: In this case, because it’s a smartphone that has everything I would ask for in a computer. Meaning, I mean, I only have had a smartphone, because I was actually not willing to go that far. I have a tablet, but my phone would be just a plain phone. But if we talk about computers, I think searching for a good laptop it should be as open as possible. And this is rather complicated, the only feasible laptop that would go that way is the one that mister (…), the father of New, New Linux has and it actually quiet complicated so I was this in the smartphone area and I thought, well this is actually a very good idea. And so I was actually determined to buy, because of course I think we need more things like that but at some point you have to put your money where your mouth is. So seeing that it was so close to production, I wanted to support with the money and that was it.

L: And which theme of the road map you said was most important to you?

A: Then it would be the last one (made with care), but I am also very much into the second one.

L: Lasting value?
A: Exactly. Yeah because that is actually, that has a lot to do with what I meant, buying gear that you know, you are not going to need to buy again in five or six years. And even if, you can still you it.

L: Why is it important to you that you don’t have to buy a new device in a couple of years?

A: Because buying hardware, platforms and actually these little machines that we all have, shouldn’t be a must. We should either buy them because we need them or our devices should be as open as possible so we can upgrade them instead of going all the way back to mining, producing, selling, buying. I think, I believe I have this idea because I am in the software production industry for quiet some years already and I tend to see these production from scratch, as the worst possible idea ever. You tend to invest 50% of your time on things that already are there. And I don’t know if that goes for hardware as well, but I tend to believe that is the case.

L: And what values do you think are behind the Fairphone?

A: Pretty much it’s about openness. I think of the Fairphone not as an NGO, but as consumers that are not quiet content with what they get when they buy something. I think the word fair refers not to the world itself, but to the possibility that someone who buys this smartphone has to know how the world is changing because he bought that gear. It is not about saving China or the Republic of Congo. It is about consumers having the choice to know, alright, this mobile has been done with this or that and in order to have this mobile, there have been working 20 to 30 people working like slaves and I know it and I can decide by myself if I want it or not so it’s this part of fairness that I tend to like. It is more, something that you can actually notice from our commodities, so we are not thinking about saving the world, but at least having the choice.

L: So what of your personal values made you buy the Fairphone?

A: Openness

L: That’s a personal value you find very important?

A: Yes. Because openness gives the choice to other people to decide. There is no things behind the camera’s, nothing going on. You get to see what you get.

L: And as you have seen in the questionnaire I asked people what identity would best describe them if they had to pick one. Would you consider yourself a world citizen?

A: Yes and no. What where the other ones?

L: You could pick your city as your main identity, or your country, or being European, Asian or American, anything which is linked to a geographical place.

A: Halfway between being a world citizen and a European citizen. I would like to seem myself as world citizen, but I know I am very European and I notice it when I get in contact with people who are not in Europe. So realistically, I would say, European.
L: How often do you get in contact with people who are not European.

A: Let’s say once a week, twice a week, because where I live is basically is very...how would you call that...a cosmopolitan city.

L: You live in Berlin right?

A: Yeah, and Amsterdam is sort of the same right?

L: Yeah

A: So, yes, Berlin is sort of a hub for people coming from Australia, South America, North America to Europe. There are like some stops like Amsterdam, Barcelona, Paris, Berlin and so on. And yeah, it’s rather easy to know a friend of a friend who comes to the city for a couple of days and so....

L: How would you describe your role as a consumer?

A: Responsible. Or as responsible as I get to be.

L: So that is how you think your role should be, if I understand you correctly, right?

A: And that’s what I try. For instance, if I go shopping, let’s say to do groceries. Five or six years ago I would go for the cheaper let’s say tomatoe sauce. Now I tend to look for what we call bio-products or fair trade products and I don’t mind paying a bit more if this is going to make a difference, it is not that much of a price and I have a job, so I believe that I should pay for that.

L: So to what extent do you think that consumers can make a difference?

A: Actually consumers should make 99% of the difference in today’s world.

L: Do they or should they?

A: Do they, would I say. I mean, theoretically we could say companies are moving the world around, but consumers are dumb enough I think, to believe what they see in the advertisements. So if we consumers decided, or I, this is just an advertisement, this is not truth, or not all of the truth, my decisions would be done because of that and that. Even if those decisions were made for evil reasons, like I like this product more because it is made by white people or whatever their decision, it is still that responsibility, because you took the time to think about it. And let’s say nowadays, consumers are 99% of the system, even if we don’t want to see that. As an example, HTC, A Chinese smartphone maker, 8 years ago, or 6 years ago, it was seen as a very cheap product and no one would buy it. And now basically because of advertisement and how people get in contact with someone who already bought this mobile phones, then you see oh my neighbour has it, it’s alright, it’s not that cheap looking and now I can buy it because I am not going to be the only one. And that’s pure consumer decision and it actually changes how HTC is seen from the outside. It changed from being a cheap company into I don’t know...one of the five
biggest ones. Even bigger than Motorola I think. We should know that we have this power and take responsibility for that.

L: You said earlier that openness is very important to you, what do you think more openness would do to the way people buy their products?

A: Well, in the...it should actually help in many ways. For instance, openness, if we take a look at the materials themselves, would point the finger at the companies that are either overmining a country or exploiting workers and so on and so forth and we have this as data and recognizable as a brand. If anytime we saw Samsung, or Apple, or whatever, we saw we produce here and these are the photos of our workers, real photos, not this portraits, smiles at the camera thing, we get an idea of what does it mean for the world when we buy this products. We would need of course the full picture for that. That is in terms of materials and work load. But if we think about let's say software and hardware, openness means that you don't get to these sort of silly things like your mobile phone. Let's say the Samsung S4. My boss has bought one, his screen broke and Samsung told him, even if we had the instruments, we are not going to change it, he went to someone who could repair this mobile phone and they told him, well it's still not older than two years. If I open it, you basically get no warranty at all. And it doesn't make sense, it is all a matter of I don't want it because of this and I cannot because of that, why there is just a screen, even if you cannot change it yourself...if it's open, let's give our consumer the possibility to repair it if it happens, then at least they can find someone who could do that. It is the same with software. Now with the NSA scandals, it is not as if you are going to have a look at the coding in Google and see oh they are sending the data to other servers, but at least you have to possibility to ask someone, I mean we are nowadays very interconnected and someone would do that and put it on internet, if there is a possibility to have a look at it. You can at least have a way to be sure of what you have in your hands is exactly what you expected. So, sort of...

L: What kind of people do you think have bought the Fairphone? Is it possible to say something about the buyer of the Fairphone in general?

A: In general, I would say...it's difficult. If I had to say one thing, and I know that it's going to be a bit miserable for most of the people in this group, I would say that they are sort of voters of the green party.

L: What do you mean by that?

A: For me, I am from Spain and I came to Berlin six years ago and there's no such green party in Spain or at least not that big. So that was one of the first things that I realized when I came here. How big the green party is. And so I talk to German people here, and they say well of course, green party if about not breaking the law, but getting more liberties and then be responsible about it. And since then I have this idea that it makes sense that also people who buy products, fair trade and so on, tend to be green party voters. I mean, it's sort of, you don't actually think about that people who would vote for a party, but this sort of name, I would give this people. You are in a very comfortable
position in this society, you have a job, you can get to travel now and then, you have a very expensive mobile phone and computer and at some point you decide, hm, I am not happy with it. I should take responsibility. It is the same as I said with buying groceries. You, maybe you are not aware that you are so comfortable in this society in your position, but you are in this step where you are thinking, what should I do better. I've spend quiet a lot explaining my idea of green party voters.

L: And would you then see yourself as part of this group as well?
A: Sometimes yes

L: What kind of values do you share with this group of people?
A: Hmmm, I share the appetite for chance. I share this idea that if you want change you have to move yourself.

L: What kind of change do you mean?
A: Less inequalities, actually more fairness in the society...that would be a very huge world for that, but...I mean we’re pretty much used to seeing inequalities in our own societies and we also tend to get advertisements of what is happening in other parts of the world so we are very conscious about that. What makes me a green party voter, I don’t like people just paying for a campaign to send money to somewhere in the world. I love the idea of, even if it is just a bit, do something. I don’t know, we don’t know if there is this possibility and I don’t even have the Fairphone with me so it could be that they just ran away with the money and this is something I heard quiet a lot when I talked about it with some of my friends and let’s say well, I have the money and there is this possibility that this is going to happen, if I thought about what could go wrong if I cooperate with something like that or I don’t know, when I give money to Wikipedia for instance. It is actually quiet weird how people tend to look for excuses not to do something. If you do this, you cannot complain about how the world is. You are enabled to change yourself so that’s actually what makes me a green party voter, which I am not by the way (laughs)

L: And to what extent are the conflict-free materials of the Fairphone important to you?
A: This is a very interesting point, because I didn’t notice, or I didn’t have such an idea of what was happening in Congo until I took the time to read through the documentation in the Fairphone website.

L: Was that after you ordered it or before?
A: After. So, I see, I mean, just by the amount of blogs that they include in their website, it’s basically 50% of their effort. Or at least the effort that you can see. And I wasn’t that aware of that. Now it is sort of growing in me, but and I actually think that it is a much more complicated issue then for instance workforce in China. Because workforce in China can always be moved to an other country, where the workload is more expensive and you have much closer controls of how the (...) are treating their workers, but the
minerals are really different. There is no way that you can get the minerals anywhere else. You have to get the minerals already there. If you mine them, I mean. So yes, I didn’t care that much about it, but in the long run, I am starting to get an idea of why this is that important.

L: And if you have the phone in December and tell people about your phone, would you mention the conflict free materials or would you tell them about the openness?

A: Of course. It’s actually, even for…very old computers and mobile phones that were build in Europe or in America and so on, they are also connected with these issues in the Congo because there is no way that you are getting these minerals from somewhere else, so it’s actually overall I would say

(I explained about Dodd Frank Act and minerals Australia – he didn’t know this – and explained why Fairphone have decided to nevertheless still invest in Congo)

A: Ah that’s a part I didn’t know, thanks! Ok so it’s actually a little bit more complicated. So one question, when was this rule against getting the material from Congo?

L: I think about three years ago.

A: So it’s not that old.

L: No it’s quite recent.

A: Once again, what is it called?

L: Dodd Frank Act, I could also send you a clip about it, of the consequences it had.

A: Sure, sure

L: So my final question, have you ever bought products from producers who were working with conflict-related materials?

A: Never.

L: Never heard of it either?

A: Sort of yes, but never so apparently serious or feasible as with the Fairphone. There was something about how they explain how they were going to do, or not, that made me think well this guys are serious in what they are saying. But I don’t remember any case of any hardware that I could have bought that were conflict-free. I would love to. As I say, if I had to ask for something, for either a laptop or a tablet for my parents, I have mine, but I would love to find someone who does this. If you have any information on this..

L: I think on the long run Fairphone might have this ambition

A: I think so too

L: But it’s going to take ages
A: Exactly

L: Do you have any questions for me or any unclearities?

A: Not really.

INTERVIEW NADEZHDA
November 24th, 2013

L: Thank you so much that you had the time. Where do you live?

N: In the UK.

L: In the UK, ah okay.

L: I want to ask you, I would like to record the interview so I can make a transcript of it afterwards, is that a problem?

N: No, go ahead.

L: Well let's just start then. Could you maybe tell a little bit more about yourself. Your age, where you live, where you come from etc.

N: So I am 22, I live in the UK, I come from Bulgaria, I graduated in psychology last year and I am I am doing a masters in computer science right now. .

L: There will be a couple of questions during the interview that will be a repetition of the survey, but of course in an interview you have a little bit more space to elaborate on what your thinking, instead of typing in a box so yeah, feel free just to speak your mind. My research is, as you may have read already in the introduction of the survey, is about political consumption. So how people buy products not because of economic reasons, but because of political reasons and I chose Fairphone as my case study for this research. And I did this big survey with the people who bought the Fairphone, then I had a couple of interview with the people from the Fairphone and now I will, as a follow-up to my survey, I will have a couple of interviews with people who bought the Fairphone, like 30 minutes interviews. Thank you that you have the time to answer some of my questions.

N: You're welcome.

L: I wanted to start by asking you, why have you bought the Fairphone?

N: So, I currently don't have a smartphone and I have been feeling the need for one for a while, so I was going to buy a smartphone anyway and then by some chance I saw a tweet about the Fairphone and I checked it out, saw that it was technologically it was very good, it had all I needed, and then I am involved in the Fair Trade movement, with food and with fashion, so it was just an extension of that. It made my choice for a smartphone very easy. Oh this one is fair!
L: Are you involved in the Fair Trade movement in the UK or in Bulgaria?
N: There is no Fair Trade movement in Bulgaria as far as I know. The UK.
L: So you it was an extension of buying already other Fair Trade products?
N: Yes, it just made sense yes.
L: Do you remember when you bought the Fairphone?
N: Oh god, it was before the 5000. So somewhere in May, something like that.
L: So you were in the first badge op people..
N: Yes, definitely yes.
L: Ok, how was that for you - to be in the first 5000.
N: I don’t know, it was just...I was happy to support them and to show them that what they were doing was important to people. I was quite pleased to show them that they were on the right track.
L: Yeah, you said it is important to people. I assume then that it is important to you as well.
N: Yeah.
L: Can you explain why initiatives like Fairphone are so important?
N: Well, the Western world has build itself by using foreign labor to make sure it has cheap prices. And I don't agree with that in the sense that, producing things have a certain costs. And if you are paying less then that, somebody down the line is paying for you, paying less. So in this case, using technology, especially using slave labor and sweatshops and what not, is very...you can it almost everywhere, every technology you get has been produced, has some sort of slave labor involved in it, and I would just like. I firmly believe that put your money where your mouth is, and since I don't agree with such practices i try to buy fair whenever possible.
L: Yeah, and have you seen the roadmap on the website of Fairphone?
N: Yes, I have.
L: And they depict five more or less themes of how they try to work around the Fairphone. And in the survey I already asked, if you had to pick one of those themes, which would be the most important one to you. And I would like to ask you that question again. Do you know the five themes by head or shall I name them?
N: No, can you name them please
L: The first one is precious materials, conflict-free fair resources that put people first, I will just cite from the website. The second one, lasting value, addressing the entire lifespan
of mobile phones. The third one, clear deals, fair transparent pricing and production, the forth one, smart design, open and responsible design for fair electronics, so that is more or less about the operating system, and the last one is made with care, building relationships for better practices from working conditions to recycling.

N: Mmm, well I think that precious metals one, the first one, that I...it's either that one or the care one. But I think right now it is more prominent to make sure that materials we use technology, don't contain human blood in them. So i would go with that one.

L: Could you elaborate a little bit more on why that is important to you?

N: It goes, with the things I said before, with slavour and sweatshops and what not. I just don't believe that I should be using something that had somebody lose their life over it. I am not important than that person that lost their life. There is nothing that I have done that justifies any sort of reason, any sort of usage of such items. So I just don't like it all.

L: No, ok. And what kind of values do you think are behind the Fairphone?

N: I think it starts with valuing human labour. Valueing the fact that people produce things and people put their work and life and blood, sweat and tears into things and they should be justly rewarded. And their geographical position should not matter in how their rewarded. But then, because it is just a smartphone and it is just technology there are thing that are very important for that themes. Technology is priority in the sense that they want to make a product that works, that is desirable and people don't feel like they are giving up functionality for fairness. So I think that those are the two driving forces. And then also community, they have build quite a strong community around, I can see people being very excited about this Fairphone and things like that. And those openness. The phone will be open, the phone will be rooted, you can open the phone, you can do whatever you want with the phone, and I don't think there is an other manufacturer that provides that, so I would say that it is just fairness, openness and technology.

L: Do you think that, these values, openness, fairness and technology are they rooted in some kind of ideology?

N: Well their are quite a few, openness and technology go back to the open source movement, to the whole idea that software should be free, should be open, you should be able to reuse it and redistribute, but ultimately they're kind of, I believe its the mark of a democratic society, that those things are taken into account. Just having, giving people the choice and the opportunity to do whatever they want with what they own, instead of monitoring it as for example Apple does. And fairness is also, I would say, a mark of democratic society, caring that other people are taken care off, I don't know.

L: What of your personal values, or maybe then ideology made you buy the Fairphone?

N: Well, as I said previously I would greatly like to know that what I am using doesn't include somebody else's blood on it, I just, I don't think that I am better than a sweatshop
worker in China or more important just because I live in a Western society. And I don’t come from a Western society so I have seen people work with very little money and I know that, just like me that could be me any day of the week. There is absolutely no reason that I should be accepting the fact that because I live in the UK I can buy something cheaply.

L: If I understand you correctly, would you then see that value as equality?

N: Yes, there is equality. But is more so fairness simply, there is just the fact that this person is putting a lot of effort into making my phone. They should be paid justly. Not less because they live in China.

L: Ok, one of the other questions in the survey was about if you had to ascribe yourself a certain geographical identity, what would best describe you. Do you remember what answer you gave to that question?

N: Was there an option of citizen of the world there?

L: Yeah

N: That’s the option I chose then, definitely.

L: Why do you consider yourself a world citizen?

N: Because I don’t care about borders. I don’t care that somebody is very far away from me, that doesn’t mean that I wouldn’t care about their welfare or about what’s happening in their country. I believe globalization is a very good think and I have friends all over the world. I come from Bulgaria, I live in the UK but I don’t necessarily associate with any of those places, I prefer to think of myself as a citizen of the world. I assimilate what I like in any culture and reject what I don’t like in the ones I come from. So it’s just...

L: So would you then describe yourself as cosmopolitan?


L: What do you, how do you see, what does cosmopolitan mean to you?

N: It means somebody who cares about the bigger picture. Somebody who is also, who is not limited by geography literally. I would think, yes I am cosmopolitan, I don’t necessarily care about geographical positions or problems as much as I care about issues in the whole world.

L: And, going back to consumption, how would you describe the role consumers have in general.

N: I believe they have the most important role because, the world as it is right now, moves where the money goes. So if consumers spend their money on things that they produced fairly, things will start being produced more fairly. It’s like, the consumers actually has the greatest power. They buy what they like. If they like something that is produced cheaply,
people will continue producing things cheaply. The (....) of the consumers is the only thing that drives the economy.

L: And as you said, you are working with the Fair Trade movement, are there certain trends or things you see happening right now when it comes to fair consumption?

N: I can see it getting more and more mainstream. The sheer fact that I just meet people, and for most of them it makes sense. They don't give a second thought about buying fair trade chocolate as opposed to not fair trade chocolate. Also many people try to boycott Nestlé products because of their pretty much evil practices all over the world. So this wasn't like, even two or three years ago when I got more involved in the Fair Trade movement, this wasn't the case. I was kind of like that looney hippie-person that would pay more money for chocolate. Whereas now, I mention I buy Fair Trade or I also buy organic, which makes me a complete hippie. But when I mention I try to buy Fair Trade or that, I try, and if I can't I try to make sure that they are not used in China or whatever or Europe, just telling them I pay more money for the same thing, doesn't actually raise many eyebrows or people don't think....So the movement is definitely speeding up, I live in the UK, I live in Wales and Wales is a Fair Trade nation, so Fair Trade is getting engraved in the culture, it is starting to make sense to more people.

L: And you said two or three years ago, it was definitely a different situation. What do you think have changed that it is getting now more mainstream?

N: Well, the companies that produce Fair Trade have grown like, for example, as I said chocolate. There is a company called Green In Blocks, they produce Fair Trade chocolate and you can now find them in any supermarket in the UK. Whereas previously you had to either go to a specialist chocolate store or to an organic or Fair Trade shop. It's the thing with Fair Trade that it makes sense. And in the UK, people have the financial ability to put their money into it. It is not that much more expense, however it is fair, that is the idea and also the Fair Trade foundation has put a lot of effort in it. There are a lot of campaigns, there are celebrities behind it and things like that, it's just, it is growing, I don't actually know if there is some sort of catalyst to it, but it definitely grew slowly and greatly.

L: You already said that consumers actually decide what is being produced and what is not being produced etc. Whether it is cheap of expensive, or fair or not. And well, that would mean that they are of course the vehicle behind this Fair Trade movement growing bigger in Wales.

N: Yes

L: What in the consumer has changed that they are now willing to buy these products?

N: I think it was about six or seven months ago when a factory in Bangladesh completely fell apart and that raised a lot of questions and a lot of awareness and also the social media
had such a huge impact in that. For example, there is a website called Upworthy and everyday they post good things, people are doing raising awareness and their website has gained popularity enormously in the past few months. Everybody on my social media shares things from them, it's just, it seems that for whatever reason, people are becoming more socially globализation is helping making people feel closer to somebody in Bangladesh or somebody in China. It is just, it's very hard to ignore that right now, it is hard to think that the person in China is somebody is very distant from you and somebody you don't understand. Because through the internet the person in China is just like you, has the same problems as you, wants the same things as you and is just trying to move on through life just as you. And there is nothing actually making you better then them and them deserving what they are doing, like working in a sweatshop. There is nothing like that. The growth of the internet, the growth of the social media, the growth of things like Kickstarter. I think there is a documentary on the production of fashion that just got funded, I actually backed that one up on Kickstarter, and there is more and more like that. It is just that suddenly the internet became the power of social good which I love. And people realizing that, no you can't just turn a blind eye to the person in China who is making your smartphone. Because that is just not how it works any longer.

L: And if you have to say something in general. What kind of people do you think have bought the Fairphone?

N: Well, I like to think that there are all kinds of people who have bought the Fairphone, not hippies likes me. But because they reached their goal of 25.000 phones so like recently, I can't accept the fact that all those 25.000 people are hippies, there is just no way. I think what the Fairphone had is like, I don't feel I am compromising technological quality for fairness, so what they have going for them is that they are actually a very good phone as well as....so the people who have bought the Fairphone might be people who are interested in fairness or Fair Trade or on the other side there might be people who just want (...), they want a phone they can open, they want a phone with dual SIM, so or they could just think, that actually looks nice and I need a new smartphone. I hope that there are a few like that. But I definitely think that the majority of the people strongly believe in fair trade or fair trade movement or really need a very good phone.

L: You said earlier, for the five themes, for now the precious materials was most important to you and after that Made With Care.

N: Yeah.

L: To what extent are the conflict-free materials important to you?

N: Well, to the extent that they don't have any conflict involved with them. Every part of the Fairphone is important. The whole idea of the Fairphone is important, so every part of it is essential so the conflict free materials, that is like really important, I don't blood diamonds and I don't want materials that support dictatorship or whatever. It is just, having...when I finally get the Fairphone, holding it and knowing that I am holding something that has been made with good thought. Something that is a power for social
L: Did you think about the link between conflict and consumption before you bought the Fairphone?

N: Yes, once I moved to the UK. the consumerist society is much more obvious then it is in Bulgaria. I had known that there were sweatshops in China but I felt detached from them, just like many people do. But in the UK I kind of, I heard about this movement of Fair and things like that, there is definitely, there is a definite relationship, the stronger the consumerist society, the stronger the relationship between consumerism and conflicts. Where something is made, that is where the economy is being supported that thing. So thing, consumerism is like very important.

L: You mentioned a couple of times the difference between Bulgaria and the UK. And what do you think changed in you that made you think about these issues such as conflict and as you said the factories, the Bangladesh factories etc.

N: It's not so much something that was changed. It was something that was allowed to grow. Because in Bulgaria, Bulgaria is a poor country so the main focus is on getting your family fed. And you will pay as little as you can, because money is never enough, whereas when I came to the UK, it is a different society. People still say they don't have enough money but this is not actually true.

L: It's a relative term

N: It is very relative. When I cam here, I also had more choice. In Bulgaria they just, there is no fair trade. It would be extremely expensive, the organic movement for example is just starting and people will not look at me like I am insane when I buy things organic because they cost so much more. So it just, things are just starting. Bulgaria is quiet a bit behind in developing a capitalist consumerist society, because of the many years of communist rule, so it's just not, people care about survival and they would do anything for survival. They don't care that much, I would do anything to make my family survive even if it means somebody else is suffering that is just the way it works. Whereas, coming to the UK there is a lot more freedom and a lot less pressure to survive like you are surviving, there are no problems with surviving here so you have a lot more time and freedom to evaluate what you want to put in. I always wanted to be (.....), but in Bulgaria that was hard, whereas when I came to the UK and I found that I could actually now do that and I could actually be a prosocial member of society who doesn't actually need to worry about their survival, moreso removing the worrying about survival led me explore other options.

L: And what do you think is the role that consumers have in conflict?

N: It can be both direct and indirect. Say conflict, it just depends, if something is made, say the conflict between Israel and Palestina, say you don't support one side. You think one side is wrong, well if you don't pay, if you buy things produced there of if you don't go there for tourism, if you just trying not to support the economy of that country, the
The economy of that country won't survive. If everybody who would not support them did it. They would start feeling pressure financial, to overthink whatever conflict they're having. So it's both direct and indirect in the sense that money rules. So wherever money goes wherever things happen. However, on the other side is that consumers are just indirectly, by spending their money on things that are produced somewhere they are actually making a stance about a conflict. That’s about it?

L: And have you ever bought products that were working with conflict-related materials?

N: Well any technology I have ever bought is working with conflict-related materials. So obviously yes. It is kind of hard to avoid. The Fairphone is more of a precedent than of a rule right now. Buying something conflict free is pretty hard.

L: Ok, well those were actually my questions. Do you have any questions?

N: Oh no, I have a psychology degree, I know exactly what you are going through...

**INTERVIEW JANNEKE**

November 21th, 2013

L: As I said, we are going to do it in English, because my whole research will be in English. So I'll do my interview in English as well. Maybe you have already read it at the start of the survey about my bakground. I will tell a little bit as an introduction. I am a master student in Conflict Studies at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. And I am doing research on political consumerism. That means consumption not out of economic reasons, but out of political reasons and I chose Fairphone as my case study and I did a couple of interviews with Fairphone and a survey with people who bought the Fairphone and now I am doing interviews with the people who filled in the survey and were willing to take a small interview. So I am very thankful that you have the time for me to answer my questions. Some of the questions will be a little bit of a repetition of what you've already been asked in the survey. In person you always have more space to just tell what's on your mind instead of typing it in a box, so feel free say whatever you are thinking. And I wanted to start by asking you if you could tell something about yourself. Background, how old you are.

J: Ok, I am Judith, I study molecular life sciences in Nijmegen. I am in my fifth year of my bachelor now so I am kind of taking a bit longer, because I am doing other things then studying as well. I am 21, I also work for the board of the students union there and I also do how do you say that, things for sustainability at the university and in my own life, I also do a lot of things with sustainability so yeah, the Fairphone is a thing for me as well.

L: Yeah, when did you buy the Fairphone?

J: Like in the first part, before the first deadline. In June or something.
L: So you were with the first 5000?

J: Yeah.

L: So after the first 5000 they started producing and you were in that first group.

J: Yeah, I was in the first group.

L: And why did you buy the Fairphone?

J: Well I kind of needed a new phone anyway, because my phone is sort of dying. And yeah, I think, it's the best available. So yeah phones are not really good for the environment but a smartphone is just really nice, because it is really useful and the Fairphone is really great because I know for sure that it is better for the environment and for people so. I wanted to support the initiative. I think it is very important to have these signals out there that other phone producers see as well that it is possible to do it right.

L: And what kind of values do you think are behind the Fairphone?

J: For humans, that people working in China, that they have better working conditions and that it all comes down to humans I guess, because they also use like warfree minerals, or at least use the mines that don't support the wars, so that's also good for humans. And I know that they use packaging that is not a lot of packaging and if it's good for the environment it is also good for humans. Yeah, just environmental reasons and well-being of humans I guess.

L: And maybe you have seen it on the website that Fairphone uses a roadmap with five themes on it, which they all try to focus on. And there are five of them, and in the survey I asked which part of the roadmap you find most important and I want to ask you that again. I can name them for you. Precious materials, so that's about the conflict free minerals, lasting value, so recyclability etc., clear deals, that's about openness on how the phone is build and the breakdown of costs etcetera, smart design, that is about the operating system and made with care and that is mostly with the facturies in China etcetera.

J: It's a hard question, because it is all kind of important, but to me it's mostly the lasting value and the clear deals. The clear deals is really good, because it is mostly that the companies who produce phones are really big and like, very capitalist. And you don't really see where the money is going and now you know why the costs so much, because it is not like it's really cheap so that's really good and lasting value is great of course because it's not like it's good for the environment to build these things because it has got all these precious materials in it so it's better if it lasts longer and it's good if you can just use the same phone instead of having to recycle it or don't recycle it at all. Yeah, I find it hard to choose between those two.
L: But to say that lasting value and clear deals were the most important for you. And what personal values, because you already mentioned what the values of Fairphone are to a certain extent, what of your personal values made you buy the fairphone?

J: Well, I just want to do things right on multiple levels. So yeah cause this phone is really trying to do everything right, that's mostly it, yeah I don't know if it is one value for me.

L: It can be more values than one, and I don't mean the values as in the roadmap. Just your personal values, you can just call them whatever you like.

J: The clear deals are not my personal...well just trying to keep an eye on the environment and make sure that people are treated well, I basically want that everyone can live on this planet like just as I do, and if you have to work 20 hours a day that is not good so I think like initiatives as Fair Phone are good because they are helping to make wealth in other places than Europe and US. Yeah and maybe a bit, I don't really like multinationals and big companies, this is like a clear sign that smaller companies can do great things as well. I want to support good initiatives. Choosing with your money, voting with your money, that is really like what you are doing and this is a really clear example of this.

L: How would you, as you said, voting with your money, how would you describe the role that consumers have in general?

J: Like not just with smartphones but with everything?

L: Yes

J: Well everything that's made is made because there is demand. If you just eliminate demand then things in the end won't be made anymore. Unfortunately, that is how the world works so, you just have to chose for the right things and only buy the things that are made with values on how you want that the world is and I don't want the world to be like with war, with people that have to work under horrible conditions so I try not to buy those products that are made in those conditions.

L: What do people need to make those decisions? What does the consumer need to make these decisions?

J: First they need information, because if you don't know where it's from it's really hard to choose. And most of the time it is not really clear, that's the great thing that Fairphone is doing. That they're showing how everything is made and what is the story behind the product, because with any other smartphone you don't know how and where it is made, well unless there is a disaster and it comes to the news. So information is one thing and unfortunately I think, most people also need a financial impulse. It needs to be cheaper or at least not very expensive, because I don't think that for most of the people that just the idea that it is made right is enough to buy it, because most of the time it is more expensive as well, so. But I think the main thing is information, that they know how a single product is made and they also know in general how things are made and that some
things just aren't right and you shouldn't support them. Even though it's not really clear for particular products.

L: Ok. And Fairphone has until now been succesful in actually selling already 25,000 phones before it is actually there. Considering that a success, what do you think made this possible for Fairphone? To become such a big success.

J: I think it plays a role that they are the only one doing these kind of things and well a lot of people have a smartphone these days and well they die every two years, so there are a lot of people wanting a new one. So I think a lot of people are trying to do things right and it is kind of known that smartphones aren't like the best things in the world if you are a conscious consumer so Fairphone is the only option you have then. And I think that because they have such clear deals you really know that it is the right thing and also because they're clear we are not perfect and we're just trying to get there. I think that is also part of it, that would be like the main criticism people could have. But they are really clear about what they are doing and I think that's a big part of their success.

L: Ok, and in the survey I also asked what identity would best describe you. And I wanted to ask you to what extent do you feel a world citizen?

J: Ehm, yeah a bit. That's not really..

L: Could you explain why it's a bit?

J: I feel a bit a world citizen, because I don't think like 'my country' or 'my continent' is better than any other place in the world and I want people all around the world to kind of have the same level of wealth and live just as nice as me and, but on the other side I feel kind of connected to Europe and Holland as well, so in that way I am not really a world citizen. Depends on your definition.

L: What would your definition of a world citizen be then?

J: I think it's someone who could live anywhere and feel just as...feel at home everywhere. I think I would miss Holland if I wouldn't live here, so in that way I feel really Dutch as well.

L: If you have to say something in general about the people who bought the Fairphone, what kind of people do you think are buying the Fairphone?

J: Conscious consumers. They are probably a bit wealthy as well, a bit younger, like between 20 en 25 mostly.

L: Why younger you think?

J: I think because younger people...it's more on their minds, at least I feel...They're more thinking about trying to make a change.

L: You think this is something new, what we are experiencing right now with for example the Fairphone?
J: Well, on this scale I do think so. Maybe I am very pessimistic about old people, but I really have this feeling that they really have this feeling that they don't want to change things for the better and I have the feeling that the younger generation, maybe that is because I am younger as well.

L: To what extent was the conflict-free mineral part of the Fairphone important to you when you decided to buy the Fairphone?

J: Hmm a bit, not too much. It's just the big picture that attracted me and it's part of it, but it's not the thing that put me over the line.

L: Did you for example know before Fairphone was actually meant to become a product, it was awareness campaign that was only focused on conflict minerals?

J: I knew it was an awareness campaign, because I read it on the website, but I didn't know it was only about conflict minerals.

L: Have you ever bought other conflict-free products?

J: Well, I think that there are a lot of conflict-free products like apples, not like consciously. It probably because I am just not aware of it.

L: Can you tell me to what extent you have read the information on the website of Fairphone?

J: I have read their whole website basically and then I led it sink in for a few days and then I decided I wanted to have it. What kind of ..it's a gamble. Because you didn't know if the phone would get there because I was along the first 5000.

L: Would you actually get your money back if they would not reach the 5000?

J: I think so, but I am not sure. I'd just hope that they would get there. And I just saw it on Facebook, because a friend of mine bought one.

L: Before you did?

J: Yes and then I clicked the link and it looked really interesting. But I read all the information on the website and that's the reason I bought it.

L: And are you still following them right now?

J: Yeah, reading their blogs

L: What is your whole experience with Fairphone right now?

J: Well, it's good. Yeah, it's a bit sad that it's delayed, but they have good reasons for it and I can really accept it. They write on their blog and you can just be really strict about the deadline with the dealers but then yeah, if the people there have to work longer days to make sure the deadline is made, that's not good as well and then I am okay with it being
delayed, because you know why it's delayed and that's really nice and they are really open about everything so that's really cool,

L: I asked all the questions I wanted to ask you, are there any unclearities for you or questions?

J: No.

L: Thank you very much for your time.

J: No problem