Living the Good Life on Instagram
An exploration of lay understandings of what it means to live well

Anastasia Loukianov[1], Kate Burningham[1] & Tim Jackson[1]

[1]University of Surrey (UK), Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity (CUSP), UK

Abstract

While the consumerist approach to what living well can mean permeates traditional media, the extent to which it appears in people's own depictions of the good life is unclear. As the unsustainability of the consumerist approach is increasingly evidenced, both in terms of environmental and social impacts, looking into which understandings of the good life resonate with people becomes essential. This article uses a sample of posts tagged #goodlife and variants originally collected in 2014-2015 on Instagram (a popular image sharing platform) to explore which understandings of the good life can be found on the platform. Using multimodal discourse analysis, it highlights two different user-generated understandings of the good life: 'working on future goals' and 'appreciating the present moment'. We argue that neither approach is directly or necessarily congruent with the traditional consumer good life. Yet their shared photographic codes with advertisements can contribute to their framing into the consumer good life. Additionally, the temporalities afforded by the platform and currently in place through social conventions may affect the type of narratives that are mediated. While the understandings derived from the analysis are not straightforward reflections of people's beliefs about the meaning of the good life, they constitute conversations that at once inform, and are informed by, users' beliefs about living well. The popularity of the platform makes these conversations crucial for anyone interested in desired lifestyles and their sustainability.

Keywords: good life, multimodality, consumerism, sustainable wellbeing, Instagram

Introduction

In postmodern societies, Sointu argues (2005), wellbeing has come to be understood as a pluralistic term, one that each individual is urged to define for him or herself. In this project however, the possibilities are not endless (Giddens, 1991). The search for personal definitions is supported by shared symbolic resources such as models, images, and symbols, available within particular socio-cultural and historical contexts (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Traditionally, while individuals played a role in the creation, maintenance, and modification of such resources, they had little power in their widespread circulation. But the democratisation of the possibility to craft wide-reaching images of the good life through the emergence of image-sharing social media platforms suggests that user-generated images of the good life

are likely to become a major force in what Goldhaber (1997) calls the attention economy and a new shared resource for personal meaning creation. Social media platforms can be understood in light of Barnett's (2014) three dimensions of public action (objects, subjects, and mediums), as new mediums through which moral understandings of living well that underpin consumer ethics are collectively articulated. We aim to contribute to this journal by exploring such articulations on one such medium, Instagram. Widely circulated user-generated images of the good life can potentially have tremendous impact on common ideas of the good life and are necessarily related to questions of environmental impacts and social justice. We analyse 150 Instagram posts tagged #goodlife to explore lay understandings of what it means to live well.

Instagram as a potential shared resource of understandings of the good life

When talking about a 'good life', we are referring to the social norms and shared ideals that circulate about what living well can mean, rather than to objective conditions of human flourishing. While understandings of the good life are not arbitrary chimeras, they do not necessarily reflect what it is to be well for any given person. In this, they can differ from Aristotelian virtue ethics that necessarily forge a link between the kind of life that we should aspire to and human flourishing (Hursthouse, 1991). Good life narratives are sociocultural stories that give directives regarding what particular people should strive to be and provide ways of living to aspire to. But as Kasser (2003) explains in relation to consumerism, good life narratives do not necessarily convey the conditions of human flourishing. In fact, Hoffman (2009: 420) argues that while sociocultural narratives are shared, they are not equally created by all and disguise ideologies which 'empower some, disenfranchise others, and extract the labour of some for the benefit of others'. While, with Rose (2014), we see individuals as competent in their use of the symbolism and communicative power of various sociocultural resources, we note with Zigon (2014) that histories of power relationships both shape and limit the availability of such resources.

In western societies today the dominant narrative of the good life is that promoted by consumerism. Dittmar (2007) characterises the consumerist good life as one focused on perfect beauty and material luxuries. To this we would add, in line with current consumerist pursuits (Hall, 2011), the consumption of intangibles such as luxury travel. Advertising images typically depict an ideal self, presenting a picture of the way we would like to see ourselves and others to see us (Belk & Pollay, 1987). They operate by linking the act of shopping to the transformation of the self: choosing a product is reinventing your life (Berger, 1972). With Barnett *et al.* (2005), we agree that rather than a separate sphere of life, consumption is part of multiple undertakings. Hence, when we talk about consumerism, we refer to the specific narrative, premised on ever growing consumption of material and 'intangible' goods, that holds that acquiring the latest goods will make us as happy, successful, and beautiful, as the people in the ad (Dittmar, 2007). While advertising images do not dictate ways of living, they both inform and reflect lifestyles. However, the dominant consumerist approach to the good life has come under increasing criticism from scholars such as Jackson (2017), who denounce its impact both

on human societies and on the planet, arguing instead for understandings of what it means to live well within planetary limits.

The popularity of social media indicates that it could constitute a new shared resource of symbolism of the good life. The increased participation in digital visual culture (Kress, 2010), suggests that understandings of the good life are likely to be created, maintained, modified, and broadcasted through online visual means. In the recent decades, the conditions of production of wide-reaching images have changed. While photography became a favoured activity for many everyday enthusiasts in the late nineteenth century, the sharing of photographs was typically limited to a small circle of friends and relatives. Today popular platforms enable users to share photographs and videos with millions of others, considerably widening the audience of any given image. For Kress (2010), this is characteristic of a convergence culture where the boundary between media producers and consumers is blurred. This is particularly significant in information-rich societies, where attention is a scarce and valuable resource that confers both wealth and power, creating an attention economy (Goldhaber, 1997). As user-generated images grow widely available, they become a major force in the struggle for attention, potentially competing with consumerist advertisements. This is of importance for consumption ethics scholars, if with Barnett *et al.* (2005) they believe that consumer ethics should be open to bottom-up approaches.

Among image-sharing social media platforms, Instagram boasts over a billion users (Statista, 2017) and has been qualified as 'an image machine that captures and calibrates attention' (Carah & Shaul, 2016: 69). Created in 2010 by Systrom and Krieger, Instagram allows users to post photographs and videos accompanied by captions and hashtags and to engage with other users' content. Hashtags make content searchable and enter it into the attention economy and make posts visible to others (Marwick, 2015). Instagram's recent introduction of a feature enabling users to directly follow hashtags further simplifies engagement in specific conversations and with specialised audiences. Arguably, the posts tagged #goodlife (and variants) contribute to an ongoing, Instagram-mediated, understanding of what it means to live well.

While Instagram is a fruitful site of exploration into desired lifestyles and imagery of the good life, a multiplicity of factors shapes these. The social conventions that prevail on the platform, its particular user demographics, and the design of the platform itself, create narratives of the good life that are filtered through an Instagram-lens. Social media is 'not a transparent window into people's imaginations, intentions, motifs, opinions, and ideas' (Manovich, 2011: 466). As such, Instagram content should not be interpreted as a straightforward reflection of people's beliefs about the good life but as a conversation that at once informs, and is informed by, users' beliefs about what it means to live well. Carah and Shaul (2016) notably argue that the power of Instagram posts in shaping ideas surrounding living well has not escaped businesses looking to expand their reach. Indeed, the platform has been characterised as one where 'personal lives are real-time billboards' (Abidin, 2014: 119). While we do not dispute this claim with regards to 'influencers', the extent to which it applies to ordinary users is unclear. In this paper we take an interpretive approach and aim to explore possible lay understandings of the good life pictured on the platform. Given the number of Instagram users, this is undoubtedly an important topic for anyone interested in desired lifestyles and their sustainability.

The study

This study is a secondary analysis of an existing dataset of Instagram posts created in 2014-2015 by researchers from the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (USA) and the Pennsylvania State University (USA). It is a qualitative exploration of the multimodal understandings of the good life that can be encountered on Instagram.

The 'Likes-R-Us' dataset was initially created to explore the various properties and latent relationships found among Like activities and the Like network formed thereof. The dataset was collected through the Instagram Application Programming Interface (API) and consists of users' Instagram logs including media, likes, tags, comments, locations, and so on, from October 2014 to March 2015. The researchers harvested 1, 174 033 individual posts from 20,000 users worldwide. The posts were split into 'adults' (30-39 years old) and 'teenagers' (13-19 years old) datasets. While the Likes-R-Us team collected hashtags, the tagging content was random. Hence, the first step in this study was to filter the dataset for tags containing 'goodlife' (i.e. #goodlife, #thegoodlife, #livingthegoodlife, etc.) and to create new datasets containing these posts only. Out of 383,042 individual posts by young people, only 97 were tagged 'goodlife' and variants. From these, only 36 had active media links. From the 917,991 posts collected from adult users, 1,167 included #goodlife and variants. For the interest of inclusion, we kept the 36 posts produced by teens, and supplemented with 114 randomly selected posts by adults, giving us a total sample of 150 posts (contributed by 75 users) on which we carried out an in-depth exploration of the multimodal meanings of the good life that can be found on Instagram.

While secondary data analysis is time and resource efficient, Tripathy (2013) highlights that it also triggers ethical concerns around users' privacy. Every post used in this study was harvested from a public account, but in the interest of preserving the users' anonymity none are reproduced here. Instead, we provide descriptions of some of the posts that constituted our sample and hope that they will be sufficient to give the reader an idea of the type of content that can be found on Instagram.

We use multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), which enables us to pay attention to all the elements constitutive of a given Instagram post (image or clip, caption, hashtags, likes, comments) and draw narratives of the good life that are informed by different modes. MDA arose from linguists' realisation of the importance of semiotics other than language-in-use for meaning-making (Iedema, 2003). Kress and Van Leeuwen explain (2001) that it hinges on the concepts of modes and media to understand multidimensional aspects of society and culture. For Kress (2010), a mode is a socially and culturally shaped resource for meaning-making while a medium is the substance in which meaning is realised and through which it becomes available to others (i.e. book, billboard, newspaper, etc.). Dicks *et al.* (2006:82) give the following examples of things that might be considered modes: 'obvious ones include writing, speech, and images; less obvious ones include gesture, facial expression, texture, size and shape, even colour'. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of digital media where different modes are easily combined into a single medium. Following Kress (2009: 54), we understand multimodality as a 'domain of inquiry' and seek to explore meaning-making beyond language-in-isolation. To this aim, we inductively established qualitative codes relating both to the content and the form of the posts (table 1).

Table 1: Table of coding categories used to analyse Instagram posts

image/clip	subject/object	living beings (human and non-human), objects, landscape, quote
		active vs. passive
	camera frame	close up, medium, long
		high angle, level, low-angle
	context	outdoors, indoors, unknown
	quality	posed vs. candid
		edited vs. unedited
		colouring
	living beings	expressions
		proximity to each other
		front-facing, from the back, profile
	presence	implied vs. explict
hashtags	quantity	from 2 to 29
	main themes	significant others/relationships, event, health (diet/exercise), context (location, day/time), self, activity, consumer ideas, status symbols, digital applications, feelings, characteristics (gender, nationality, physical/mental traits)
	sentiment	positive, negative, neutral
	temporality	the hashtags are past, present, or future oriented (i.e. #today, #mysaturdaynight)
likes	origin	followers vs. strangers
	quantity (at the time of analysis	from 1 to 278
comments	sentiment	positive, negative, neutral
	quantity	from 0 to 15
	origin	followers vs. strangers
engagement (likes/followers)	percentage	from 0.2% to 40.1%
caption	length	from absent to 5 sentences
	main themes	significant others/relationships, event, health (diet/exercise), context (location, day/time), self, activity, consumer ideas, status symbols, digital applications, feelings, characteristics (gender, nationality, physical/mental traits)
	sentiment	positive, negative, neutral
	temporality	using past, present, or future tense

While we use MDA to analyse Instagram posts, we are keen to highlight that our decoding of the visuals should not be understood as accessing objective meanings of the good life for Instagram users. Some of the reasons for this are linked to the platform's design and prevailing social conventions and have been mentioned earlier. Another reason, which is specifically methodological, has to do with the fact that truth is not simply encoded in visuals (Pink, 2005). As polysemic texts, images take on new meanings without changing content as they move from one context to the other.

Their meanings are dependent on social and cultural interpretations and shift in space and time (Schroeder, 2002). Hence the meanings that we draw from our sample should be understood in the context of neoliberal consumer culture and cannot be taken for universals. While this does not invalidate the understandings that we draw from this sample, the reader should bear in mind the subjective and interpretive nature of the analysis.

Instagram: good lives anchored in the present

In this first part, we briefly introduce the themes that emerged from our coding and analysis of the sampled Instagram posts, before broaching users' anchoring of their posts in the present.

From our analysis of the sampled Instagram posts, we derived 9 thematic aspects of the good life: fitness and health, entrepreneurship, wealth and luxury items, significant others, self, having fun, travelling, relaxing, and aesthetics. A single post could regroup multiple thematic aspects highlighting the complexity of good life understandings. For instance, significant others typically appeared on posts that promoted having fun or relaxing activities. Similarly, travelling often also involved the depiction of aesthetic landscapes. While Instagram posts tagged #goodlife and variants called forth a variety of thematic aspects of wellbeing, a striking unifying feature of all posts was their present temporality. This temporality was expressed in captions, slice-of-life photographs, and hashtags. Oftentimes, it was the combination of these three modes that conveyed the present temporality, rather than one mode in isolation.

Hashtags such as #photooftheday, #today, #instadaily, #beautifulday, #goodday, or #bestoftheday, were some of the most popular ones in the sample. Others made reference to specific days of the week or times of the day, such as #mysaturdaynight or #goodmorning. Caption were regularly written in a present tense and commonly described events as if they were in the process of happening. One user wrote: 'The fireplace is lit, the wine is poured, the ribs are cooked and the scrabble competition is in full effect!!'. Some captions were written in a past tense but made reference to events that likely just unfolded or were made to look like they just had, such as 'Had #grandma over for dinner'. The juxtaposition of this caption next to a photograph of the user with her grandma conveyed the sensation that 'grandma' was just there. Additionally, some captions that were anchored in the present, made reference to future goals: 'And the shoulder boulders be finally growing […]'. And here again, the juxtaposition of the caption next to a photograph of the user showing off her shoulders reinforced the sentiment of present.

The slice-of-life characteristic of user-generated photographs also contributed to the present temporality. These photographs were informal, seemingly capturing fleeting moments. Although likely staged, most looked like realistic records of everyday life, taken in a minute, without much underpinning thought beyond the wish to immortalise or document the present moment. They portrayed ordinary people engaged in mundane activities, or posing for the camera. These snapshots of everyday life are typical of home photography. Additionally, two photographs were taken from elsewhere and displayed the traditional codes of advertising photography (lighting, quality, luxury items). Despite the use of different aesthetic codes, the captions and hashtags on these two photographs (i.e. 'Welcome to the good life') contributed to anchor them in the present.

The present temporality was further reinforced by the design of the platform. The name of the platform is a

portmanteau of 'instant camera' and 'telegram', highlighting its focus on 'on-the-go' photography sharing. The application's interface is such that the visibility of Instagram images is short lived, and most only receive attention within the first few hours of being posted (Carah & Shaul, 2016). Additionally, Instagram posts have a particularly low survival rate and are often deleted or archived. These structural elements imply that most posts that are viewed on the platform have just been posted. Like the moments that they aim to capture, they are themselves fleeting and ephemeral.

Two forms of good lives: 'working on future goals' and 'appreciating the present moment'

The good life on Instagram has a strong relationship with the present moment, partly as a result of the platform's design. However, the posts manifested two different approaches to the present. In the first approach, taken up by the majority of the posts in our sample (= 118), the present could be valued for itself. In the second approach, which constituted a substantial minority of our sample (= 32), the present was seen as an opportunity for bringing us closer to our goals. These approaches did not correspond to character types, as the same user could employ one or the other alternatively. However, they were more likely to manifest in relation to particular thematic aspects of the good life.

Table 2 summarises these two approaches to the present and outlines the thematic aspects of the good life that each approach favoured. The percentages provided in the table indicate the proportion of posts within the approaches that conveyed a given theme. As we mentioned earlier, a given post could regroup multiple themes, hence the percentages do not add up and were only calculated to normalise the proportions across both approaches to the present.

Table 2: Table of themes and temporalities of sampled Instagram posts

	Fitness & health	Entrepren-eurship	Wealth and luxury items	Significant others	Self	Having fun	Travelling	Relaxing	Aesthetics
Working on future goals (=32 posts)	13 (40.6%)	11 (34.4%)	3 (9.4%)	6 (18.8%)	6 (18.8%)	1 (3.1%)	1 (3.1%)	0	0
Appreciating the present moment (=118 posts)	4 (3.4%)	1 (0.8%)	8 (6.8%)	53 (44.9%)	22 (18.6%)	45 (38.1%)	15 (12.7%)	25 (21.2%)	21 (17.8%)

These two present orientations to the good life can be related to Krznaric's (2017) distinction between two approaches to the long-established adage of carpe diem. First introduced by Horace, Krznaric argues that the notion is strikingly resonant in contemporary societies. However, it can be understood in a variety of ways and here we focus on two of them. One reading of the notion centres on enjoying the present moment and noticing 'the sweetness of the world' (2017: 34). Another reading sees it as an incentive to seize the day as an opportunity for working on the realisation of future goals. While most themes were present in both approaches (except for 'relaxing' and 'aesthetics'), each orientation favoured particular themes.

The temporality of 'working on future goals' typically appealed to users when they were engaged in fitness and health activities (40.6%), or in entrepreneurial projects (34.4%). In these posts, users promoted dedication and personal responsibility to work everyday on realising one's goals, whether those were getting a six pack, recovering from anorexia, building a business, or becoming a millionaire. These posts frequently employed the vocabulary of meritocracy and suggested that effort and talent were necessary to achieve one's goals. For instance, one user posted a picture of the following quote: 'Success belongs only to those who are willing to work harder than anyone else' and tagged it #motivation, #thebillionairesclub, #rich. The use of the word 'only' here emphasises the exclusivity of success to those who are dedicated enough to consistently work on their goals.

These posts were typically centred on personal goals, albeit a few users engaged in the pursuit of personal change for the benefit of significant others. For instance, one user who contributed 13 posts to our sample continuously highlighted the importance of her husband and her dog in motivating her to recover from her addictions, care for her health, and go back to work. The self was conceptualised as a project which demands on-going work. Multiple posts utilising this temporality emphasised the value of being busy, functioning on little sleep, and hustling. This was seen in photographs and captions detailing impressive to-do lists and photographs of large coffee cups. Users demonstrated that they made the most of the opportunity provided by everyday to work on their goals and urged others to do the same, emphasising the fleeting (and perhaps business-like) character of life (i.e. 'life is a one time offer').

In these posts, the self was often presented as a '#gogetter' in '#beastmode' and whose '#hardworkpaysoff'. Sweaty selfies and blurry photographs of feet on a treadmill were testimonies of a workout well done, while snapshots of coffee cups and work spreads testified to the entrepreneurship of their posters. These posts emphasised that work was in progress and contributed to creating a record of its proceedings. Working on one's goals was conceptualised as a difficult process (i.e. #onedayatatime, #thestruggleisreal), albeit one that was worth the hardship and sacrifices. Users emphasised their agency in the process, sometimes referring to the need to '#staypositive'.

On the other hand, the temporality of 'appreciating the moment present' appealed to users when they were spending time with significant others (44.9%), were having fun (38.1%), and relaxing (21.2%). Here users attempted to immortalise the good times, and their emphasis was on living everyday for the day itself rather than for what it might achieve. Users talked about enjoying 'the little things' of everyday life (i.e. wearing 'autumn clothes' for the first time of the year, catching the sun, etc.), feeling blissful, and soaking up extraordinary experiences (i.e. exotic travel, high-end restaurants, etc.). When users referred to their own wellbeing (18.6%), they highlighted the physicality and visuality of wellness: '[it] makes me smile and [I] can definitely see that positive energy in this picture', 'it's amazing to see what a little self love can do', 'my skin looks better on vacation because it loves good life'. Hence, being well related to looking well.

Strikingly, pets and children were epitomised as living the good life themselves (i.e. #doglifeisgoodlife, #happychild, #iwannabeacat). This mostly referred to the pet or child being fed, cared for, loved, having fun, and having few worries. They were often shown relaxing or engaging in playful activities. For instance, one user posted a video of her two sons

playing basketball, others posted photographs of their children playing video-games, snacking, being hugged, and so on. The common social construction of childhood as a time of blissful and uncomplicated innocence (Cook, 2005) is evident in these posts. Users invoked the romanticised social ideas of what being a child means to convey a particular understanding of the good life. In these posts, the good life was one of love, peace, joy, security, friendship, and family. Pets were talked about and pictured in similar ways to children as cute, loved, happy, and dependent beings. Indeed, there was a realisation that children and pets could enjoy this type of good life because of the provisions that were made for them (i.e. #mompaysallthebills). Hence, the 'appreciation of present moments' was an understanding of the good life that children and pets lived continuously, but adults could only dip in and out of, on particular occasions.

The consequences of Instagram understandings of the good life

In this part we consider the consequences of the widespread broadcasting of these two understandings of the good life. At the time of writing, the tag #goodlife regroups over 15 745 000 publications on Instagram and is continuously growing. While individual posts struggle to constitute a narrative and harness continuous attention because of their fleeting and disarticulated character (Carah & Shaul, 2016), the feeds accessed through hashtag-search regroup multiple posts that sustain similar themes and convey similar stories. Scrolling through these feeds gives users access to consistent portrayals of what living well can mean. With the increasing expansion of #goodlife, these lay understandings of the good life enter into competition with other symbolic resources.

Strikingly, some aspects of Instagram posts conveyed a different approach to living well from dominant consumerist narratives (see McCracken, 1990 for an overview) as conveyed (for example) in advertisements. In the first understanding of the good life, successful lives were overwhelmingly presented as acquired through hard work rather than through the purchase of particular goods, even though in a minority of cases (11 posts), 'success' was understood as the ownership of luxury items. In the second, the good life was equated with a child's life, which Cook (2005) observed has been typically conceived as separated from the spheres of the market and of consumption. In total, only 15 posts explicitly mentioned material goods, typically as supporting components of users' experiences rather than as centrepieces. Perhaps unsurprisingly, consumer goods were presented as centrepieces only in the case of luxury items, which as Greehy (2017) highlights in the case of perfume, have a particular relation to consumerist narratives of success. Hence, socially accepted lay understandings of the good life are not necessarily aligned with the consumer dream.

However, the background presence of material and intangible consumer goods, which to some extent is unavoidable in consumer societies, reinforced their contribution to both forms of good lives. Belk and Pollay (1987) explained that the taking for granted of background items in advertisements strengthens their belonging to the good life represented by the advert, and hence, their desirability. While they specifically referred to advertisements, this can easily be extended to Instagram posts, and to this we would add engagement in particular experiences. Pictures of sunny vacations in exotic locations contributed to normalising travel and epitomising its legitimacy as a good life practice. When users with a substantial number of followers failed to mention in the captions or hashtags the items present in

the photographs, their followers tended to ask for information on the brand of the products. For instance, one user who appears highly involved in bodybuilding posted a posed photograph where she reflected on her progress of the past few months. Her followers congratulated her, some asked for her routine, while others enquired about the provenance of her leggings. Hence, while the posts do not necessarily convey consumerist good lives (as defined earlier by an emphasis on never-ending purchase), they seem to reinforce consumer culture. As Burningham and Venn (2017) argue, questions regarding consumption ethics are complicated by the necessary implication of consumption in multiple spheres of life.

One explanation for this phenomenon can be found in the widespread adoption by consumer companies of the snapshot aesthetics that are typical of home photography. Schroeder (2010) argues that the glamorous studio photographic style that consumer brands, particularly on the higher-end of the spectrum, used to employ has given place in the late 2000s to harsh lighting, strong shadows, and awkward poses. Like Instagram posts, snapshot photography aims to capture the fleeting moments and depicts people engaged in seemingly realistic, often mundane, experiences. Hence while advertisements used to be easily distinguishable from personal photographs and home videos, they increasingly blend with user-generated content. This is particularly explicit on Instagram where brands use the same tools and conventions as any other user (Carah & Shaul, 2016). The blurring of photographic genres leads users to approach personal posts in a similar fashion as they would approach adverts. While the understandings of the good life that circulate on Instagram overlook fundamental aspects of the consumerist good life, they can be framed in consumerist terms. In this, the viewers of Instagram posts have at least as much a part to play as their creators.

Conclusion

In this paper we have explored two of the understandings of the good life that circulate on Instagram. The first one portrays each day as a chance to work on one's goals and emphasises the good life as a working process towards the realisation of one's potential. In this, it can perhaps be related to the eudaemonic approach to wellbeing which typically involves notions of growth, self-acceptance, and mastery (Carlisle *et al.*, 2009). The second one promotes the enjoyment of each day for itself, reminding us of hedonist approaches to wellbeing that emphasise the presence of positive affect and absence of negative mood (Carlisle *et al.*, 2009). While both these understandings can be problematically related to liberal individualism (Christopher, 1999), neither are directly or necessarily congruent with the consumerist good life. However, we argued that both understandings were anchored in the present. The minority of posts that treated the present as an occasion to work on future goals only referred to goals that did not expand beyond the user's lifetime. Questions of temporality are important in consumption ethics. They are, for instance, explored by Witkowksi (2018) and Eräsaari (2018), with regards to the application of present ethics to evaluate the past, or past ethics to evaluate the present. Here however, temporality plays a different role and applies to the timeframes that our good life narratives can span. In both approaches, the 'good' seemed to be defined in relation to the present, and in either case, did not extend beyond one's lifetime. Yet, sustainability is necessarily concerned with the long-term future. Do sustainable good life narratives need to offer notions of 'good' that span beyond our lifetimes? Opinions will certainly differ on this point. But the temporalities of our narratives, and those afforded by the mediums that we use to articulate them, and those of

the current social conventions in place on those mediums, affect what we can talk about and how we can talk about it. These are matters that consumption ethics scholars, should be concerned with (Barnett *et al.,* 2015).

Supplementary materials:

All data used in this study came from the Likes'R'Us dataset, created at the PIKE (http://pike.psu.edu/) research group at Pennsylvania State University (USA). Access: https://sites.google.com/site/pikelna/dataset/

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