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The new focus on environmental issues in the past decade has resulted in the Green Consumption Movement. In an effort to assist the public in the movement, companies have started offering green alternatives to many products. However, as the notion of "being green" becomes more popular, more companies are realizing that being "green" makes green. This thesis entails an ethnographic exploration of how people who are environmentally committed in Burlington, VT make sense of their consumption patterns, in the outdoor gear industry. It also examines how the outdoor gear industry creates needs and desires to get even more environmentally conscious to buy more.

Green consumerism seeks to address an issue of critical importance, which is to lessen the environmental consequences of contemporary consumption patterns. Yet as long as goods are made by unsustainably extracting resources from the natural environment, the result is more environmental problems. Consequently, this makes it hard to believe that green consumerism is the answer. The significance of this research is that it explores ethnographically how well environmentally committed consumers understand this contradiction and the meanings and strategies they employ to overcome it. Furthermore, it highlights the powerful role that green marketing, advertising, and retail industries play in cultivating desires to consume in such ways that can mask the environmental consequences of the consumption they promote.

As the research is still being analyzed I have yet come to any definite conclusions. However, I believe that the implications of my answer will be significant enough to make people rethink their consumption patterns. It may make so-called "green businesses" change their ways in order to actually become green businesses. Since the thesis pertains exclusively to the outdoor gear industry, I would say that my results would be specific to that industry, yet possibly generalizable to companies offering green alternatives.