Recognising the role marketing has in the relationship between consumption and the environment, recent work within the field of marketing has called for a transformation of marketing strategies, which incorporates sustainability at its core. Thus, this research moves away from traditional marketing theories and uses evolutionary psychology, which seeks to provide a unifying framework for understanding behaviour, to examine alternative methods for encouraging sustainable or pro-environmental behaviours. Within the unifying framework of evolutionary psychology, studies based upon the mid-level theory of a universal desire for status demonstrate that altruistically motivated behaviour, such as pro-environmental behaviour may be an effective strategy for increasing status within a peer group (Griskevicius et al, 2010; Cheng et al, 2013). Further empirical evidence demonstrates that there are two main strategies for increasing status, where an array of available tactics will result in either a Dominance or Prestigious status (Kyl-Heku
and Buss, 1996; Hardy and Van Vugt, 2006; Greengross and Miller, 2008).

This research aims to build upon the existing evolutionary psychology theory of status by exploring how individuals use tactics identified through cost signalling theory, such as, pro-environmental behaviour, humour, or time in order to gain social status within a peer group. This research explores how the universal desire for status, according to evolutionary psychology, may be used to influence consumption via either a Dominance strategy for status or a Prestige strategy for status. The study uses an online ethnography to identify and evaluate the causal mechanisms of status strategies, where pro-environmental behaviour, humour, artistic talent and time serve as the underlying tactics for either a Dominance or Prestige strategy for status. The online community observed is called Litterati, where individuals post pictures via Instagram of litter they collect. Analysis of the data collected link observed patterns and causal relationships to higher-level evolutionary theory, such as the universal desire to increase status and cost signalling theory.

Considering the methodological implications by adopting a two-strategy approach to hierarchy negotiation discussed by Hawley (2011) and in the integration of individual, social and environmental factors within the model a mixed method approach is considered most appropriate. Taking a mixed methods approach to behavioural studies allows for a deeper understanding of the behaviour in question, a mutual goal of both critical realism and evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary psychology and critical realism tend to converge in a mutual focus on explaining and understanding why behaviours occur the way that they do (Johnston and Smith, 2014). However, critical realism seeks to provide a multi-dimensional explanation of an observed event
or experience with the surrounding social structures. Whereas evolutionary psychology aims to go beyond social structures to examine the underlying causes of an observed experience or event as a function of the brain. Thus, in an effort to better understand the relationship between strategies for status, competitive constructs and consumption, this research combines the critical realism ontology with evolutionary psychology epistemology. Applying the critical realist ontology to the evolutionary psychology epistemology ensure greater validity to testing the proposed model within the larger social science domain. Employing these perspectives within an ethnographic study, further justifies a reflexive interpretation of the observed experiences.

Preliminary observations and analysis reveal links to categories of data established *a priori*. Further that, emerging themes related not only to cost signalling theory, but also reciprocal altruism (Trivers, 1971). Observed commentary within the Litterati community indicates the visual representation of branded goods as litter results in a negative relationship between the consumer, product and company. By examining the relationships and the measuring the influence of social, individual and environmental conditions one may be able to not only predict which strategy an individual will choose, but it may help to identify key interventions for encouraging altruistic behaviours such as pro-environmental behaviour. Wider implications of this research not only contribute to evolutionary theory, but also explore the relationship between consumer, product and producer.