

## **Beating, Ditching & Hiding: Consumers' Everyday Resistance to Marketing**

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## **Abstract**

This article illuminates consumers' views of marketing in light of theories of resistance. It argues that consumers engage in resistance to the power of marketing through their everyday actions and also through the ways they construct their accounts of these actions. It identifies three theoretical approaches to resistance (hegemonic, relational and autonomous). These are used to discuss consumers' accounts of marketing collected through 78 personal interviews in which participants were asked to describe marketing and provide examples of their experiences with marketing as they defined it. Through this, the study uncovers various forms of consumer resistance, which can often go unnoticed. These are conceptualised through the notion of *everyday resistance to marketing* and are used to challenge existing marketing theory and develop paths for future research.

## **Key words**

Consumer resistance; critical marketing; power relations; empowerment; consumer culture

## **Summary Statement of Contribution**

This article illuminates consumers' views of marketing in light of theories of resistance. It develops an argument that consumers resist the ubiquity and invasiveness of marketing

institutions through their everyday actions and also through the ways they construct their accounts of these actions. It identifies three theoretical approaches to resistance (hegemonic, relational and autonomous) and uncovers forms of consumer resistance in light of these perspectives.

## **Introduction**

In this manuscript we take a novel approach to consumers' understandings of marketing. Moving beyond the banal observation that "consumers dislike marketing", we use the lens of consumer resistance to interrogate consumers' views and explore the relationship between resistance and power. Drawing on 78 personal interviews with consumers, we unveil how their accounts of marketing are infused with multiple forms of mundane resistance to the discipline, which can often go unnoticed by others. These everyday acts of resistance (Scott, 1985) reflect different ways in which consumers understand the relationship between marketing (as a perceived power) and themselves (as resistant to that power).

The interests, desires and satisfaction of consumers are claimed to be at the heart of the marketing discipline. Despite such aspirations, depictions of marketing in the media, emphasise the ways marketing practices work against consumers' interests (Cluley, 2016). Indeed, extant research demonstrates that consumers are cynical about marketing (French et al., 1982; Sheth et al., 2006), and consider marketing technologies to be manipulative, misleading and dishonest (Heath and Heath, 2008). Other commentators highlight that consumers feel this way because the discipline has developed new marketing technologies without due consideration of the moral consequences of their deployment (see Arndt, 1983; Alvesson, 1994; Elliott, 1997; O'Malley et al., 1997; Smith & Higgins 2000; Martin & Smith, 2008). While addressing such challenges is morally relevant, it also makes commercial sense (Sheth & Sisodia, 2005) because antipathy towards marketing inevitably reduces its effectiveness, credibility and perceived legitimacy (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2002; Smith, 2006; Badot & Cova, 2008). For example, consumers have engaged in boycotts (Kozinets & Handelman, 1998),

embraced anti-branding movements (Klein 1999; Holt 2002) and created emancipatory spaces of consumption for themselves (Kozinets, 2002). These behaviours represent “radical interventions that result in structural change” (Penaloza & Price, 1993: p. 125) and consumer resistance is understood to involve any attempt to undermine, escape consumer culture or unbind themselves from the dark sides of marketing. Much of this research implicitly adopts a hegemonic view that frames marketing as powerful and consumers as vulnerable. However, the relationship between power and resistance is likely to be far more nuanced and complex given that consumers can simultaneously resist marketing ideology while participating in the market economy (e.g. Cherrier, 2009). Indeed, it seems that consumers “subtly and skilfully use consumption in everyday life to challenge the *status quo* and the dominant market ideologies” (Izberk-Bilgin, 2010: p. 313). Building on wider sociological understandings of resistance (e.g. Hollander and Einwohner, 2004), we explore how consumers’ narratives of marketing underlie, construct and open up different forms of resistance. Moving beyond a binary view of structure and agency, we sketch out three perspectives on resistance. A *hegemonic* view sees resistance as a response to an oppressive power; a *relational* view sees resistance as a necessary component of power; an *autonomous* view sees resistance as primary to power. This opens up space for us to consider consumers’ accounts of marketing as expressions of everyday acts of resistance (Scott, 1985). The phrase “*Everyday acts of resistance to marketing*” refers to consumption strategies employed by consumers to resist marketing practices in ways that remain hidden or unnoticed by others. Consumers’ resistance is not always loud or visible but it nevertheless affects the ways in which consumers relate to companies and marketing and, importantly, how they experience such interactions. As such, the contribution of this study is to offer a more nuanced appreciation of consumer resistance.

## **The Relationship between Power and Resistance**

Resistance is an “oppositional action of some kind” (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004: p. 544; see also Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013: p. 1). It refers to behaviours that work against some kind of powerful entity (e.g. a dictator). Simply put, resistance has to resist something. The entity that is resisted might be a person, organization, institution, or act - but it must have some ability to force others to work in its interest rather than theirs (Simon, 1944). However, the relationship between resistance and power is not necessarily straightforward. Reviewing a broad range of social theory, we explore three theoretical paradigms for thinking through the relationship between power and resistance. Unpacking these perspectives provides us with a multi-level understanding of consumer resistance that allows us to identify a range of possible resistant behaviours.

Considerations of the relationship between market power and consumer resistance tend towards conceptualisations of consumers as passive dupes within the discourse of “manipulation and enslavement” (Izberk-Bilgin, 2010, p.300) or as active users of marketing for self-expression within the “agency and empowerment discourse” (Izberk-Bilgin, 2010: p. 306). However, just as sociological theory increasingly explores the possibilities of a third way (Giddens, 1998), we can expand Izberk-Bilgin’s (2010) conceptualisation beyond a unilateral view of power and resistance. Unilateral views of power, where power is conceived through an either/or binary with social actors either having power or being subjected to power, are increasingly subject to critique. Social theory has moved on to consider the interactions between social structures and agents (see Callon, 1984; Latour, 1994; Bourdieu, 1977). To this end, we propose that reformulating

the paradigmatic views of power and resistance can expand our understanding of consumer resistance. We do so by outlining three alternative views of power and resistance: *hegemonic*, *relational* and *autonomous*.

### *The hegemonic perspective*

A *hegemonic* view regards power as primary and resistance as secondary. That is to say, it sees resistance as a response to power. This is, perhaps, the classical and most intuitive way to think about power and resistance. It is based on the idea that in any given social setting only one group has true power. Resistance to power emerges, then, when those with power exploit, abuse or ignore those they direct. One consequence of this view is that it supposes that power can be wielded in ways that minimise resistance and that any resistance indicates a mismanagement of power. An example of this perspective is Freudian psychoanalysis. It views resistant behaviours as “reaction formations” that are enacted to sublimate, mitigate or cope with the excesses of power (see Frosh, 2010). So, when people struggle to conform with the dictates of those with power over them – whether they prohibit them from certain sexual acts, artistic endeavours or consumer misbehaviour (Cluley, 2015; Fullerton, 2007; Desmond 2012) – their struggles become manifest in physical and psychological symptoms. Psychoanalytic therapy involves uncovering the causes of these symptoms and working with the individual to overcome them. Gramsci (1971) influentially adapted this idea in his concept of cultural hegemony. It tells us that those with economic power in a society use a range of cultural mechanisms to stave off potential sources of resistance. This has inspired a range of critical marketing studies including the Frankfurt School critiques of mass consumerism and mass culture (Marcuse, 1964; Adorno & Horkheimer, 1972; Fromm, 2012).



Perhaps more relevant to marketing managers, this perspective is also manifest within the consumer empowerment literature. It considers brands as capable of empowering and enabling consumers (Denegri-Knott, Zwick and Schroeder, 2006). In other words, it suggests that brands have power over consumers and the ability to delegate that power to them. Through this, it is hoped, consumers will produce innovations, create brand values and minimise their acts of resistance to brands.

### *The relational perspective*

A *relational view* views power and resistance as interdependent. It is based on dialectic logic that sees powers as an emergent property produced through acts of resistance. Perhaps the archetypal conception of this view is Hegel's (1807) master-slave dialectic. Simply put, Hegel argues that the power a master has over a slave is the result of a dialectical relationship between them. In other words, if there were no slave, the master would have no power. Here, power is the result of submission. Once resistance ends, power is established. Far from being a by-product of power, as in the hegemonic view, resistance both opposes and establishes it. This perspective lies behind a number of resistant political movements and is neatly summarised in the militant adage that *if you fight you might lose, but if you don't fight you always lose* (Fanon & Fratz, 1963).

Such views, while incredibly influential in wider social theory, tend to be under-represented in marketing research, in part perhaps because emergent categories that are neither the sum of nor correlated with their composite parts stand outside of dominant methodological approach in marketing (see Arvidsson, 2005; Wernick, 1991; Holt 2002). An exception here is the expansive literature that applies the work of Foucault to marketing contexts (Humphreys, 2006; Zwick et al., 2008). Rose (1989; 1996), for

example, expands Foucault's notion of governmentality to include everyday acts of consumption such as going to the gym, buying a branded good or even restricting one's consumption. He argues that power operates through these acts – technologies of the self – rather than through demands placed on individual consumers to behave in certain ways from hegemonic powers. Understood in this way, divisions between the powerful and the powerless become increasingly difficult to sustain as the powerless are seen to discipline and control themselves more effectively than the powerful can. The relations between power and resistance are the key.

#### *The autonomous perspective*

An *autonomous view* suggests that resistance is primary and power secondary. Rather than submitting to the power, as in the master slave dialectic, here it is resistance to power which grants power its authority. Such an idea lies at the heart of Deleuze and Guattari's (1977) criticism of capitalism. They see capitalism as a system which redirects autonomous flows into authority and power. This suggests that the power of marketing can never minimise consumer resistance. To do so, is to minimise power itself (Hardt & Negri, 2001). Rather, resistance is to be welcomed, embraced and even provoked (Cluley & Brown, 2015). It gives marketing its strength. This perspective lies at the heart of postmodern marketing – in particular Brown's (2001) call for marketers to torment their consumers.

Following this logic Wade Morris (2015) offers a reinterpretation of anti-consumption in the music market. He argues that consumers who embraced services such as Napster might have thought that they were individually expressing an anti-market discourse (Cluley, 2013) or building a temporary hypercommunity (Kozinets, 2002; Giesler &

Pohlman, 2003). However, their collective resistance “played a commercial role by gathering around the software in ways that allowed for further monitoring, measuring and commodification of digital music and its audiences” (Wade Morris, 2015: 34). In short, their resistant behaviours provided an opportunity for new marketing activities. They produced data that could be analysed, packaged and ultimately used as the basis for more precise and effective marketing activities (see Turow, 2012; Cluley & Brown, 2015; Turow et al., 2015).

Separating out these three perspectives help us to recognise that the relationship between power and resistance is complex and can be understood in very different ways. To be clear, we are not suggesting that these offer an exhaustive rendering of the possible relationships. Rather, we want to show that the direction of the relationship and the dominant force in it are open to debate. This challenges us to consider the differences between resistance aimed as challenging power, coping with power and creating power. A hegemonic view, for example, suggests that resistance is symptomatic of power gone awry. The autonomous view, in contrast, tells us that resistance is a necessary constituent of power that exists separately to power. Power, on this view, could be said to be resistance gone awry. As we have seen, each view has some purchase in the marketing literature. Indeed, it may be the case that these perspectives are not in conflict with each other but are used in various ways to construct resistance.

### **Typologies of resistant behaviours**

Research into resistance attempts to classify different forms of resistant behaviours and such classifications cannot be divorced from the conceptualisation of power. This is why

it is useful to unpack the paradigms of power and resistance. Resistance tends to be separated along axis which do not necessarily map evenly onto the conceptualisations of power and resistance in social theory. This opens up spaces for further investigation. In this regard, we propose that consumer resistance is typically described in terms of the direction of resistance; the extent to which resistance involves collective or individual acts; and the extent to which resistance exceptional or ongoing.

### ***Individual or collective acts***

In a culture dominated by consumption and “structured by the collective actions of firms in their marketing activities” (Holt, 2002: p. 71), it would be odd if consumer behaviour was not the venue for some form of resistance. Within the extant literature, studies tend to deal with collective acts of resistance (Penaloza & Price, 1993), where targets are “well-defined antagonist[s]” often representing some form of domination, such as brands (e.g. Nike), organizations (e.g. McDonalds) or other market- or marketing-related images, norms and instruments (Cherrier et al., 2011: p. 1759). The literature explores how consumers collectively create alternative spaces and experiences of emancipation away from the power of the market such as the Burning Man Festival (Kozinets, 2002). Such resistant behaviours tend to be quite visible. Examples here include boycotts (Kozinets & Handelman, 1998) and anti-advertising/anticorporate movements such as adbusters (Rumbo, 2002), “reclaim the streets” (Klein, 2010: p. 312), or the recent CATS (Citizens Advertising Takeover Service) initiative of buying advertising space at a London underground station and replacing it with pictures of cats.

### ***Direction***

Resistance can be directed to power or shared among resistant groups. In the former case, resistance must be visible to power in some meaningful way. In the latter, resistance may be hidden or invisible to all but the resistant actors. Hollander and Einwohner (2004) explain that resistance may include visible acts which are easily recognised by others and by the targets of that resistance as well as less obvious forms which, although intentional and even recognized by other observers, may go unnoticed by their targets. Examples of what we can call “overt resistance” include revolutions and protests. Examples of more “covert resistance” include workplace gossiping and joking (Griffiths, 1998; Scott, 1985; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004).

At the extreme of covert resistance is a class of resistant behaviours which can be described as “everyday resistance”. It is less dramatic and visible than well-known forms of resistance as rebellions, revolutions or demonstrations. “Everyday resistance” is about “how people act in their everyday lives in ways that might undermine power” and is “typically hidden or disguised, individual and not politically articulated” (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013; p. 2). Many “everyday acts of resistance” can go unrecognized by others (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004) and be experienced only by the individual who is resisting (see Chalari, 2012). Indeed, much research into everyday resistance looks into acts used by powerless people who often lack the means or opportunity to resist in more open ways (e.g. spirituals sung by slaves, Sanger, 1995). Scott (1985) offers a detailed account of “everyday forms of peasant resistance”: “the prosaic but constant struggle between the peasantry and those who seek to extract labor, food, taxes, rents, and interests from them” (p. xvi). He calls these the “weapons of the weak” and include foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, and sabotage.

### *Exceptional or Ongoing Resistance*

There are, however, many simple individual acts that show consumers' everyday resistance "against a culture of consumption and the marketing of mass-produced meanings" (Penaloza & Price, 1993, p. 123). Here, extant research suggests that consumers are most likely to resist marketing practices rather than the culture of consumption. Ironically, though, in so doing, they may actually support consumer culture by facilitating new marketing practices. For example, Ozanne and Murray (1995) argue that something as small as reflexively attaching meanings to acts of consumption other than those supplied by marketing can be an important act of defiance. They call for a more insurgent, radically critical or "reflexively defiant consumer" (p. 521) in face of the power of the market and technologies used (Ozanne & Murray, 1995). Clearly, though, such new meanings can be re-appropriated back into marketing practice through social media listening, cool hunting and becoming a prosumer (Zwick et al., 2008). Holt (2002), too, describes how one of his participants filters out marketing's influence and tries to ascertain his sovereignty when shopping, "beating the market using exhaustive research" (p. 75). Such research exposes the consumer to even more marketing opportunities.

Reviewing the theory of resistance, typologies of resistant practices and extant research on consumer resistance, then, we can begin to appreciate that resistance is a multi-level phenomenon. There are a number of possible provocations to resistant behaviours; a number of targets; and a number of intentions and performances. This allows us to sketch out possible openings for research to develop the understanding of consumer resistance in relation to wider theorisations. In particular, we can see that research into consumer resistance tends to focus on resistances to cultures of consumption and on visible and collective resistant behaviours. Given this emphasis, this study is motivated by a concern

with the role of marketing, as an institution and practice, in relation to individual and less visible consumer resistance – or what we might call *everyday resistance to marketing*. Such forms of resistance are key concerns in the wider theorisation of resistance and power but are less prominent in theories of consumer resistance. Here consumer resistance tends to be seen as a transformational attack on consumer culture supported by collective moments of resistances. In this study we aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the mundane and less visible forms of resistance that individual consumers adopt in their daily lives.

## **Methodology**

In this article, we investigate the relationship between marketing (as a perceived powerful entity) and consumers (as resistant to that power). Specifically, we aim to examine how consumers view marketing and how they envision their relationship to marketing, and to uncover the everyday strategies by which they resist marketing. Data were collected in one UK city over two phases, the first involving 19 exploratory, face-to-face, in-depth interviews and the second an additional 59 face-to-face interviews (with different participants) using critical incident technique (CIT).

The sampling strategy combined convenience with a concern to ensure diversity in terms gender, age and profession. Individuals who reported having had formal qualifications or employment in marketing were excluded. Participants' ages vary from 18 to 71 years old. Levels of education vary from leaving school without formal qualifications to PhD. Our sample included unemployed and retired people, as well as students and people with

varied occupations. Table 1 in Appendix presents a list of participants. To preserve anonymity of participants, we use pseudonyms.

The initial set of interviews explored informants views of marketing and the meanings they attributed to it (Taylor and Bogdan 1998; Sheth, Sisodia & Barlulescu, 2006). Subsequent CIT interviews focused on consumers' perceptions and views of the discipline and probed further into the origins of such views. In both sets of interviews, we used a semi-structured interview guide, open to any unexpected and relevant issues (Kvale, 1996). This is similar to Patton's (2002: 343) "general interview guide approach", where we outlined the key topics to address whilst granting flexibility for participants to discuss their views without constraints.

In both stages, we started by asking participants which words first came to their minds when they thought of marketing (see also Sheth, Sisodia and Barlulescu, 2006); this was to capture their spontaneous reactions prior to give them opportunity for any deeper rationalization about what they "should" answer. We then asked them about their views of discipline, including: what was marketing for them and how would they define it; what was the main aim of marketing; whether their opinion of marketing was mostly positive or negative (we alternated "positive or negative" with "negative or positive" to avoid biases) and why. In addition to these issues, in the second stage of interviews, we specifically asked participants for critical incidents that may have contributed to their views. Specifically, CIT were defined as: "positive or negative", alternated with "negative or positive", "lived experiences with marketing that may have contributed to their views of marketing".



The purpose of using CIT was to allow participants to deliver a reflective account of the phenomenon (Johnston, 1995) and to counteract their tendency to offer abstract or vague views of the discipline. By focusing on specific, real-life experiences, we also hoped to trigger their memories (Chell, 2004) and gain a richer understanding of the origins of consumers' negativity, beyond shared cultural assumptions and anti-marketing rhetoric that seems to prevail against marketing. Because CIT allows for a holistic understanding of different, and potentially unexpected, variables that might affect a particular outcome (Walker & Truly, 1992), it seemed particularly useful to explore possible origins of consumers' negativity.

Interviews lasted up to fifty minutes, with the typical length being approximately half an hour (typically, under-graduate students gave shorter interviews than other participants). It is important to highlight that we did not query participants directly about resistant behaviour – rather these emerged spontaneously within interviews and, as a result, “resistance” was subsequently employed as the theoretical lenses to inform interpretations.

When asked directly about the valence of their attitudes towards marketing, a large number of participants (combined from both stages) reported holding “mostly negative” (43.6%) attitudes, with only 16.6% having “mostly positive” attitudes; 39.7% of the participants said they held either mixed views or were ambivalent. These percentages were comparable to those of previous studies (Sheth et al., 2006; Smith, 2006) although somewhat more favourable to marketing. In this article, we concentrate on cases of resistance, which means that we focused mostly on negative attitudes and associated CIT stories.

Interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service. Analysis was approached as a “cyclical process and a reflexive activity” (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996: p. 10) and accordingly, we read and reread the data and reflected upon their meaning, while identifying patterns and themes (see also Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). After dividing data into meaningful themes, we used a large array of tables displayed on A2 sheets of paper using colourful codes; this arguably archaic process supported our visualization (Huberman and Miles, 1994) of a vast amount of data in single sites and allowed us to maintain connection to the whole (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). We looked at and discussed consumers’ accounts from different angles (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996), trying to see beyond the well-known criticisms of the discipline and looking for origins of such attitudes. Resistance emerged as a natural setting in which to situate participants’ views of marketing. Accordingly, we used the lenses provided by critical marketing scholarship and, in particular, by the body of knowledge on consumer resistance to make sense of participants’ accounts. The following discussion combines the findings from both sets of interviews and reveals the main themes that emerged.

### **Accounts of marketing and resistance**

Analysis of participants’ experiences suggests a tense and conflicting set of relations with the practice of marketing. Most participants conceive marketing as a dominant force, overly geared towards maximizing profit and satisfying interests of their own:

*“[Marketing is] Trying to get the customer to buy what they don’t want.”[Suzanne, 63 years old]*

*“It is a thing that is trying to get me to behave in a certain way or is trying to give me information to behave in a certain way. [...] That it’s an attempt to influence the way I behave, specifically with regards to what I purchase or what I want to buy. So it’s provision of information about a product or a service which I assume is in some way biased in order to influence me to behave in a certain way and to purchase a certain thing or a certain service I guess.” [Ella, 30 years old]*

As these accounts illustrate, participants situate the relation between consumers and marketing at the centre of their perceptions of the discipline. They see this as a tense dialectical relation through which marketing imposes itself on consumers. This is further demonstrated in the “first words” participants associated with marketing; along with the expected “advertising”, “promotions” or “sales”, many drew on words that evoke both marketing’s power (e.g. “money”, “profit”, “big businesses”, “big brands”) and its perceived intrusiveness (e.g. “inconvenience”, “aggressiveness”, “pushiness”, “annoyance” or “pressure”). In short, in describing marketing, our participants tended to offer an evaluative position towards it. In the following, we explore details of participants’ experiences with marketing that help us to appreciate these perceptions.

### *Marketing Hegemony: Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide*

Amongst our participants, there was an almost universal impression that marketing infringes upon their mental space to an extent that reduces their agency. This was manifested in participants’ discontentment about their interactions with marketing – which they conceived as both personal interactions via phone, internet and inter-personal

communications and impersonal practices such as advertisements and promotions. They described these as excessive, forceful and inescapable. Consider the following accounts:

*“Consumers cannot do anything about it because it’s always in your face. You turn on the radio; it’s there. You turn on the telly; it’s there. You turn on the computer; pop up 10 times and I’m closing ... didn’t I close that window just now? So the consumer doesn’t have a choice when it comes to listening you know [...] They advertise on the bus. You can’t close your eyes [...] It’s everywhere, even at your door... You can’t ignore it; it’s constant. So there is nothing you can do” [Ivy, 39 years old].*

*“They’re kind of always throwing all this stuff at you and I just record the adverts and skim past them mostly. [...] pushing in your face. Christmas is invasive you know, we have no choice, do we in the big campaigns; it’s just there on the boards and everything.” [Adele, 59 years old]*

These accounts construct marketing as pervasive and forceful and depict consumers as unable to escape the tentacles of marketing. For many of our participants, this is experienced as a “bombardment”; their common usage of this powerful metaphor helps to build the image of marketing as an “oppressor” in an unequal relationship with consumers:

*“I suppose it’s maybe sometimes the consumer doesn’t feel in control of what they’re about to buy, they’re being bombarded with kind of you need this and*

*you need that but they're not actually sure whether it's beneficial for them."*[Lily, 19 years old]

*"Especially these days, everything is kind of exploited to the hilt. [...] You know, when you have Mothers' Day now, you have Easter, you have Christmas, you have Fathers' Day and it's all... you are bombarded with information from marketing... things these days seem to be a bit more over-commercial and it's all about making as much money as possible... so like now you go... on the television but if you go on YouTube now, you get an advert, or if you get a DVD out of the shop, you put it on and there's an advert on... There's no way of escaping adverts; you are just bombarded [...] and then they try and get you to buy their product. And if you don't, they try and make you almost feel like an outsider, you know... Like with Sky TV for example you know, join in, to join in... you know, so you've got to be... part of the group, yes, exactly. It's very psychologically tilted there and it's making you feel if you don't join in, you're an outsider and you don't belong you know, it's very subtle."* [John, 54 years old]

This bombardment, as Lily and John articulate it, is disempowering. It confuses consumers and convinces them that they have to buy in order to "belong" or to fit in. Importantly, as John describes, it is increasingly difficult to evade the market. Moreover, it seems that not only can consumers not escape the market, but that the market seduces them and renders them unable to think for themselves:

*“...people tend to buy things that they really don’t need. How many pairs of shoes do you actually need? You’ve only got two feet ... (laughs) You can only wear them you know, two at a time really (laughs). But it’s because of marketing and the labels that you know, we tend to think that we want these things. [...] and that is what the marketing people want, it’s people who basically can’t think for themselves...” [Ivy, 39 years old].*

Other participants elaborated on the emotional impact of this “bombardment”:

*“I think a lot of people, especially kind of more westernised countries, there is a lot of marketing all the time. And you know, millions of visuals coming in every year. And so that can add stress to someone where you know, if they’re out taking a walk somewhere and they just want to enjoy it. And it could be an audio marketing piece in a grocery store and it’s like it can be jolting and ... it might not but it seems like some people get irritated from other ... the bombardment of advertising and marketing because I think they look at it as well this company’s making millions of dollars and they’re forcing this on me and I don’t want to participate.” [Carl, 41 years old]*

Marketing, then, is experienced as a powerful and inescapable force in consumers’ everyday lives. Moreover, as we can see in the extracts presented so far, it tends to be presented as a malevolent and imposing force that consumers must endure. It adds, as described in many participants’ accounts, “stress”, “irritation” and “confusion” to their marketplace experiences. Marketing is, in short, powerful and consumers present themselves as bound by it. It is a hegemonic power they cannot escape.

## **Everyday resisting strategies**

While participants overwhelmingly construct marketing as an oppressive force which denies them agency, they simultaneously and spontaneously described several ways in which they believed themselves to have outwitted it. In other words, they presented themselves as being both market-bound and autonomous. Analysis of data unveils several strategies employed by participants to resist marketing. As we will see, they often attempt to “beat” marketing and reclaim agency from marketing institutions. In other cases, resistance comes in a burst of frustration in which consumers resist to withdraw from an unwanted relationship with marketing. In such cases, they often still feel thwarted and overpowered after resisting. Participants further resist in more common, and less noticeable, ways to find spaces hidden from marketing.

### *Beating Marketing: Resistance as empowering*

For many of our participants, becoming wiser and more discerning was a preferred method of resistance. Although they do not go to the extents described by Holt’s (2002) reflexive resistant participant (Ozanne & Murray, 1995; Kozinets & Handelman, 2004), many described a cynical attitude towards marketing. Noncompliance with the rules of the opponent (even if they are otherwise favourable) is a way of asserting their own sovereignty in interactions with marketing systems. Ironically, though, this involves learning to understand marketing and to develop a reflective position on marketing practices:

*“...probably in the last three or four years I’ve sort of looked at the prices more and tried to suss out whether it would be cheaper to buy two or a bigger pack or [...] the Activia yoghurts and I know it’s marketing and you can buy two lots of four cheaper than you can buy a pack of eight which is on offer and that really bugs me... And I know it’s marketing, ‘Oh look, special offer £3.00’ and then you work out how much you can get two lots of four for and it’s £2.99. And I know it’s only a penny but I know they’re trying to pull the wool over my eyes and that is quite annoying (laughs).” [Stephanie, 50 years old]*

*“I always try really hard not to buy things when they’re in a special place (laughs), I go and find it on the shelves. I know that’s silly but then I just ... I feel more like it’s me making my own choice [...] Rather than being told ‘Look, this is what you want, this is super special’.... [Joanne, 27 years old]*

Stephanie sees marketing as a set of deceitful practices which attempt to snare her. Importantly, however, she constructs herself as a savvy consumer who avoids temptation and evades being duped. Even though the market value of her savings may be low, she scores important points in this symbolic war. Similarly, Joanne is keen to maintain at least a semblance that she is making her own choices. She works “really hard” to find “special” places rather than following the directions to “more-marketed” locations in the retail setting. Although Joanne’s behaviour demands more effort from her for an equal benefit (which is probably why she describes it as “silly”), it still gives her a sense of empowerment and satisfaction.



Some participants are very reflexive about the relationship between consumers and the market and suggest that consumers are only victims if they allow themselves to be. Jana's account, below, portrays her reflective behaviour at variance with that of a generation "blind[ed]" by marketing, media and brands; rather than using social media to post "new shoes and stuff like that", she tries to raise awareness of issues of market power:

*"What we need to do is raise awareness. [...] I once saw an advertisement about how everything is being sold to us [...] I try, from my own very, very limited way, limited influence, from my Facebook, I put these things up and let my friends know about them... And I keep making myself aware and telling people, instead of just you know, telling them I got new shoes or stuff like that, I tell them about these things... And make everyone aware, like cleans this whole generation, this blind generation by making them aware of what they're doing [...] nobody is thinking of what do we actually need; no-one, because the consumer is blinded by the media [...] Technology and marketing and awareness of how the human mind works are all working together to kind of make us go forward into this like really fast-forward point where nobody thinks anymore... Nobody stops and goes like 'What am I doing with my life? Why am I doing this? Why am I buying all this?' And 'No, I don't need this, I don't need the TV, I don't need that, I don't need these brands, I don't need to wear something that has Gucci and Prada on it'. Some people are dying of hunger and they don't have marketing, all they want is just the basic needs. Look at them and learn from them. [Jana, 23 years old]*

Jana suggests there is a moral imperative to educate others about marketing. Ironically, Jana's behaviour arguably grants more visibility to marketing (e.g. by diffusing marketing-related material on Facebook) but it also serves to raise her above marketing and a generation "blinded" by it. In the following extracts, we see other consumers boast of their ability to filter out the influence of marketing by contrasting their consumer behaviours with others, who they describe as being "silly", "weak" and "victims" of "media frenzy":

*"If you want to buy a product you'll buy it....And you'll buy that whether you've had whole media frenzy surrounding it or not. If I don't like something and there's a huge media frenzy about it, doesn't mean I'll then go out and buy it. That kind of viewpoint describes people as weak. ... Consumers are only victims when they let themselves be. If people willy-nilly will put their email address and their phone number on everything with no thought of themselves and then complain that they're being bombarded with products, to a certain extent it's your own fault if you're in that situation" [Tim, 24 years old]*

*"I don't think anybody should really buy a product solely on marketing, on the advert. I think they should research anything, you know. I mean obviously if you're talking about you know, a motor car or something that costs a lot of money, then obviously research it and reading reviews and newspaper reviews and customer reviews you know, that's more important. So to me, if you buy something that is quite valuable on the basis of an advert, then really you can't blame the advert, that's your own personal silliness." [Ronnie, 51 years old]*

In this, we see that these participants not only use their claimed resistance as a tool for identity construction (“I versus them”, Cherrier et al., 2011: 1761) but do so with reference to an imagined vision of marketing as cultural engineering. Both Tim and Ronnie and, indeed, many of our participants subscribe to the principle of *caveat emptor* and rely on a shared “common sense understanding” (Garfinkel, 1967) of marketing as untrustworthy. Thus, those that fall in its traps somehow deserve it.

For some participants, the intrusiveness of marketing made them justified in resisting it by means that they would usually consider immoral, such as by lying, mocking or otherwise deceiving. Ivy, below, laughs at her excuses to hang up on cold callers:

*“On the phone, it’s hard to get them off, you have to be ... you know, they’re like ... that’s the most annoying one, people calling up and ‘Would you like ...?’ and I’m like ‘No I’ve got one, thank you’. Yeah (laughs). It’s ‘The stove is ... the house is burning down, I have to go’, you know.... ‘The baby is crying’. So those phone ones they’re very annoying because you’re not ... you know, I don’t want to be bombarded with sales right now.” [Ivy, 39 years old].*

Ivy expresses a degree of pride and amusement in her ingenuity at tricking call-centre operatives into accepting the end of the call and enjoys the opportunity to boast about it. We may wonder exactly why this should be, when saying straightforwardly she was not interested or simply hanging up would have been equally effective. It seems reasonable to infer that Ivy is engaging in a form of identity construction, casting herself as canny and able to evade the intrusion of marketing into her life. In a similar vein, Jillian boasts about wasting the time of sales people:

*“I must be honest I play a game of I’m doing market research for whatever and if they’re really pushy they say ‘Windows?’ and I say ‘No, we’ve got windows’, ‘Well fascia boards?’ ‘No, we’ve had that’. ‘Conservatory?’ And I finally say ‘But I rent the house’. ‘I’m sorry’ (laughs)” (Jillian, 56 years old)*

By castigating marketers for being so forceful Ivy and Jillian gain a sense that they have some agency while also affirming the power of marketing. In these cases, their tricks in dealing with marketing validate it by helping them conceive of it as so a powerful force that small victories are exceptional and to be celebrated. Casting the outwitting of a call-centre worker in this light allows Ivy and Jillian to broadly submit to, perhaps even welcome, the discipline’s cultural power while still viewing themselves as properly concerned with their personal autonomy.

#### *Ditching Marketing: Exhausting Resistance*

Across many accounts, resistance emerges as a complicated labour, often being a “last ditch” attempt for participants to regain some control from their interactions with marketing. The actions of some companies have pushed participants too far. Consider Melanie’s account below:

*“It was with a charity actually. I used to have a direct debit to a charity and I stopped it but then I ... well while I had the direct debit, I kept getting calls asking me to increase the direct debit every month. And in the end I stopped the direct debit and I still got calls saying ‘Thank you for your support for this charity, we really welcome it, we understand that you can’t ... you’re not in a*

*position to ... but could you take up this direct debit again?', and that was quite aggressive. And I think coming from a charity as well, you feel even more... And to the point where I said that I felt that they were actually hassling me and said could they please stop phoning me" [Melanie, 55 years old]*

More than an imposing opponent, marketing is portrayed here as an inconvenient and exhausting adversary that needs to be terminated. Such forms of resistance do not come easily; they are often visible and emotional, emerging finally as an ultimate reaction to a continued oppression. Rather than feeling empowered, as with the previously mentioned forms of resistance, many participants experience enhanced tension (e.g. many describe feeling "intimidated", "pressured", "frustrated", "angry") when they feel compelled to resist. Indeed, several acknowledged that in resisting what they perceived to be the negative effects of marketing, they suffer in other ways:

*"I just wanted to sort of pick one [mobile phone] and just decide what I want to do and they're all promoting deals and stuff and trying to persuade you and sometimes I think they take that side too far. And they do try and manipulate you into sort of signing contracts and stuff which I may not want to... Yeah, I felt angry and frustrated as well because I just wanted to go in there, I knew what I wanted and I felt like I had to end up ... well I did end up arguing with the salesperson to just say 'Look, no, I just want this [...] it's almost like they invade your kind of personal space.'" [Maria, 31 years old]*

*"I didn't like their attitude, I didn't like their pushiness you know, they're actually asking questions about ... started asking who you was with and I said*

*'Well I don't really want to divulge that; I'm happy with the [energy] company I am with'. And he got quite irate and in the end I slammed the phone down on him because he was rude [...] I felt angry... Of course you don't want to be doing that unless you really need... I didn't like to do that you know, I'd already explained that I didn't want to move and I didn't want to discuss who was my provider and it was constantly all the time, 'Well who are you with? Who are you with?', 'That's my business, my personal business'.* [Annie, 41 years old]

Maria explains how she “just wanted” to have agency in choosing a mobile phone (she knew what she “wanted”) and “ended up” having to “argue with a salesperson” to avoid further pressure being exerted on her. This was experienced as a violation of Maria’s personal space that caused her distress. Similarly, Annie’s outburst on “slam[ing] the phone” caused her increased stress. Likewise, to show their discontentment with the unequal power relation between themselves and marketing – as they conceive it - some participants chose to terminate relationships that may have been otherwise beneficial to them. Engaging in “intentional non-consumption” (Cherrier et al., 2011; Nixon and Gabriel, 2016) as a way of showing their resentment with and resistance to a company’s policies or insistency is a form of resistance that may involve sacrifice, as Dhillon’s account suggests:

*“I'm famous or infamous for boycotting things, which make it very difficult for some of my friends to socialise with me because... I refuse to go into this coffee shop or you know, buy a product from this company or you know, buy this soft drink or whatever because I have some issues with some of these companies. [...] Yeah, another one that comes to mind is kind of cold calls from say people*

*advertising or marketing broadband for instance. There is a time we got so many that I vowed never to take broadband out from them, even if they are the cheaper provider because I don't want it...I'd rather pay a bit more to get some company that doesn't harass its potential customers." [Dhillon, 35 years old]*

Rather than actively seeking to undermine marketing, these participants use the power they possess as consumers to resist marketing by removing themselves from a marketplace or market interaction. This, though, is done at their expense. Refusing to go into a coffee shop, may mean giving up opportunities to socialise. Equally, in refusing to communicate with a firm because of its marketing, Dhillon acknowledges that he may suffer economically.

That this kind of resistance does not produce the same feelings of satisfaction as more consciously chosen acts of resistance is not surprising. As with Nixon and Gabriel's (2016) participants, our informants disengage with marketing as a result of interactions that cause them to feel saturated, revolted or even violated. Far from feeling that they have scored a small victory these participants feel defeated and emotionally strained. Their accounts are often reminiscent of someone who has been roused to anger by a schoolyard bully or online troll; they feel that by drawing a response their tormenter has won.

#### *Hiding from Marketing: Quiet Resistance*

To avoid confrontation, consumers may find less exposed ways of resistance by means of ignoring or avoiding manifestations of marketing. Participants outline a number of mechanisms by which they quietly block marketing messages. This included simple

strategies like: “leaving the room and putting the kettle on” (Sarah, 51 years old) or “muting the TV” (Sam, 43 years old) during commercial breaks, “not answering” the door (Charlie, 32 years old), “walk[ing] sideways” and avoiding “eye contact” on the street (Jillian, 56 years old), “faze [sic] webpage advertising out” (David, 47 years old), “deleting” unsolicited emails without reading them (Joanne, 27 years old), or “ignoring” advertisements in the mail (Antonia, 51 years old). These are examples of “ad avoidance strategies” to cope with the “information saturation and advertising clutter” that overwhelms them (Rumbo, 2002: p. 131). As Sofia and Michael explain:

*“I think it’s the saturation of it and the constant barrage of wherever you go, on the side of buses, on the television, in magazines, it’s everywhere. And I think people become a little bit jaded with it... And just try to block it out.” [Sofia, 53 years old]*

*“I sometimes consciously, if I’m somewhere with a lot of shops about, a lot of... usually busy as well, places where there are lots of retail opportunities, there’s also lot of advertising, I do feel a bit crowded by it... I consciously shift my attention, deliberately to other things, like breathing... or the fine detail of... like textures of walls, if there’s stone walls, or if there are any trees about, look closely at... pay precise attention to small things in order not to be overwhelmed by the commercial stuff trying to get my attention” [Michael, 30 years old]*

While Sofia explains the need for individuals to “block out” marketing’s presence, Michael delivers a detailed account of how he sometimes does this. By mindfully shifting his attention away from marketing’s manifestations, he engages in an invisible



and private form of resistance that grants him some serenity. In contrast, Jana, below, uses negative affirmations to achieve the same control:

*“All I see on Facebook ... I go on Facebook and I see advertisements and I’ll be like ... How does this appear here? Just because I did a search on this, now I have this (laughs)... And it tells me that I want these shoes and I really need them because they’re on a discount. And you know what, I don’t [...] I cannot afford this. I keep telling myself ‘I cannot afford this, I need to pay for something more important’. That’s the only way I can survive it because otherwise you get this urgency, oh God, it’s going to ...” [Jana, 23 years old]*

## **Discussion**

Based on the understanding of resistance as a multi-level phenomenon dependent on particular conceptions of power and typologies of behaviour, we examined how consumers make sense of marketing and relate to it. We can appreciate how consumers present marketing power in a variety of ways. Indeed, this is not only the case across participants’ accounts but also within them. That is to say, that while participants overwhelmingly portrayed marketing as an oppressive force that worked against their interests, they also gave accounts of opposing it.

Thus, participants often present marketing as the dominant, oppressive and inescapable force that is associated with a hegemonic account of power. In keeping with this view, we find accounts of acquiescence (e.g. “we have no choice do we”) and of frustrated, almost hopeless lashing out at marketers. Yet, at the same time, many also describe ways in which they refuse to be downtrodden. Here we see participants apparently adopting a

relational view of power and resistance: denying power to marketing by refusing to submit. That is to say, marketing has a bounded power that consumers can rise above – if only they can gain the knowledge and strength to do so. Resistance “is possible if one develops a reflexive distance from the marketing code” and is able “to disentangle the marketer’s artifice from the value in use of marketer-supplied resources” (Arnould, 2007: p. 142). Thus, consumers actively seek to learn marketing tricks and devise tactics to avoid them. They find or create spaces hidden within marketplaces and market relations that allow them to escape marketing. Stephanie, for example, investigates the misleading nature of promotional offers, while Michael uses mindfulness to block out marketing. In so doing, though, and in celebrating their small victories against marketing, consumers may be interpreted as constructing and reinforcing the power of marketing around them. We also see consumers describing how their attempts to resist marketing lead to further marketing. Jana’s resisting buying is an example here.

In other accounts, consumers’ resistance is a form of play with marketing: Ivy’s and Jillian’s gleeful accounts of their conversational “move[s] and counter-move[s]” (Huizinga, 1955; Rodriguez, 2006) for outwitting cold callers, for example. Insofar as participants enjoy this playful pushing against the boundaries of marketing’s influence, this is in keeping with the autonomous view of power and resistance. It can be seen as analogous to a child’s acting out to provoke an *assertion* of parental authority. Even if the child eventually conforms, such acts remind everyone of the limits of parental power. Thus, it makes sense to hear participants report that marketers are capable of bombarding them at the same time as they describe how they toy with them. So, Ivy and Jillian allow marketers in. They answer the phone and speak to them. But they do so on their own terms; they lie and joke with them.

Moreover, by their tricks, cunning or boasting these and other participants have the opportunity to construct their identities as witty, wise or reflective, resistant consumers in contrast to the mainstream ones. Thus, at the same time they resist marketing's power, they also welcome it as something against which to define themselves.

To relate this study to wider discussions of consumer resistance and the dark side of marketing, we return to Garfinkel's (1967) ideas about common understanding or social construction of concepts and categories. While the marketing concept was left unexplained by the interviewer, participants both reflected and reconstructed an image of marketing from the wider culture of consumption. They described marketing as both a set of practices and interactions. But, in most cases, they presented these in negative terms, as if this was what was expected (e.g. "well, you know... *'marketing bullshit' comes together as a phrase quite naturally*" [Michael, 30 years old]. "Isn't that the idea though? Aren't they trying to manipulate? Isn't that the whole point?" [Julie, 45 years old]). In so doing, they reinforced the negative social representation of marketing with negative signifiers in the same way as The Burning Man's festival goers did (Kozinets, 2002). Where we have used "marketing" in the interpretation of the data, we have not defined the term precisely, so as to reflect the participant's views. Whether this negative view primed participants to focus on their resistance is not a question we can answer. We can, though, speculate that marketers could reduce everyday resistance if they did a better job of marketing "marketing". This relates back to Cluley's (2016) comparisons of the official definitions of marketing offered in marketing education and practice with cultural representations (see also Heath and Chatzidakis, 2012).

We can also return to the dominant trends in the consumer resistance literature. As we have seen, this literature tends to focus on episodic resistance – typically coordinated by collective movements (e.g. Kozinets, 2002; Kozinets and Handelman, 2004). Such resistance can be criticised for its symbolic nature. From a transformational perspective, we can question whether overt but occasional displays of resistance are doomed to fail precisely because of their momentary nature and the ease at which marketing power can recognise and re-appropriate them. The everyday resistance documented here offers a different perspective on this tension. Here, resistance is more elusive and invisible. This makes it harder for it to be appropriated. But, from a transformational perspective, we might wonder whether it is more concerned with coping than change. As such, it may represent a form of consumer resignation rather than emancipatory potential (Adorno, 1978). Equally, it could be criticised as an individualised mechanism for dealing with a cultural problem. In this sense, resistance is not only against the dominant or oppressive force of marketing but also against oneself (or others) for succumbing to them. By using marketing as a “scapegoat” (Scott and Lyman, 1968) or “super ego” (Cluley, 2014), consumers exculpate their behaviour as the only possible response to the behaviour of the oppressor. This suggests that a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between marketing and consumers that goes behind the “moments of obvious conflict between producers and consumers” (Denegri-Knott et al., 2006: p. 956) may be needed to see how conflict is purposefully constructed by consumers who want to beat, need to cope or choose to hide from marketing.

## **Conclusion**

This study extends discussions of consumer resistance to include everyday and less visible forms of consumers' responses to the perceived dominance of marketing forces. We identified three different views of the relationship between resistance and power – hegemonic, relational and autonomous – and associated them with consumers' accounts of their interactions with marketing. Underlying these forms of resistance is the participants' construction of marketing as an oppressive force which they wish to rise above, reclaim agency from or simply hide from. Interestingly, such a construction confers some benefits to consumers. It allows them to cast themselves as clever, savvy or canny individuals who are able to outsmart the powerful marketing machine that less enlightened others (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004) are unable to resist. At other times this conceptualization may serve participants to justify their own engagement with consumption, by portraying themselves as victims of the system (see also Heath & Heath, 2016) with no other option but to join in. On other occasions however, consumers may feel exhausted, defeated and less than empowered, even after resisting.

Significantly, there is an overarching consensus that marketing speaks too loudly, impinging on times and spaces where it is inappropriate. Participants' discourses in themselves constituted a form of resistance to this noise; by voicing publicly and often eagerly their complaints to someone who was going to disseminate them, participants' accounts became “discourses of power” (Thompson, 2004: p. 170) used to contest the discipline's dominant discourses, to tell “marketing” off.

This discussion contributes to critical marketing scholarship in various ways. Firstly, looking at consumers' views of, and experiences with, marketing as forms of resistance, illuminates the turbulent relationships between consumers and marketing. In particular,

by giving voice to those otherwise excluded (Scott, 2007) and examining their everyday resisting acts, we shed light onto “new forms of cultural criticism” used to contest “the powerful subjectivizing processes of contemporary marketing discourse” (Brownlie & Hewer, 2007: p. 47). Indeed, while our participants seem to agree with the marketing discourse on the importance it gives to the “consumers-marketing” relationship, they challenge this discourse in the ways in which it represents the balance of power of such relationships. Thus, defying the rhetoric of customer centrality (see also Marion, 2007; Heath and Heath, 2008), or mutual satisfaction (Baker, 2010), participants construct this relationship as fundamentally asymmetrical in favour of marketing. To try to reclaim power, our data reveals, they resist in many mundane, more or less quiet or invisible, witty, cunning or emotionally-charged ways. This analysis allows us to reach a more nuanced understanding of consumers’ resistance, which is not always loud, visible or collective (e.g. Kozinets, 2002) but is still experienced as a conscious opposition to what is seen as an overly imposing force of marketing.

This line of enquiry could be further explored, in particular within transformative consumer studies directed at understanding how these forms of resistance impact on individuals’ well-being. For practice, this study sends a clear message that consumers are saturated and wary of marketing. This is not to say that practitioners should use this knowledge to exploit consumers’ resistance in favourable ways to their businesses. It rather invites them to listen to consumers’ resistance to being marketed to excessively.

We repeat the question posed by Sheth and Sisodia: “Must marketing always elicit negative sentiments? Is there something intrinsic to marketing that regardless of how hard we try, consumers are going to resist it?” (2006: p. 9). Perhaps there is. Marketing is a

means by which institutions exercise power and the *hegemonic*, *relational* and *autonomous* views all agree that where there is power there will be resistance. Furthermore, marketing would remain powerful and therefore subject to resistance even if practice were reformed to show greater respect for consumers' boundaries. That some resistance may be inevitable regardless of how marketing is practiced cannot, however, be a reason to ignore consumers' anger at the discipline. If marketing institutions exercised their power in ways that were more acceptable to consumers, the resistance would be less intense and less damaging to them. In any case, if marketers sincerely believe that they are in the business of serving consumers' needs they must try to reform practices against which those consumers are willing to struggle.

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## Appendix

Table 1: Table of Participants

Participant	Name	Gender	Age	Family Status	Occupation
1.1	Michael	Male	30	Married, 1 child	Mathematician
1.2	Lottie	Female	25	Partner	Teaching Assistant
1.3	Suzanne	Female	63	Married, 2 children	Retired
1.4	Charlotte	Female	31	Partner	Psychologist
1.5	Ella	Female	30	Partner	Researcher
1.6	Saadi	Male	23	Single	Student
1.7	Abbad	Male	40	Married, 2 children	Physician
1.8	Antonia	Female	51	Married, 1 child	Secretary
1.9	Stephanie	Female	50	Married	Administrator
1.10	Joanne	Female	27	Partner, 1 child	City Librarian Assistant
1.11	Ronnie	Male	51	Married	Administrator
1.12	Brian	Male	29	Single	Lecturer
1.13	Chandler	Male	26	Married, 1 child	Information Technology Support
1.14	Leo	Male	23	Single	Researcher
1.15	Ivy	Female	39	Married, 1 child	Cleaner
1.16	Abigail	Female	30	Married	Researcher
1.17	Sarah	Female	51	Married, 1 child	Administrative
1.18	Sam	Female	43	Married, 2 children	Lecturer
1.19	Jillian	Female	56	Married, 2 children	Receptionist
2.1	Dhillon	Male	35	Partner	Professor
2.2	Layla	Female	51	Separated, 2 children	Catering Assistant
2.3	Julie	Female	45	Married, 4 children	Counsellor
2.4	Annie	Female	41	Married, 2 children	Catering Assistant
2.5	Erica	Female	50	Married, 3 children	Receptionist
2.6	Sharon	Female	31	Single	Student
2.7	Gerald	Male	41	Single	Book shop assistant
2.8	Dennis	Male	19	Single	Student
2.9	Ryan	Male	23	Single	Student
2.10	Phillip	Male	32	Partner	Lecturer
2.11	Gabriella	Female	34	Married, 1 child	Unemployed
2.12	Rose	Female	54	Married	City Librarian
2.13	Tessa	Female	45	Married, with children	Union Shop assistant
2.14	Charlie	Male	32	Single, 2 children	Information Technology Support
2.15	Jerome	Male	41	Single	Union Shop assistant



2.16	Tim	Male	24	Single	Information Technology Support
2.17	Maria	Female	31	Single	Receptionist
2.18	David	Male	47	Married, 2 children	Mathematician
2.19	Jason	Male	45	Married	School teacher
2.20	Pamela	Female	34	Single	Production coordinator
2.21	Eve	Female	29	Married, 1 child	Artist
2.22	Victoria	Female	46	Married, 2 children	City Librarian
2.23	John	Male	54	Single	Musician
2.24	Mac	Male	27	Single	Unemployed
2.25	Kathie	Female	31	In a relationship	Administrative Assistant
2.26	Alina	Woman	43	Single	Administrative
2.27	Stephanie	Female	62	Single	Dress machinist/Care worker
2.28	Ken	Male	49	Married, 3 children	Carer
2.29	Richard	Male	21	In a relationship	Student
2.30	Melanie	Female	55	Marries with children	Student Support Service
2.31	Sofia	Female	53	Married with children	PhD student
2.32	George	Male	22	Single	Student
2.33	Rahul	Male	27	Single	PG student
2.34	Juliana	Female	30	Single, 2 children	Unemployed
2.35	Jake	Male	30	Single	Architect
2.36	Lily	Female	19	Single	Student
2.37	Anne	Female	19	Single	Student
2.38	Simon	Male	52	Partner	Information Technology (Manager)
2.39	Alfie	Male	21	Single	Student
2.40	Abigail	Female	30	Single	Student
2.41	Francis	Male	22	In a relationship	Student
2.42	Carl	Male	41	Married	Artist
2.43	Anita	Female	35	Married	PhD Student
2.44	Venita	Female	27	In a relationship	Unknown
2.45	Isabel	Female	25	Single	Student
2.46	Susan	Female	20	Single	Student
2.47	Tyles	Male	18	Single	Student
2.48	Robyn	Female	18	In a relationship	Student
2.49	Luca	Male	23		PhD Student
2.50	Steve	Male	38	Partner, 3 children	Cooking Team Leader
2.51	Walton	Male	47	Married, 1 child	Unemployed
2.52	Louisa	Female	34	Married, 2 children	PG student
2.53	Adele	Female	59	Married, 2 children	Psychotherapist

2.54	Sharad	Male	71	Married with children	Jain cleric
2.55	Lewis	Male	23	Single	Student
2.56	Max	Male	41	Single	Psychotherapist
2.57	Jana	Female	23	Single	Occupational psychologist
2.58	Lila	Female	31	Divorced	Research fellow
2.59	Rod	Male	18	Single	Student