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EXPLORING (SELF-)PERCEPTIONS AND ASSESSMENTS
AMONG ACTORS WITHIN
THE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION SCENE

MASTER'S THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The major objective of this thesis is to explore (self-)perceptions and assessments of manufacturers and employees within the realms of sustainable consumption. In order to investigate what people themselves believe to know and perceive to be sustainable, a field research was carried out among participants within the German sustainability platform *Heldenmarkt* by making use of participant observations, interviews, questionnaires, websites and literature analysis. Using world systems theory and a culture of consumption as a background, the analytical framework deals with characteristics of classifications, power relations and ethics of nature. Considering the theory, the data suggests that companies' visions are mainly addressing ecological aspects, whereas employees' understanding of sustainability highlights a critical thinking. The analysis reveals that employees have high ethical values which go far beyond the companies' visions. Moreover, contradictions within sustainable consumptions are illustrated and confirmed which suggest a continuing existence of the culture of consumption. The paper concludes that future sustainability conceptions should be complemented by an ethical dimension to consider values being important for authentic long-term sustainable development. Moreover, companies shall become aware of the employees' strengths. Further research should consider perspectives from other companies to better grasp what companies or employees prevent from acting sustainably.

Keywords: sustainable consumption, sustainability, classifications, ethics of nature, culture of consumption, assessments

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Prologue

Smell of black coffee. I am sitting in my favourite coffee bar in my neighbourhood in Berlin and I am remembering a coffee plantation I visited in Eldoret, Kenya, many years ago when I became friends with an employee. I am wondering where these beans may have come from. My question is answered by the waitress immediately: They have an arrangement with a roastery directly in Berlin, importing only certified fair trade and organic coffee from Ethiopia.

One coffee bean is very small. However, it is involved in something big with complex processes. You have to look closer at the commodities' trade to find out more about its background as all commodities have a value beyond just their exchange value. There is a network surrounding the coffee bean, which deals with the way it is produced etc. I feel that we should look and search for the stories behind the products to critically reflect upon our own consumption of goods.

1. INTRODUCTION

“If you just grow food and eat it, then no culture is created. If, by contrast, you grow food, exchange it in complex networks that create canoes, send these in turn to be exchanged for valuables from other islands, representing other networks, then something big happens. What comes back is a value [...]. An elaborate field is created through which people and islands grow not just food; they grow reputation, they can become Argonauts and have adventures, stories can be told, things heard about and seen.”

(Miller 2010: 66).

As Miller (see quote above) motivates to search for the stories, I met a small team in Berlin doing exactly this: Looking at the story behind the products and evaluating if they would recommend these products as good alternatives to willing consumers. They organise special markets called *Heldenmarkt* attributed as trade fairs dedicated to sustainable consumption addressing citizens and consumers. The exhibitors come from different sectors associated with consumption and offer information or products that present alternatives to conventional products and employ sustainable methods e.g. organic cultivation or established fair trade relations. Started in Berlin in 2010, the market is now held in six German cities.

There are different definitions concerning sustainability. My initial ideas for this thesis came up when I wondered what was really meant by the term of ‘sustainable product’ and even

more so, I was intrigued by the question who was supposed to define this? Working with the *Heldenmarkt* group, I unexpectedly found myself to be a part of a team defining sustainable consumption.

I wondered if it might be better to let the stakeholders define it for themselves. In that case it would mean asking the exhibitors about their (self-)perception of sustainability and their role in achieving or contributing to sustainability. Instead of developing a guideline based on analysing the environmental impact of products, I would leave this to engineering science (e.g. dealing with systems as UPB see Sietz et al. 2008). Rather I prefer to focus on what is *perceived* to be sustainable among the stakeholders themselves because this seems to be at the core of consumers' decisions as well. Dealing with the employees and finding out more about their motivation, vision and self-image concerning their sustainable products, I assume that it will offer some insights into the definition of sustainable products. As consumers are not able to assess the performance of products, it is interesting to find out, what people actually feel and believe to be sustainable.

As a student of human ecology, approaching sustainability from the perspectives of culture and power, sustainable consumption seems to me a very good example of the intertwining of culture, power and sustainability, as both, the concept and the discipline are “[...] linking social and natural sciences in addressing the complex problems of the environment” (Moran 2010: xii). I also want to take into account the meaning of sustainable consumption for the relation between nature and humans and see if I can find any hints what the assessments of more or less sustainable products tell us about the relation between humans and nature (see chapter 3.3).

The thesis has been developed within the realms of cultural and political ecology. Cultural ecology is looking at the relationship of environmental resources; technology and behaviour of humans as well as social structures (cf. Moran 2010: 46). Within the realms of Political Ecology it was Joan Martinez Allier among others, who pointed out that political decisions and power relations shape the environment (cf. Hornborg, McNeill & Alier 2007). From a political ecologist perspective one questions who makes decisions and who is affected by them. Moreover one examines the meaning for environmental degradation and social inequality. I assume that people deciding to consume sustainably pose these kinds of questions as well, as I recognized this within our discussions in the *Heldenmarkt* team also:

As our everyday consumption inevitably affects other people and our environment, there is immense power of the decision making processes standing behind it.

1.1 TOPIC OF THE STUDY

My topic deals with the self-conception and assessment of stakeholders in the marketplace of sustainable consumption, exemplified by *Heldenmarkt* and its participating exhibitors as this offers a platform for sustainable consumption. I'll visit the event *Heldenmarkt* as a stakeholder in the sustainability scene and I assume that it has a strong local influence in shaping the public opinion on sustainability.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In consequence, my overall research question is: How is sustainability defined, perceived and assessed among stakeholders of sustainable consumption participating in sustainability platforms with particular reference to *Heldenmarkt*?

This objective of my study shall be examined by answering the following questions:

I) regarding the (self-)perception of sustainability:

How do the individual employees, working in sustainable companies, perceive and define the concept of sustainability themselves?

What sustainability vision do the companies have and how do companies implement measures toward sustainable development?

II) regarding the assessments:

Wherein lays the motivation of companies to participate in a certification programme?

What are the key facilitators and barriers for a participation in a certification programme?

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

With my work I want to contribute to the established discourse surrounding sustainable consumption which became a relevant research domain in the last years (cf. Reisch & Kreeb 2007: 463; Power & Mont 2013): At the beginning, manufacturing processes and companies

had been in the focus of environmental political discussions, but later on, the focus was laid on consumer demands and consumer patterns. However, as far as I know was only little research on the self- understanding of the producers and seller's opinions themselves so far. Many researchers dealt with the question of why and how we consume (e.g. Miller 2010, Baudrillard 1998, Bauman 2009). The companies' or employees' motivation is assessed only in terms of CSR as far as I could review within available literature. I want to give voice to the faces behind the companies and look at their (self-)perceptions regarding sustainability to find out more about their commitments and visions. I aim at creating consciousness among people for different (self-)perceptions and priorities.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

My thesis is divided into five parts. After presenting my aim and research questions in this introduction, chapter 2 will deal with the methodology on the evolution of the idea and how I actually will explore all the above mentioned aspects. I will examine the methods used and their purposes as well as the limitations of the research. As a starting point, I will present the background in chapter 3.1 of this study which is essential as a presumption for this work and the necessity of the concepts of sustainability and sustainable consumption, which I will discuss in chapter 3.2. This is followed by chapter 3.3 which deals with the further theoretical and analytical framework of this study. I will outline foundational concepts concerning assessments, power relations and natural ethics, to which I will refer to and which are relevant when dealing with sustainable consumption. The empirical part (chapter 4) will be divided into a descriptive part and the analysis. I will critically discuss the effects of sustainable consumption referring to all methods used; moreover I present the findings out of this analysis and locate them within the framework as outlined before. The final chapter 5 will conclude the thesis with a summary about the main findings the study of the (self-)perceptions and assessments of sustainability within sustainable consumption, and ends with an outlook on the relevance of the findings and future research potential.

2. METHODS

In the following I will examine the methods used to conduct the research and will critically reflect upon the limitations of the methods. For my combination of qualitative as well as quantitative research, I made use of different types of data collection: As primary research methods, which means gathering information at the source directly (Berekoven 2009 et al.: 39), I conducted a survey, interviews and participant observation as well as informal discussions with visitors of *Heldenmarkt*, exhibitors and the team of *Heldenmarkt*. This was expanded by secondary data in terms of a discourse analysis which consisted of website analysis and literature review, but also functions as an analytical tool. By the use of secondary data, I wanted to compare my analysis of data from my own interviews and questionnaires with published experts.

The research was carried out among different stakeholders of the sustainable consumption marketplace and its analysis will be carried out within Germany, too. The analysis took place at my current residence in Berlin. I gathered the empirical data primarily in March 2015 at the event of *Heldenmarkt* in Munich, conducted interviews and did an online analysis in April 2015 in Berlin. Subjects of the study were the people participating in the *Heldenmarkt*, whom I interviewed using questionnaires. Websites complementes the analysis to strengthen the focus of my study: How is sustainability perceived by stakeholders of the sustainability marketplace themselves?

2.1 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In accordance with the transdisciplinary nature of my study programme, I am taking into account different perspectives, especially from sociologists, anthropologists, and philosophers. Jørgensen and Philips (2002: 9) pointed out that language and social behaviour are influencing themselves recursively and like that, are shaping the reality of the world. Discourses are trying to capture meanings within specific domains, they can be seen as „a particular way of representing the world“ (ibid.: 143). I regard this as important in recognising that in the end, our works are more of a snapshot, but not static, as I experienced on my own that everything is dynamic in life. However, this snapshot is important and is needed to work with - therefore it will provide a framework of my study (ibid.: 143) as I present the current

discussion concerning sustainable consumption (see chapter 3.2.3). I followed the approach of socio-scientific discourse analysis as introduced by Traue et al. Discourses consist of discursive practices and therefore are relevant for transformation processes (2014: 494).

Discourse analyses always carry a historical perspective, which examines the discursive effects of statements and their societal conditions as well as their consequences. Therefore discourse analysis always aims at examining the relations of knowledge, power, and constellations of stakeholders as well as processes of constructions. In consequence, collective and institutional processes are of interest in the analysis, too –as specific knowledge becomes a societal reality in them (Traue et al. 2014: 495ff.).

Traue et al. stated that the difficulty within discourse analysis lays in the challenge of not referring to specific strategies or linguistic codes only but to see the unity of discourses as an effect of societal balances of power – rather than a research constructs. To my mind, these especially suggest an open-minded attitude of the researcher in not pre-determining all research units and to see what the research fields offers (Traue et al. 2014: 500). Power relations have to be worked out empirically and cannot just be presumed. According to Foucault, discourse analysis assumes recursive relations between societal power relations and knowledge as well as reality constructions. Therefore the relation of knowledge and power is understood as a circular relation. Social conditions discursively coin the constructions of reality. Similarly, societal balances of power are legitimised or modified by forms of knowledge (Traue et al. 2014: 504ff.).

Especially according to the sociological discourse analysis coined by Keller, the discursive construction of societal reality develops through intersubjective and communication processes shown in the media. Like that, social stakeholders are producers and recipients of discourses at the same time and this is an important characteristic of discourses: they can exist only in so far as they are expressed acting on its own. Moreover, the re- and deconstruction of processes of institutionalisation of knowledge are pointed out (Traue et al. 2014: 497). According to socio-scientist discourse analyses one identifies inner relations and its forms, and explains what kind of mechanics of power are stabilising the discourse. Therefore the analyses of power and knowledge have to be related to each other again and again during the research process (Traue et al. 2014: 504f.).

2.2 QUESTIONNAIRES

When designing the questionnaire, I chose to focus on four main areas of interest: the interviewee's individual (self-)perception of sustainability, the companies' (self-)perception, the position to *Heldenmarkt* and last but not least the position to certification programmes. It was important to use free text fields: Non-standardized questions offer the possibility to receive authentic answers and the own opinion of the participants without influence. In this manner one could guarantee a qualitative aspect of the data collected (cf. Flick, 2009, S. 23). To assure the clarity, feasibility and comprehensibility of the questionnaire, I did some pilot interviews with qualified persons, to exclude any possibility of misunderstandings or missing logic in the questions (Mundt 2007: 432). The original as well as a summarized translation of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix (see A_1, A_2).

The respondents came from different positions in the organisational structure of various companies and I looked forward to examine the perspectives from employees in different sectors in order to see if there were differences in their perspectives, too. *Heldenmarkt* defined six spheres of activity (according to Schrader & Hansen) in a protocol from the 30th of June 2014: These are a) food, b) fashion and accessories, c) finances, d) living and household, e) mobility and leisure, and f) information. I found these classifications as useful, and merely changed area c) of finances into a general services sector (including finances, assurances, consulting etc.).

Since I knew about the exhibitors' time constraints during the event, I prepared envelopes with my address and stamps beforehand, so they could fill it out conveniently and attached a letter informing them of my interest in their opinion on sustainability. I wanted to give them the choice to participate anonymously, because I expected to receive higher participation and honest answers. Therefore, I only marked the questionnaires with small coloured dots so that during the analysis I would be able to recognize which sector the person's company or association belongs to. I didn't collect demographic information (age etc.) as the focus was on their understanding and (self-) perception of sustainability. I only asked respondents to state their designation in their company and invited them to share any information concerning the company (e.g. sector, number of employees etc.) to benefit a more specific evaluation.

Out of 94 participants in the event, I distributed my questionnaires personally to 77 exhibitors - the other 17 participants could not be reached due to business talks with clients I did not want to interrupt). This is shown in A_3 in the appendix. Since more than half of the people I contacted sounded really motivated to participate, I expected to receive almost half of my distributed questionnaire back. In fact, I only received 27 questionnaires. This equates to 33 percent, therefore exactly one third, of the distributed amount and 27% of the number of exhibitors at the event. Related to the total distributed amount it is not a very high rate but looking separately at the distribution of each sector, it mirrors a good portion of responses. Only, the sector "food" is under-represented: It was the sector being represented the most at the event and I distributed the most questionnaires among these people but I only got feedback from 6 people.

2.3 PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

I was drawing from the methodology of anthropologists, which is characterised by spending time with subjects - in my case at my work environment, as described in the introduction. It was the anthropologist Malinowski who wrote as early as 1922 that it is of high importance to grasp the „native's own point of view“ (Malinowski 1922: 19) for being able to understand their (self-)perception of the world. Even though I was not researching on a foreign society, I followed this principle to find out more about people's individual (self-)perception of sustainability. Participant observations are extremely valuable to grasp people's (self-)perceptions (Schnell et al. 1993: 394): "The ethnographer participates, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions; in fact collecting whatever data are available [...]" (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983: 2). According to this, I have considered informal discussions in my working environment – especially with my colleagues and at the event itself with the participants and visitors. Due to my employment situation (and my individual consumption patterns as well) I was part of the scene or community dealing with sustainable consumption and therefore I could be considered not only as a participating observer but also as an observing participant. It was the researcher Kaminski who differentiated between participant observation and observing participant - as the latter resorts to personal experiences and „[...] enters a

community through a similar social process as its other members and is subject to similar rules [...]“ (Karminski 2004: 15).

This is important to recognise in so far, as I have an insider perspective because I was part of the *Heldenmarkt* team, but consider myself enough of an outsider at the same time, since my task was not the admission process of the exhibitors but the organisation of the accompanying programmes (as lectures etc.). However, due to my integration I gained access to my interviewees easily. Therefore my analysis might be shaped differently than the (self-) perception of somebody not involved with sustainable consumption issues in daily routine.

2.4 INTERVIEWS

By conducting interviews I hoped to complement my research with “[...] rich insights into people’s, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings“ (May 2011: 131). Mayring (2002: 66) pointed out the importance of letting subjects speak themselves - since they are the experts for their own significant contents. At the time of handing out the questionnaires, prospective respondents could state if they wanted to participate in an interview. I decided to choose exhibitors from only one sector – since I assumed there would be differences across sectors with regards to relevant aspects (e.g. certification programmes) and I wanted to make sure being able to compare their (self-)perceptions within this sector. My choice fell on the food sector, as this sector was a bit under represented in the questionnaires (see chapter 2.2).

My interview research sample consisted of three semi-structured interviews in German language. This means that the interviews consisted of prepared questions but the order was developed flexibly during the conversation and new or other questions were added depending on the interview situation (Atteslander 2006: 126). In this manner, I could positively channel the natural flow of the conversations (Schnell et al. 1993: 391) and had the possibility to compare answers during analysis (May 2011: 153). Due to the distance to each interviewee and resource constrains, I decided to conduct the interviews via telephone and took notes during our conversations (see A_5). I tried to create a positive environment for conversation

during the interview, so that respondents could feel comfortable (cf. Hermanns 2000) and would be motivated to talk frankly.

2.5 WEBSITE ANALYSIS

Nowadays, internet research (Meyer; Seitz, 2006, S. 13) is the most important, fastest and cheapest external data source for secondary research (Berekoven et al., 2009, S. 39ff). Since I knew that each company has an online presentation and they are easily accessible to everybody, I decided to do an internet based analysis of the companies' sustainability communication my respondents worked for. I did not expect all exhibitors to communicate sustainability but I wanted to research if it is communicated at all to find out more about their (self-)perception and involvement in sustainable development. In addition, I wanted to compare my interviewees' (self-)perception towards sustainability with the (self-)perception of the companies' visions. To this end, I studied the company websites in detail. I expected to find most information regarding these issues on sub-sites such as 'About us' or 'Our products' – however, I checked the entire webpages to get an overview and to not miss any information. I collected all various terms used and topics being communicated and was clustered the statements into groups with similar meanings. Moreover, I analysed, to whom they were addressed. Moreover, in regard to the definition of sustainability in chapter 3.2.1, I checked to which dimensions (ecological, economic, social) their definitions/presentations referred to. Another aspect I was looking for was whether companies state a participation in certification or label programmes. In the charts A_5, A_6 und A_7 in the appendix I have presented the aspects I explored.

Finally, on comparing all websites studied, I wanted to summarize which topics had been in focus and examine how easily the information concerning sustainability is accessible. Furthermore, it would be interesting to find, if observations could be drawn regarding the sustainability visions, were different across sectors.

2.6 LIMITATIONS / ROLE AS RESEARCHER

The number of participants (in the survey and interviews) was too small to be representative in terms of statistical significance of the results. However, for the purpose of this thesis and

the size of the *Heldenmarkt* Munich as my research area, it seemed appropriate and gave valuable insights in terms of the content due to the qualitative statements.

Regarding the interpretation of open questions it is important to realize that in the analysis of these answers I had to shorten the answers for standardization and classification. The analysis may be mildly influenced by my own views due to this. Moreover, my work is limited in my independence, as I am part of the organization of *Heldenmarkt* . Even though I conducted the research independently and it was not part of the contract with my employer, my role as a researcher cannot be separated from my current role at my workplace.

Regarding the interviews and informal discussions with my colleagues at *Heldenmarkt* , it is important to recognise that their openness and manner of exchange might have been less communicative if they had talked to an independent external researcher. As all my interviewees had been informed about the extent and possible publication of the thesis, it might have influenced their statements as well. Therefore, I guaranteed confidentiality to protect the reputation of the respondents and granted anonymity to all companies and interviewees: To protect the research participant's identity, I followed the approach of Meyer & Meier (2014: 255) suggesting to assign nicknames for real person's or organisation's names.

3. FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

In this part I will deal with the background offering foundational assumptions on world conditions in which the studied phenomenon takes place. This will lead me to the presentation of the key concepts sustainability and sustainable consumption and will be followed by three specific theoretical concepts offering the important analytical framework for the discussion of empirical data at a later point.

3.1 BACKGROUND

This section is necessary to point out my way as of perceiving the reality a researcher. These (self-)perceptions are a foundational basis for my understanding of our current world situation

and being relevant as a context when dealing with sustainable consumption in Germany. Therefore I will outline some essential conceptions describing the circumstances the German society (my research setting) faces currently.

3.1.1 WORLD SYSTEMS THEORY AND ECOLOGICALLY UNEQUAL EXCHANGE

Wallerstein's world systems theory describes the world economy as a capitalist one which is segmented into the core, semi-periphery and periphery: Capital accumulation takes place in the core, which flows from the periphery, leading to capital deficits in these regions. The semi-periphery is characterised by qualities present in both the core and the periphery (Wallerstein 2014). It only exists because inequalities e.g. regarding division of labour. The inequalities also concern the environment: As consumption goods are manufactured in specific regions of the world, they are also connected to environmental damages due to the productions. It means that they have environmental loads to carry for consumer's well-being and demands in other regions (cf. Hornborg 2011; Martinez-Alier 2001). This environmental injustice is examined in the concept of ecologically unequal exchange: It illustrates that energy, land and labours being used in our world economy are unequally distributed on the planet (Hornborg 2011).

Considering this world situation, leading to severe environmental and social inequalities, we are in need of alternate societal processes. Consumption is one part of societies' activities. Different stakeholders recognising these problems are developing an awareness regarding their role in this system and are looking for taking responsibility in different areas of daily life. When consuming, one might ask how much land and labour have been embodied in processes as trade. This is what we call "embodied emissions" (cf. Malm 2012) in traded consumer goods: For example, a t-shirt from Bangladesh symbolizes imported emissions from this country. Therefore it is not the producer alone, but the consumer as well, who is responsible for the emissions, and consequently the ecological footprint. It illustrates how much area we use due to our lifestyle (cf. Wackernagel & Rees 1997). Sustainable consumption might be seen as one way of aiming at a reduction of our ecological footprint.

3.1.2 CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION

Wilk highlighted that it is essential to deal with issues of consumption if one wants to understand environmental change at all scales of analysis (Wilk 2006: 421). When looking at the current consumption situation, we find a growing tendency or a culture in which human's tasks are defined only as consumers: People are connected to items, but not to other people or communities anymore: "Our humanity is being defined as our connection to commodities instead of to each other and our communities" (Magdoff & Foster 2011: 53). Therefore people's participation in society is only recognized in terms of consumption (Bierhoff 2013: 40). The core of consumerism can be described by the task of creating needs among the consumers: They shall always discover more things they want to buy (ibid.: 47).

Bauman wrote about an economy of deception and described consumers as being deceived (Bierhoff 2013: 18) and as consuming irrationally, without making use of information, and being led by emotions when buying stuff (ibid.: 44). Another aspect of the culture of consumption is the growing distance between the production & consumption places of commodities as "[...] firms with markets in wealthy countries move production to poorer countries" (Bunker & Ciccantell 2005: 7). In that manner, Bauman observed the change from a society of producers into a society of consumers (Bierhoff 2013: 30) - as most of our consumption goods are produced in other countries. There is a lack of recognition of the complete and indirect resource use which means that one has to consider material use through foreign imports as well – for example the water imported for the cultivation of coffee plants mentioned in the introduction, that leads to challenges related to drinking water, hygiene or agriculture in the country of production (cf. Daschkeit et al. 2014: 233). This all leads to the consequence that consumers are unable to relate production and origin to the consumed products or value the labour standing behind the production and are not concerned with growing inequalities in the commodity chain (Bunker & Ciccantell 2005: 7).

Having outlined these relevant (self-)perceptions describing our world situation as a capitalist system facing many environmental impacts, it becomes evident, that there is a need for a radical change. In the following, I present the concept of sustainable consumption as one strategy to respond to these circumstances of environmental changes due to our individual daily routines.

3.2 THE KEY CONCEPTS: SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Dealing with sustainable consumption automatically leads to an investigation of sustainability itself or sustainable development. Therefore these terms shall be examined and also a short overview on topics related to sustainable consumption will be presented.

3.2.1 THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY/SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainability relates to the interaction of society and nature and deals with the manner of using natural resources - in a way that future generations can make use of these resources and fulfil their own needs (Lange 2008: 6). Therefore sustainability can be understood in terms of durability: Sustainability is looking for „the degree to which a given practice or material standard of living can continue without using up the ability to do so in the future.” (Townsend 2009: 105). The concept of sustainability means taking responsibility to assure the ecological, economic and social basis for future generations (Grunwald; Kopfmüller, 2006: 7f, 27) and distributive justice and assurance of individual needs for the present generation (ibid.: 7f, 29). It is important to note that this is done to assure living standards for the people (Lange 2008: 6) and not because of mere moral concerns about environmental protection.

When dealing with sustainability it becomes clear that actually we are striving for a sustainable development, since it is not possible to reach a specific sustainable situation.

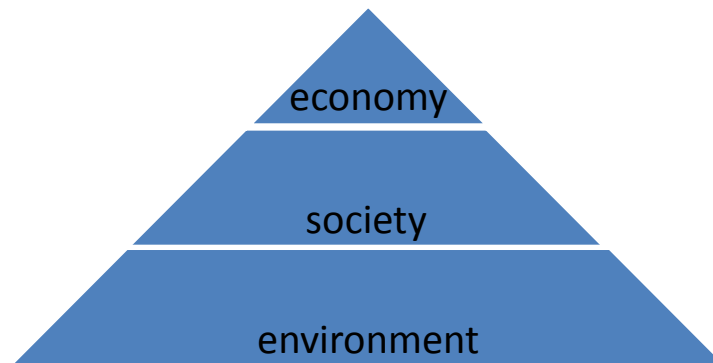
The term sustainable development seems to be contradicting as sustainable seems to imply something conservative but development something more dynamic. This contradiction might be a reason why the term is associated with different contents very often (Schreiner 2007: 391). Moreover, there is a problem of low recognition of sustainability issues, because their existence in a global context: Temporal and spatial distances between cause and effects are not comprehensible and intangible to consumers (Mast; Fiedler 2007: 571).

Sustainability is a complex term and not defined the same way. There are many different principles, which are mostly adapted to varying frameworks and convenience of companies (cf. Michelsen, 2007: 25f). When dealing with the literature one recognises quite easily that there is a differentiation into a) sustainable development, which means a changing process in the society, and b) sustainability, which describes a condition and therefore the end of the before mentioned process. I will use both terms synonymously as I deal with the meaning of

sustainability and not the difference between static conditions or dynamic processes (cf. Grunwald; Kopfmüller, 2006: 8).

One definition many people refer to, was published in the Brundtland report in 1987 stating that sustainable economy means to protect resources for (future) human needs, too.

Fig. 1



The concept of sustainability became popular through the Rio conference in 1992, but the principle had already been in use earlier: In the 17th century, there was a lack of wood in Europe due to a small ice age. In Germany, it was Hans Carl von Carlowitz, who wrote a paper in 1713 stating that the cutting of trees in the forests always should be in balance with the growing or planting of new wood (Huter et al.: 26f.).

Mostly, the conceptualization of sustainability is illustrated as a three pillar model or a triangle: It was the European Union which defined sustainability according to the pillars of economy (economic security), ecology (ecological balance) and society (social justice) in 1997. Since the pillars are not equal in their importance as the model suggests, researchers suggest a pyramid model: In figure 1 one can see that the environment is the basis, as economy and society can only function if our environment is preserved (Bergius 2014: 187). I prefer working with this model and will refer to these three dimensions throughout my analysis.

Finally, when dealing with sustainability, it is important to recognize that it should not be formulated as a goal to be achieved once but that it should become a process and it is best to make it a practice as an attitude towards life. It was Hellmuth Lange (2008: 8) who described sustainability as a process so that sustainability doesn't represent a location to be reached once. The German 'Rat der Nachhaltigen Entwicklung' conceptualizes sustainability as a

searching process in which new ideas are evolving, nothing rests per se: This means that all social, economic and ecological aspects have to be analysed again and again (Averbeck & Crome 2007: 884). Moreover, sustainability is an instrument of reflection to discuss what kind of societal future one is aiming to achieve. Instead of conceptualising a finite condition to be achieved, one can evaluate if processes develop more or less in a sustainable direction (Lange 2008: 8).

3.2.2 SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIETY

Our current so-called environmental crisis is in fact caused by society and therefore is a crisis of social behaviour or culture: The situation which was caused by humans can also be undone by humans: Wackernagel & Rees (1996: xi) pointed out that it is merely social (namely our behaviour) problems we have to change, and not technical or environmental problems if we want to reduce our ecological impact. As our social behaviour is culturally defined, we can conclude that the environmental problems are a problem of our culture (see chapter 3.1.2). Despite the fact that a clear definition of sustainability is missing, around one quarter of the German population knows the term ‘sustainable development’ and around 80% of them support this principle (Reisch & Kreeb 2007: 464). In Germany, sustainability is communicated as a guiding principle within the domain of environmental protection by law as well: § 1 BNatSchG regulates environmental protection and landscape conservation (Schreiner 2007: 388). In general, there is a need to establish sustainability as a guiding principle in the society (cf. Siebenhüner 2014), it should be understood as an overall vision (Lange 2008: 7).

In the discussions on how to design a sustainable society, there are three popular approaches discussed frequently: efficiency, sufficiency and consistence strategy. The first one focusing on efficiency aims at the development of energy and resource-efficient products so that consumers can continue improving their living standards by consuming the same goods (Schoenheit 2009: 22). Intelligent manufacturing processes and designs of the product offer ecological improvement and better profits (Reisch & Kreeb 2007: 465). In fact, this is only possible when sticking to a specific behavior which of course is attached to social and cultural conditions. The second strategy, sufficiency, states to consume less and in another manner. In other words it means to question one’s own consumption patterns. The third strategy,

consistency, focuses on the materials used and tries to use intelligent materials to create circles, in which all materials can be recycled (cf. *ibid.*: 465).

I think that all three strategies are important to follow and a combination would benefit our environment the most. Especially when looking at efficiency and consistency strategies, one has to assess critically the environmental impact of the manufacturing process. It was Weizsäcker (2014: 70) as well who pointed out a possible complementment of the three strategies. He suggested a model which calls for continuously increasing prices of natural resources use in accordance with the obvious growth of efficiency so that energy-service will not get more expensive (*ibid.*: 68).

3.2.3 SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

The production and use of consumer goods in industrialised countries uses much energy and resources: If this were to continue, we would need a second planet just for resources. Moreover, there is a growing concern about the degree of influence and the negative consequences of these activities for the population (Schoenheit 2009: 19f.). As I examined in chapter 3.1 there is a low recognition of these consequences of one's own consumption as there is a growing distance between the production and consumption places of goods. The concept of sustainable consumption suggests that freedom and choice of consumption is not limited but that it offers opportunities to act responsibly (*ibid.*: 21). The German Umweltbundesamt defines sustainable consumption as behaviour which is socially and environmental friendly (Umweltbundesamt 2014: 6), so it means that environmental consequences and preconditions for the production of products are being questioned. The questions of sustainability focus primarily on consumption patterns and the improvement of environmental impact as a result of product manufacturing and transport (Lange 2008: 12). Sustainable consumption suggests to question the place of origin and the manner of raw materials being used during the production process and can be seen as a way to reduce the overall ecological impact.

Besides the term 'sustainable consumption', there are many terms found in the literature (see fig. 2) which I consider being equivalent with sustainable.

English written literature	German written literature
- sustainable consumption	- nachhaltiger Konsum
-responsible consumption	- bewusster Konsum
- ethical consumerism	- strategischer Konsum
- green consumerism	- öko-intelligenter Konsum
- political consumerism	- ethischer Konsum

Fig. 2

I will make use of the term ‘sustainable consumption’ – since this is also stated in the introduction to *Heldenmarkt* and this is my research setting - but I considered literature using the above mentioned terms as well.

Regarding the relevance of sustainable consumption, I like to refer to Elinor Ostrom, who examined the so-called ,tragedy-of-the-commons. It describes the long-lasting ecological and societal damage because of individual’s short term needs and has long-term effects for everyone (cf. Ostrom 1990). One could argue that sustainable consumption is a model contrasting this egoistic lifestyle as it seeks to reduce the ecological impact. Sustainable consumption is a lifestyle change and might be seen as a means of adaptation to climate change. In fact, it is an individual adaptation strategy to climate change to contribute to a better environment.

3.2.4 STAKEHOLDERS OF SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Multiple stakeholders are involved in contributing to sustainable consumption: Consumers, politicians, companies, different NGOs and associations, states by legislation and other agreements – just to name a few. As I focus on the stakeholders participating at the *Heldenmarkt* , I will examine the role of companies and consumers in the following.

Role of enterprises

By producing and offering goods and services, companies carry a big responsibility contributing toward sustainable development. For example, they have the duty to deal with resources and energy economically, reduce emissions and sewage, take care of the health of employees, ensure gender equality, ensure equal distribution of profits or create human fair

working conditions everywhere (Hutter et al 2012: 169). However, sustainable development cannot be implemented in the company as a ready-made instrument: It has to evolve within a learning process for the whole company (Baedeker et al 2007: 637) which will be described in section 4.1.1.1 in detail.

Companies can have much influence as they might be able to „[...] partially substitute CPA’s ([consumer policy stakeholders] consumer information to promote sustainable consumption“ (Fricke & Schrader 2011: 27). Through lobbyism they may even influence laws. Their advertisements influence the lifestyle and demand patterns of consumers. Critics argue that marketing profits from consumers’ demands, but that the sustainability vision is used only to increase profits and a better reputation than authentic engagement for the environment (Bierhoff 2013: 62). Companies create engagement through multiple strategies. In figure 3, I summarized the different corporate strategies the companies make use of.

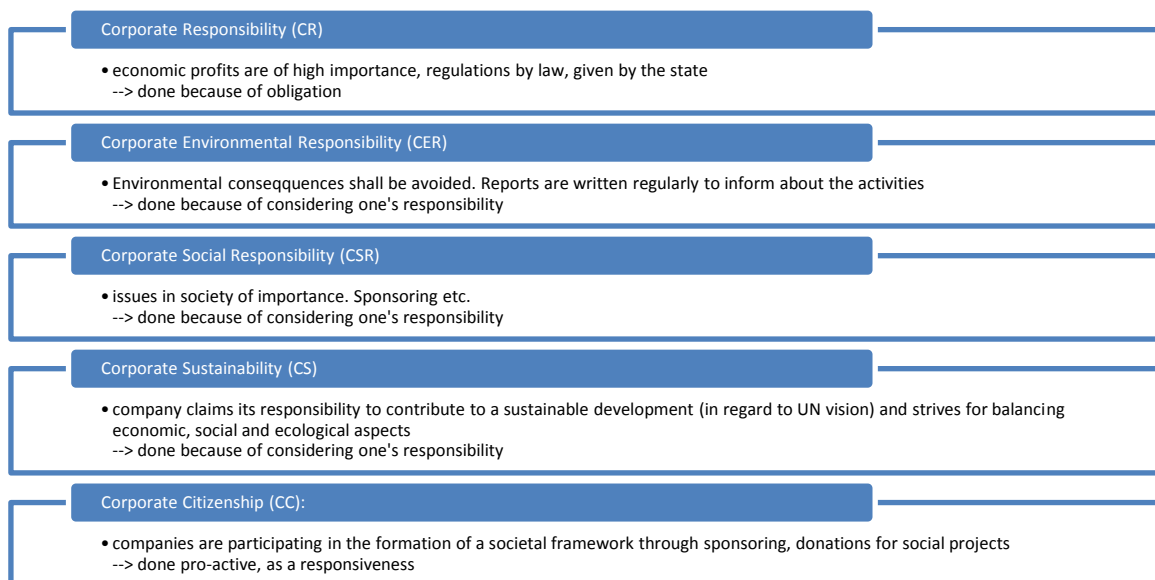


Figure 3: Corporate strategies of the companies (according to Weiß 2007: 596 ff.; Hutter et al. 2012: 170)

Nowadays, companies also promote consumers’ social responsibility within their communication: It is called Consumer’s Social Responsibility (CnSR) and companies are now articulating consumers’ responsibility and giving tips on how to change behaviour in accordance with sustainable development (Fricke & Schrader 2011: 25). CnSR can be seen as social marketing as well as sustainability marketing (ibid. 26) and in the end it is also

contributes to building consumer awareness and corporate citizenship behaviour. The role of consumers shall be examined in the next section.

Role of Consumers

The above mentioned Rio Conference in 1992 (see chapter 3.2.1) highlighted the significant role of consumers to contribute to sustainable development. As consumers are responsible for emissions because they demand low-priced goods, they should be aware of their responsibility (cf. Yunfeng & Laike 2010): According to the idea of sustainable consumption, the consumer is an ecologically and socially responsible citizen, who considers the consequences of her/his actions (ibid.: 21). This (self-)perception can be supported by the theory of agency stating that “[...] actors are the ultimate drivers of change”: Decisions made by individuals can mean micro level changes that are part of macro structural changes (Moran 2010: 34), which would mean the improvement of our environmental situation in the case of sustainable consumption: It is the idea that consumption behaviour influences sustainable and more environmental friendly production (Hutter et al. 2012: 166). However, there need to be some preconditions. These are (access to) knowledge concerning the problems, recognition of sustainability as a leading vision – and an actual change of one’s own behaviour in accordance with this ideal (ibid.: 167). In fact, these are found missing very often: There is a big gap between the high percentage of consumers who know and understand environmental problems and a small amount of consumers who adapt their consumption patterns in accordance with it. One reason might be the prioritization of one’s own advantages (Schoenheit 2009: 21). Taking into account this gap, it is important to recognize that the individual consumer cannot change planetary problems alone, but that we need specific (societal and economic) structures so that consumers are able to act according to their conscience (cf. Nixon 2011: 21, 38). Researchers identified a new group of consumers which they identify as LOHAS = Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability. These consumers focus on individual health and sustainability and critics state that people are consuming alternative products to buy a better conscience (cf. Bierhoff 2013: 61f.).

3.3 THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Besides the already presented concept of sustainability and sustainable consumption (see chapter 3.2) which is the basis for this work, I am referring to some additional concepts. As I am dealing with the assessment of sustainable products for stakeholders, my theoretical framework refers to main insights from the stakeholders' ethics toward nature, as they give valuable insights into human behaviour towards the environment. This will lead me to classifications in general and will also point out the power relations behind it. Moreover, I will present some key aspects of natural ethics as they provide an insight into human's way of treating the environment.

3.3.1 ASSESSMENTS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

As stated in the methodology that I am referring to discourse analysis (in chapter 2.1), it is interesting to examine what kind of classifications have been made as they are results of and within discourses (Traue et al. 2014: 503). Wanting to find out more about the assessments within sustainable consumption and understanding what is perceived as relevant for sustainable consumption, it seems important to me, to deal with classification processes and find out how they are constitutionalised. Classification processes are understood as summarising things into groups similar with moral and political content (Douglas 1991: 107f. according to Traue et al. 2014: 503). Produced classification schemes through discourses are very often nstitutionalised and contain assessments/valuations as well as attributions. Traue et al. pointed out that it is interesting to question in how far classifications are referred to in self-descriptions or what kind of identity creating effects they have (Traue et al. 2014: 503). This will be related to my question of the exhibitors' (self-) (self-)perception regarding sustainability. Moreover, one finds many different labels on products stating why they are good for the environment, which I will outline in section 4.1.1. Due to these labels or other certification programmes, I see a necessity of dealing with classification programmes.

Bowker and Star defined classifications as “*a spatial, temporal, or spatio-temporal segmentation of the world*” (Bowker & Star 2000: 10). This segmentation can be reached through organizing parts of the world in standardized boxes to be able to work with them (ibid.: 10). Classifications are found everywhere, as “*to classify is human*” (ibid.: 1). Its

ubiquity – the involvement in social, political, economic systems - is one important characteristic of classifications (ibid.: 38). It results into complexity as a second characteristic, besides the invisibility of classifications and lastly, a recursive influence of classifications and the network being affected by it.

Classifications unite different stakeholders –so they are able to function as boundary objects (Star & Griesemer 1989). Boundary objects can offer a common *modus operandi* to which different stakeholders originating from different backgrounds can refer (ibid.: 388). Therefore, classifications can exist in different industries and will fulfil needed demands in all of them. This means that they are able to communicate with different stakeholders and might facilitate communication in general (cf. ibid.: 39, 292).

Classifications can evoke different challenges or lead to negative consequences: They are not natural, and outside of their context they seem artificial and strange to outsiders (Bowker & Star 2000: 131). Moreover, different designers have different needs and demands (ibid.: 70) which leads to conflicts. Establishing different categories is an ethical decision and there might be advantages and disadvantages for different groups and individuals (ibid.: 5f.). This leads us to classifications and the (sometimes invisible) power relations behind them which very often become manifested or established because of classifications (ibid.: 127). Furthermore, classifications might eventually avoid future developments, as they communicate a static setting, which doesn't have to be static like that (ibid.: 69). What seems interesting is Bowker's & Star's recognition that classifications are used even though people do not believe in them and too much information and choices overstrain people (cf. ibid.: 4, 24).

3.3.2 POWER RELATIONS

Dealing with assessments, labels and classifications lead us to questions of power relations behind these processes. Inspired by Foucault, who analysed how power is exercised between stakeholders and for what purposes (see Ruffing 2008: 110), I aim to stay very attentive during my whole analysis to possible power relations and be aware of them myself. It was Foucault as well, who examined in his book 'Surveillance et punir' from 1975 that power could

also have a stimulating inspiring effect on supporting specific behaviours as power is not only exercised by power plays but by also offering incentives such as praise and recognition (Ruffing 2004: 267). Different assessments according to tests and certificates, create enormous influence in societies: Power acts productively by inducing specific behavioural patterns (ibid: 267). These thoughts regarding our behaviour and its relation to our environment will lead us to ethics of nature.

3.3.3 ETHIC OF NATURE

The ethic of nature offers valuable reflections on the relation of human behaviour and the environment as it focuses on the sense of acting morally and doubts that it is humans' right to exploit nature for own purposes (cf. Meyer 2011: 26). There are important insights made regarding the ways of attaching values to something which is of interest when dealing with (self-)perceptions and assessments of sustainability.

According to Lotze, values are defined as something emotionally accepted by human beings to which they refer to in their behaviour. First of all, it is important to note that a value is not the characteristic of an object. Rather it is something awarded to the object and thus becomes a part of it. This attribution is done by a subject - somebody who rates. In social contexts values are therefore standards, which are generally considered good or right. Therefore the value is dependent on humans and their (self-)perceptions. It signifies that it is an anthropocentric ethic: Only humans are able to evaluate (cf. Meyer 2011: 28).

Concerning the environment, ethic of nature follows naturecentric ethics and consequently, it supposes an intrinsic value attached to nature (Meyer 2011: 30, 43). Pursuing a holistic approach, humans are understood as being part of nature and therefore a close connection between their lives and nature is recognised: Humans are dependent on nature as human survival is not possible without it. This leads to the imperative of respecting and is examined by the ethic of the environment, a subdiscipline of the ethic of nature. It aims at defining how humans should treat their direct (non-human) environment (Meyer 2011: 61ff., 192). One philosopher who stated that the dignity of nature is in its pure existence as well, is Hans Jonas (1979: 153).

Jonas pointed out that it is not war but peaceful use of technology that results in the biggest environmental destruction (Meyer 2011: 63). This is why Jonas (1979: 15, 26) called for the consideration of the environment with a future perspective and recognition of long-distance effects: New technologies require new dimensions of responsibility. This can be related to Hornborg's consideration of embodied aspects in consumption goods presented in chapter 3.1.1. Considering the complexity and irreversibility of consequences of our actions, Jonas defined an ethics of consequences (cf.: 84) and formulated the ideas of sustainable principles (cf. section 3.2): He urged us to take responsibility for all consequences of our actions from a long-term perspective. Instead of making people responsible retrospectively for causative actions, Jonas focused on a responsibility for the future. This *responsibility of prevention* shall prevent people from doing things which they cannot control at a later stage (Meyer 2011: 66). Again I want to point out that an anthropocentric motivation lays behind which is in accordance with the presentation of the conceptualisation of sustainability outlined in section 3.2.1.

4. EMPIRICAL PART

The following section is differentiated into 1. a literature review dealing with an elaboration of assessments within the field of sustainable consumption and the contradictions found in the conception of sustainable consumption; 2. a presentation of my findings from primary and secondary data, which refers to the survey, website analysis and interviews I conducted and; 3. the interpretation and discussion of my findings.

4.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Having mind the analytical framework presented before, I will focus the on assessments within sustainable consumption to be followed by contradictions surrounding the conception of sustainable consumption in general. This overview offers already some interesting findings which will be considered in section 4.2 as well.

4.1.1 ASSESSING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

When dealing with sustainable consumption, unavoidably it raises the question of what actually is perceived as sustainable. How is a sustainable product, service or company recognised and who defines this? I will provide a brief overview into this topic in the following. First of all, I recognised that a distinction has to be made between the assessment of the companies, and their products or services. For both, there are different kinds of sustainability rating systems available. I will begin with some reflections on the assessment of companies, followed by an examination of product's assessments and the development of labels as a means to classify or categorise these products.

4.1.1.1 ASSESSING SUSTAINABLE COMPANIES

Keeping in mind the aspects worked out in section 3.3, on ethics of the environment, I would like to adapt this to the responsibility of companies: Enterprises have to consider their actions in light of their influence on the environment and consequently there are different initiatives to motivate companies to consider sustainability as an overall guiding principle. In 1999 it was Kofi Annan of the UN who asked companies to participate in the Global Compact programme assuring minimum social and ecological requirements for example human and employees rights, environmental protection as well as corruption (Clausen & Loew 2007: 614f.).

Another initiative, which was agreed upon by companies, NGOs as well as academics is the GRI - Global Reporting Initiative (Clausen & Loew 2007: 615). The stakeholders defined the guidelines for the preparation of companies' sustainability reports (cf. W_1). The GRI is internationally the best known catalogue of criteria regarding sustainability and aims at transparency as well as establishing a standardisation and comparability. It includes indicators with categories related to direct economic consequences, environment, working conditions, human rights, society and product stewardship (cf. Clausen & Loew 2007: 615).

Moreover, there are multiple rating agencies that assess the sustainability performance of companies (Clausen & Loew 2007: 616). In Germany, for example, there are oekom research, scoris and imug among others. They publish reports on the companies' performances

regularly. One way of assessing companies is the *Dow Jones Sustainability Index* (DJSI) (cf. Sietz et al: 65). Besides these criteria for rating companies' performances, there are a growing number of labels to help consumers identifying the companies' activities when buying a product. For example, CSE (Certified Sustainable Economics) is a label stating that companies aim at being sustainable in the long term. It exists since 2012 and can be used as a label on products as well (cf. W_2). However, there is a problem of trust concerning the company's activities: CSR is seen as merely greenwashing very often (Fricke & Schrader 2011: 26), which is done for the company's reputation but not for a contribution to sustainability.

All in all, it is important to note that sustainable development cannot simply be implemented as a ready-made instrument but has to be transacted within a framework of new organizational learning (Baedeker et al 2007: 637). Baedeker et al describes this transformational learning as "double-loop-learning" (ibid.: 637): It aims at the focus of the company's principles of sustainability by relating to valid information and establishing open communication processes (Brentel 2003: 62). This means that employees have to change their behavioural patterns. In consequence, the qualification and motivation of employees is very important to establish sustainability oriented performance models. If the vision endures within the company, it is essential that employees actually practice sustainability within the company as well (Baedeker et al 2007: 637, 644f.). This was also the reason that I decided to ask the employees themselves for their individual perspectives. In this manner, it is easier to understand, in how far they support the companies' sustainability vision or products.

4.1.1.2 ASSESSING SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

As I outlined in section 3.3.3, values are assigned only by humans, and they are not characteristics themselves. This is the case for sustainable consumption goods as well. Goods might receive the attribute of being sustainable due to different initiatives for the evaluation of companies or products performances in terms of sustainability (as *Heldenmarkt* is doing it as well). Here is an example. Suppose I buy a fair-trade certified chocolate: the chocolate itself does not carry the property, to be fair. Its properties/characteristics may be brown, sweet, bitter, hard etc. By ascertaining the method of production and trade as sustainable, a

certification body attaches the attribute 'fair' to the chocolate, as if it was a property, a characteristic of the chocolate. Then it awards the fair trade mark to the chocolate from the day of certification. This is important to recognise as these processes can be highly flexible and the chocolate may not remain 'fair' if manufacturing processes change.

There are different product certification systems such as in Germany there is the *Umweltbezogenes Produktbewertungssystem* (UPB) (cf. Sietz et al., Gottschlich 2004). If one wants to evaluate a product's eco-standard, one has to assess all environmental impacts at all stages in the whole life cycle of a product (Grunwald 2012: 69). The sustainability characteristics of products are achieved by the organisation of resources from production till disposal and are not obviously recognised when looking at just the final product (Schoenheit 2009: 22). Since many contradictions evolve in this life cycle, it is difficult to balance the criteria when assessing the environmental friendliness of a product. However, the UPB for example, designed checklists with multiple indicators and criteria in accordance with the life cycle design. The assessment is categorised in three groups describing the situation in terms of each criteria suggesting the degree of need for actions (Sietz et al. 2008: 126f.).

One way of communicating the results of a product's assessments to consumers is the use of labels and certificates. The advantages and disadvantages of using labels have been highly debated within academic discourse (cf. Gallategui 2002, Morris 1997, Dosi & Moretto 1999). Dealing with labels, I would like to relate to a characteristic of classifications worked out in section 3.3.1: its function as a boundary object being able to communicate in a complex actor network. A label such as the European organic label communicates across different states with different legislations the setting up of an obliging commitment regarding organic crop growing regardless other state's laws. Moreover, it provides consumers with the same information in different countries, making them capable of identifying organic products in the entire European Union. However, among many scholars, Schoenheit (2009: 23) pointed out the difficulty in developing a label regarding sustainability: Since complex issues have to be addressed, it is a big challenge to the designers to assure expertise and credibility of the label. One has to consider complex challenges concerning the criteria being different for each product line (ibid.: 23).

I would like to add that since we are confronted with a dynamic process regarding sustainability it is difficult to define rules for labels because the circumstances may change over time and context. Power & Mont (2013: 10) also noticed the difficulty of establishing eco-labels as they are not able to adopt to rapid product innovation cycles and suggest instruments such as ‘Top Ten’ rankings which can be reviewed more often.

Concerning the general (self-)perception of labels on the market it is worth mentioning the high number of different labels that exist and confront the consumers with an information overload: It is hard to find out the meaning and trustworthiness of the statements on the products (Schoenheit 2009: 23). In Germany there are more than 400 eco-labels to be found (Grießhammer 2012: 39). This is also related to a point made in section (cf. 3.3.1) earlier that too much information overstrains people. It leads us to another important aspect concerning characteristics of sustainable products – so the fact is that people have to rely on trust: Consumers have to trust the correctness of the provided information. As I mentioned above (see 6.4.1), trust plays a significant role when considering labels and provision of information: Consumers have to trust the control and compliance criteria set up. It is difficult to judge them, so they have no choice but to believe in them – more or less (cf. Schoenheit 2009: 22).

However, as outlined in section 3.3.1 the positive influence of certification also has some role in stimulating specific behaviours. It is interesting to relate this to the fact that due to increasing use of labels a competition among companies developed as well. Companies are trying to receive certifications and are aiming at a participation in label programmes to get a better standing in the market. If more and more companies highlight their social and environmental engagements, it will force others to do so, too. I would like to refer here to the characteristics of classification once more (cf. chapter 3.3.1), in that classifications are used even though people do not believe in them (Bowker & Star 2000: 4): In this case, it is done by companies to be able to compete in the market.

To sum up, it is really difficult to find if a product really is sustainable or to be able to distinguish between good and bad products. In the end, one can only assess if a product is better or more sustainable than others or not (Schoenheit 2009: 23). To my mind, this is an essential point that Schoenheit worked out. I would conclude that sustainable products can only mean the better alternatives and these can change in a dynamic environment.

4.1.2 CONTRADICTIONS CONCERNING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Dealing theoretically and practically with sustainable consumption in detail, I found myself being confronted with many contradictions, suggesting that the conception of sustainability does not meet its own demands. During the discourse analysis, I came upon similar thoughts among other researchers, too, which I considered in my assumptions presented in the following:

1. Sustainable consumption empowers the culture of consumption.

First of all I think that consumption by itself is not sustainable at all. Moreover, a market offering so called sustainable products will empower the culture of consumption (cf. chapter 3.1.2) and may lead to even higher consumption in general which may lead in turn to an increasing use of resources needed for the production. This increase is called ‘rebound effect’ in the literature (e.g. Paech 2013). One example might be the increasing amount of private long distance car drives due to the “[...] fuel saved through eco-efficient driving” (Fricke & Schrader 2011: 26). This means that more environmental and social friendly products or manufacturing processes leading to efficiency are compensated by increasing growth in consumption (Reisch & Kreeb 2007: 464).

2. Sustainable consumption is not fair and excluding people.

Sustainable consumption is only done by a minority of the German population. One reason is that people consider price as a more important criteria in purchase decision making among different products (Schoenheit 2009: 24). Moreover, among this minority, people use sustainable consumption often as a status symbol (ibid.: 24) and in fact, many LOHAS do not act as environmentally friendly as they were assumed to before (Grunwald 2012: 80). Also, not everybody is able to participate in sustainability. People with less income should not be excluded from sustainable consumption (Schoenheit 2009: 24). Furthermore, I think that others may not have the chance to access the needed knowledge. This leads us to a problem of justice. In fact, the social dimension of sustainability demands justice and therefore a deconstruction of hierarchies. However, many institutions such as the *Heldenmarkt* are in a powerful position over others when it comes to this form of justice as they decide which companies or products are worth allowing participation.

3. Sustainable consumption is used to salve one's conscience.

Buying sustainable products may lead people to salve one's conscience and is done with some sense of charity. To some consumers, the alternative products offer a legitimization of consumption as they contribute to something good: By living luxury life, one assists the poor? Moreover consumption leads to increased production in other countries and will contribute to the economic success of developing countries so that they are able to pay the compensation bills for the destruction of the environment caused by manufacturing processes. Hornborg spoke in relation to the colonial white man's burden, of a white consumer's burden nowadays – since consumers may think to save the world by their sustainable consumption patterns – as buying “[...] of Chinese commodities will help China pay for a clean environment and become ‘sustainable’” (Hornborg 2008: 5). As one can recognize easily, environmental destruction originates in the increasing demand for sustainable products as well.

4. Sustainability events are not sustainable themselves.

In the magazine *Workshop* it has been pointed out that sustainability has to do with avoiding wastage (*Workshop* 2012: 18). During a trade fair – or a sustainability event as *Heldenmarkt* - there is a lot of waste and a number of things are used which cannot be recycled or may even be toxic. Therefore events like this should be planned well concerning the material to be used and constructive recycling after the event. One has to assess critically, what kind of resources are used by the stakeholders of the sustainability scene. To my mind this brings up the essential question of figuring out how we can identify if the waste produced at an event is justified for the promotion of sustainable development. Moreover, the magazine pointed out that it is not just about ecological but social and economic aspects as well: Employees need good working conditions so that they are willing and able to work effectively, as the human stakeholder is essential for the success of an event (cf. *ibid.*: 18f.). This will lead us to the next contradiction:

5. Actors within the sustainable consumption scene are not sustainable themselves.

Companies offering sustainable products or wanting to contribute to sustainability are often not sustainable themselves. Frequently this is due to the fact that they see themselves confronted with the difficulty of surviving in the market. There is a lack of fair payment for employees and companies are not well supported for their commitment to contribute to

sustainable development. At this point it is interesting to mention that some researchers such as Zahrnt et al. (2014) showed that it is possible to lead a company without following the current trend of only striving for growth.

To my mind it is very important to recognize these contradictions as they mirror the complexity of sustainability (cf. chapter 3.2). Depending on the level of self-reflection of the consumers, I think it can be more or less useful to confront people with the complexity of the positive and negative effects of sustainable consumption. Considering that too much complexity (which sustainability is in itself already) somehow overwhelms and overburdens consumers (compare for example with Fiala 2014), I suggest that it is best to convince people by consuming more sustainably and making it as comfortable and easy as possible to start with. Gradually, people will learn to recognize the reality of different labels and certification statements and question their credibility. This will change the activities of companies as well. Possibly companies started communicating sustainability only as a marketing strategy, but this green washing may lead to more real actions as well as their their work will be assessed and criticised by consumers as well (cf. Heidbrink & Schmidt 2009). In the following analysis of my research data dealing with the people's (self-) perceptions, I will refer to the framework presented in chapter 3 and consider these five assumptions made above, too. I will analyse if respondents' statements meet the assumptions made.

4.2 FINDINGS: PRESENTATION OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA

In this section the main data of the research is examined and presented in the first section and discussed, with regards to chapter 3, in the second section.

4.2.1 EVALUATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

To evaluate the questionnaire data, I analysed each question separately and clustered the given answers by similarity. In this manner, I was able to see similarities in the answers and could group similar meanings into categories with specific statements. I differentiated which sector the employees company belonged to, to be able to check, if there were significant differences in people's (self.)perceptions according to the sector they worked in. In the following, I will briefly summarize and in a second step interpret the responses according to

the four questions asked. A fifth question was inviting the respondents to comment on anything they would feel being important to them concerning sustainability, sustainable consumption, the event *Heldenmarkt* or any comments concerning the questionnaire. It was used by six persons - mainly to state how the event could be improved and some critical reflections concerning consumption behaviour in general. All original answers can be found in an excel chart with an overview of the sectors they came from and can be provided immediately.

4.2.1.1 EMPLOYEES‘ UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABILITY

Question 1 dealt with the (self-)perception and understanding of sustainability and the vast majority of answers corresponded only to the ecological dimension of sustainability. As presented in fig. 4, the three most common statements concerning people’s individual understanding of sustainability deal with a reflective behaviour of consumers. This is followed by ecological (call for organic agriculture) and social concerns (worker’s conditions).

dimension	aspect	answers in total
moral	thinking and reflecting consciously upon consumption decisions	14
moral	less consumption in general	1
moral, ecological,	avoidance of buying new things	9
ecological	organic cultivation	8
social	fair payment for the workers	8

fig. 4 The most common (self-)perception of sustainability

There are several statements which are describing a need for ethical behaviour. One respondent noted that there are segments wherein it is easier to identify sustainable products (e.g. food) and others where it is more difficult (e.g. computers).

People from the food sector did not mention the moral dimension frequently. In contrast, people from information as well as services and fashion sectors reflected upon the moral dimension a lot.

Interpretation of the Findings

This might be due to the fact that their products are more luxury oriented than is food, which is a necessity. As sustainable consumption firstly aims at a reflection upon how it is produced, where it was grown under what conditions etc., it does not follow a principle of reducing consumption in total - whereas in case of other items such as fashion, we might be more easily concerned with the general question of the products relevance. To my mind, this can be considered in line with the presented term ethical consumption (cf. chapter 3.2.3), which describes a specific state of mind being present when consuming. Moreover, I want to refer to chapter 3.2.2 where I presented some ideas for establishing sustainability as an overall guiding principle which goes well together with the ethical considerations the participants mentioned. I assume that sustainable consumption appeals to more people due to the current use of the term sustainability, but in fact, I suggest that ethical consumption as a term would describe this actual way of consuming better.

However, my recognition of bringing up a category named ethical dimension during my analysis, I suggest complementing the conceptualisation of sustainability with an ethical dimension to address the actual need for a specific behaviour among individuals which is signified by reflective thinking. One could organise these aspects within the social dimension as well, but I see a difference since this ethical dimension only appeals to an ethical state of mind, which is dependent upon an individual's character. I want to point out the need for a specific inner attitude; it is therefore another level of awareness, which might be primarily marked by respect and empathy for example. The social dimension appeals to social actions, which of course are of moral or ethical value. However, these actions can also be performed I assume, when green washing. Even when not being an empathic or an environment saving person, one can do one's social duty, which actually is something good and not done just for the purpose of sustainable development. An organization can engage in the social dimension

and support social projects, donate money because it is e.g. required by law or supports a better reputation (cf. chapter 3.2.4).

In fact, sustainability is in need of living up to specific morals (as presented as an overall guideline in section 3.2.2 to support a long-term perspective. This long-term involvement can go in line with authenticity and should differ from green washing. For installing a real and continuously sustainable development, we need this kind of thought process. Moral values, could guide us to consider our present and future generation’s well-being. If this becomes anchored in our thinking, acting sustainably might become an overall natural guiding principle that Lange called for (cf. section 3.2). Companies following these principles may sustain profitably for a long time as they do not evolve out of a purely capitalist aim for profits but also follow a mission, contributing to their vision of a sustainably living society.

4.2.1.2 COMPANIES’ UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABILITY

Question 2 dealt with the companies’ vision concerning sustainability and its contribution to a sustainable development or relevance for sustainable consumption. As it can be seen in fig. 5, the top 5 answers are similiarly all referring to the ecological dimension and focus on reductions of packagings, transport resource use, longevity of products and a consideration of product’s life cycle.

dimension	aspect	total
<i>ecological</i>	reducing and environmentalfriendly packaging	6
<i>ecological</i>	reduced and environmental friendly use of resources for production	4
<i>ecological</i>	local production --> avoiding transports	4
<i>ecological</i>	considering product's life cycle, holistic thinking	4
<i>ecological</i>	longevity of products	4

Fig. 5: Thee top 5 responses on why the company/products/services are sustainable

Almost nobody referred to the economic dimension. Two respondents only mentioned the assurance of strict quality controls which could be related to the economic dimension. Regarding the company’s contribution to sustainability, there were three most common answers, as seen in fig. 6. Half the respondents mentioned their impact by educating others

and creating consciousness among people; other statements focused on use of green energy and eco-friendly office material.

dimension	aspect	total
<i>moral, social</i>	educating or advising others, creating consciousness among people	13
<i>ecological</i>	investing into or making use of green energy	11
<i>ecological</i>	use of eco-friendly office material	10

Fig. 6: top 3 answers regarding the company's contribution to sustainability

One single person mentioned their company's participation in a certification programme (selling GOTS certified products) when explaining why the company can be seen as sustainable and what their contribution to sustainable consumption looks like. Moreover, two aspects were stated dealing with a general claim regarding sustainable consumption: It should be understood in a holistic sense and consider the product's life cycle; and it should describe a reduction and avoidance of consumption.

Interpretation of the Findings

The highlighting of the ecological dimension when explaining the sustainability vision, mirrors very good the conceptualisation of sustainability as a pyramid presented in chapter 3.2.1. It is in the focus of companies' (self-) perceptions and like this offers another reason, to conceptualise the ecological dimension as the foundational basis. Focusing might be seen as a starting point on the way to a sustainable development and the social and economic dimension will followed.

Looking at the reasoning for the companies' contribution to sustainability, it is interesting to note, that certificates were not used (except of one respondent) as a proof for their engagement. I recognised that this is done by conventional supermarkets as *Rewe* or discounters as *Netto* and *Lidl* very often: When explaining examining their CSR or sustainability engagement, they demonstrate certificates on available products in their shops (cf. W_3, W_4 & W_5). It seems that the *Heldenmarkt* participants don't identify with

certificated and don't justify themselves in advance for the companies' sustainability engagement, which will let me assume that they have an authentic interest and contribution to made to a sustainable development. This leads me to conclude it might be *Heldenmarkt*'s quality that participants are not assessed in reference to their certifications only but also consider ethical standpoints of the participants.

4.2.1.3 REPRESENTATION OF UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABILITY AT THE HELDENMARKT

Considering the way the companies' visions are represented at the *Heldenmarkt*, it is evident that the three most common answers (see fig. 7) deal with the diversity and the concept of *Heldenmarkt* as a whole. Participants respect that it is not an ordinary sales fair but that there is inspiring exchange of information taking place and organisers make good choices in choosing the participants.

representation	aspect	total
yes, is represented	plurality, inspiration and platform for alternatives	9
yes, is represented	information and educating platform - not just consumption event	7
yes, is represented	good consequent choice of exhibitors (exclusion of non organic products)	6

Fig. 7: p' top 3 answers concerning representation of companies' vision at the *Heldenmarkt*

Most critical remarks came from the information and services sector; however, they also gave positive feedback at the same time. Some people stated the difficulty of participation costs. Only respondents working in the services sector dealing with investments stated that the costs were not too high. Another critics regarding the implementation of *Heldenmarkt* 1 was given by 8 respondents and concerned to little amount of small business, offers of regional/local products or producers. Other respondents mostly gave feedback on how far the vision was mirrored at the event - which was fulfilled in the case of the majority.

Interpretation of the Findings

First of all, looking at these responses it becomes obvious, that sustainable consumption goes along with supporting small local or regional businesses. Secondly, participants reflected critically on the role of *Heldenmarkt*. Relating to assumption 4 made in chapter 4.1.2, it shows that interviewees are discussing these issues as well. It was pointed out that the material use is considered carefully by the team *Heldenmarkt*, but negatively it was criticised the financial barrier. This is interesting to draw in line with assumption 2 that sustainable consumption is excluding others. Only respondents from finances sector mentioned the affordability of participation costs. This shows that there must be different standards among the different sectors within the realms of sustainable consumption. Participation costs are too high for some small business so they feel excluded. At this point I would suggest *Heldenmarkt* to implement solidary models so that bigger companies could decide to pay more on a voluntary basis to support smaller local stakeholders. This would make sustainable vision more alive and come into practice.

4.2.1.4 PARTICIPATIONS AND OPINIONS ON CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

Out of the 27 respondents, 11 participated in certification programmes, 13 did not and three did not state if they did. The companies that did not have certificates were mostly related to the services sector in which approved labels are uncommon as mentioned by one respondent. Out of the four respondents, two own an online shop and themselves demand certificates from their suppliers. One deals with textiles from hemp, for which no certifications exist at the moment.

The certificate most commonly referred to is the EU Bio Siegel, the label that assures organic cultivation. Among the people who are not part of a certification programme, three respondents outlined their role in themselves distributing certificates to others. One respondent outlined explicitly that he does not know of any label which would meet the company's standards at this point of time (cf. W_). When examining the advantages of certification, more than half of the respondents mentioned the positive impression on consumers by communicating reliability. Similarly, the three top aspects can see in the

following chart fig. 8. In terms of individual/company advantages it was mentioned that companies could find out their own standing and see how the competition compared.

aspect	total
helps consumers identify good products	9
supports reliability of product information/ offers some security for consumers	7
consumers look for certificates	4

Fig. 8: Top 3 answers concerning advantages of certification programmes

Disadvantages of certification came up as well, mostly by people from the information sector followed by services and fashion. Respondents had doubts concerning certification programmes (see fig. 9) because of the efforts needed in terms of costs and bureaucracy. Green washing and confusing consumers with too much information were also mentioned as concerns:

aspect	total
expensive	6
time-consuming and complex process	4
danger of green washing (e.g. FSC)	3
consumers are being overstrained by existing label jungle	3

Fig. 9 top 4 answers concerning disadvantages/doubts concerning certification programmes

Interpretation of the Findings

The data mirrors the already existing discussions in the literature very well. It shows that certifications are mainly used for the communication with consumers or to simplify consumers' decision making processes by assuring the product's reliability - as this is also what they have been designed for (cf. chapter 4.1.1.2). Furthermore, consumers looking for labels will encourage companies to participate in certification programmes, too. This shows the recursive characteristics of knowledge and power outlined in chapter 3.3.2. Moreover, the (self-)perception of certification programmes correlates with Foucault's understanding of power, which is considered as being decentralised and present everywhere. This is mirrored in

the statement that one could find out more about the companies' competition through certifications. For companies, the certification programmes offer a possibility to find out more about their positions in the market, comparison and areas of improvement. The statement, that no label would meet the company's standards, shows the high demands that companies are having themselves. Additionally, it confirms the challenge of classifications mentioned in chapter 3.3.1 of unifying different needs and demands of different stakeholders.

4.2.1.5 CONCLUSION

Considering all responses and data, it is interesting to see that there is a correlation between the individual (self-)perception of sustainability and the company's contribution to it: In general, most answers relate to the ecological and social (or moral) dimension. It is important to recognise that the economical dimension got hardly any attention at all; it was considered in presentations of individual understandings of sustainability.

Looking at topics 1 and 2, we can see that, when conceptualising sustainability, respondents often relate to the trinity of the concept as presented in chapter 3.2.1. However, when it comes to the actual realisation in companies, the economical dimension seems to be missing.

4.2.2 EVALUATION OF INTERVIEWS

With each interviewee I spoke about the three topics which are similar to sections 4.2.1.1, 4.2.1.2 and 4.2.1.4: The individual understanding of sustainable consumption, the company's work within the realms of sustainability as well as participation and thoughts regarding certification programmes. The findings will be presented in the following:

4.2.2.1 EMPLOYEES' UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABILITY

Regarding the interviewees' understanding of sustainability, they stated regional products (I_1, I_2, I_3), seasonal and organic food (I_1, I_3), less wastage (I_3) as key points. Moreover, two persons pointed out that it is about a general critical questioning where the products are coming from (I_2, I_3). Furthermore, one interviewee said that he aims at better and efficiently using things (I_1).

All three interviewees gave the example of a dilemma situation of choosing if it is better to buy an organic apple coming from another country or a non-organic apple coming from their region. All preferred buying the non-organic apple from a farmer of their region (cf. I_1, I_2, I_3). Especially Diana pointed out that the decisions and assessments if something was fair or not, are done emotionally, with regards to one's own intuition (I_3). Other examples dealt with discussions such as finding out if re-use of glass or plastic bottles would be better (I_1) or the use of Bio-Plastics (I_3). Diana stated that everything can be criticised but one should focus on the better alternate option (I_3).

When talking about their individual (self-)perceptions of sustainability, the interviewees immediately pointed out their motivation. All interviewees said that their motivation is to support local stakeholders (I_1, I_2, I_3). Moreover, two persons stated that resources and the environment should be preserved (I_1, I_2). Steffen shared his personal motto in life stating that one should leave a room in the condition one found it: Next generations should have the same opportunities as we have right now and should not be limited by us using up resources unsustainably (I_2). Diana considering universal connections, has the urge of giving something back. This is why she donates 20% of her monthly income to other initiatives (I_3). Ole admitted that he still wants to enjoy life and probably salves his conscience by consuming sustainably (I_1).

Interpretation of the Findings

The last mentioned response regarding salving one's conscience goes along with the assumption 3 made in chapter 4.1.2, which states that sustainable consumption is done to feel better than consuming conventional products. However, two interviewees were pointing out the feeling of responsibility for next generations, which actually describes exactly the definition of sustainability aiming at the assurance of same preconditions for future generations (cf. chapter 3.2.1). Interviewees put own needs last and somehow describe a holistic thinking guiding them in their actions – especially as Diana did. However, the statement of Ole shows that there still are specific consumption needs, which he likes to be satisfied. The possibility to still choose among has been presented in chapter 3.2.3, too, and

furthermore the statement might show the influence of the culture of consumption creating needs among consumers, as presented in chapter 3.1.2.

The complexity of processes being involved in the product make it difficult to assess if something is more or less sustainable to buy. This was demonstrated by all through the examples of apple. XI). Moreover, Dianas statement that assessments are done emotionally, has to be brought in line with Lotze's statement outlined in section 3.3.3 stating that values are something emotionally superior approved. To my mind this is an important aspect to consider as it could mean that it is not possible at all to design universally valid criteria when looking for rating systems. Since emotions are highly subjective/individual, the (self-)perception and acceptance may always differ. In section 4.1.1 I assumed already that the assessment decisions can only consider if something is a better alternative contributing to a more sustainable development.

4.2.2.2 COMPANIES' UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABILITY

Firstly, it is worth mention that all interviewees stated their conviction for products offered by their companies. Ole pointed out the good quality of the products which are also costly but would contribute to the long term existence of the company, too (I_1). The companies make use of regional and organic raw materials and prefer regional suppliers (I_2, I_3). Moreover, wastages are reduced (I_2), resources saved through less printing for example (I_1) and renewable resources are used (I_2). Other points reflected on are the companies' logistics within the whole commodity chain (I_1, I_2). Furthermore, the interviewees highlighted the educational commitment of the companies: One company offers courses at its own academy, regardless of economic profits (I_1)- and another discusses sustainable lifestyles in workshops (I_3).

The interviewees mentioned challenges and difficulties for the companies as well: Diana told me about the financial problems especially due to heavy workload in a one-woman business and many discounts for friends' friends etc. (I_3). At this point I want to highlight that this was shared during informal discussions during my participation in the event. At the same time, she told me that she offers goods exchanges to people as well, instead of cash payments

(I_3). Everybody also shared criticism and suggested what companies could do to improve, e.g. CO2 neutral postages (I_3), business trips without air travel (I_1) and more energy efficient company buildings (I_2).

Interpretation of the Findings

Two interviewees being convinced of the companies' products (I_1, I_2) which offer technological inventions – can be interpreted that they follow the efficiency strategy (see section 2.2): They support efficient technologies but don't want to miss enjoyment (as I examined the concept of sustainable consumption in section 3.2.3). The responses confirm assumption 5 presented in chapter 4.1.2 - that there is a lack of fair payment. This obviously does not concern either the employees in producer countries only (which is avoided e.g. through Fair Trade initiatives) or the founders and workers in German companies striving for sustainability. However, the example of Diana trying to implement alternative ways of payment shows that following own convictions is of high importance. Moreover, as all interviewees had ideas what could be improved in the companies and expressed the desire to more strict sustainability compliance from their companies, I conclude that employees have higher demands on the companies than their actual performances suggests. The commitment of companies in education and provision of information contradicts the economy of deception presented in chapter 3.1.2. In the truth, the companies are aiming at providing information to consumers and encourage them to make use of information.

4.2.2.3 PARTICIPATIONS AND OPINIONS ON CERTIFICATION PROGRAMMES

All three interviewees worked in companies that were certified with the organic label of the European Union. Moreover, Steffen's company carries the Fair Trade labels and a label stating the product's compostable quality as well (I_2). The use of the label is considered an important marketing tool to reinforce the products' credibility as many other companies just state that their products are sustainable without getting any certification or eco labels. Moreover, the individual agreement with the fair trade labels' requirements played a role in the decision for participation (I_2). One interviewee said that she wanted to have the right to declare her products being based on organic ingredients because she was using them:

Consumers should know that organic ingredients are more expensive than conventional products, so she decided to pay for the costly certification process (I_3).

Regarding their individual opinion on certifications one interviewee mentioned that he heard of many cases in which the certification standards have not been held up. Ole stated that not everything is labelled correctly but mentioned that it is the better option for development in a right general direction. Moreover he points out the needed trust into the implementation of labels' standards (I_1).

Interpretation of the Findings

In terms of certification programmes all three interviewees have a critical standpoint or uttered scepticism if the standards of labels' criteria are met. However, they make use of it, which is in accordance with the statements made in chapter 4.2.1 as one doesn't know better options so far. It confirms the statement made in chapter 3.3.1 that many classifications are used despite a lack of believe in it. Reasoning the participation in a certification programm due to marketing purposes, the interviews confirm the results from the questionnaires as well. Moreover it mirrors the power relations standing behind the certification system: Diana felt being forced to buy the certification as she would not get the permission to declare her use of organic ingredients otherwise. This shows the enormous pressure that assessments can have on society, as introduced in section 3.3.2.

Finally, it can be said, that in the interviews the social dimension was highlighted the most. Interviewees addressed the complexity of sustainability issues themselves and also shared their own scepticism.

4.2.3 EVALUATION OF WEBSITE ANALYSIS

The motivation behind website analysis was to understand the companies' communication in more detail to be able to differentiate better between the (self-)perceptions of the employees and the companies about sustainability. I studied all the 26 websites of the various companies with which my interview partners (3) or participants in the survey (27) were associated. Two websites could not be studied, as two respondents did not mention their company. Additionally, two respondents worked for the same company as two other respondents. The overview of the websites taken into account can be found in the appendix (see A_5),

companies' belonging to which sectors can be seen in fig. 10 below. According to the categories established, I will summarise briefly the main findings in the following.

sector	number of studied websites
Fashion	4
Food	5
Information	4
Mobility & Leisure	1
Other	3
Services	9

Fig. 10: Websites checked and the companies belonging to which sector

4.2.3.1 SUSTAINABILITY

More than two third of the websites studied had a statement regarding the company's vision which referred to sustainability issues. A clear definition of sustainability in general was missing except for W_22, W_24, W_26. Almost every website offered information which appealed to one of the three dimensions of sustainability (cf. section 3.2.1). Almost half of the websites studied (11 out of 26) referred to all three dimensions (e.g. W_7, W_23, W_30). However, the ecological dimension was referred to the most often.

As one can see in the chart (see A_7) I checked if specific terms were used on the websites as I expected them to be important for sustainability (self-)perceptions. These attributes were also mentioned as key words in the questionnaire. In terms of frequency the order was as follows: regional (11), bio (10), fair (6), direct marketing (3), second hand (2), Cradle to Cradle (2), reparability (2) and seasonal (1). Moreover, I have also presented below an overview of other terms used relating to sustainability in figure A_7 in the appendix. The most common responded aspects are shown in fig. 11.

terms used	translation of the term	frequency of responses
Grüne Zahlen/ Projekte/ Energie/ Anlagen/ Bücher	green numbers/ projects/ energy/ investments/books	6
Umweltfreundlich/umweltverträglich/ umweltschonend	environmental friendly/sound/compatible	6

Klimaschonend/klimafreundlich/ Klimaschutz	climate-friendly/ climate protection	5
Energiewende	energy transition	5
Ökologisch/Öko-Qualität	ecological, eco-quality	5
Zukunftsfähig/langfristig	long-term, sustainable	5

Fig.11 Most common frequent responses

4.2.3.2 SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

More than the half (15 out of 26) stated or encouraged the necessity of a critical or conscious way of consumption in general, but only four suggested to reduce consumption at all. This was stated in terms of a personal statement, the publishing of own magazines or tips for conscious consumption behaviour. The stakeholders of sustainable consumption most frequently mentioned are consumers (14), followed by partners or suppliers (11), producers (7), and traders (7). This is in accordance with websites' communication focused on consumers (11). Four websites focused mainly on the production process of their products and six on the company's management. Some companies could be found which focused on multiple aspects simultaneously.

4.2.3.3 CERTIFICATIONS

Out of 26 websites, 10 did not state any participation in certification programmes. The 16 companies stating participation in different programmes related to labels but most frequently to certificates from different institutions. These evaluations are very often the result of some kind of test reports. Most frequently, the organic label "Bio-Siegel" was presented. Two companies reasoned why they did not have a fair trade label and stated that these standards are a self-evident fact to them (cf. W_9, W_14).

4.2.3.4 COMPANIES' CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT DESIGN

Around half (12) of the websites studied offered more detailed information surrounding the material or resources used for the products offered. For example companies stated how resources have been grown or use of recycled material. Only four websites pointed out a

holistic thinking and consider the product's 'after life': They stated the recyclability of the product (cf. W_9, W_14), the company's engagement in retaking the product after usage (cf. W_9) and implemented measures to design a bio degradable product (cf. W_6, W_10, W_14).

Interpretation of the Findings

The information on the websites addresses consumers as the communication looks for sales of the sustainable products and the sensibilisation of sustainable issues (cf. Wehrli et al. 2013: 1). It is comprehensible that a critical way of consumption is encouraged, so that consumers decide for the alternative products –as the website owner is offering. The recommendation of reduction of consumption would hinder the companies' aim of increasing sales through advertisements; this might be the reason that it is not stated on the websites.

Analysing how companies are reasoning its contribution to sustainability, it was obvious that most of them were putting emphasis on the products' design than on the management of the company. Most of the exhibitors don't use the term sustainable at all and do not state in how far the product is sustainable or what is being sustained. It was interesting to see that the most frequent attributes used have been regional, bio and fair as these are the attributes used in the communication of *Heldenmarkt's* marketing (e.g flyer and poster design) as well. Regarding other terms used for sustainability issues (cf. fig. 11), it is important to recognise that these terms are very broad and have less focus on specific topics. Moreover, five out of the six most common terms appeal to the ecological dimension. Social and economic dimension seem less in focus. It was remarkably, that especially participants from the services sector mentioned a lot of social aspects. This illustrates to me that they support the idea of sustainable development and honestly look for alternatives in the financial market.

4.3 DISCUSSION

After the presentations and short interpretations of the research findings, I will outline and discuss main results of the whole analysis afterwards.

4.3.1 INTERRELATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

First of all it is to state that all findings of the different research methods used confirm or reinforce each other. This high amount of similar statements increases the reliability of the findings. In my research it was obvious to see that all interviewees, participants and websites studied focused on the companies' products or services offered. Only a minority was also examining the company's management. Especially the interview partners and survey participants expressed their motivation or reasoning for sustainable consumption which can be related to the world systems theory and unequal ecological exchange as outlined in chapter 3.1. Their recognition of injustice became a driving force, a motivation in changing their consumption patterns or to be engaged in sustainable consumption.

Regarding a definition of sustainability, the findings from the website analysis and from survey data are similar: The ecological dimension was mentioned the most and in interviews it was the dimension that the interviewees referred to primarily also. However it is remarkable that the social aspects have been pointed out in detail. The economic dimension was very difficult to grasp - it was barely mentioned by the respondents at all. It got most attention when reflecting the participation costs at the *Heldenmarkt* exhibition or in certification programmes.

However when comparing the survey and interview results regarding the individual (self-) perceptions of employees there seem to be other values of higher relevance than the company's vision. From the responses given it becomes obvious, that in general opinion, sustainable consumption goes along with supporting small local or regional businesses - despite the fact that not a lot of persons mentioned this in question number when outlining the personal (self-)perception of sustainability. This shows that we have clear ideas and expectations concerning sustainability or sustainable consumption but obviously, we are not aware of them sometimes.

Obviously, one big discrepancy among the data of the different methods used is the much smaller discussion of the sustainability visions presented on the websites than stated in the questionnaires or interviews. This will be due to the fact, that they have been specifically invited for an intense reflection. The websites' visions focus on the products' designs and especially point out environmental protection initiatives. In the questionnaires and interviews, the social aspects have been highlighted – I guess this is because an own reflection of themselves being in a (sustainable) consumer role at the same time. As one could easily assess that websites are mainly designed to provide information to consumers, it is comprehensible that maybe a critical way of consumption is encouraged, so that consumers decide for the alternative products – as the website owner is offering. However, a recommendation of reduction of consumption would hinder the companies' aim of increasing sales through advertisements; this might be the reason that it is not at all stated on the websites. However when comparing the survey and interview results regarding the individual (self-)perceptions of employees there seem to be other values of higher relevance than the company's vision.

4.3.2 INTERRELATIONS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings suggest that complexities and contradictions within sustainable consumption as well as its assessments are addressed by all participants. I will summarise some main results drawn from the research. This is organised in terms of relevant topics stated in the following sub-headings:

(Self-)Perceptions of Sustainability

Due to my categories applied during all research methods used, it was possible to trace back the sectors respondents belonged to. In the research findings we see that there are differences of sustainability perceptions across different sectors as almost everybody focused on the domain his company working in and therefore mentioned aspects concerning the companies' products or service a lot. Within the whole analysis I recognised that the services sector uttered the most critical statement which I assume depends on their daily routine being concerned with critical demands by consumers usually. Moreover the differences across the sectors do not only concern the sustainability perceptions but the availability different means

(e.g. financial means) as can be seen in 4.2.3.1. This is important to consider as it creates different possibilities of access.

The study mirrors that sustainable consumption is highly connected to an active consumer role. As one can see from the website analysis, the emphasis was on the consumer's role, even encouraging consumers to think critically and become aware of their own responsibilities. Other stakeholders have barely been named – only one respondent mentioned the politicians' responsibility in encouraging sustainable consumption by creating different incentives. To my mind, this emphasis on the consumer role being present in all research findings, mirrors the before discourse as outlined in chapter as well. This shows moreover the necessity to give voice to other stakeholders within the sustainable consumption scene, to be able to grasp a holistic understanding of everybody's needs to be able to contribute to a sustainable development.

The companies' (self-)perceptions focus on the ecological dimension. The employees' understandings of sustainability within sustainable consumption focus on ecological aspects, too, but additionally, the people outlined their motivation at the same time, which shows that they are led by high moral values in their activities. This critical thinking goes far beyond the companies' vision. Moreover, the interviewees confirm the conceptions that sustainability should be seen as a process (cf. 3.2.1), because they pointed out a lot that there are no finite answers when assessing sustainable products, but it would depend on critical reflections and questions regarding the products background.

Employees' Strengths as Capital for Sustainable Companies

The study suggests that employees identify well with sustainability. They have high moral values and try to live and consume sustainably themselves. Employees are more involved and have a more complex (self-)perception of sustainability than their companies' vision - only a few employees stuck to the company's vision. Most named more sensitive issues than the companies' concerns and seemed to be convinced of searching for alternatives, which let the employees appear really authentic. This high ethical behaviour has to be related to Baedeker et al. once more who pointed out the importance of employee's behaviour, as outlined in section 4.1.1.1. It is important that companies consider the strengths of the employees'

commitment. This can be very powerful of use for the companies' implementation of measures to a sustainable development. Therefore, to my mind, it is important, that companies are sensibilised for this 'human capital' and use the chances to actually realise sustainable principles in the company management. As shown above, companies mainly focus on product design when defining sustainability. To facilitate more sustainable company management, political measures could support this development, e.g. ensuring employment protections legislation.

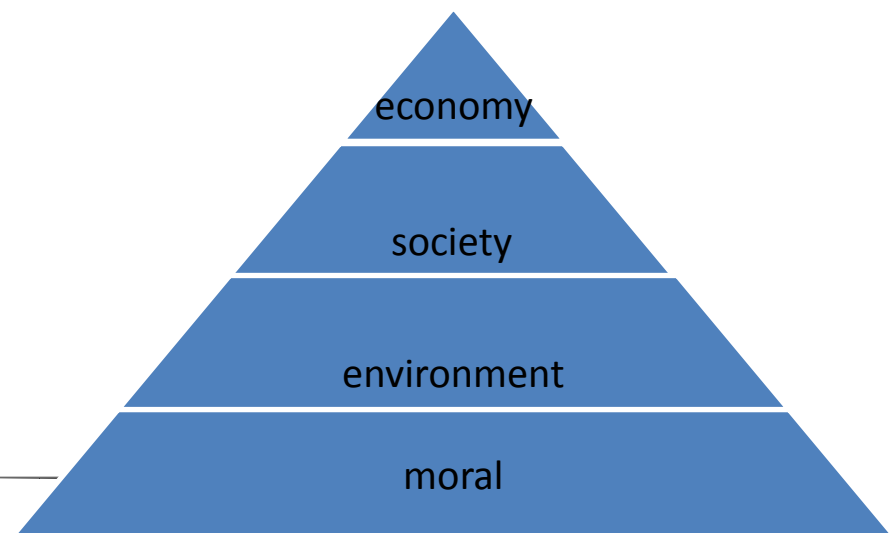
Need for Ethical Dimension

As I introduced the model of the sustainability pyramid in section 3.2.1, I suggest complementing it here by adding a fourth dimension: an ethical dimension, which forms the base (see fig. 12) as it becomes the underlying necessity for an *ideal* implementation of sustainability. I consider this as a long-term authentic engagement. In fact, it is possible to contribute to sustainable development a company focuses on just one dimension. However, its contribution can and should be questioned, especially in terms of greenwashing.

I assume that if a moral dimension is considered and comes into practice, the gap between knowledge and behaviour (cf. chapter 3.2.4) would reduce automatically, because sustainability would be attributed with another priority. Having presented already some calls in chapter 3.2.2, it was e.g. Griebhammer (2012: 36) who pointed out that a transformation will happen only if there are guiding principles with which citizens may identify. The respondents' outlined perceptions show that sustainability has to do with a conscious behaviour, which allows us to recognise the consequences of one's own actions (which relates to chapter 3.1).

Fig. 12:

Therefore the research findings highlight that sustainable consumption is more than the act of buying ethically correct commodities but involves



a self-understanding of the stakeholders being involved in sustainable consumption. Implementing the ethical dimension, will complete a holistic vision of a sustainability to be anchored in society. If we consume green we are captured in a capitalist system and reduce our role to being a consumer. In fact, it is necessary to understand oneself as a citizen (Leonard 2010: 274ff) as consuming ethically is not sufficient to contribute to a sustainable development.

Contradictions of Sustainable Consumption

As Regarding the assumptions presented in chapter 4.1.2, the research findings suggest that all assumptions have been confirmed by the respondents at least once. Especially assumption one shall be put into focus, as it relates directly to the background presented in chapter 3.2. The results suggest that a culture of consumption will be hold up as there are barely alternative initiatives found among the participants. One interviewee only (I_3) stated that she is doing exchanges instead of money payments. Moreover, sustainability cannot be achieved in a culture of consumption at all. I draw this conclusion from the fact, that the research findings show that all respondents are experiencing limitations of the sustainability concept. This will become even clearer with the following results. For example sustainable consumption is not accessible to everybody as high prices of the products (I_3) or the participation costs for a sustainability event excludes some stakeholders. In this regard the aim of social justice for everybody cannot be achieved. The interviewees revealed that the high moral values the employees have, present challenges to them when being confronted with the implementation of sustainable principles.

Assessments of Sustainability

As As I outlined in section 3.3.1 Bowker & Star (2000: 4) recognised that classifications are used even though people do not trust them. This is also the case within the realms of sustainable consumption: Consumers buy organic labelled products – not because they are concerned for organic farming, but because such products represent status, and also save the conscience by doing something good or trusting labels to offer a better guideline in rating products' performance. It is similar for the companies: They follow consumer's demands even when not being convinced of the certification. Therefore certifications are used as a means to

an end – they are perceived as the only option so far. This shows power pressures of discourses (cf. chapter 2.1) affecting the companies' behaviour.

Moreover, exhibitors pointed out the need for marketing purposes said that they are not convinced by certification programmes but they assume certification programmes are important for consumers – so they would find more clients as well. The provision of information for consumers and augmentation of its reliability are the main reasons for the use of certificates. However, when outlining their sustainability perceptions or contribution to a sustainable development, no certificates were mentioned. Certificates do not play a central role in the perceptions of companies and are not used a lot in the communication of companies' contribution to sustainable development as the labels have not been highlighted on the websites for example.

5. CONCLUSION

In this final chapter I want to point out briefly the essential results answering the research questions. This will be followed by an examination on the contribution of this study regarding its relevance and an outlook for further research ideas.

Considering the background of the world systems theory and the culture of consumption, the study explored perceptions of sustainability within the sustainable consumption marketplace. By motivating employees' to outline their individual understandings, the idea of this thesis was to actually grasp the way of defining sustainability by the stakeholders of the sustainable consumption scene themselves. To this end, definitions of sustainability and sustainable consumption have been examined as the key concepts. Referring to characteristics of classifications, power relations and ethics of nature as analytical framework, the research findings have been analysed. This was complemented by own assumptions as I came across many contradictions during the literature review; and considered them as valuable additional material for the analysis of research methods used.

5.1 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

All research questions posed in the introduction could be answered through my research and shall be pointed out briefly. The overall research question regarding the definition, (self-) perception and assessment of sustainability among stakeholder of sustainable consumption participating in sustainability platforms with particular reference to *Heldenmarkt* should be answered by focusing on two sub-questions:

Sub-question I) was regarding the (self-)perception of sustainability by asking how the individual employees working in sustainable companies perceive themselves and define the concept of sustainability. Moreover, it questioned what sustainability vision the companies have and how companies implement measures toward sustainable development: The stakeholders of sustainable consumption barely offer concrete definitions of sustainability but reflect on different attributes ('bio', 'regional', 'fair') and companies' measures contributing to a sustainable development. The characteristics organic, regional and fair also mirror the demands of the *Heldenmarkt* concept. Relating the perceptions to the conception framework of sustainability, it is obvious that focus lies on the ecological dimension. There is a neglect of economic dimension. When looking at the (self-)perceptions, the results show that employees point out the necessity of an ethical behaviour. By taking into account insights from the ethic of nature, the growing awareness and taking responsibility for consumption goods can be explained. Moreover it could be shown that employees already carry high moral values formulating higher demands on the company's contribution to sustainability than they do already. Therefore I suggested to complement future theoretical model of sustainability by an ethical dimension considering the individuals attitudes.

Sub-question II) was regarding assessments by asking wherein the motivation of companies lies to participate in a certification program. Moreover it was asked to find out, what are the key facilitators and barriers for a participation in a certification programme: It became clear, that the (self-)perceptions of certification programmes are debated controversially. Certifications are used as a means to an end because there are no other options currently. The main motivation of participation in certification programmes lies in marketing purposes to facilitate the communication with consumers and increase products' credibility. Moreover, the

discussion of certification programs revealed some important aspects regarding power pressures having effects on the companies' actions which may lead to exclusions of some stakeholders as well. Sustainable consumption was designed as a response to environmental, social and economic consequences of the world system (cf. chapter 3.1). However, during the analysis of literature and research different contradictions surrounding sustainable consumption were recognised and confirmed through the data. This suggests that sustainability can not be achieved in a culture of consumption. However, this has to investigate further and it shows another reason to understand sustainability as an inner attitude which has to be followed a guiding principle in life (cf. chapter 3.2.2).

5.2 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The study offers original data as it provides new insights into the stakeholders' (self-) perceptions of sustainability which have been neglected so far - as pointed out in chapter 3.2. Hereby one is able to shed light on contradictions which are due to the complexity and difficulty of defining sustainable behaviour as well as power relations. By examining these contradictions, the thesis contributes to a more authentic understanding of the sustainability conceptualisation and points out challenges for stakeholders of sustainable consumption. Moreover, referring to assessments and examination of participations in certification programs, the study revealed some insights into power pressures in society, too. Therefore the study suggests that more research needs to be done to better understand peoples' self-perceptions and grasp the actual meaning of sustainability. The analysis made a change when referring to current theoretical conceptualisations of sustainability: In future researches, the pyramid model of sustainability should be complemented by a moral dimension. Like that, academic discussions would not miss to consider the importance of individual human perspectives toward it and furthermore their individual contribution to and motivation for a sustainable development. Their ethical values have been identified as a crucial point for an authentic long-term sustainable development and this is why the study finally calls for a proper consideration of employees' importance for the success of a sustainable consumption.

However, the research is biased in so far, as only people being perceived as sustainable by one institution already - the *Heldenmarkt* - could have been considered. To my mind, there is

the need to include a further perspective: Further research should try to include the perspective of the excluded to better understand what companies or employees prevent from acting sustainably and showing up possible diverse and alternative approaches of what is perceived being sustainable. As a concrete research suggestion, I suggest to complement this present study with a research among the denied applicants for a participation in the *Heldenmarkt*. For that, *Heldenmarkt* should be subject of the research to find out more about the actual way of assessments. In finding out why companies have been denied, one could conduct a comparative study asking the team as well as the denied companies for the reasons why they are perceived as being sustainable respectively as unsustainable.

Epilogue

Back to the coffee: The coffee bean found its way from a plantation in Ethiopia and ended inside my cup of coffee in Berlin. The way in between is a complex network with many stakeholders being involved. Looking from the perspective of sustainable consumption, we can question if ecological, economic and social aspects are assured for everything and being involved in the process to decide if it is fine to enjoy this coffee or not. However, this all only matters, if we want to look at the story and want to know about the challenges and consequences due to the adventures taking place in these stories.

Some weeks ago, this coffee shop created a mind map publishing all expenses and incomes in their business which decorates the shop's walls now. To my mind, this is an important step: To not only make people aware of the complex network being involved and each part of it carrying its own small story - but furthermore to offer access to knowledge. It offers a basis and therefore the possibility to consumers, suppliers and other concerned or interested parties to decide how to value the product, the company management and the people selling it. I guess it follows one important principle being important during assessments, too: Transparency. However, this will lead me probably to the prologue of another study...

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W_1: Global Reporting Initiative.

<https://www.globalreporting.org/information/sustainability-reporting/Pages/default.aspx> (*accessed May 12, 2015*)

W_2: Gesellschaft für Angewandte Wirtschaftsethik. <http://angewandte-wirtschaftsethik.org/das-label/> (*accessed May 12, 2015*)

W_3: REWE – Nachhaltigkeit. <https://nachhaltig.rewe.de/> (*accessed May 12, 2015*)

W_4: Netto – Verantwortung. <https://www.netto-online.de/Verantwortung-CSR.chtm> (*accessed May 12, 2015*)

W_5: Lidl – Verantwortung. <http://www.lidl.de/de/verantwortung/s841> (*accessed May 12, 2015*)

APPENDIX

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A_1 Questionnaire (original version)

Kurz-Fragebogen

- zum Thema: Selbstverständnis & Bewertung von Akteuren nachhaltigen Konsums
am Beispiel des Heldenmarktes

Bei der Auswahl der offenen Fragen wurde gezielt auf vorgegebene Antwortmöglichkeiten verzichtet. Nutzen Sie den Raum für eine kritische Auseinandersetzung sowie Reflektion des Heldenmarktes und nachhaltigen Konsums generell. Bitte fühlen Sie sich nicht durch die Platzvorgabe eingeschränkt - die Rückseite bietet sich sehr gut zum Schreiben an oder senden Sie eine E-Mail, wenn für Sie eine nachträgliche Anonymisierung in Frage kommt.

Bitte geben Sie Ihre Position im Unternehmen an:

1. Nachhaltigkeitsvision

o Unabhängig von Ihrer Position im Unternehmen erläutern Sie bitte zunächst, ohne die Sichtweise durch die

Brille ihres Unternehmens: Was verstehen Sie persönlich unter Nachhaltigkeit im Bereich Konsum?

2. Relevanz

o Erläutern Sie bitte, inwiefern ihr Unternehmen, ihre Produkte oder Dienstleistungen nachhaltig sind.

o Worin sehen Sie dabei einen Beitrag zu nachhaltigem Konsum?

3. Position zum Heldenmarkt

o Inwiefern wird Ihre Auffassung in Bezug auf Nachhaltigkeit auf dem Heldenmarkt wiedergespiegelt?

o Welche persönlichen oder unternehmerischen Aspekte haben Sie zur Teilnahme bewegt, was hat Sie ggfs. an einer Teilnahme zweifeln lassen?

4. Zertifizierungen

o Ist das Unternehmen, in dem sie arbeiten, Teil eines Zertifizierungsprogrammes?

o Worin sehen Sie Vor- und Nachteile, welche Herausforderungen ergeben sich?

o Inwiefern trägt eine Zertifizierung positiv bzw. negativ zu Nachhaltigkeit/ nachhaltigen Konsum bei?

Haben Sie weitere Gedanken, die Ihnen zum Thema Nachhaltigkeit, nachhaltigen Konsum oder der Umsetzung auf dem Heldenmarkt wichtig sind oder in dieser Umfrage zu kurz gekommen sind?

Hier können Sie Informationen (z.B. Branche, Größe, Name) zu Ihrem Unternehmen teilen, wenn Sie möchten.

Dadurch kann in der Auswertung spezifischer auf die verschiedenen Unternehmensbereiche eingegangen werden.

Sind Sie mit einer Kontaktaufnahme für weiterführende Fragen einverstanden?

ja, per E-Mail, unter: _____, Name: _____

ja, per Telefon, unter: _____, Name: _____

nein

Vielen herzlichen Dank für Ihre Mitarbeit!

A_2 Questionnaire (translated version)

Translation of the Questionnaire

1. Vision of sustainability
Independently from your position in your company and without looking through the company's glasses, would you please outline: What do you individually understand by sustainability within the realms of consumption?

2. Relevance
Please examine in how far your company, your products or services can be defined as sustainable?
Wherein do you possibly see a contribution to sustainable consumption?

3. Position towards Heldenmarkt
In how far is your vision of sustainability mirrored at the Heldenmarkt?
Which personal or professional reasons led you to a participation at the Heldenmarkt?
Was there anything letting you doubt a possible participation?

4. Certifications
Is your company participating in a certification program?
What kind of advantages, disadvantages or challenges do you see in a participation?
In how far would you consider certification programs having a positive or negative influence on sustainable consumption?

5. Do you have further thoughts, which are of importance to you, regarding sustainability, sustainable consumption, the realisation at the Heldenmarkt or something which was not mentioned in the questionnaire before?

A_3 Distribution of the Questionnaire

sector	total number	specialisation	of total number	number of distributions	specialisation
<i>Out of the 94 participants the distribution of belonging to different areas was the following:</i>				<i>how many have been contacted by me:</i>	
fashion & accessoires	20	fashion/accessoires	18	16	15
		cosmetics	2		1
food	35		35	30	
informations	10	informations: association	6	9	5
		informations: media	4		4
living & household	3		3	2	
mobility & leisure	3		3	2	
other	5		5	3	
services	18	services: assurances	1	15	1
		services: consulting	1		1
		services: energy	2		2
		services: finances	11		8
		services: printing	2		2
		services: compensation	1		1
in total:	94		94	77	

A_4 List with codes of interview partners

Sector	(Nick-) name	Company	Type of company	Position in the company	Phone interview	Reference code
food	Ole	████████	limited company (GmbH) –existent in Germany, Austria and Swiss	freelancer	04.05.2015, 15:30 h	I_1
	Steffen	████████	public limited company (AG) - existent in Germany and Swiss	product management	05.05.2015, 11:30 h	I_2
	Diana	████████	one-woman business - existent in Germany	owner and founder	06.05.2015, 16:30 h	I_3

A_5_I_1 Notes: Interview with Ole

Was verstehst Du persönlich –ohne eine Sichtweise durch die Brille deines Unternehmens - unter Nachhaltigkeit im Bereich Konsum?

Ressourcen schonend genießen können!

Sprich, das Wissen ich hab hier jetzt nicht ,n Produkt gekauft, was ne Flug-Papaya ist. Ich liebe Papaya, aber wenn ich mir vorstelle, da fliegt jetzt jemand mit n Flugzeug ne Papaya nach Deutschland - das find ich aber nicht gut. Das hört der Spaß auf.

Das heißt du verzichtest dann auch auf die Papaya?

Ich glaube ich werde es in Zukunft immer tun. Ich probiere es. Denn das ist sonst nicht nachhaltig. Ich möchte kein schlechtes Gewissen haben. Nach meinem Ermessen.

Hatte neulich gerade eure Ausstellerausweise in der Hand von der letzten Messe und dachte klasse, das ist so ganzheitlich mitgedacht das find ich stimmig.

Pfandflaschen find ich super. Mir graut es wenn ich ein Produkt kaufe und kein Pfand drauf ist. Da grauts mir schon, das erscheint mir falsch. Wegschmeißen geht nicht. Ich komme da immer öfter in einen Zwiespalt. Pfandflasche aus Kunststoffe oder Glas ist so ne Diskussion für mich.

Das spielt alles bei mir beim Konsum mit rein. Ja Konsum.... Da denk ich auch grad ans fliegen. Wir sind neulich auf eine Messe nach Wien geflogen. Was für ein Wahnsinn. Wir fliegen dahin, verpesten die Umwelt, und das nur um ein paar gute Produkte vorzustellen? Das fand ich schon mal nicht mehr gut.

Hat das Konsequenzen für dich?

Ja , ich hab darüber nachgedacht und ich möchte nicht mehr fliegen.

Kannst du das in der Firma sagen?

Ja, ich kann das dem Messeleiter sagen. Natürlich geht's da auch um kosten Ersparnisse. Aber meistens ist der Zug eh günstiger. Wenn nicht, vielleicht könnte ich dann den Zuschlag zahlen um Zug zu fahren? Hmm, wenn ich es extra zahlen müsste die Fahrtkosten wie zum Beispiel 300 Euro , dann ginge es nicht . bei 100 Euro jedoch, würd ich nochmal mein Budget angucken und das wahrscheinlich machen.

Motivation: Warum hast Du Dich für diesen Weg entschieden? Was treibt Dich an diesen

richtigen Rahmen zu finden?

Ja ich nenn es jetzt mal Verantwortung mit den Dingen besser umzugehen und effektiver. Die Nachhaltigkeit.... Das ist halt mein Gefühl dabei. Der Antrieb dabei ist möglichst ressourcensparend einzukaufen. So wie ich es verstehe....

Gehst du davon aus, dass das bei jedem Menschen unterschiedlich ist?

Ja und während des Gespräches dachte ich gerade auch, da ist vielleicht auch viel Psychologie dabei fällt mir grade ein. So generell jetzt mit dem nachhaltigen Konsumieren. Ich fühle mich dann vielleicht auch besser wenn ich denke dass ich nachhaltig kaufe. Dass ich mich nicht schuldig fühle um ein gutes Gewissen zu haben.

Schlagwort regional fällt mir jetzt noch ein. Ich greife lieber dazu. Auch wenn ich sehe dass da ein Apfel aus Neuseeland ist und ein konventioneller aus meiner Region, nehme ich lieber den aus meiner Region der nicht bio ist. Die Ökobilanz stimmt dann irgendwann nicht mehr.

Auch wenn es mir nicht bestrebt aber ich greif dann lieber zu dem Produkt dass aus meiner Region kommt.

DAS UNTERNEHMEN

Inwiefern kannst du das im Unternehmen umsetzen?

Inwiefern liefert das einen Beitrag zu nachhaltigem Konsum

Ich arbeite freiberuflich.

Wie identifizierst du dich mit dem Unternehmen?

Mit macht die Arbeit Spaß. Ich mag Promotion.

Ich stehe hinter den Produkten. Mittlerweile gibt es auch ein oder zwei Produkte die man nicht unbedingt braucht und ansonsten find ich alle Produkte sehr sinnvoll. Zu 90% steh ich hinter dem Unternehmen.

wie beurteilst du das?

Diese elektrischen Maschinen sind meiner Meinung nicht sinnvoll, weil sie eh noch andere Dinge erfordern, dass das elektrische gerät nicht so viel bringt. und das sehen andere auch so.

Im Unternehmen wird also über die Sinnhaftigkeit der Produkte diskutiert?

Genau. obwohl, im Unternehmen direkt kann ich es aber nicht sagen. Ich bin nur im Messeteam, die Firma hat 100 Leute. Wir im Messeteam sind uns da aber einig und würden das Produkt am liebsten nicht mitnehmen. Wir haben auch gar keine Lust das Produkt zu promoten.

NACHHALTIGKEIT DES UNTERNEHMENS/IM UNTERNEHMEN SELBST

Inwiefern weißt du um die NachhaltigkeitsVision des Unternehmens Bescheid?

Sofern ich was weiß, kann ich sagen, dass der Chef Rohkost weiter in die Welt tragen will. Es gibt auch ne Rohkost Akademie zur Weiterbildung. Die sind auch sehr gut. Das trägt sich finanziell nicht wirklich mit den Kursen. Er will das weiter vora treiben, wegen der Sache.

Das heißt es geht nicht nur um den Profit?

Ja da sind immer noch Visionen hinter und das find ich toll! Es geht nicht nur darum was zu verkaufen sondern auch was weiterzugeben.

Wie engagiert sich denn deiner Meinung nach das Unternehmen für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung?

Also wenns um Messen geht, geht es darum dann einen möglichst ökologischen anreiseweg nehmen. Zum Beispiel Fahrgemeinschaften. Das ist klasse um die Umwelt zu schonen und nicht unnötig Energie zu verballern.

Im Unternehmen selber war ich nicht oft, aber das ist meines Wissens nach sehr gut. Essen wird für Mitarbeiter zubereitet, dort wird wunderbar gekocht. Mit Ressourcen wird sparsam umgegangen. Da wird sehr pingelig drauf geachtet, teilweise auch zu pingelig. Zum Beispiel wird geguckt, dass die Leute nicht zu viele Sachen ausdrucken. Wenn du dann allerdings hörst, der Papierkorb wird kontrolliert. Das muss man vielleicht auch machen um zu gucken das ist für mich extrem, so ne Art kontrollzwang, das find ich dann schon ungesund. Aber die Leute sind sensibilisiert darauf, dass alle Ressourcen sparen. Der Lagerbereich ist auch super geordnet, und Mülltrennung gibt's sowieso.

Die Produkte die wir verkaufen sind meiner Meinung nach wirklich gut. Die Produkte haben ihren Preis weil sie ihre Qualität haben. Wenn man nur Blödsinn hat und nicht die Qualität würde es die Firma auch nicht so lange geben!

ZERTIFIZIERUNGEN

Warum hast Du Dich im Unternehmen für eine Zertifizierung entschieden?

Alle Produkte sind biozertifiziert. Die Firma ist auch aus einem Bioladen entstanden Wildkräuter aus Wildkräutersammlung allerdings nicht, das geht ja nicht. Alles andere aber ist meiner Meinung nach .

Weißt Du warum sich das Unternehmen für eine Zertifizierung entschieden hat?

Kann ich dir nicht sagen.

Und wie stehst Du persönlich Zertifizierungen oder Siegeln gegenüber?

Ich finds erstmal gut - weil es ist für mich ein Leitfaden. Dann weiß ich woran ich bin. Hoffe ich. Mein Eltern sagen ist ja eh nicht alles bio, das kann nicht stimmen. Naja, schwarze Schafe gibt es doch überall. Und auf was sonst soll ich mich sonst verlassen? Ich muss darauf vertrauen. Ich finds noch besser wenn es DE statt EU ist find ichs besser und wenn es Demeter ist find ich es noch besser. Wenn es mal nicht stimmt, dann ist es halt so, aber ich find es ist der richtige Weg. Am liebsten geh ich in kleineren Läden einkaufen als in großen Supermärkten.

Regional kommt dann wieder ins Spiel. Zum Beispiel auch im Laden und bei lokalen Produzenten kaufen. Das ist dann auch sehr transparent wo was von welchem Hof kommt. Ich weiß auch dass es die gleichen Sachen bei denns günstiger gibt aber ich habe gehört dass es so Ketten gibt die zum Biohersteller sagen, dass sie günstiger produzieren sollen. Die geben dann nach aber machen dann auch oft andere Dinge rein. Das kann sein und wenn man dann die Verpackungen mit Inhalten. Dann kommt der Bioproduzent in so eine Mühle dass er von Großkonzernen erpresst wird. Für den Endverbraucher wird es nicht eindeutig deklariert. Der Verbraucher kann es nur sehen wenn er ganz ganz genau hinschaut. Ich fand sowas wie denns attraktiv zunächst aber das meide ich jetzt. Weil ich da was gelesen habe. Das muss ich mal nachprüfen.

A_4_I_2 Notes: Interview with Steffen

Zum persönlichen Verständnis von Nachhaltigkeit im Bereich Konsum haben Sie einen schonenden Umgang mit Ressourcen erläutert. Möchten Sie dem noch etwas hinzufügen?

Den regionalen Bezug, wie wir ihn auch im Unternehmen umsetzen.

Sie sind auf Ihr Lebensmotto „So wie man einen Raum vorfindet, sollte man ihn auch wieder verlassen“ eingegangen. Bitte erläutern Sie das genauer. Warum nennen Sie dieses bei einem Statement zu Nachhaltigkeit? Inwiefern beeinflusst dieses Motto Ihr Verständnis von Nachhaltigkeit/nachhaltigen Konsum?

Das ist eine gute Frage. Das ist mir da so spontan eingefallen. Das ist erstmal eine Erziehung in der Familie gewesen: So zu handeln und nicht Dinge zu tun, die man anderen nicht antun will, weil man es selbst auch nicht möchte.

Und das bezieht sich doch auf das Thema schonender und bewusster Umgang mit der Umwelt.

Wenn ich das Verständnis so nicht hätte, dann würde ich mich einen Dreck drum kümmern. Dann wär mir alles egal. So: Ich bin jetzt auf dem Globus und alles andere wär mir egal. Für mich ist das das Motto eine Zusammenfassung wie ich Nachhaltigkeit verstehe, denn es muss tiefgreifend sein. Sonst hat das mit Generationengerechtigkeit nichts zu tun.

Ich bin kein ausgemachter grüner, aber man kann schon im Einklang mit der Natur leben. Und wenn wir vernünftig so leben, dann können nächste Generationen auch die gleichen Möglichkeiten wie wir jetzt haben.

Für mich ist die Motivation, dass die nächste Generation auch so leben kann wie wir es irgendwie auch können. Mit den gewissen Freiheiten und Möglichkeiten.

Wenn wir aber gewisse Ressourcen so aufbrauchen würden, dann schränken wir dies für diese Generationen ein.

Sie haben sehr genau erläutert, inwiefern Ihr Unternehmen ein nachhaltiges Produkt anbietet.

Inwiefern führen sie auch Bestrebungen zu einer nachhaltigen Unternehmensführung durch?

.... Lieferanten interessant, geringe Entfernung Kaffee Rösterei. Wir kennen unsere Zulieferer persönlich.

Cradle to Cradle - wie wir es versuchen, dass es ein geschlossener Kreislauf ist, von der Produktion bis zur Entsorgung sogar des Produktes, weil es kompostierbar ist.

Nachwachsende Rohstoffe werden genutzt. Wir werden dann kritisiert, dass das Lebensmittel sind, die man in Beschlag nimmt, und woanders verhungern Leute. Ja das ist richtig, das muss man ernst nehmen

Auf der anderen Seite werden so viele Lebensmittel weggeworfen werden (weil die Gurke krumm ist...) Das finde ich schwerwiegender. Lasst uns deshalb die Dinge besser verteilen und aus nachwachsenden Rohstoffen möglichst nachhaltige Dinge machen.

Ja, zur nachhaltigen Unternehmensführung wäre zum Beispiel die Verpackung zu nennen. Verpackung so wenig wie möglich und kompostierbar oder 2nd Hand Kartonagen wir wählen regionale Lieferanten für kurze Transportwege
Natürlich könnte man das Spiel weiterspielen und die Produktion durch Solarenergie umstellen. Zum Beispiel Tesla hat Entwürfe vorgelegt, wie man Häuser intelligent mit Energie versorgt. Aber wir konzentrieren uns auf die Minimierung von Verpackungseinheiten und Lieferanten aus der Region.

Sie sprachen an, dass im Bio-Bereich Zertifizierungen teilweise wenig Sinn machen? Inwiefern? An was für ein Beispiel denken Sie da?

Naja, Bio wird oft verwendet. Aber man hat ja schon viele Dokumentationen, Filme und Studien gesehen, die zeigen, dass oft die Standards nicht eingehalten werden!
Wie bei uns zum Beispiel macht die Biozertifizierung Sinn, da bei Bio Kaffee Anbau weniger Wasser gebraucht wird sodass es zu tatsächlichen CO2 Einsparungen führt. Das muss nicht zwangsläufig bei jedem Lebensmittelanbau so sein! Da kenne ich mich aber auch nicht so gut aus.

Und Bio wird oft für Argumentationen genutzt um sich beim Kunden zu profilieren. Das Thema grün wird oft als Vehikel genutzt.

Das Thema ist sehr komplex. Da gibt es viel gegeneinander abzuwägen. Beispiel Äpfel: Die Lagerungen von regionalen Bio-Äpfeln im Winter erzeugen oft einen höheren CO2 Verbrauch. Als würde man die Äpfel von sonst wo einschiffen lassen. Also achtet man nun auf die Energiebilanzen oder die Bodenerhaltung oder Gesundheit, dass ausgeschlossen ist, dass keine Pestizide gespritzt sind?

Warum haben Sie sich im Unternehmen für eine Zertifizierung entschieden?

→ Keimling Siegel war ganz klar für die Argumentation gegenüber Kunden von Bedeutung.

Wichtig, weil es doch viele Produzierende gibt, die auf dieses Thema anspringen, jedoch nicht

richtig dahinter stehen. Wir wollten Glaubwürdigkeit verstärken. Von anderen abheben

- ➔ Bei Bio zum Thema Kaffee die CO2 Einsparungen wichtig (siehe oben) durch geringeren Wassereinsatz beim Anbau
- ➔ Fair Trade zum Produktkonzept zusammengepasst. Wichtig für Vermarktung und auch wegen unserer Überzeugung.

A_4_I_3 Notes: Interview with Diana

PERSÖNLICHES

Was verstehst Du persönlich –ohne eine Sichtweise durch die Brille deines Unternehmens - unter Nachhaltigkeit im Bereich Konsum?

Für mich ist Nachhaltigkeit im Grunde genommen ein Stück weit darauf zu achten dass ich sozial verträglich lebe. Mich zu fragen: Wo kommen die Sachen her? Für mich ist auch bio nachhaltig. Aber nicht immer. Wenn ich im Sommer zum Beispiel Äpfel aus sonst wo herschiffen lasse, find ichs besser den nicht bio-Apfel beim Bauern nebenan zu kaufen. Für mich hat das was mit Regionalität zu tun. Aber auch dass ich nicht die Umwelt unnötig belaste, zum Beispiel weniger Auto fahren.

Ich mag das regionale. Saisonale Produkte.

Aber im Grunde genommen ist es ein riiiiiiiiiesiges Spielfeld. Nicht ewig lang duschen, keine Jeans kaufen, bei deren Produktion die Menschen wegen giftiger Farben sterben.

Wenn man seinen Konsum so einteilt, dass man nichts wegwerft, das ist auch nachhaltig für mich. Verschwendung vermeiden.

Nachhaltig finde ich auch dass die Dinge im Rahmen sein sollten.

und wie legst du das fest?

der rahmen ist so –den kann man so gar nicht wirklich feststecken. Der ist eher so gefühlt.

Gefühlt, dass es sich noch sozial und fair anfühlt. Klar, gute Produkte kosten zwar Geld, aber wir müssen auch gerecht bleiben.

Motivation: Warum hast Du Dich für diesen Weg entschieden? Was treibt Dich an diesen richtigen Rahmen zu finden?

Dankbarkeit und Demut für alles. Ich spende auch ganz viel. Ca. 20 % meines Gehaltes spende ich an Hilfsprojekte. Ich hab zum Beispiel auch ne Patensau auf nem Bauernhof hier in der Nähe.

Meine Motivation ist, dass mir bewusst ist dass es mir gut geht. Ich habe das Bedürfnis was zurückzugeben.

Diese ganzheitliche Betrachtung kommt daher, dass ich weiß dass alles zusammen hängt.

Man kann nichts einzeln sehen. So fühlt sich alles dann komplett an.

DAS UNTERNEHMEN

Inwiefern kannst du das im Unternehmen umsetzen?

Inwiefern liefert das einen Beitrag zu nachhaltigem Konsum

Ich bin bio zertifiziert. Vorwiegend regionale Produkte verwenden. Auch in schulungen und wworkshops den leuten was über umwelt und nachhaltigkei beizubringen. Ihnen eine natürliche lebensweise beibringen.

NACHHALTIGKEIT DES UNTERNEHMENS/IM UNTERNEHMEN SELBST

Worin siehst Du die Stärken des Unternehmens?

Worin die Schwächen?

Finanzielle Schwierigkeiten. Schwierig, dass viele Leute Rabatte bekommen, weil man durch die Bekanntschaften da mal n Nachlass und hier mal n Nachlass lässt. Das ist wirklich schwierig dann da das Geld reinzukriegen. Ich saß jetzt mit kollegen zusammen und

überlegte, wie wir rawdies groß machen können. Aber ich will nicht überall hin. Und lass mich nicht verkaufen an jemanden. Aber ich will das machen, was ich liebe.

Ich mache auch tauschgeschäfte wenn Leute kein geld haben.

Ich bin mir sicher, dass das auch generell geht. Ich habe mich zum bsp von meiner steuerberaterin getrennt, die nicht meine Lebensweise unterstützt. Und werde nun mit einer Buchhalterin kooperieren, die ich in Essen bezahlen werde. Und mit einem regionalen Weingut tausche ich auch immer Wein gegen Cracker für den gleichen Wert.

Das finde ich auch nachhaltig sowas. Sich auch gegenseitig unterstützen. Lieber bei denen um die Ecke kaufen als billig im Internet. Ich mein, wir haben doch alle kein Geld.

Man könnte noch besser versenden... CO2 neutraler Versand...

Gibt es etwas was Dir im Bereich nachhaltiger Konsum sehr wichtig ist, Du selbst jedoch nicht in Deinem Unternehmen umsetzen kannst?

Facebook total wichtig für Kommunikation und vor allem Informationsaustausch, in veganen Plattformen. Webseite ist total der Programmieraufwand, dabei brauche ich Hilfe. aber letztendlich sind alle News auf facebook.

Ich achte auch auf Umweltbesteck... Über Bio-plastik kann man sich streiten aber trotzdem denke ich dass es die bessere alternative ist.

ZERTIFIZIERUNGEN

Warum hast Du Dich im Unternehmen für eine Zertifizierung entschieden?

oh, das geld muss man auch erstmal haben. die kostet zw 500 und 1000 euro je nachdem wie lange die prüfen. Beim ersten Mal wurde beanstandet, dass mein gedrucktes biosiegel auf den aufklebern nicht maßstabgetreu sei. Die spinnen ja wohl...

du darfst nicht bio zutaten deklarieren, wenn man nicht die Zertifizierung hat. Deshalb hab ich mich letztes Jahr dafür entschieden. Von den fünf Stunden hat er drei Stunden geredet und nichts geprüft... Das ist fies. Aber ich hab mich dafür entschieden, denn wenn ich die Bioprodukte benutze möchte ich auch damit werben. Und die Leute müssen auch wissen, dass die Bioprodukte mehr kosten als die konventionellen Zutaten.

A_5 Codes from website analysis

Sector	Company	URL	Last access	Reference code
fashion & accessoires	Cannamoda	www.cannamoda.de		W_6
fashion & accessoires	Monagoo	www.monagoo.com		W_7
fashion & accessoires	pirate business wear	www.piratebusiness.com		W_8
fashion & accessoires: cosmetics	Ringana	www.ringana.com		W_9
food	beanarella	www.beanarella.de		W_10
food	Bio-Kostbarkeiten	www.bio-kostbarkeiten.de		W_11
food	Keimling Naturkost	www.keimling.de		W_12
food	Rawdies	www.rawdies.de		W_13
food	Sonnentor	www.sonnentor.com		W_14
information: associations	BUND	www.bund.de		W_15
information: associations	Papier Pilz	www.papierpilz.wordpress.com		W_16
information: associations	Rettet den Regenwald e.V.	www.regenwald.org		W_17
information: associations	Verkehrsclub Deutschland e.V.	www.vcd.org		W_18
mobility & leisure	VeryYoga	www.veryyoga.de		W_19
other	Claudia Renner	www.claudia-renner.de		W_20
other	Klima-Kollekte	www.klima-kollekte.de		W_21
other	Ruby Cup	www.ruby-cup.com		W_22
services: assurances	BKK advita	www.bkk-advita.de		W_23
services: electricity	Greenpeace Energy	www.greenpeace-energy.de		W_24
services: finances	ABO Invest	www.buergerwindaktie.de		W_25
services: finances	ecoplanfinanz AG	www.ecoplanfinanz.de		W_26
services: finances	Effondo	www.effondo.de		W_27
services: finances	greenXmoney	www.greenxmoney.com		W_28
services: finances	MehrWert GmbH	www.mehrwert-finanzen.de		W_29
services:	neunmalklug	www.neunmalklug-verlag.de		W_30

publishing house	Verlag			
services: publishing house	oekom Verlag	www.oekom-verlag.de		W_31

A_6_Results from website analysis

sector	company	website	product/service	transparency	certification/labels	definition or vision
<i>sector</i>	<i>company</i>	<i>website</i>	<i>product/service</i>	<i>transparency</i>	<i>certification/labels</i>	<i>regarding sustainability</i>
fashion & accessoires	Cannamoda	www.cannamoda.de	clothes made from 100% cannabis		none	x
fashion & accessoires	Monagoo	www.monagoo.com	online shop offering sustainable fashion	x	x	x
fashion & accessoires	pirate business wear	www.piratebusiness.com	clothes and accessoires from old firebrigade tubes			none
fashion & accessoires : cosmetics	Ringana	www.ringana.com	cosmetics	x	x	x
food	beanarella	www.beanarella.de	coffee capsules		x	none
food	Bio-Kostbarkeiten	www.bio-kostbarkeiten.de/	jam, sirup, cake		x	none
food	Keimling Naturkost	www.keimling.de	smoothie maker		none	x
food	Rawdies	www.rawdies.de	catering and vegan raw food		x	none
food	Sonnenator	www.sonnentor.com	spices, herbs	x	x	x

information: associations	BUND	www.bund.de	information on protection of the environment in Germany	x	x	x
information: associations	Papier Pilz	www.papierpilz.wordpress.com	collegeblocks through direct recycling of paper		none	x
information: associations	Rettet den Regenwald e.V.	www.regenwald.org	information on protection of the rainforest		none	x
information: associations	Verkehrsclub Deutschland e.V.	www.vcd.org	information on sustainable means of transportation	x	none	none
mobility and leisure	VeryYoga	www.veryyoga.de	yoga mats and other accessoires		x	x
other	Claudia Renner	www.claudia-renner.de	personal coach for vegan lifestyle		none	none
other	Klima-Kollekte	www.klima-kollekte.de	compensation of CO2 emissions	x	x	none
other	Ruby Cup	www.ruby-cup.com	menstruation cups	x	x	x
services: assurances	BKK advita	www.bkk-advita.de	health assurance		x	x
services: electricity	Greenpeace Energy	www.greenpeace-energy.de	provider of electricity made from renewable sources	x	x	x
services: finances	ABO Invest	www.buergerwindakte.de	selling shares investing in wind energy	x	x	x
services: finances	ecoplanfinanz AG	www.ecoplanfinanz.de	consulting for sustainable investments		none	x
services: finances	Effondo	www.effondo.de	sustainable investments		none	x
services: finances	greenXmoney	www.greenxmoney.com	investments in renewable energy	x	none	x

services: finances	MehrWert GmbH für Finanzberatung und Vermittlung	www.mehrwert-finanzen.de	sustainable investments		x	x
services: publishing house	neunmalklug Verlag	www.neunmalklug-verlag.de	cradle to cradle certified children's books		none	x
services: publishing house	oekom Verlag	www.oekom-verlag.de	publishing house for sustainability and ecological issues		x	x

company	referring to dimensions of sustainability			which stakeholders are named ?			
	ecologic	social	economic	partners/suppliers presented?	producers	consumers	traders
Cannamoda	x				x	x	
Monagoo	x	x	x	x		x	
pirate business wear	x	x				x	
Ringana	x	x				x	
beanarella	x	x		x			
Bio-Kostbarkeiten	x		x		x		x
Keimling Naturkost	x						
Rawdies	x			x		x	x
Sonnentor	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
BUND	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Papier Pilz	x	x	x	x		x	
Rettet den Regenwald e.V.		x			x	x	x
Verkehrsclub Deutschland e.V			x				
VeryYoga							
Claudia Renner						x	
Klima-Kollekte	x			x			
Ruby Cup	x	x	x				
BKK advita	x	x	x				
Greenpeace Energy	x		x	x		x	
ABO Invest	x	x	x				
ecoplanfinanz AG	x	x	x		x	x	x
Effondo	x		x	x			
greenXmoney	x			x			
MehrWert GmbH für Finanzberatung und Vermittlung	x	x	x		x	x	x
neunmalklug Verlag	x	x	x				

oekom Verlag	x	x	x	x		x	
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A_7 Attributes relating to sustainability found on the websites

terms used	translation of the term	frequency of responses
Grüne Zahlen/ Projekte/ Energie/ Anlagen/ Bücher	green numbers/ projects/ energy/ investments/books	6
Umweltfreundlich/ umweltverträglich/ umweltschonend	environmental friendly/sound/compatible	6
Energiewende	energy transition	5
Klimaschonend/ klimafreundlich/ Klimaschutz	climate friendly/ protection	5
Ökologisch/ Öko-Qualität	ecological/ eco-quality	5
Zukunftsfähig/ langfristig	long-term/ sustainable	5
Vegan/ vegane Lebensweise	vegan (lifestyle)	4
Verantwortungsbewusst/ Verantwortungsvoller Konsum	responsible (consumption)	4
Frei von synthetischen Zusatzstoffen/ keine Konservierungsstoffe/ keine Chemie	no additives/ preservative/ chemicals	3
Handarbeit	hand-made	3
Nachhaltige(s) Finanzanlagen/ Anlagestrategien/ Einkaufen	sustainable investments	3
Aus erneuerbaren Energiequellen/ Ökostrom	from renewable energy sources/ green electricity	2
biologisch abbaubar/ kompostierbar	bio-degradable/ compostable	2
Aus eigenem Anbau	from one's own cultivation	1
Direktrecycling	direct recycling	1
Ganzheitlich Nachhaltig	holistic sustainable	1
Kompensation	compensation	1

Lange Lebensdauer	long lifetime	1
Nachwachsend	renewable	1
Rein pflanzlich	purely vegetable	1
Rohkost	raw food	1
Sozialverträglich	socially acceptable	1
Transparenz	transparency	1
Wiederverwendbar	reusable	1