

Exploring Entrepreneurial Contributions to a Post-Growth World

A Case Study of the Swiss Outdoor Equipment Industry

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Abstract

Global warming, biodiversity loss, pandemics – humanity today suffers from many life-threatening phenomena beyond those mentioned here. The root cause of those phenomena lies in the overuse of limited natural resources. Economic growth drives this overuse dramatically. Economic growth in turn is inter alia driven by enterprises. This thesis investigates how outdoor equipment enterprises can contribute to a post-growth world, with growth independence being this world's main feature. The thesis finds that enterprises can and do contribute through (1) adopting post-growth values, (2) engaging with post-growth innovations, (3) communicating an enterprise's environmental and social performance transparently and (4) staying away from the stock market. Furthermore, it finds that both enterprise's advanced age and large size matters regarding its ability to contribute to a post-growth world. Regarding further studies, the thesis suggests to investigate the implementation of entrepreneurial post-growth characteristics in order to facilitate the transformation towards a growth independent world.

Keywords: enterprises, growth independence, degrowth, pioneers, sustainability, Switzerland

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This thesis project felt like a loong bike ride on a bumpy road; there were highs and lows. Sometimes I fell, had to get up again and start pedalling once more. During the whole bike ride – to continue with this bike metaphor – I was lucky to get great support for which I'm deeply grateful; from Darin who gave me great advice on where to go next once I've lost direction and who motivated me to get on the bike again and continue my journey once I fell. From Irmi who helped me understand the mechanics of my bike (aka post-growth) and who handed me a plaster to cover my scratches I got from falling. My deepest thanks to both of them, for the time and energy they were ready to give to help me navigate on my bumpy thesis road. Furthermore, I want to thank my friends and family who were there on the bike ride with me. Some of them had a less bumpy road ahead, which made me see that roads are changing and that they do not stay bumpy forever. They stood by me in my crises and celebrated with me when I just got on top of a hill. I am also grateful to all the participating enterprises, who shared their stories with me and who made this journey possible in the first place. Without the support of all these people I would probably be stuck somewhere by now, with a broken bike, a bunch of ideas what to do next and a hard time deciding for one of them. In other words, I could not have done this journey. A big thank you to all of you!

What if the transformation towards post-growth is similarly bumpy as my thesis bike ride? Well, I can tell, it is doable, not easy and not always fun, but doable! So, let's get all our bikes out and pedal together into a bright post-growth future, where less is more and more is less. For the living beings of tomorrow; for all of us.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Setting the Scene – The Outdoor Equipment Industry	2
2.1 The Environmental Impact of the Outdoor Equipment Industry	2
2.2 Growth in the Outdoor Equipment Industry	3
2.2.1 <i>Growth Stagnation in Swiss Outdoor Equipment Enterprises</i>	4
2.2.2 <i>Growth Attitude of Outdoor Equipment Pioneers</i>	5
3. Theoretical Entry Point – Post Growth.....	6
3.1 Growth Criticism.....	6
3.2 Limits to Growth and the Myth of Decoupling	8
3.3 Post-Growth and Enterprises	9
4. Methods.....	10
4.1 Framework Development via Literature Review	11
4.1.1 <i>Framework Description</i>	13
4.1.1.1 <i>Values</i>	13
4.1.1.2 <i>Innovations</i>	13
4.1.1.3 <i>Scope of Action</i>	14
4.1.1.4 <i>Entrepreneurial Basics</i>	15
4.2 Framework Application via Thematic Analysis of Entrepreneurial Post-Growth Characteristics among Outdoor Equipment Enterprises.....	20
4.2.1 <i>Interviews with Swiss Outdoor Equipment Enterprises</i>	20

4.2.2 Document-Based Analysis of Pioneering Outdoor Equipment Enterprises	21
5. Results	22
5.1 Entrepreneurial Post-Growth Characteristics in Swiss Enterprises.....	22
5.1.1 The Enterprises' Attitudes towards Growth	22
5.1.2 Values	23
5.1.3 Innovations	24
5.1.4 Scope of Action.....	25
5.1.5 Entrepreneurial Basics	27
5.2 Entrepreneurial Post-Growth Characteristics in Pioneering Enterprises	32
5.2.1 The Enterprises' Attitudes towards Growth	32
5.2.2 Values	33
5.2.3 Innovations	34
5.2.4 Scope of Action.....	35
5.2.5 Entrepreneurial Basics	36
6. Discussion	41
6.1 How can Swiss Outdoor Equipment Enterprises Contribute to a Post-Growth World?	41
6.2 What Entrepreneurial Characteristics are Pivotal for an Outdoor Enterprise's Ability to Contribute to a Post-Growth World?	42
6.3 This Thesis' Contribution to Sustainability Science.....	44
6.4 Limitations.....	45
7. Conclusion.....	46

8. References47

9. Supplementary Material.....58

Appendix A..... 58

Appendix B..... 64

Appendix C..... 66

Appendix D 67

Appendix E 71

Appendix F 83

Appendix G 86

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1: (Predicted) revenue growth in percent in the European OEI from 2018-2025</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Figure 2: Process of identifying the ECs and EPGCs respectively.</i>	<i>12</i>

List of Tables

<i>Table 1: Content of literature.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Table 2: The framework's four categories with their ECs</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Table 3: Framework of ECs and their expression EPGCs.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Table 4: Key figures of the enterprises (E1 – E6) interviewed</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Table 5: Key figures of the enterprises analysed via documents.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Table 6: The enterprises' attitudes towards growth.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Table 7: EPGCs in each of the Swiss enterprises</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Table 8: Vaude and Patagonia's attitudes towards growth.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Table 9: EPGCs among the pioneering enterprises.....</i>	<i>38</i>

Abbreviations

CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CSR:	Corporate Social Responsibility
EC:	Entrepreneurial Characteristic
EPGC:	Entrepreneurial Post-Growth Characteristic
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
OE:	Outdoor Equipment
OEE:	Outdoor Equipment Enterprise
OEI:	Outdoor Equipment Industry
SME:	Small and Medium Enterprise

1. Introduction

Global warming, land degradation, biodiversity loss, pandemics – the list of life-threatening phenomena humanity faces today is long. Many of these phenomena occur because humanity is overusing the planet's finite resources which in turn threaten human well-being (UNEP, 2021). (Economic) growth has been identified as one of the root causes for this overuse and the resulting threats (Meadows, Meadows, Randers, & Behrens III, 1972; Kallis, Demaria, & D'Alisa, 2015). At the same time, economic growth is still one of the most important indicators for a nation's wealth (Raworth, 2017). It is a deeply rooted belief in humans that economic growth makes life better (Jackson, 2021). However, economic growth is becoming dangerous. The life-threatening phenomena mentioned above are the result of this dangerous economic growth which reduces human well-being in the long run. In order to increase well-being, a system-wide transformation is required which *“will involve a fundamental change in the technological, economic and social organization of society, including world views, norms, values and governance”* (UNEP, 2021, p. 11).

Such a system-wide transformation is what the post-growth idea is aiming for; in a post-growth world economic growth would be left behind, i.e., the various systems would not be existentially dependent upon economic growth any longer (Seidl & Zahrnt, 2010). In a post-growth world, politics which increase economic growth are abandoned, the consumption of energy and resources is reduced and growth dependent institutions and structures – e.g., enterprises – are converted (Seidl & Zahrnt, 2010).

Enterprises are one actor in the economic system and as such, they have a responsibility to contribute to the economy-wide and cross-sectoral transformation (UNEP, 2021). They have the potential to contribute to a systemic change (Deimling, 2017). This thesis focuses on enterprises and aims at exploring their contribution to the transformation towards a post-growth world. In other words, it seeks to understand the role of enterprises in this transformation. To this end, enterprises of the Swiss outdoor equipment industry (OEI) – which are considered to be beneficial contributors to a post-growth world by the author – will be investigated. The following research questions lead the study: *(1) how can Swiss outdoor equipment enterprises contribute to a post-growth world?* and *(2) what entrepreneurial characteristics are pivotal for an outdoor enterprise's ability to contribute to a post-growth world?*

This particular industry is chosen because the OEI has observed strong growth for about two decades, however, growth is stagnating in the past years. This stagnation is being recognised as

structural because markets are saturated (Conradin, 2017; World Footwear, 2019; Snow Industry News, 2018). Hence, there is a need to start thinking about a world ‘after growth’ i.e., a post-growth world. The country Switzerland is chosen because of the author’s personal affiliations with the Swiss OEI.

2. Setting the Scene – The Outdoor Equipment Industry

Exploring the great outdoors and enjoying the beauty in nature this planet offers is appealing to many people. Outdoor equipment enterprises (OEEs)¹ play an important role in making these outdoor experiences as enjoyable as possible through their safe and protective outdoor equipment (OE). However, producing (Krättli, 2020) and using outdoor equipment harms nature (Greenpeace, 2016). Since OEEs directly rely on an intact nature – because people buy OE if there are great outdoors to explore – they need to protect it in order to not lose their reason for existence (Kaufmann, 2021; Snow Industry News, 2018). Besides, growth of the OEI involves increases in its production and hence its environmental impact. The heavy environmental impact is one argument in favour of not increasing the production further – besides the economic bottlenecks. In the following, the environmental impact of the OEI (see Chapter 2.1) as well as the growth trends in the OEI are introduced (see Chapter 2.2). Furthermore, information on the Swiss OEI is given in more detail (see Section 2.2.1). Lastly, two pioneering OEEs are introduced (see Section 2.2.2).

2.1 The Environmental Impact of the Outdoor Equipment Industry

The environmental impact of the Outdoor Equipment Industry (OEI) is substantial; since many functional materials used for OE are based on oil, their production emits three times as much CO₂ as the production of cotton (Krättli, 2020). Besides, 90 percent of the chemicals used in the production of OE have been proven to be harmful for the environment (Brüngger, 2021). The OEI is aware of its negative environmental impacts and has developed alternative techniques to produce OE, such as using recycled materials (Brüngger, 2021). Technical improvements are important but not sufficient to solve the problem of the ever-increasing resource use on a planet with finite resources. Hence, the question of business growth in the OEI has to be examined more closely, and the drivers of the constantly increasing resource consumption have to be understood.

¹ In this thesis, the term ‘outdoor equipment enterprise’ refers to a provider/brand of outdoor equipment.

2.2 Growth in the Outdoor Equipment Industry

The OEI emerged in the 1980s, with a few OEEs. In the following years, more enterprises joined and together they built a new market which was thriving (Kühni, 2020). Around the year 2000, when big OEEs started to enter the various markets and take over smaller OEEs, it became difficult for the latter to survive (Kühni, 2020). These takeovers were and still are one reason why OEEs exhibit/show growth (Kaufmann, 2021); small OEEs want to grow in order to protect themselves from being taken over and big OEEs strive for growth because they want to increase their power on the market. Fashion trends could be another reason for OEEs to grow; in recent years, fashion has gained importance in the OEI, especially regarding garments (Kühni, 2020). Conradin (2017) observes it is often only the colour of e.g., a zipper that changes from one season to another. This leads to more production, more waste and hence more pressure on the environment because non fashionable garments are replaced by fashionable ones even though the former are still functional (Conradin, 2017). More production requires more turnover and therefore growth is beneficial.

Despite the aforementioned growth drivers, the growth trend² in the OEI is starting to stagnate (Conradin, 2017). In 2018, the worth of European wholesales of OE was reduced to 5.81 billion Euros (World Footwear, 2019) compared to its worth of 5.86 billion Euros in 2017 (Snow Industry News, 2018). The wholesales' worth started growing again in 2019, but only by 0.01 billion Euros (Shepherd, 2020). Figure 1 shows/predicts the revenue growth of the European OEI from 2018 until 2025. After a short growth phase from 2018 to 2020³, the revenue growth in online shops (which may reflect the overall sales) is expected to decrease until 2025 (Statista, 2021)⁴.

² Focus on the growth trend in the European OEI only because of the thesis' limited scope.

³ This peak could be explained by the COVID-19 outbreak during which people started to buy more OE because they were outdoors more often.

⁴ Based on data from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations and Eurostat.

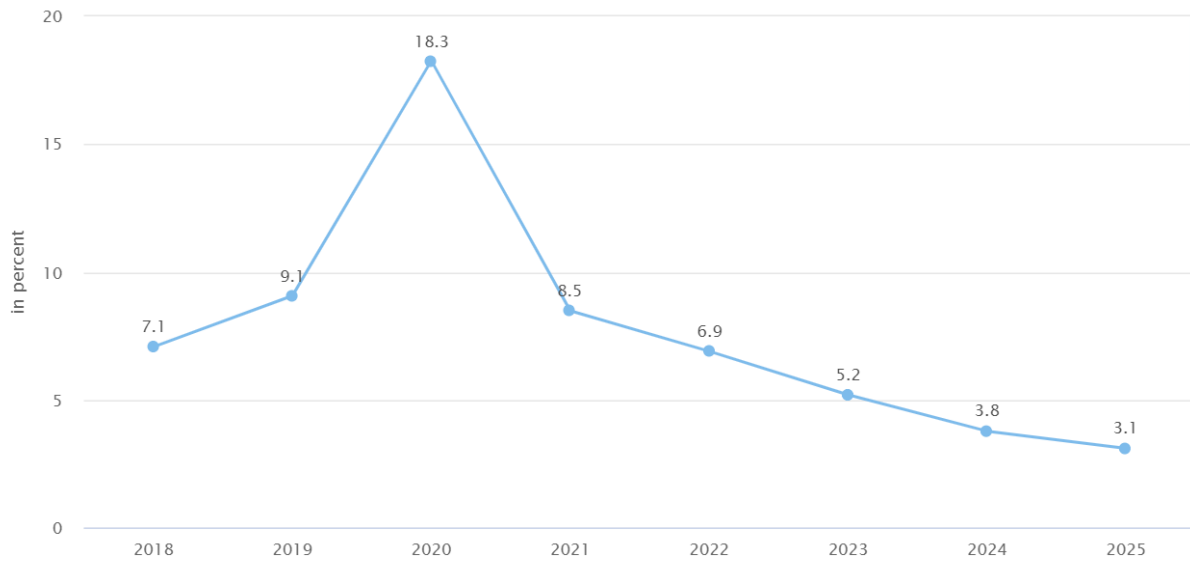


Figure 1. (Predicted) revenue growth in percent (y-axis) in the European OEI from 2018-2025 (x-axis), showing the revenue generated and expected in the sport and outdoor industry via online shops (Statista, 2021).

The predictions illustrated in Figure 1 should be reason for concern regarding the future of the OEI if it remains dependent on growth. But what if enterprises could survive and maintain themselves without growth? The US OEE Patagonia could be considered a pioneer regarding growth independence. In 2020, the company announced that it does not want to grow any further and instead of producing new products to focus on reselling old products (Kaufmann, 2021). The German OEE Vaude is also critical about growth (see Section 5.2.1). Both enterprises seem to realize the need for (entrepreneurial) alternatives to growth strategies and are therefore considered post-growth pioneering OEEs (see Section 2.2.2).

This thesis attempts to investigate those post-growth alternatives in Swiss OEEs and to compare them to the pioneering OEEs in order to find out how OEEs can contribute to the transformation towards a post-growth world.

2.2.1 Growth Stagnation in Swiss Outdoor Equipment Enterprises

Switzerland with its abundance in mountains, forests and lakes is a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts. There are several Swiss OEEs who provide the necessary equipment for them. Six such Swiss OEEs – who are introduced in more detail in Section 4.2.1 – are analysed in this thesis. The Swiss OEEs are also struggling with the aforementioned European stagnation trend in the OEI; the stagnating OEI together with a missing succession planning in enterprises active in this industry leads to the ‘death’ of specialized producers and retailers of outdoor equipment. Both the former Swiss retailer Eiselin Sport as well as the former Swiss OEE Mammut experienced this ‘death’, i.e., they

both had to sell their enterprise in recent years (Aargauer Zeitung, 2019; Kühni, 2020). The founder of Eiselin Sport spoke of an oversaturation of the outdoor market (Aargauer Zeitung, 2019). Another Swiss OE retailer, Transa, stated that today growth in the outdoor industry only takes place at the expense of other market participants (Conradin, 2017). Hence, it is crucial for Swiss OEEs to find alternative ways to do business which are less dependent on growth.

2.2.2 Growth Attitude of Outdoor Equipment Pioneers

In order to have an idea where Swiss OEEs could orientate themselves when finding alternative ways to do growth-independent business, the author identified the two OEEs Vaude and Patagonia as pioneering enterprises. According to Loorbach & Wijsman (2013) pioneering businesses are characterised by tactical networking through which an industry's broader impact on the environment and society can be discussed and eventually mitigated. This is the case with Vaude and Patagonia, both of which are members of outdoor associations – Vaude is a member of the European Outdoor Group (European Outdoor Group, 2020a) and Patagonia is a member of the Outdoor Association Industry (Outdoor Industry Association, n.d.) – that provide a platform for key stakeholders in the OEI to facilitate collaborations and a sustainable business conduct within the industry (European Outdoor Group, 2020b; Outdoor Industry Association, 2021). Furthermore, pioneering businesses engage in experiments in order to influence and eventually change a market (Loorbach & Wijsman, 2013).⁵ Vaude and Patagonia do so through providing repair and reuse services, engaging in politics etc. (Vaude, 2020k; Streep, 2017; Patagonia, 2018) (see Chapter 5.2). Furthermore, they both take critical stances towards growth. Hence, both enterprises can be considered pioneering enterprises (Vaude, 2020k; Kaufmann, 2021). In this thesis they are used as benchmarks for growth independence.

⁵ See Loorbach & Wijsam (2013) for more characteristics of pioneering businesses.

3. Theoretical Entry Point – Post Growth

Creating a better future for the living beings of tomorrow. This is ultimately what post-growth aims for. And this is also where post-growth and sustainability science meets. Sustainability science is about “*studying – and ultimately transforming – the way human societies interact with and depend upon the natural environment*” (Nagatsu et al., 2020, p. 1808). A post-growth world can be – and in this thesis is – seen as the world after this transformation. This thesis seeks to find entrepreneurial contributions to the transformation towards a post-growth world and intends to increase the knowledge about this transformation on an entrepreneurial level. In the following, the idea of post-growth as well as the role of enterprises in this transformation is outlined.

3.1 Growth Criticism

Before the 1970s, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth had been the most important indicator for a nation’s economic health (Raworth, 2017) and its political success (Jackson, 2021). However, such an interpretation of the indicator is misleading because, amongst others, it does not take into account the environmental costs that come with the production of goods. GDP as an indicator is reliant on monetary value and since nature has no such value the consumption of natural capital is not included in the GDP. In fact, the higher the GDP the higher the environmental exploitation because the more products are produced the higher the consumption of resources (Daly, 2014). Hence, besides being an indicator for economic health, GDP can be seen as an indicator for pollution, depletion and exploitation of the natural world.

Critiques on the indicator GDP and on the blind pursuit of economic growth have started to emerge in the second half of the 20th century in countries all over the world. Kallis et al. (2015) refer to two phases of growth-related criticism in which different aspects were central: (1) the 1970s with a focus on limited resources and (2) the 2000s with a focus on the idea of sustainable development.

In phase one, the following contributions set the pathway for phase two: in 1972, the report *The Limits to Growth* was published which outlined the environmental problems resulting from perpetual economic growth (Meadows et al., 1972). The report laid the foundation for subsequent growth criticism (Seidl & Zahrnt, 2010). The same year *The Limits to Growth* was published, the French intellectual André Gorz introduced the term ‘*décroissance*’, the French term for ‘degrowth’. Inspired

by Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen⁶, Gorz advocated degrowth through emphasising inter alia the importance of reduced consumption (Kallis et al., 2015).

With the World Commission's Report *Our Common Future*, published in 1987, the debate about sustainable development emerged with economic growth being a part of it (Seidl & Zahrnt, 2010). The report set the starting point for the second phase of growth-related criticism which started off in 2001 in France (Kallis et al., 2015). This second phase was characterised by the emergence of the degrowth movement, with its main idea of a society which consumes fewer natural resources and focus on organizing new ways of living (Kallis et al., 2015). Degrowth focuses on the downscaling of production and consumption in order to increase human well-being and improve ecological conditions (Kallis et al., 2015; Kopfmüller, Nierling, Reichel, & Albiez, 2016).

In the late 2000s, another growth critical idea emerged in Germany through fundamental contributions from Niko Paech (Paech, 2009), and Irmi Seidl and Angelika Zahrnt (Seidl & Zahrnt, 2010): post-growth. Post-growth serves as an umbrella term for a variety of ideas and visions 'after growth'. According to Paech (2009), a post-growth economy is an economy with stable supply structures which do not depend on GDP growth. Seidl & Zahrnt (2010) define a post-growth society as a society which is not dependent on GDP growth. Both, the definition of the post-growth economy and society point out the independence from GDP growth. Being independent from economic growth is conditional for cutting the ties between GDP growth and environmental exploitation and therefore for reducing environmental pressure exerted by economic growth (see Chapter 3.2). Banerjee, Jermier, Peredo, Perey, & Reichel (2020) argue that post-growth is about shifting away from an accumulative economy to a distributive economy, from extraction to restoration, from competition to cooperation and from consumerism to sufficiency-based values. In a post-growth economy and society growth is still possible. However, it is selective meaning that those industries who ease the pressure on the environment shall grow and those industries who increase this pressure shall shrink (Seidl & Zahrnt, 2010).

Hence, degrowth and post-growth differ regarding their propositions for responding to the environmentally problematic perpetual GDP growth; the degrowth idea actively seeks to downscale GDP growth whereas the post-growth notion aims for the economy and society to become independent from GDP growth. Whether the economy will shrink is of secondary interest. This thesis

⁶ One of the first ecological economists who pointed out that continuous consumption – no matter the economic growth rate – inevitably leads to exhausting the earth's limited resources (Kallis et al., 2015).

focuses on a post-growth world, i.e., an economy and society which is independent from economic growth.⁷ Growth independent enterprises are one important element.

3.2 Limits to Growth and the Myth of Decoupling

With their report *Limits to growth*, Meadows et al. (1972) introduced the fundamental aspect of finite resources which ultimately set (economic) growth limits (see Chapter 3.1). Acknowledging those growth limits were and still are unsettling for humanity since economic growth is seen as the source of human well-being (Ranis, Stewart, & Ramirez, 2000). However, it is widely accepted that economic growth is problematic for the environment (OECD, 2011; World Bank, 2012). In order to overcome those well-being jeopardizing growth limits and simultaneously protect the environment, many economic actors, for instance the OECD or the World Bank, emphasise the importance of improving technological efficiency (Hickel & Kallis, 2020). They assume that an increase in technological efficiency would allow to decouple GDP growth from its negative impacts on the environment (OECD, 2011; World Bank, 2012). However, strategies aiming for ‘eco-efficiency’ are limited; rebound-effects – increased consumption due to lower cost of resource use realized by eco-efficiency – counterbalance the reduced resource use achieved through increased efficiency (Parrique et al., 2019; Banerjee et al., 2020). Hence, for this and other reasons (see e.g., Parrique et al., 2019), decoupling economic growth from resource use is only possible to a limited extent. Relative decoupling has been shown to be partly achievable by countries (Hickel & Kallis, 2020), e.g., the reduction of emissions per unit of economic output, which cannot compensate for any output increase (Parrique et al., 2019). What would be needed is absolute decoupling, which occurs when an increase in economic activities goes along with a decrease of environmental pressure (Parrique et al., 2019). So far, no country achieved absolute decoupling (Parrique et al., 2019; Hickel & Kallis, 2020) and hence, the reliance on technological solutions is not enough to alleviate pressures on the environment. In other words, growth limits most probably cannot be overcome by efficiency gains. Instead of overcoming growth limits, humanity has to overcome its growth addiction. Therefore, the focus on economic growth has to be replaced by a focus on growth independence or growth neutrality. This is not to be confused with A-growth which means not to care about the growth question but to focus on environmental policy (Van den Bergh, 2011). Growth independence is a precondition for a post-growth world, which is established by both economic and societal actors, who share the responsibility for contributing to a post-growth world (Posse, 2015). This thesis focuses on enterprises as pivotal economic actors in the transformation process towards a post-

⁷ In this thesis, the term ‘post-growth world’ is used to refer to the post-growth economy and post-growth society as defined by Paech (2009), and Seidl & Zahrnt (2010).

growth world. The following chapter outlines the importance and the role of enterprises in this transformation.

3.3 Post-Growth and Enterprises

According to Banerjee et al. (2020), macroeconomic⁸ efforts to reduce the pressure on the environment through realizing a growth independent economy are not sufficient. They therefore suggest to take the microeconomic sphere of enterprises into account to see how enterprises can contribute to a post-growth world. So far, microeconomics⁹ have not or only seldomly taken post-growth ideas into account (Posse, 2015).

This is problematic because macroeconomic efforts to become growth independent have no effect on underlying economic structures if the entrepreneurial strive for growth does not stop (Deimling, 2017). The structuration theory developed by Giddens offers a helpful theoretical construct to understand the effects from both micro- and macroeconomics on structures (Whittington, 2010). According to Giddens structuration theory, all actors in social systems have an agency to influence the systemic structures (Whittington, 2010). In other words, enterprises – the actors – have the agency to influence and change the economic system – the structure – and its strive for growth. Enterprises are therefore not helplessly at the mercy of the underlying economic structures, but are in fact change agents of the very same (Deimling, 2017). In order to realize a post-growth world, it thus makes sense to have a closer look at enterprises as a starting point. The question is whether it is possible for enterprises to do business without being dependent on growth and thereby influencing today's economic structures. This thesis focuses primarily on enterprises which are essential for growth independence and less on the enterprises influence on economic structures for reasons of scope. However, only a transformation at both the macroeconomic and microeconomic level can lead to a post-growth world.

Enterprises are strong drivers of growth in the present economic system (Johnsen, Nelund, Olaison, & Sørensen, 2017). An enterprise in today's system is considered successful if it yields profit and strives for growth (Hopkins, 2009). Their efforts to boost economic development and growth through generating jobs, developing products and services, interacting with consumers and shaping their behaviour seemingly goes along with the enterprises' strive for growth (Tambunan, 2006; Schaltegger, Hansen, & Lüdeke-Freund, 2015). Besides, the growth drive triggered by competition is another reason or rather pressure for enterprises to grow (Tschumi, Winiger, Wirth, Mayer, & Seidl,

⁸ Macroeconomics: concerned with (economic) decisions of countries and governments (Investopedia, 2021).

⁹ Microeconomics: concerned with (economic) decisions of individuals and enterprises (Investopedia, 2021).

2020; Posse, 2015). Overall, there seems to be an unwritten market rule for businesses which leaves them with two options: growing or dying¹⁰ (Posse, 2015).

Even though growth appears to be central for enterprises, a study of 700 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the DACH¹¹ region by Gebauer & Sagebiel (2015) showed that only two percent of the participating SMEs are aiming for strong growth. 25 percent are limiting their growth rates and another 25 percent have no growth objectives at all. The remaining 50 percent only want to grow to a certain size of enterprise (Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015). Hence, there is empirical data that growth does not need to be a primary objective of an enterprise in order for it to survive. There is another option besides growing or dying: reconceptualizing.

What if entrepreneurial success would be reconceptualized, i.e., what if environmental and social benefits realized by enterprises instead of their growth and profit would indicate entrepreneurial success? Johnsen et al. (2017) argue that reconceptualizing enterprises as socially creative entities would disconnect them from pure economics and emphasise their potential to bring about environmental and social benefits. They would become growth independent enterprises, i.e., enterprises which focus on product qualities, resource efficiency as well as life and labour quality with turnover, profit or employee numbers not being central indicators for success anymore (Liesen, Dietsche, & Gebauer, 2013). Such 'post-growth enterprises' have left growth ambitions behind and even though there still might be growth phases, their existence does not depend on growth any longer.

4. Methods

In order to pursue this thesis' aim of understanding the role of enterprises in the transformation towards a post-growth world, i.e., find the seeds of post-growth in an entrepreneurial context, the concept of post-growth had to be operationalised. Therefore, a framework of entrepreneurial post-growth characteristics (EPGCs) was developed (see Chapter 4.1). This framework was then used to collect data on outdoor equipment enterprises, which were the basis for answering the two research questions *(1) how can Swiss outdoor equipment enterprises contribute to a post-growth world?* and *(2) what entrepreneurial characteristics are pivotal for an outdoor enterprise's ability to contribute to a post-growth world?* The data for answering research question (1) was collected through interviews with Swiss OEEs. For answering research question (2), data was collected through a document-based

¹⁰ Author's translation of the German saying 'wachsen oder weichen'.

¹¹ Germany (D), Austria (A), Switzerland (CH).

analysis of pioneering OEEs (see Chapter 4.2). In the following, more information on the aforementioned framework and methods is given.

4.1 Framework Development via Literature Review

Based on a non-systematic literature review¹² (see Table 1), eleven entrepreneurial characteristics (ECs) and their respective expression in a post-growth world were identified. The term ‘entrepreneurial post-growth characteristic’ (EPGC) refers to an EC with its post-growth expression. Furthermore, the EPGCs’ effects on the enterprises and on society were assigned to each EPGC. The eleven ECs were then grouped into four categories in order to enhance the overview (see Table 2). Figure 3 shows the process of identifying the eleven ECs and EPGCs respectively.

Table 1. Content of literature with sources which served as the basis for deriving the EPGCs from. In bold: aspects related to growth independence (author’s creation).

Literature about	References
Indicators of and starting points for growth independence	(Tschumi et al., 2020; Posse, 2015)
Entrepreneurial strategies to escape growth drivers	(Niessen, 2013)
Future oriented ¹³ enterprises	(Posse, 2013)
Central decisions for realizing post-growth companies	(Gebauer, 2018; Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015)
Post-growth compatible enterprises	(Reichel, 2013a)
Non-growing or growth-neutral enterprises	(Leonhardt, Juschten, & Spash, 2017; Deimling, 2016; Deimling, 2017; Reichel, 2017; Reichel, 2013b)
Growth resilience	(Reichel, 2013b)
Entrepreneurial strategies which reduce growth	(Deimling, 2016)
Qualities of companies with ‘mojo’ ¹⁴	(Liesen, Dietsche, & Gebauer, 2015)
Contribution of enterprises to post-growth	(Paech, 2017)
Stability-oriented enterprises	(Gebauer & Mewes, 2015)
Common good oriented enterprises	(Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018)
Sufficiency-based business model initiatives	(Bocken & Short, 2015)
Eco-social enterprises	(Johanisova & Fraňková, 2017)

¹² Starting with an initial set of articles, a snowball principle was applied to find new literature. The author decided to stop the literature review when time became spare and the articles identified started to repeat.

¹³ Author’s translation of the German adjective ‘zukunftsfähig’.

¹⁴ Personal charisma; used in an entrepreneurial context here.

Table 2. The framework’s four categories with their ECs (author’s creation).

Category	Entrepreneurial Characteristics
Values	Business philosophy; CEO characteristics
Innovations	General innovations; product innovations; labour innovations
Scope of action	Regional scale; relation to external actors ¹⁵ ; communication with external actors
Entrepreneurial basic	Legal form; size of enterprise; finances

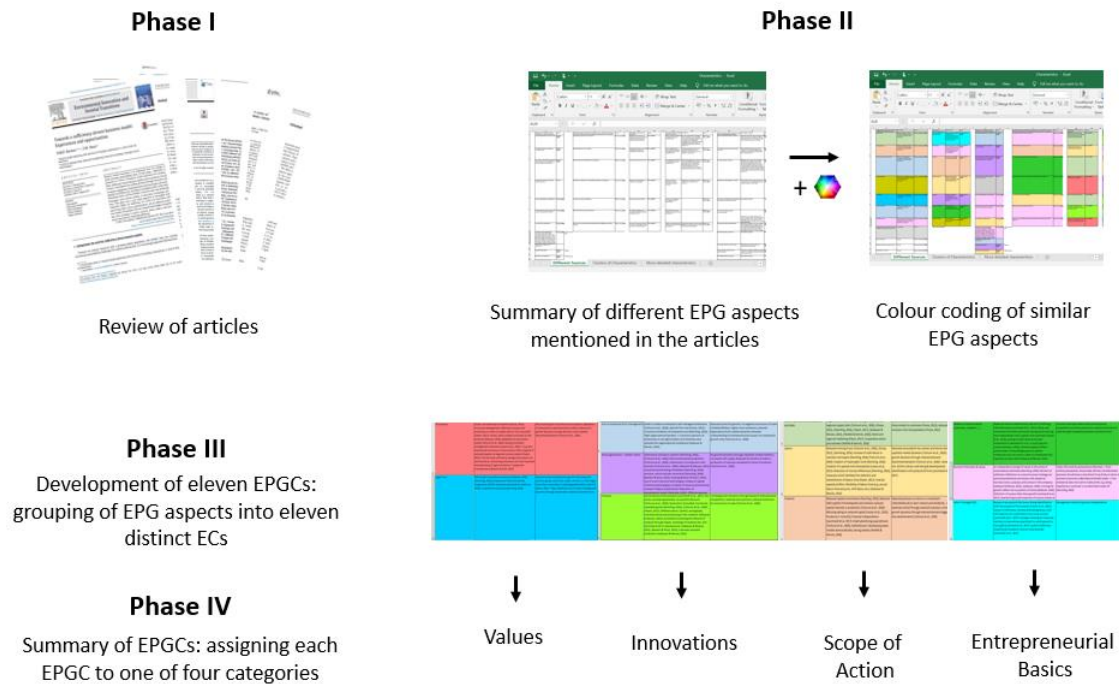


Figure 2. Process of identifying the ECs and EPGCs respectively. **Phase I:** reviewing articles with applying a snowball principle in order to find new articles. **Phase II:** (1) summary of the different entrepreneurial post-growth (EPG) aspects mentioned in the articles, the aspects’ effects on enterprises and society and the corresponding references in an excel sheet; (2) colour coding similar EPG aspects. **Phase III:** grouping the EPG aspects into eleven general entrepreneurial characteristics (ECs) (e.g., EPG aspects about the importance of regionality and short supply chains were summarized under the EC *regional scale*), ending up with eleven EPGCs. **Phase IV:** Summary of the eleven ECs into four categories according to the realms they touch upon (e.g., the ECs *regional scale*, *relation to external actors* and *communication with external actors* were summarized under the category name *scope of action*), ending up with four categories (author’s creation).

Finally, all categorised ECs and EPGCs respectively as well as the EPGCs’ effects on enterprises and society were summarized in a framework (see Table 3). This framework was then used for analysing the OEI and its post-growth compatibility (see Chapter 4.2).

¹⁵ Customers, competitors etc.

4.1.1 Framework Description

In the following, the framework introduced above is described in more detail. Table 3 depicts all the data gathered on EPGCs as well as the references. The references can only be found in Table 3 in order to facilitate the reading of the following sections.

The sections are organised as follows: the title of each section refers to the category of the respective EPGCs. The first paragraph (in italics) addresses the respective importance of each category and its EPGCs (see also column *effects on enterprises and society* in Table 3). The subsequent paragraphs outline the EPGCs, assigned to the respective category.

4.1.1.1 Values

The EPGCs of this category contribute to a responsible, holistic, sustainable and growth-neutral conduct of business and help reduce entrepreneurial pro-growth decisions. Furthermore, the role model function of the CEO can help bring about changes not only in the respective enterprise but in the broader realm of enterprises.

Business Philosophy

Important (entrepreneurial) values which are compatible with a post-growth world are fairness and cooperation, diversity, independence, democracy, transparency, ecological sustainability and frugality. Furthermore, moments of reflection on these values and preferences underlying the business vision and the resulting purpose and conduct of business activities are important. Those meetings also help the enterprise to adapt to the needs of employees and customers.

CEO Characteristics

A CEO with a clear, strong vision can incorporate post-growth ideas into the corporate identity and the purpose of the enterprise.

4.1.1.2 Innovations

This category's EPGCs are crucial for a post-growth world because they allow for production according to demands and reduce economics of scale, increase entrepreneurial self-supply structures which increase self-sufficiency of enterprises and therefore, reduce their dependence on capitalist market relations.

General Innovations

Alternative utilisation systems¹⁶ which concern how products and services are used are a fundamental innovation for a post-growth world. Those systems focus on sharing concepts and services such as repair and maintenance as well as on the reduction, reuse and recycling of products. Overall, the aim of those alternative utilisation systems is to decommercialize production, reduce the consumption of resources and land and emphasize collaborative consumption. Collaborative consumption refers to consumption via sharing platforms, reuse platforms etc. Besides, collaborative production, i.e., prosumer-management, is another important innovation for realizing a post-growth world. Prosumers are consumers who are involved in the production of the product they consume later and/or who are able to maintain and repair their products. It is expected that hence the consumer needs are better met and the level of material consumption can drop.

Product Innovations

Products should be durable, functional and repairable in order to reduce the overall resource consumption and eliminate built-in obsolescence. Built-in obsolescence describes a way of designing products so they become functionally or psychologically undesirable, i.e., obsolete. Hence, the consumer is forced to buy a new product.

Labour Innovations

Furthermore, working hours of employees should be reduced in order to decrease the production volume, increase well-being due to reduced stress levels of employees and allow for a more even distribution of labour.

4.1.1.3 Scope of Action

This category's EPGCs tend to stop the strive for entrepreneurial growth. Furthermore, they can help bring about structural changes.

Regional Scale

Enterprises with regional sales and purchasing structures, i.e., short supply chains are beneficial for a post-growth world because the contact to other economic actors and customers is kept close which reduces price competition, allows for a fast adaptation to consumers' needs and for better control over business activities.

¹⁶ Author's translation of the German expression 'Nutzungssysteme'.

Relation to External Actors

Moreover, collaborations not only with consumers as mentioned in Section 4.1.1.2 but also with other enterprises and society are important for a post-growth world because these collaborations create external capacity buffers and strengthen the commitment between collaborating enterprises. Examples of such collaborations are giving partial orders to a partner enterprise and vice versa or open-source activities through which all stakeholders (consumer, producers, suppliers etc.) have equal access to the means of production.

Communication with External Actors

A transparent communication of and broad accounting for their social and ecological performance helps enterprises to focus on not only growth but different entrepreneurial objectives. Furthermore, it allows them to assess their value in a non-monetary way and to strengthen their resilience towards external shocks. Furthermore, enterprises should moderate their sales and promotions with non-manipulative marketing campaigns in order to reduce sales incentives. Besides, communicating political concerns and therefore functioning as a structural policy actor¹⁷ who corrects misaligned societal, political and market structures and offers alternative societal visions can help bring about a post-growth world.

4.1.1.4 Entrepreneurial Basics

This category's EPGCs tend to reduce or stop the entrepreneurial strive for growth.

Legal Form

The legal form of an enterprise best compatible with a post-growth world ideally allows for democratic ownership, equity and employee participation. Hence, cooperatives, benefit corporations (see Table 4 in Section 4.2.2) and limited companies are advantageous legal forms; cooperatives enable employee participation and benefit corporations as well as limited companies minimize the risk of losing control over the enterprise's vision and mission. Overall, these legal forms reduce the pressure to maximise profits. However, there is no legal form that is best compatible with a post-growth world. It is rather the enterprise's purpose that decides over its compatibility; with a sufficiency-oriented purpose almost every legal form could be aligned with post-growth ideas. But there is one legal form that is least compatible with a post-growth world: listed stock companies. Their profit-oriented shareholders – who normally buy stocks in order to earn some return – exert

¹⁷ Author's translation of the German term 'strukturpolitischer Akteur'.

growth pressure on the enterprise in order there is some dividend and an increase of the stock value and hence they leave little room for the enterprise's interests regarding (non)-growth.

Size of Enterprise

Regarding the size of an enterprise, studies have shown that small or medium, self-managed enterprises are beneficial for realizing a post-growth world compared to larger enterprises because SMEs are more resilient to crises and less dependent on market dynamics. Furthermore, SMEs can more easily adapt to changes on the market and overall tend to strive for growth less often than larger enterprises. However, there is no optimal enterprise size for a post-growth world; enterprises have to find their optimal size themselves which is dependent on the business sector and the market phase of the enterprise.

Finances

Another important aspect for enterprises compatible with a post-growth world is financial independence. If enterprises manage to be independent from profit seeking financing, i.e., loans from external financiers, they are better able to conduct their business in accordance with their values and visions and stop striving for growth in order to return loans. Hence, taking out loans should be avoided if possible.

Table 3. Framework of entrepreneurial characteristics (EC) and their expression in a post-growth world consisting of eleven entrepreneurial post-growth characteristics (EPGCs) as well as their effects on enterprises and society identified based on a literature review. All references are in grey. A more comprehensive table with all the data can be found in Appendix A. This table depicts the aspects mentioned most often in the literature (author's creation).

Category	EC	EPGC	Effects on enterprises and society
Values	Business philosophy	Important values: fairness and cooperation, independence, democracy, diversity, transparency, ecological sustainability, frugality (Deimling, 2017; Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018) Reflection on current business strategy (Deimling, 2017; Gebauer, 2018; Gebauer & Mewes, 2015)	Frugal enterprises consume less (Deimling, 2017) Responsible, holistic, sustainable business conduct tends to be a growth-neutral business conduct (Deimling, 2017) Increased sensitivity for pro-growth decisions ¹⁸ and therefore reduced pro-growth decisions (Gebauer, 2018)
	CEO characteristics/abilities	CEO standing for corporate identity and the purpose of the enterprise for which growth is not a goal (Deimling, 2017; Leonhardt et al., 2017; Liesen et al., 2015)	Role model function of CEO translates into the enterprise as an economic actor: it fulfils a role model function and changes the system from within (Deimling, 2017)
Innovations	General innovations	Alternative utilisation systems: - Services which exclude ownership, e.g., sharing concepts (Deimling, 2016; Bocken & Short, 2015; Johanisova & Fraňková, 2017) - Services such as repair and maintenance (Posse, 2013; Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018; Reichel, 2017) Prosumer-Management: offering of courses and workshops in order to enable users to "do it yourself" (Paech, 2017; Posse, 2013; Niessen, 2013; Gebauer, 2018)	Reduced growth dynamics through capitalist market relations (Tschumi et al., 2020) Increased self-supply (Tschumi et al., 2020) Reduced economics of scale in production of services compared to those of products (Tschumi et al., 2020) Adaptation to consumers' needs (Posse, 2013) Emphasis of collaborative consumption (Reichel, 2013b)
	Product innovations	Production of durable, functional, repairable goods; eliminate built-in obsolescence ¹⁹ (Deimling, 2016; Tschumi et al., 2020; Paech, 2017; Bocken & Short, 2015; Gebauer & Mewes, 2015; Reichel, 2017) Niche product: focus on quality, functionality, socially just and	Reduced built-in obsolescence (Bocken & Short, 2015) Reduced price competition and incentives for economics of scale (Tschumi et al., 2020) Reduced material production (Reichel, 2017)

¹⁸ Decisions affecting enterprise size and growth, e.g., entering new markets with customers, replacing machinery, expanding sales opportunities and capacities through new distribution channels. These decisions are made daily in enterprises and often pass unnoticed.

¹⁹ A way of designing products so they become functionally or psychologically undesirable, i.e., obsolete. Hence, the consumer is forced to buy a new product (Sherif & Rice, 1986).

		environmentally friendly production (Leonhardt et al., 2017; Reichel, 2017)	
	Labour innovations	Reduced working hours (Posse, 2013; Posse, 2015; Reichel, 2013b; Tschumi et al., 2020; Niessen, 2013; Deimling, 2016)	<p>Reduced production volume (Posse, 2013)</p> <p>More even distribution of labour in society (Posse, 2013)</p> <p>Well-being and development (Posse, 2013)</p> <p>Reduced stress level for employees (Posse, 2013)</p>
Scope of action	Regional scale	Regional sales and purchasing structure, i.e., short regional supply chain (Tschumi et al., 2020; Posse, 2013; Posse, 2015; Deimling, 2016; Paech, 2017; Gebauer & Mewes, 2015; Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015; Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018)	<p>Reduced price competition due to reduced number of competitors allows for a fast adaptation to consumers' needs and control over business activities (Tschumi et al., 2020; Posse, 2013; Gebauer, 2018)</p> <p>Reduced emission from transportation (Posse, 2013)</p> <p>Reduced strive for growth (Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015)</p>
	Relation to external actors ²⁰	<p>Collaborations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open-source practice, peer-to-peer production (Reichel, 2013a; Reichel, 2017; Gebauer & Mewes, 2015) - Partial orders given to partner enterprises and vice versa in order to complement the capacities of each other (Gebauer & Mewes, 2015) 	<p>External capacity buffers through collaborations (Gebauer & Mewes, 2015)</p> <p>Collaborations strengthen the commitment of actors (Posse, 2015)</p>
	Communication with external actors	<p>Transparent communication and accounting of social and ecological performances (Niessen, 2013; Posse, 2013; Posse, 2015; Tschumi et al., 2020)</p> <p>Restraining/moderating sales and advertising (Posse, 2015):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No manipulative marketing campaigns (Bocken & Short, 2015) - Influencing public perceptions regarding the importance of reduced consumption (Leonhardt et al., 2017) <p>Political engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprises as structural policy actors who influence political societal and market structures (Posse, 2015; Schneidewind, 1998) 	<p>Focus on entrepreneurial success through different entrepreneurial objectives (Tschumi et al., 2020)</p> <p>Strengthening of enterprise's resilience towards external shocks (Niessen, 2013)</p> <p>Non-monetary value assessment (Niessen, 2013)</p> <p>Reduced purchase incentives (Bocken & Short, 2015)</p> <p>Correction of systemic misaligned incentives that lie outside the corporate sphere (Posse, 2015)</p>

²⁰ Customers, competitors etc.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enterprises as contributors to cultural change through offering alternative societal visions and implementing these in their business activities (Niessen, 2013) 	
Entrepreneurial Basics	Legal form	<p>Democratic ownership and fairness (Deimling, 2016; Gebauer, 2018; Johanisova & Fraňková, 2017): a legal form that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - allows for employee participation, e.g., cooperative (Gebauer, 2018) - reduces the risk of losing control over the entrepreneurial vision and mission, e.g., benefit corporation, limited company (Bocken & Short, 2015) <p>BUT: The enterprise's purpose is more important than its legal form; with a post-growth purpose, almost every legal form could be aligned with post-growth ideas (Posse, 2013)</p> <p>NOTE: Listed stock companies are not post-growth compatible because their profit-oriented shareholders exert growth pressure on the enterprise (Binswanger, 2013), and hence they leave little room for any enterprise's interests regarding (non-)growth</p>	<p>Reduced pressure to realise or even maximise growth (Niessen, 2013)</p> <p>No or very limited growth dynamics through absent shareholder interests (Binswanger, 2013)</p>
	Size of enterprise	<p>Small or medium, self-managed enterprises are advantageous for post-growth (Niessen, 2013; Tschumi et al., 2020; Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015)</p> <p>BUT: No adequate firm size; optimal firm size needs to be found by enterprise itself (Posse, 2013; Deimling, 2017)</p>	<p>Reduced strive for growth (Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015)</p> <p>High crisis resilience and reduced dependency on market dynamics (Tschumi et al., 2020)</p> <p>Quick adaptation to changes on the market (Niessen, 2013)</p>
	Finances	<p>Financial independence; avoid to take on external capital (Leonhardt et al., 2017; Liesen et al., 2015; Niessen, 2013; Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015)</p>	<p>Reduced strive for growth (Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015)</p> <p>Business activities that align with the entrepreneurial vision (Niessen, 2013)</p>

4.2 Framework Application via Thematic Analysis of Entrepreneurial Post-Growth Characteristics among Outdoor Equipment Enterprises

In order to provide data for the two research questions, a total of eight OEEs were analysed. Two forms of data collection were applied; (1) an empirical analysis of six Swiss SMEs – enterprises with fewer than 250 employees (Eurostat, 2016) – through interviews and (2) a document-based analysis of two pioneering non-SMEs. Each form of data collection was meant to provide data on one research question.

The data provided by the enterprises, i.e., the representation of the enterprises themselves were analysed in a non-critical way. In other words, the enterprises' statements were not questioned critically for reasons of time, thesis' scope and thesis' aim. However, the author is aware that those statements might not depict the whole picture.

Since the focus of the thesis is on Swiss enterprises, interviews were chosen as a method to analyse those because interviews enabled the author to directly interact with the enterprises and get detailed information. The document-based analysis was chosen because a lot of data (including analyses) on those pioneering OEEs was available online. Furthermore, their data was rather meant as comparative data to the data on the Swiss SMEs in order to see differences between larger OEEs and smaller OEEs. Hence, less detailed information on the larger OEEs was needed.

In the following, the eight enterprises serving as source of data are introduced. Furthermore, the methods used to collect the data are outlined.

4.2.1 Interviews with Swiss Outdoor Equipment Enterprises

In the empirical analysis, semi-structured interviews with six Swiss OE SMEs were conducted. For reasons of confidentiality no enterprise names are used. Based on a set of 37 questions (see interview guide in Appendix B), the interviewees were asked about each of the EPGC generated through the literature review (see Chapter 4.1). Furthermore, they were asked for self-assessments, e.g., assessing the importance of growth for the enterprise on a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 10 (very important). The questions were grouped according to the eleven EPGCs which facilitated the subsequent analysis because the answers were already roughly coded. Each interview took approximately one hour and they were all conducted in German, except for one which was conducted in English because the interviewee did not speak German. Table 4 provides an overview of the enterprises interviewed. The initial search for enterprises aimed for enterprises with criteria such

as sustainability, product quality, functionality and durability as well as their rootedness in Switzerland following their statements on their websites. In the process of finding enterprises that are both Swiss and available for interviews, some of the original criteria were excluded, with sustainability and rootedness in Switzerland being left.

Table 4. Key figures of the enterprises (E1 – E6) interviewed. G: Garments, E: Equipment (author’s creation).

<i>Enterprise</i>	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6
<i>Legal form</i>	Ltd ²¹	Stock company	Stock company	Ltd	Ltd	Stock company
<i>Number of employees</i>	7	14	24	12	1	27
<i>Established in</i>	2011	2009	1983	2016	2012	1930
<i>Products</i>	G	G + E	E	G + E for kids only	Soles	Socks

4.2.2 Document-Based Analysis of Pioneering Outdoor Equipment Enterprises

The two large enterprises who served as benchmarks for growth independence were analysed via documents, i.e., websites and newspaper articles (see Appendix C for more details on the sources used for both enterprises), with the main data source being the enterprises websites. They were chosen because of their pioneering characteristics (see Section 2.2.2). The data on each enterprise was collected for two days which allowed for a similar amount of data to be collected on each enterprise. In Table 5, the two enterprises are introduced.

Table 5. Key figures of the enterprises analysed via documents. G: Garments, E: Equipment (author’s creation).

<i>Name</i>	Vaude (German)	Patagonia (US)
<i>Legal form</i>	Ltd & Co. KG ²² (Vaude, 2020t)	Benefit corporation ²³ (Gunther, 2016)
<i>Number of employees</i>	558 (Vaude, 2020i)	Approx. 2.000 (Patagonia, 2021f)
<i>Established in</i>	1974 (Vaude, 2021a)	1973 (Gunther, 2016)
<i>Products</i>	G + E (Vaude, 2020t)	G + E (Patagonia, 2021g)

²¹ Author’s translation of the German term ‘Gesellschaft mit beschänkter Haftung’.

²² Co. KG (German: Kommanditgesellschaft): partnership between two legal entities, whereby one partner has unlimited liability and the other partner has limited liability; approved in Germany (Wikipedia, 2021b). Because of the limited legal scope of this particular legal form, this thesis simplifies Vaude’s legal form to a Ltd only.

²³ Corporation that is committed to higher standards of purpose, accountability and transparency (B Lab, 2021a). A Benefit Corporation is not a Certified B Corporation (B Corp); the former is a legal form, applicable in 34 states in the USA, Colombia and Italy whereas the latter is a certification, verifying companies who do business in accordance with nature and society (B Lab, 2021b).

5. Results

In this chapter, the EPGCs introduced in Chapter 4.1.1 are compared to the interview results (see Chapter 5.1) and the document-based results (see Chapter 5.2).

5.1 Entrepreneurial Post-Growth Characteristics in Swiss Enterprises

The results outlined in this chapter provide information to answer research question (1) *how can Swiss outdoor equipment enterprises contribute to a post-growth world?*

In the following, information on the general attitude towards growth of the six Swiss enterprises is given²⁴ (see Table 6). Furthermore, how well the Swiss enterprises align with EPGCs is outlined (see Table 7). The following sections are organised as follows; each section is named after one of the framework's categories and is subdivided into paragraphs addressing the category's ECs. The first paragraph of each section (in italics) describes the potential of each category's results to influence entrepreneurial growth. Section 5.1.1 concerns the general attitude towards growth. Even though this is not part of the EPGC framework, the section is organised in the same way as the remaining sections.

5.1.1 The Enterprises' Attitudes towards Growth

The six enterprises' attitude towards growth indicates that younger enterprises are more inclined and probably forced to pursue growth strategies compared to older ones who are larger in number of employees and have already passed their growth periods.

The importance of growth differs between the six enterprises; for the younger enterprises E1, E2, E4 and E5 (established after 2000), growth is of greater importance than for the older enterprises E3 and E6 (established before 2000). E3 and E6 have experienced growth in the past whereas the younger enterprises were not extensively growing so far, but are currently growing. Regarding obstacles towards growth independence, the enterprises E2, E3 and E6 mentioned the strong (price) competition in the outdoor equipment sector.

E3, E4 and E5 referred to post-growth directly; E3 stated that *"we are aware of the fact that we cannot solve the environmental problem only by using better materials. We really have to move in the direction of 'less'"*. E4 and E5 mentioned that they incorporate post-growth values already into their

²⁴ The attitude towards growth is not an EPGC. It is rather meant to give a general idea of the growth context the enterprises find themselves in.

business philosophy but that they are too small to abandon growth entirely yet, since they would not survive without it.

Table 6. The enterprises' attitudes towards growth. A more comprehensive table with all the data can be found in Appendix D (author's creation).

<i>Enterprise (established in...)</i>	<i>Importance of growth²⁵</i>	<i>Obstacles towards growth independence</i>	<i>Addressing post-growth directly?</i>	<i>Past growth phases?</i>
E1 (2011)	10	Lacking power of decision-making Growing too big	No	No extensive growth phases; currently growing
E2 (2009)	9	Strong competition Low point of product difference amongst OEEs	No	No extensive growth phases; currently growing
E3 (1983)	3	Price competition	Yes: Production needs to be reduced in order to solve environmental problems	Yes; the enterprise has a subsidiary in the US. It has experienced growth there
E4 (2016)	7	Dependence on turnover in order to realize the enterprise's vision	Yes: post-growth ideas are present but growth cannot be abandoned	No extensive growth phases; currently growing
E5 (2012)	6	No information ²⁶	Yes: post-growth ideas are present but growth cannot be abandoned	No extensive growth phases; currently growing
E6 (1930)	5-6	Competition	No	Yes; the enterprise is currently in a restructuring phase where employee numbers are reduced. It has experienced growth

5.1.2 Values

This category's results indicate that even if enterprises reflect upon their values this does not automatically reduce their strive for growth. However, entrepreneurial values can guide business activities and therefore, they have the potential to promote post-growth strategies if according values are followed. CEO characteristics that foster team spirit and support employees create a good

²⁵ The enterprises were asked to assess their growth independence on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (very important).

²⁶ There was a misunderstanding during the interview regarding this question and hence, no information can be provided here.

working atmosphere and reduce pressure on employees which are preconditions for post-growth strategies.

Business Philosophy

E1's business strategy builds upon values such as fairness and cooperation, transparency and ecological sustainability. E3 mentioned democracy and transparency and E5 referred to fairness as an important value. E2, E4 and E6 did not mention any further post-growth values, but sustainability. When asked for the entrepreneurial values, the post-growth values diversity, independence and frugality were not mentioned explicitly.

In all these enterprises, reflection meetings on the values and preferences underlying the business vision take place. At E2 and E6 those meetings are only attended by the members of the corporate management. E3 is starting now to have more of those meetings with the whole team. At E1, E4 and E5, the whole team is invited to participate in reflection sessions and encouraged to engage in discussions. There is a tendency for enterprises with more than 20 employees (E3, E2 and E6) to organize reflection meetings with the corporate management only. E2 explained that *"if you involve too many heads or brains in the brainstorming process you will lose the focus"*.

CEO Characteristics

When asked about important CEO characteristics, the enterprises mentioned the ability to listen to stakeholders (including employees, customers and business partners), to create an atmosphere in which employees can work well and which enables them to exploit their full potential, to coach employees and also allow this coaching to happen vice versa, to put effort in good internal communication and to appreciate all stakeholders.

5.1.3 Innovations

This category's results indicate that alternative utilisation systems have the potential to reduce the production and to build up new activity such as repair and resell which allow to reduce the material turnover. Focusing on high quality material in products reduces built-in obsolescence which has the potential to decrease consumption since products do not break quickly. Reduced working hours contributes to distribute employment more evenly in the society and reduce the stress level of employees. Yet, it seems as if this characteristic is less discussed especially in enterprises which are in the early business stage (e.g., start-ups).

General Innovations

E1, E2, E3 and E4 are offering a repair service and hence are contributing to establish alternative utilisation systems. The products offered by E5 and E6 cannot be repaired so far.

E1 would be interested in engaging in concepts such as second hand and barter at some point in time. E3 is already participating in a successful second-hand pilot project for outdoor equipment. For E3, *“it is always worthwhile to repair a product, i.e., we repair products even if it is not financially worthwhile”*. This is also true for E2, who emphasized the importance of wearing their garments for as long as possible and who offers free repairs for their products. E4 just developed a reuse platform through which the enterprise is taking back old E4 products in order to resell them once they are cleaned and repaired if needed. In return for bringing back old E4 garments, the customers receive a voucher for E4’s online shop.

Product Innovations

The products of all enterprises can be considered niche products. E1 and E4 are eager to produce multi-purpose products and therefore, enable consumers to buy only one jacket instead of more. E4 stated that *“we want a certain product quality precisely to prevent customers from buying new products all the time”*, hence eliminating built-in obsolescence. All enterprises except for E2 aim at producing ‘timeless runners’ which can be sold for several years and therefore are not subject to fashion trends. The luxury fashion sport brand E2 is more exposed to fashion trends but it also tries to offer long-lasting designs which do not go out of fashion.

Labour Innovations

No enterprise is actively planning to reduce the working hours for employees. For E1, E2 and E4, who are all still in an early stage of business, working less is not an option because there is a lot of work to do in order to keep the enterprises alive. The employees are aware of the fact that their employer is in an intense phase and are happy to work all the hours needed because they perceive their work as meaningful. E3 would welcome reduced working hours so that the whole team would have more time to be outdoors. For E5 and E6 reducing working hours is no point of discussion at the moment; E5 offers only one full-time job, which is shared among several people and E6 is in a restructuring phase, in which the enterprise adapts to the digital era and which requires a reduction of jobs but not of the employees’ working hours.

5.1.4 Scope of Action

This category’s results indicate that relatively short but international supply chains have low potential to become shorter or even be reduced to Switzerland only. The high price pressure in the textile industry seems to be a reason for this. Good and close contacts of the enterprises to external actors have the potential to decrease the dependence on further external actors and their interests. A

transparent communication potentially strengthens the corporate identity and therefore the integrity of business activities.

Regional Scale

The supply chain of E1 extends to ten mainly European countries. However, 90% of fabric meters produced are manufactured in Switzerland with only specific parts of products being produced internationally, namely zippers being produced in Japan because of their high quality. E2's supply chain involves 30 countries, but the company is putting effort in bringing the production back to Europe. There are eight countries involved in both the supply chain of E3 and E4. The supply chain of E5 and E6 comprises three European countries with E6 working with some more countries in the Far East (in Eastern Russia, East Asia and Southeast Asia). However, the main part (99% of the products) of E6' value creation takes place in Europe. All companies agree that the number of countries involved in the supply chain could be reduced but this would result in cost inefficiency and loss of product quality. It would be possible to limit the production to only one country (China). However, relocating the whole production to China would compromise the ecological and social standards the companies aim for.

Relation to external actors

Regarding the relation to other OEEs, most of the enterprises described these as good. E1 and E2 have rather little contact with other OEEs but would be open for collaborations. E3 and E4 appreciate the long and good relationships they have to other OEEs. The two enterprises also collaborate with each other in order to complement their capacities. E5 and E6 are in good contact with other OEEs too but these relations do not seem to be of great importance to them.

Communication with external actors

Communication with external actors seems to be an important aspect for all enterprises interviewed. E1 puts a lot of effort into the transparent communication of where and by whom their products are made and what this production costs. E2, E3 and E6 are not communicating their ecological and social performance extensively yet. E2 has plans to transparently display the supply chain on its website soon. The company is eager to communicate the importance of wearing garments as long as possible and repair them if needed. E3 is expanding its marketing team and seeks for advice from GreenroomVoice – a specialised agency which provides assistance to outdoor brands regarding their communication of sustainability – in order to communicate its environmental and social efforts more comprehensively. E6 has recently employed a marketing person who is in charge of storytelling and communication of the company's ecological and social performance. For E4 it is important to communicate how the high prices for its fairly produced products come to be. E5 puts effort in

answering all questions consumers have regarding the production of its product. E1 is the only enterprise amongst the six enterprises investigated with political ambitions; E1 states that “*we want to get more politically involved because we see that as a brand, we also have political power. We want to show that it is possible to do business sustainably*”.

5.1.5 Entrepreneurial Basics

This category’s results indicate that each legal form which differs from a listed stock company has the potential to reduce the growth orientation. Furthermore, being an SME potentially reduces the strive for growth. So does financial independence, even though in the OEI it seems to be difficult to retrieve from taking out loans entirely.

Legal Form

There are two legal forms present amongst the enterprises interviewed: limited company (Ltd) (E1, E4 and E5) and unlisted stock company (E3, E2 and E6) (see Table 4 in Chapter 4.2.1). Since there is no listed company among the six enterprises, their compatibility with a post-growth world considering the legal form only is not put into question.

Size of Enterprise

All the enterprises interviewed are SMEs, with employee numbers ranging from one (E5), seven (E1), twelve (E4), 14 (E2), 24 (E3) up to 27 (E6). Hence, they all have a size which often hints at a reduced growth orientation.

Finances

The perceived financial independence from external funding of the enterprises interviewed differs; E1 and E5 (both with the legal form Ltd) perceive themselves as very independent, whereas E4 (also a Ltd) considers itself as not independent at all. E3, E2 and E6 (three stock companies) think of themselves as being moderately independent at least in ‘normal’ times (times before the COVID-19 pandemic). E2 explained that the financial support is mainly being used for advance payments of production to get it started. In other words, each year there are financial bottlenecks. Therefore, sometimes enterprises have no other option but to take out loans.

Table 7. EPGCs (see Table 3 in Chapter 4.1) in each of the Swiss enterprises. The numbers of the enterprises are displayed in the column on the far left. A more comprehensive table with all the data can be found in Appendix E (author’s creation).

Category	Values	
EC ²⁷	Business philosophy	CEO characteristics/abilities
E1	Important values: <i>ecological sustainability</i> : (1) detox programme: no harmful chemicals used, (2) CO ₂ -neutrality (3) closed loop; <i>social sustainability</i> : production of garments as much as possible in Switzerland; <i>economic sustainability</i> : (1) investing money in political activities (2) price fairness for suppliers and customers, (3) price transparency for every product Reflection meetings with all employees every week	Create an atmosphere in which employees can work well
E2	Important values: eternal and unique products, limited collections Reflection meetings only with the management team	Listen to all stakeholders
E3	Important values: democracy, respect, transparency, ‘Swissness’ ²⁸ , producing only useful products One reflection meeting with the whole team so far with more to come	Enable all employees to exploit their full potential, respond to their needs and coach them
E4	Important values: sustainability, ‘Swissness’, quality, humour Reflection meetings with the whole team	Enable a good internal communication Allow for reciprocal coaching of all employees no matter their position
E5	Important value: not taking advantage if one is in a stronger position and hopefully not be taken advantage of when one is in weaker position Reflection meetings in a family context (since it is a family business)	Appreciate employees, customers and suppliers Not always aim for perfection Be at eye level with all stakeholders
E6	Important values: quality of products, sustainable production Vision: produce the best socks in the world Reflection meetings only with corporate management	Listen to employees and incorporate their feedback in business activities Clearly define the role of each employee

²⁷ Entrepreneurial Characteristic.

²⁸ Products developed in Switzerland with the Swiss accuracy (e.g., paying attention to details, quality before quantity).

Category		Innovations		
EC	General innovations	Product innovations	Labour innovations	
E1	Open to new business models such as second hand, barter etc. External maintenance and repair service Instructions to 'repair products yourself' are handed out on request	No niche products because they should fulfil a multi-purpose use but the enterprise's brand is still a niche brand Focus on high quality and as low prices as possible in order to offer affordable products for everybody Products are not subject to fashion trends	No reduction of working hours planned because the company is still growing	
E2	Repair service in Slovenia Products are repaired for free (life warranty on all products)	Niche products because of their unique design and high price	No reduction of working hours planned	
E3	Involved in pilot project from 2ndPeak (Swiss second-hand outdoor shop) Repair service in Switzerland, Germany and the US Belief that repairs are always worth the costs; attempts to sensitize consumers to repair products	Niche products because of their high pricing Focus on quality not quantity Production of 'timeless runners' which can be sold for several years Products are not subject to fashion trends	Everybody in the company would welcome reduced working hours	
E4	Establishing a reuse platform: taking E4 products back and resell them Repair service	Niche products because of their high prices Production of multi-use, long-lasting products Focus on quality not quantity Products are not subject to fashion trends	No reduction of working hours planned because the company is still growing	
E5	The soles are not repairable	Niche product because of its unique feature to generate warmth through body weight and motion Products are not subject to fashion trends	Only one full-time job (fulfilled by more than one person); no need to discuss reduced working hours	
E6	The socks are not repairable	Within the textile industry, socks are considered a niche product	No reduction of working hours planned	

Category		Scope of action	
EC	Regional scale	Relation to external actors	Communication with external actors
E1	Countries in supply chain: 10; potential decrease to 6 or 7 90% (measured in meters of fabric) of the value creation takes place in Switzerland	<i>To retailers:</i> no retailers <i>To suppliers and customer:</i> good contact <i>To other OEEs:</i> no contact but open for collaborations	Transparent communication of the company's efforts regarding social sustainability Future plans: get more engaged in political activities and thereby, acknowledge the power of a brand
E2	Countries in supply chain: 30; potential decrease to 10 Number could be reduced to 10 Efforts to bring production back to Europe	<i>To retailers:</i> no retailers yet <i>To customers:</i> closes contact <i>To other OEEs:</i> very little contact; open for collaborations	No extensive information on environmental performance yet since it is only a small brand Future plans: displaying what product is made where on the website
E3	Countries in supply chain: 8; potential decrease to 1 (China)	<i>To retailers and customers:</i> good contact <i>To other OEEs:</i> collaboration	Communicating the social and ecological performance with assistance from GreenroomVoice ²⁹ Future plans: providing more information on performance
E4	Countries in supply chain: approx. 8; potential decrease: possible but it would not serve the purpose of an environmentally and socially acceptable production	<i>To retailers and customers:</i> good contact <i>To customers:</i> good contact	Communicate what fair production costs in order for customers to understand how the high product prices come to be Future plans: expanding the marketing team
E5	Countries in supply chain: 3; potential decrease: not possible	<i>To retailers:</i> good contact <i>To customers:</i> no close contact	All questions regarding the company's social and ecological performance can be asked directly and will be answered
E6	Countries in supply chain: 3 plus Far Eastern countries ³⁰ ; potential decrease: 2 99% of the products produced in Portugal; 1% is produced in Turkey and Far Eastern countries	<i>To retailers, suppliers and customers:</i> good contact	Future plans: expand communication about social and ecological performance and invest in storytelling

²⁹ Specialised agency which provides assistance to outdoor brands regarding their communication of sustainability (GreenroomVoice, 2021).

³⁰ Far East refers to countries in Eastern Russia, East Asia and Southeast Asia.

Category		Entrepreneurial basics	
EC	Legal form	Size of enterprise	Finances
E1	Ltd	7 ³¹ employees (SME); 2 corporate managers	No loans are taken out Assessment of financial dependence ³² : 1
E2	Unlisted stock company	14 ³³ employees (SME); 4 decision-makers	Loans are taken out; the money is mainly being used for advance payments of production, since there is a lot of money needed at once Assessment of financial dependence: 10 (in times of Corona), 5 (in normal times)
E3	Unlisted stock company 100% of the company is owned by its founders	24 employees (SME); 3 corporate managers and 2 board directors/founders	Assessment of financial dependence: 3
E4	Ltd	12 employees (SME); 2 corporate managers	Loans are taken out because the company is not profitable yet and because pre-financing is needed for production which leads to liquidity bottlenecks each year Assessment of financial dependence: 9
E5	Ltd	1 employee (SME); 1 corporate manager	No loans are taken out Assessment of financial dependence: 1 ³⁴
E6	Unlisted stock company	27 employees (SME); 5 corporate managers	Assessment of financial dependence: 3-4

³¹ This number includes the whole team, including the corporate managers.

³² The enterprises were asked to assess their financial dependence on external financiers on a scale from 1 (not at all dependent) to 10 (very dependent).

³³ This number refers to the employees in the Swiss store (4) and the back office (10). There are more stores with more employees all over Europe.

³⁴ Special: the CEO and owner of the company is also its financier; hence, the company as an entity is dependent on external financial support, but the owner is not.

5.2 Entrepreneurial Post-Growth Characteristics in Pioneering Enterprises

The results outlined in this chapter provide information to answer research question (2) *what entrepreneurial characteristics are pivotal for an outdoor enterprise's ability to contribute to a post-growth world?*

In the following, information on the general attitude towards growth of the two pioneering enterprises is given (see Table 8). Also, it is outlined how well the pioneering enterprises align with EPGCs (see Table 9). The organisation of the following sections follows the same logic as the one in Chapter 5.1. All references can be found in Table 8 and Table 9 respectively and are not included in the following sections in order to facilitate the reading. Only for very specific information the reference is given.

Since a different method was used to collect data on the two pioneering enterprises, the results also differ in detail from the results for the Swiss enterprises (e.g., no self-assessment of the company on the importance of growth). Nevertheless, the document-based data yielded valuable information for all the EPGC framework categories and ECs respectively.

5.2.1 The Enterprises' Attitudes towards Growth

The two enterprises' attitude towards growth indicate that for well-established enterprises growth is of secondary importance. However, there are factors such as the concentration processes in the OEI which exert growth pressure even on economically well-positioned enterprises.

Vaude and Patagonia (both established before 2000) have experienced extensive growth in the past. Growth seems to be of secondary importance for both of them now; acting in accordance with society and the environment is of prior interest. In 2020, Patagonia even decided to stop growing and to focus on reselling second-hand products instead of producing new goods with one of the reasons being that the company wants to decouple its concerns from growth. The founder of Patagonia also mentioned the importance of a 'post-consumerist economy' in which goods are of high quality, recyclable and repairable (Dumain, 2012). For Vaude, abandoning growth entirely is no option, because of the strong concentration processes in the outdoor and sport industry which drive entrepreneurial takeovers and acquisitions and therefore the growth of competitors and retailers. Hence, in order to remain competitive, Vaude has to grow to some extent. However, the German enterprise engages in the post-growth discussion and was also subject to a doctoral thesis in 2019 (Vaude, 2020k) in which some of the enterprise's post-growth characteristics have already been examined. For Vaude, post-growth means to be critical about the growth of the enterprise and to

conduct business in a way which does not exceed the earth’s capacities. Therefore, Vaude sees post-growth as a valuable addition to the understanding of sustainability. Both enterprises have experienced growth in the past.

Table 8. Vaude and Patagonia’s attitudes towards growth. A more comprehensive table with all the data can be found in Appendix F (author’s creation).

<i>Enterprise (established in...)</i>	<i>Addressing post-growth directly?</i>	<i>Growth aimed for: yes or no?</i>	<i>Past growth phases?</i>
Vaude (1974)	Yes; less resource consumption is necessary; hence, post-growth is needed (Vaude, 2020k) Post-growth: being critical about growth and act within planetary boundaries (Vaude, 2020k) Valuable addition to sustainability (Vaude, 2020k) Subject of doctoral thesis in 2019 on post-growth characteristics (Vaude, 2020k)	Yes because of the strong concentration processes in the OEI and the resulting takeovers and acquisitions (Vaude, 2020k)	Yes; the enterprise achieved continuous growth in all its product categories and as an enterprise overall (Vaude, 2021b)
Patagonia (1973)	Not directly but indirectly ³⁵ ; a ‘post-consumerist economy’ where goods are high quality, recyclable and repairable is needed (Dumain, 2012)	No; in 2020 the enterprise decided to stop growing and instead focus on reselling second-hand products (Kaufmann, 2021)	Yes; revenue and profits have quadrupled over the past seven years (Streep, 2017)

5.2.2 Values

This category’s results indicate that even if the formulation of values differ from what is considered post-growth values, they have the potential to reduce the entrepreneurial growth orientation. The role model function of enterprises can set examples for doing business differently – in accordance with the environment and society – and therefore, those role model enterprises have the potential to inspire other enterprises.

Business Philosophy

The values and missions of both enterprises are shaped by sustainability; Vaude is guided by long-term, sustainable, ecological, social and economic goals. It understands entrepreneurship as an obligation to contribute to the common good (Vaude, 2020p). Patagonia’s core values are: (1) build the best product, with the criteria for the best product being function, repairability and most importantly, durability, (2) cause no unnecessary harm, (3) use business to protect nature and (4) not

³⁵ The author interpreted ‘post-consumerist economy’ as closely related to post-growth.

being bound to conventions which means that the success of the company lies in developing new ways of doing things (Patagonia, 2021d). The post-growth values fairness and cooperation, transparency, democracy, diversity, independence and frugality (see Section 4.1.1.1) are not mentioned explicitly as values on the webpages. No information could be found on reflection meetings in which enterprises reflect upon the values and preferences underlying the business vision.

CEO Characteristics

Since no specific information could be found on CEO characteristics, this paragraph provides some information on the role model function of the enterprise as a whole (not only of the CEO). Vaude aims for doing business in a way it has a positive impact on people and the environment and it wants to inspire other companies to do the same. Patagonia acknowledges the negative environmental impacts its business activities have and tries it's best to reduce those. The founder of Patagonia hopes that other companies come to the same realization in order for all of them to change their business activities to be less harmful. The company was already successful in this regard since, for example, other companies asked for Patagonia's advice on conducting business more sustainably.

5.2.3 Innovations

This category's results indicate that alternative utilisation systems have the potential to reduce the production and to build up new activity such as repair and resell which allow to reduce the material turnover. Producing repairable, functional and durable products potentially reduces the need for the consumption of new products. Labour innovations such as child-care sites and offering leisure activities for employees have the potential to raise gender equality and to enable a good work-life-balance.

General Innovations

Both companies offer repair services and are engaged in upcycling projects, i.e., contribute to alternative utilisation systems. Vaude offers both a repair service where customers can bring their products to be repaired as well as a Repair Café in which customers get free guidance from Vaude employees. In its upcycling store project, Vaude collaborates with eBay. Besides, Vaude promotes shared use and alternatives to purchasing products through the rental service iRentit. Patagonia's product up- and recycling programme 'Worn Wear' seeks to repair and reuse Patagonia products. In the future, Patagonia plans to introduce a reuse service through which customers sell their old Patagonia products to the company who resells them after they have been cleaned and repaired. Furthermore, a rental service for Patagonia garments should be established soon.

Product Innovations

Regarding product innovations, both companies emphasise the importance of durability and reparability, with Vaude adding the importance of quality and timelessness of products. For Patagonia, the product's functionality is of prior interest too besides durability and reparability.

Labour Innovations

No specific information was found on plans to reduce working hours. Therefore, some information on other labour innovations is given in this paragraph. Both companies offer on-site child care at their respective headquarters. This is especially important for women who profit from returning to work soon after giving birth since they do not have to organise any external child care. Moreover, Vaude built a green campus at its headquarters with green patches, a climbing tower for its employees and a certified organic canteen. Patagonia offers a company-paid health care and sick time as well as paid parental leave besides the on-site child care.

5.2.4 Scope of Action

This category's results indicate that reducing the length of the supply chain is a difficult task for OEEs because there are only few regional manufacturing places (at least in Germany) and because of the price pressure in the OEI. When it comes to contacts to external actors, if good, they have the potential to foster sustainability efforts within the OEI which benefits all OEEs. Moderating sales through providing information on how to reduce consumption and emphasising its importance can reduce sales incentives and material turnover. Being an established, popular OEE tends to enhance its acknowledgment of the OEE's (political) power.

Regional Scale

Vaude's supply chain involves eleven countries; five European countries and six Asian countries. Reducing the supply chain to only Germany is not possible due to the lack of German sewing factories. Even if it was possible to produce all products in Germany, the doubling of current sales prices would reduce the accessibility of Vaude products to a limited group of people. Therefore, the company focuses less on the question of where to produce but rather on how to produce. The supply chain of Patagonia consists of 18 countries all over the world.

Relation to external actors

Both companies have good relations to external actors, because they see sustainability as a 'team sport' for which good and long-term business relations are essential (Vaude, 2020k). Vaude and Patagonia also both collaborate with eBay and iFixit in order to facilitate reselling or repairing of products for their customers.

Communication with external actors

Both enterprises offer transparent information on their social and environmental performance, either in form of an extensive online Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Report or online footprint display. Furthermore, both enterprises are eager to animate customers to consume consciously and to use products as long as possible. Vaude offers information on what consumers can do and on how Vaude supports them regarding conscious consumption. Patagonia reminds its customers to reuse and repair its products with a label inside of each garment and sets up advertisements that tell consumers to not buy a jacket in order to make them aware of the power they have regarding changing how clothes are made. Both companies are politically engaged; Vaude is calling for a supply chain law in order to reduce competitive disadvantages for sustainably operating enterprises and Patagonia supports environmental grass root movements and organised a voter-education event during the 2016 election phase.

5.2.5 Entrepreneurial Basics

This category's results indicate that especially a benefit corporation has the potential to adjust the entrepreneurial focus away from growth towards the environmental and social benefits an enterprise can bring about. The larger an enterprise is, the higher its political power and therefore its influence on not only a microeconomic level but also on a macroeconomic level. Financial independence has the potential to increase entrepreneurial autonomy and therefore facilitates the pursuit of the enterprises core values without the enterprise being distracted by interests of external financiers.

Legal Form

There are two legal forms present among the two enterprises: Vaude is a Ltd & Co. KG and Patagonia is a non-listed benefit corporation. Both legal forms are considered advantageous in a post-growth world (see Section 4.1.1.4). Vaude offers profit participation certificates to its employees with a fixed interest rate of two percent and a profit participation of two percent, with share in losses being excluded. Patagonia's legal form legally binds the company to its values, i.e., it has to act in accordance with its values. Furthermore, it incentivises enterprises to create environmental and societal benefits through its business activities and it supports the company in keeping control over its visions and missions.

Size of Enterprise

With 558 employees and approximately 2000 employees, both enterprises are no SMEs. Even though SMEs are considered beneficial for a post-growth world (see Section 4.1.1.4), being bigger also

means to have more political power and therefore, being able fulfilling the role model function of pioneer businesses regarding entrepreneurial post-growth strategies.

Finances

The financial independence of Vaude is strengthened through profit participation certificate programme for employees (such certificates are a German financial instrument similar to preference shares) while employees participate in the profits and get interest payments. Patagonia reinvests its money in the enterprise and therefore, it can also safeguard its financial independence. According to Patagonia's CEO, it is especially important to be financially disciplined from now on since the enterprise decided to stop growing (Kaufmann, 2021) (see Section 5.2.1).

Table 9. EPGCs (see Table 3 in Chapter 4.1) among the pioneering enterprises. All references are in grey. The parts in italics refer to aspects that do not concern the respective EPGC directly but are clarifying/contextualising a statement directly linked to the EPGC. A more comprehensive table with all the data can be found in Appendix G (author’s creation).

Category	EC ³⁶	Vaude	Patagonia
Values	Business philosophy	Philosophy (Vaude, 2020p): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entrepreneurship: obligation to contribute to the common good - Guided by long-term, sustainable, ecological, social and economic goals 	Core values (Patagonia, 2021d): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build functional, repairable, durable products - Cause no unnecessary harm - Use business to protect nature: leadership is required to face the societal and environmental challenges - Not bound by convention: the success of the company lies in developing new way to do things
	CEO characteristics/abilities	Role model function: doing business should have a positive impact on people and the environment and inspire others to conduct business in a sustainable manner too (Vaude, 2020k)	Role model function: Patagonia acknowledges its negative environmental impact and tries its best to reduce it; other companies should do the same (Gunther, 2016) <i>Success experience: one of the world’s largest retailers asked Patagonia for advice regarding doing business more sustainably (Gunther, 2016)</i>
Innovations	General innovations	Repair services (Vaude, 2020k): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repair workshop in which Vaude products are repaired - Repair instructions to ‘do-it-yourself’ on iFixit - Vaude Repair Café with free expert guidance from Vaude employees (Vaude, 2020m) Upcycling projects (Vaude, 2020r): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - eBay upcycling store: collaboration with eBay (eBay provides the platform and Vaude the fabric left-overs) Rental service iRentit: promoting shared use as an alternative to purchasing products (Vaude, 2020k)	The enterprise believes that in order to act responsibly (Patagonia, 2021h): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Companies need to build durable products - Consumers need to use products as long as possible - Patagonia helps consumers to do that through offering repairs Worn Wear (upcycling and recycling programme) (Patagonia, 2018): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project aim: repair and reuse Patagonia products in order to extend their useful life Reuse ideas for the future (Kaufmann, 2021): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customers should sell Patagonia products back to the company which resells them again after cleaning and repairing - Rental service for Patagonia garments
	Product innovations	Core elements of product philosophy: quality, durability, timelessness and reparability (Vaude, 2020k)	Core value of building the best product: the best product is functional, repairable and durable (Patagonia, 2021d)

³⁶ Entrepreneurial Characteristic.

Labour innovations	<p>Vaude children's house (Vaude, 2020d):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aim: enabling mothers to return to work soon after giving birth through an adequate childcare facility - <i>Effect: increase the ratio of female managers</i> <p>Green campus at headquarters (Vaude, 2020b):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A campus-like inner courtyard with green spaces - Climbing wall in the centre of the courtyard - Certified organic canteen 	<p>Services for employees (Patagonia, 2021e):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Company-paid health care and sick time - Paid parental leave - Access to on-site child care at the headquarters in Ventura and Reno (US) since 1983
Scope of action	<p>Regional scale</p> <p>Countries in supply chain: 11 (Germany, Austria, Portugal, Lithuania, Ukraine, China, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea) (Vaude, 2020j)</p> <p>Focus on how to produce instead of where production takes place because production only in Germany is not possible due to a lack of German sewing factories (Vaude, 2021a)</p>	<p>Countries in supply chain: 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offices in the USA, the Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Chile and Argentina (Patagonia, 2021l) - Suppliers in Bangladesh, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Hong Kong, India, Mexico, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the USA and Vietnam) (Patagonia, 2020)
Relation to external actors	<p>Sustainability is seen as a team sport and hence, cooperative, long-term business relationships are important (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Collaborations with eBay in upcycling project (Vaude, 2020r) and with iFixit in providing repair instructions (Vaude, 2020k) (see also general innovations)</p>	<p>Collaborations with eBay and iFixit to facilitate the reselling or repair of products for customers (Bocken & Short, 2015)</p> <p>Close partnership to companies worldwide in order to reduce the environmental impact of producing outdoor equipment (Patagonia, 2021k)</p>
Communication with external actors	<p>A transparent CSR report and information on price tags enable conscious purchase decisions (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Sensitizing consumers for conscious consumption and for using products as long as possible: information on website about what consumers can do and how Vaude supports them (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Political engagement: call for a supply chain law that reduces competitive disadvantages for sustainably operating companies (Vaude, 2020k)</p>	<p>Transparent information about the company's footprint is on website (Patagonia, 2021j)</p> <p>Sensitizing consumers for conscious consumption and for using products as long as possible through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reminding customers to reuse and repair products with a labels inside of each garment (Bocken & Short, 2015) - Making consumers aware of their power regarding changing how cloths are made (Patagonia, 2021p) <p>Political engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hosting of voter-education events during the presidential election in 2016 (Streep, 2017) - Supporting environmental grass root movements (Patagonia, 2021b)

Entrepreneurial basics	Legal form	<p>Legal form: Ltd & Co. KG (Vaude, 2020t)</p> <p>Profit participation certificate for employees with a fixed interest rate of 2 percent and a profit participation of 2 percent (Vaude, 2020a)</p>	<p>Legal form: Certified Benefit corporation (Gunther, 2016) which...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is not listed (Underwood, 2021) - Codifies the company's values legally (Gunther, 2016) - Incentivises the company to create environmental and societal benefits through its business activities (Bocken & Short, 2015) - Could avoid the loss of control over the company's vision and mission (Bocken & Short, 2015)
	Size of enterprise	558 employees (Vaude, 2020i); 3 corporate managers (Vaude, 2020c)	Approx. 2000 employees (Patagonia, 2021f)
	Finances	Strengthening financial independence through projects such as profit participation certificate (German financial instrument similar to preference shares) (Vaude, 2020a)	<p>Money is reinvested in the company; hence, the company is independent from external investors (Kaufmann, 2021)</p> <p><i>According to the CEO, now that the enterprise is slowing down its growth, financial discipline becomes very important</i> (Kaufmann, 2021)</p>

6. Discussion

The following chapters (Chapter 6.1 and 6.2) provide answers to the two research questions (see chapter titles) of this thesis. The main findings/answers are in italics. Furthermore, the contribution of this thesis to sustainability science (Chapter 6.3) as well as the thesis' limitations (Chapter 6.4) are outlined.

6.1 How can Swiss Outdoor Equipment Enterprises Contribute to a Post-Growth World?

Applying the EPGC framework to the six Swiss OEEs showed that they can and do contribute to a post-growth world through

- (1) Adopting post-growth values such as transparency, democracy and frugality.*
- (2) Engaging with post-growth innovations.*
- (3) Communicating the enterprise's environmental and social performance transparently.*
- (4) Staying away from the stock market.*

(1) Adopting post-growth values are fundamental starting points for enterprises to contribute to a post-growth future because they influence entrepreneurial (growth) decisions and ultimately any business activities (such as number (2)-(4)) (see also Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018). Furthermore, an enterprise's realisation that it can actively decide for or against (never-ending) entrepreneurial growth is pivotal in order to resist growth pathways (see also Gebauer, 2018).

(2) Engaging with post-growth innovations such as sharing and repair concepts can help bring about a cultural change which offers alternative societal visions (see also Niessen, 2013). OEEs can influence the consumer behaviour through offering alternatives to conventional consumption patterns, for instance sharing, rental and reuse services as well as durable, repairable, multi-functional products.

(3) A transparent communication of an enterprise's performance shifts the focus away from entrepreneurial profit to environmental and social benefits brought about by enterprises (see also Tschumi et al., 2020). This communication ties back to (post-growth) values; if enterprises communicate their activities which align with their values, they can strengthen consumers' trust and loyalty. Together with contributing to alternative utilisations systems, this increase of consumer's trust in 'post-growth' enterprises can promote cultural change.

(4) Staying away from the stock market helps enterprises to reduce the growth pressure exerted by profit seeking shareholders and to focus on their own (non-)growth interests (see also Binswanger,

2013). Again, this comes back to the values' influence on business decisions, since it is an active decision of enterprises to become a listed company.

Despite these post-growth contributions, the six Swiss OEEs are also constrained to some extent for several reasons: small and old enterprises who are active on slow-growing, local to national markets and who do not take out loans are most likely to keep their current enterprise size (see also Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015). Therefore, E3 and E6 are the two Swiss enterprises best compatible with a post-growth world in terms of enterprise size and age among the six enterprises investigated; they are both SMEs and have been established before 2000. However, the OEI is not a slow-growing local market but, as E3 put it, a “*very dynamic market environment*” of substantial size. The number of OEEs on this market is high which increases competition (Vaude, 2020h). This type of market also explains why all OEEs analysed struggle with the EC *regional scale* and its post-growth expression *short supply chain* – even though they put effort in keeping it as short as possible (e.g., E1). Regarding taking out loans, E3 and E6 also seem to be in the most comfortable position among the six enterprises since they have had their growth phases and are not in desperate need for financial support in order to survive. Apart from start-ups in their early entrepreneurial phases, few SMEs have a clear growth strategy (see also Gebauer, 2018). This finding helps explain the strive for growth in the four remaining Swiss OEEs³⁷, which all could be considered start-ups.

Overall, all enterprises no matter the size or age, can contribute to a post-growth world, but every enterprise and industry also faces its particular challenges which can limit an enterprise's contribution. This shows the importance of a system-wide transformation; enterprises cannot achieve a post-growth world without underlying political, economic and societal structures being changed simultaneously (see also Posse, 2013). In Chapter 6.2, the major limits for OEEs are introduced in more detail.

6.2 What Entrepreneurial Characteristics are Pivotal for an Outdoor Enterprise's Ability to Contribute to a Post-Growth World?

The application of the EPGC framework to six Swiss OEEs and two non-Swiss pioneering OEEs allowed for a comparison between the Swiss and the non-Swiss OEI which pointed out what ECs are pivotal for an OEE's ability to contribute to a post-growth world. There are two main findings (see parts in italics) regarding this ability. Both findings concern the size and age of the OEEs, which makes sense

³⁷ E1, E2, E4, E5.

since those are also the main differences between the Swiss SMEs and the pioneering OEEs. In the following, these findings are outlined and discussed.

The age of an OEE – which is connected to its entrepreneurial phase – influences its ability to become growth independent: older OEEs can more easily abandon growth objectives and leave growth behind than younger OEEs.

The two Swiss enterprises (E3, E6) which were established before 2000 perceive entrepreneurial growth as less important than the four younger Swiss enterprises. The two pioneering OEEs, both established before 2000 go even further and take growth critical stances; Vaude engages in post-growth projects (Vaude, 2020k) and Patagonia even declares its turn away from growth (Kaufmann, 2021). The Non-Swiss pioneers as well as the two older Swiss SMEs seem to have left their intense growth phases behind, whereas the younger Swiss-SMEs are still in an early stage of their entrepreneurial existence which makes growth more important. E4 put it as follows: *“Patagonia, for example, no longer wants to grow. They can say that because many people wear a Patagonia jacket, but as a small company it's much more difficult.”* Hence, the age of enterprises influences the importance of entrepreneurial growth (see also Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015). Overall, these findings point out that past growth phases, which E3, E6, Vaude and Patagonia experienced, and having had time to establish a brand increases growth independence.

The size of an OEE influences its ability to become a structural policy actor: the larger and more established an OEE is, the higher its (political) power and therefore, its chances to influence political, economic and societal structures which can bring about a post-growth world.

With an increase in size, OEEs tend to have more political power, which is shown by Vaude's and Patagonia's political engagement (see Section 5.2.4). The Swiss SMEs have less political power, which might also relate to the fact that they do not necessarily want it. Amongst the six Swiss SMEs analysed in this thesis only E1 strives for political power in order to show that doing business sustainably is possible. Furthermore, more (political) power could support E1's objective to keep the Swiss textile industry alive, i.e., become what Schneidewind (1998) calls a 'structural policy actor' who influences the structures of the market, politics and society (p. 42). This 'structural policy action' by enterprises aims at correcting systemic misaligned incentives that lie outside the microeconomic sphere and present alternatives (see also Posse, 2015). E1 states that *“we just want to do our thing - namely to produce sustainable clothing in Switzerland as a team and to support the Swiss textile industry as much as possible. To achieve this efficiently, we need to make a certain turnover”* and therefore, growth is needed in E1's current start-up phase. Taking this together with the fact that the

two pioneering OEE in this thesis have the greatest political power among all the enterprises analysed raises the following question: does an enterprise – in order to become a structural policy actor – need to grow to a critical size first to enhance its turnover and political power and therefore its contribution to the aforementioned transformation? The following statement of E1 suggests to affirm this question: *“we don't see E1 as a classic company that strives for growth or as much profit as possible. The goal of E1 is to be in the black at the end of the day. We don't want to earn a lot with this brand.”*

Hence, E1 seems to be in a growth phase not for the sake of growth but in order to reach a cost-covering size which provides for the financial means and enables the enterprise to become a structural policy actor in order to achieve its goal of keeping the Swiss textile industry alive. As outlined in Chapter 3.3, a growing enterprise can still be post-growth compatible; it is however important, that those growth phases do not persist for a long time and that growth is rather a side effect of doing business in accordance with post-growth values instead of it being the main objective. It would go beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate this relation of growth phases and (political) power more closely but it would be an interesting subject for further research.

Overall, both high age and large size matters regarding an OEE's abilities to contribute to a post-growth world. However, an old and big OEE does not automatically contribute; it has to use its age and size in a way that is meaningful for post-growth. In other words, it has to adopt the EPGCs developed in this thesis. As can be seen by Vaude and Patagonia, large and established enterprises who have embedded EPGCs can promote a transition towards a post-growth world.

Yet, the old Swiss SMEs show that there is no need for both a high age *and* large size in order to increase an enterprise's ability to contribute to a post-growth world. The entrepreneurial age has proven to do so through increasing growth independence, no matter the size.

6.3 This Thesis' Contribution to Sustainability Science

This thesis is valuable for sustainability science because it engages with the transformation towards a post-growth world; a world in which life-threatening growth is left behind. Reducing life threats is also what sustainability science ultimately aims for; through investigating the interactions between humans and nature (Kates et al., 2001) it tries to provide practical solutions (Clark & Dickson, 2003) to reduce life threats which occur from crossing planetary boundaries. This thesis contributes to those practical solutions through providing an EPGC framework which offers a post-growth entry point for enterprises. This framework can be used by any enterprise to check its EC's alignment with EPGCs. Hence, it extends the knowledge about post-growth on an entrepreneurial level and provides

an orientation for enterprises willing to contribute to the transformation towards a post-growth world, i.e., a sustainable future.

6.4 Limitations

There are several limitations to this thesis. First of all, as already mentioned in Chapter 4.2, the data collected in this thesis was analysed in a non-critical way because the aim of the thesis was to understand the role of enterprises in the transformation towards a post-growth world. Hence, the author took a rather constructive stance towards the data and tried to work with 'what there is already' in terms of EPGCs instead of taking a critical stance and focusing on the EPGCs still missing. However, this non-critical data analysis did not take into account the actual motives behind the enterprises business activities and potential attempt to green wash those activities. This is especially true for the pioneering OEEs since the document-based data collection did not allow 'to look behind the scene' as closely as this was possible through the interviews with the Swiss OEEs, in which the author could add on questions if there were uncertainties. It would be interesting to investigate the enterprises analysed in this thesis more critically in further studies.

Furthermore, analysing the EPGC of eight enterprises results in a broad overview of existing EPGC but it does not allow for a deeper investigation of how those EPGC could be implemented. However, more knowledge of how to implement them is of great importance which could be achieved through a deep case study of only one or two enterprises.

Moreover, this thesis focused on the OEI, which is a global and competitive industry. Enterprises in other industries, facing other challenges, might contribute to a post-growth world differently than the OEEs analysed in this thesis.

7. Conclusion

For realizing a post-growth world – a cross-sectoral challenge – the contribution of all economic, political and societal actors is needed. This thesis focused on the contribution of enterprises in this transition towards a post-growth world. Through creating a EPGC framework and applying it to the OEI, it investigated the already present EPGCs in six Swiss enterprises as well as in two non-Swiss pioneering enterprises. The main findings are that all enterprises, no matter the age or size, can contribute to the transition towards a post-growth world through (1) adopting post-growth values, e.g., transparency, democracy and frugality, (2) engaging with post-growth innovations such as sharing and repair concepts, (3) communicating the enterprise's environmental and social performance transparently and (4) staying away from the stock market.

However, with an increase in age and size – with more or less characteristics – OEEs tend to be more growth independent and become able to take an active role as structural policy actors. This shows that enterprises – especially small and young ones – are limited in their contribution to a post-growth world. In order to overcome these limits, structural changes are required to enable enterprises as well as other actors in the various human systems to enable a transition towards a post-growth world. Hence, further studies on the changes required in systemic structures are needed.

Regarding further studies on an entrepreneurial level, it would also be important to gain more knowledge about how EPGCs can be implemented in an enterprise in order to facilitate the transition for enterprises who might just start with adopting entrepreneurial post-growth strategies. Moreover, studying the relation of entrepreneurial growth phases – which usually result in size increase – to an enterprise's political power would enhance the knowledge about the transformational power of an enterprise and about what is required for gaining that power.

8. References

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9. Supplementary Material

Appendix A

Detailed framework of entrepreneurial characteristics (ECs) and their expression in a post-growth world (EPGCs) containing all the data that has been found in the literature. In bold: aspects mentioned most often in the literature and therefore considered being of special importance in realizing a post-growth world. In the thesis only those are touched upon (author's creation)

Category	EC	EPGC	Effects on enterprises and society	References
Values	Business philosophy	<p>Important values: fairness and cooperation, diversity, independence, democracy, transparency, ecological sustainability, frugality</p> <p>Money is not the main value</p> <p>Broader understanding of entrepreneurial success which is not reduced to growth only</p> <p>Reflection on current business strategy</p> <p>Realising and accepting dilemma structures³⁸</p> <p>Meaning of profit: creating value for stakeholders through fair and responsible business activities</p> <p>Other-than-profit goals</p>	<p>Frugal enterprises consume less</p> <p>Enterprises that follow entrepreneurial activities in a responsible, holistically sustainable and therefore growth-neutral way</p> <p>Increased sensitivity for pro-growth decisions³⁹ and therefore reduced pro-growth decisions</p>	<p>(Deimling, 2017); (Gebauer, 2018); (Gebauer & Mewes, 2015); (Johanisova & Fraňková, 2017); (Leonhardt et al., 2017); (Liesen et al., 2015); (Tschumi et al., 2020); (Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018)</p>
	CEO characteristics/abilities	<p>CEO standing for corporate identity and the purpose of the company for which growth is not a goal</p> <p>Turning the growth matter into a question of choice</p>	<p>Role model function of CEO translates into the enterprise as an economic actor: it fulfils a role model function</p>	<p>(Deimling, 2017); (Gebauer, 2018); (Leonhardt et al., 2017);</p>

³⁸ Trade-offs could be perceived as dilemmas: from another perspective, those trade-offs are not dilemmatic anymore → the dilemma is only there if one thinks in terms of business economics solely: if an enterprise does not want to make profit, e.g., being rejected by a customer is no dilemmatic trade-off (Deimling, 2016)

³⁹ Decision affecting enterprise size and growth, e.g., entering new markets with customers, replacing machinery, expand sales opportunities and capacities through new distribution channels. These decision are made daily in enterprises and often pass unnoticed (Gebauer, 2018)

		<p>Values of sufficiency, honesty and transparency</p> <p>Work with heart and soul</p> <p>Quality leadership: creativity and innovation</p> <p>Focus on core business</p> <p>Important challenge for director: recognising and accepting dilemmas</p>	and changes the system from within	(Liesen et al., 2015)
Innovations	General innovations	<p>Alternative utilisation systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Services, which exclude ownership, e.g., sharing concepts - Direct use: Establish second-hand markets to reduce waste - Offering services such as repair and maintenance - Demand reduction services: providing add-on services that support consumers in reducing their consumption - Resource use reduction services: Resource use reduction services: provision of services and products that consume less resources and increase the value for customers - Use of work intensive technologies instead of capital-intensive technologies <p>Focus on social, non-technical innovations</p> <p>Support of and participation at regional currency system</p> <p>Full life cycle sufficiency: design process and product use focus on reduced resource consumption</p> <p>Increase of resource productivity instead of labour productivity</p> <p>Reduction of specialisation levels</p> <p>Prosumer-Management: offering of courses and</p>	<p>Reduced growth dynamics through capitalist market relations</p> <p>Increased self-supply</p> <p>Reduced economics of scale in production of services compared to those of products</p> <p>No production for positional consumption⁴⁰</p> <p>Production according to demands</p> <p>Reduction of growth dynamics through demand</p> <p>Niche markets</p> <p>Decommercialization</p>	<p>(Bocken & Short, 2015); (Deimling, 2016); (Gebauer, 2018); (Gebauer & Mewes, 2015); (Johanisova & Fraňková, 2017); (Liesen et al., 2015); (Niessen, 2013); (Paech, 2017); (Posse, 2013); (Reichel, 2013b); (Reichel, 2017); (Tschumi et al., 2020); (Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018)</p>

⁴⁰ Consumption of products which show the status of a person in society (example of a positional good: Ferrari)

	workshops in order to enable users to "do it yourself"		
	Adaptation to consumers' needs		
	Having innovative management, e.g., non-hierarchical structures, no boss		
	Using profits to replenish nature and community		
Product innovations	<p>Exclusive/niche product: focus on quality and/or functionality and/or socially just and environmentally friendly production of products</p> <p>Differentiation: Careful, ecologically oriented choice and processing of raw material</p> <p>Fair prices, purchase guarantee, no quantity discount</p> <p>Production of durable, functional, reparable goods</p> <p>Customer oriented production</p> <p>Circular flow technologies, everything that enables zero waste and the cradle-to-cradle approach for product design and product use</p> <p>Focus on use and reuse phase of products</p>	<p>Reduced built-in obsolescence</p> <p>Limited growth dynamics through demand</p> <p>Reduced price competition</p> <p>Reduced cost pressure</p> <p>Reduced incentives for economics of scale</p> <p>Reduced material production</p> <p>Development and diffusion of products in order to support consumers in living a sufficient lifestyle</p> <p>Breaking the connection of growth and impact</p>	<p>(Bocken & Short, 2015); (Deimling, 2016); (Gebauer & Mewes, 2015); (Leonhardt et al., 2017); (Paech, 2017); (Reichel, 2013b); (Reichel, 2017); (Tschumi et al., 2020)</p>
Labour innovations	<p>Reduced working hours</p> <p>Increase of craft labour to maintain and repair</p> <p>Creation of meaningful work and a special work atmosphere</p> <p>Reduction of income differences</p> <p>Flexibility of labour time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Measures which facilitate the reduction and redistribution of labour time - E.g., annual labour time accounts, shift labour etc.) <p>Influencing routines of employees through corporate culture</p>	<p>Reduced production volume</p> <p>More even distribution of labour</p> <p>Reduced consumption by employees and hence reduced capitalist market dynamics</p> <p>Limited growth dynamics through reduced demand</p> <p>Decommercialization</p> <p>Good work environment and enterprise culture</p> <p>Well-being and development</p> <p>Identification with products and</p>	<p>(Deimling, 2016); (Deimling, 2017); (Gebauer & Mewes, 2015); (Leonhardt et al., 2017); (Liesen et al., 2015); (Niessen, 2013); (Paech, 2017); (Posse, 2015); (Reichel, 2013b); (Tschumi et al., 2020)</p>

			company Internal capacity buffers through flexible working hours Reduced psychological pressure through work on employees; frugal deceleration	
Scope of action	Regional scale	Regional sales and purchasing structure, i.e., short regional supply chain Direct and regional marketing Cooperative direct procurement Rootedness in place and time	Close contact of economic actors and close contact to customers which reduces price competition and allows for a fast adaption to consumers' needs Reduced emission from transportation Avoidance of alienation from production conditions Reduced strive for growth	(Deimling, 2016); (Gebauer, 2018); (Gebauer & Mewes, 2015); (Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015); (Johanisova & Fraňková, 2017); (Paech, 2017); (Posse, 2013); (Posse, 2015); (Tschumi et al., 2020); (Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018)
	Relation to external actors (customers, competitors, etc.)	Stable yet diverse relationships Denial of (unfitting) offers/demands Being well connected with local community Having close and long-term relationships with suppliers and customers Joining of other actors and social movements to advocate for sustainability or a post-growth world Collaborations: - Open-source movement, peer-to-peer-production - Partial orders given to partner enterprises and vice versa in order to complement the capacities of each other	External capacity buffers through collaborations Collaborations strengthen the commitment	(Gebauer, 2018); (Gebauer & Mewes, 2015); (Leonhardt et al., 2017); (Liesen et al., 2015); (Posse, 2015); (Reichel, 2013a); (Reichel, 2017)
	Communication with external actors	Transparent communication and accounting of social and ecological performances Provision of non-financial information	Focus on entrepreneurial successes through different entrepreneurial objectives	(Bocken & Short, 2015); (Gebauer, 2018); (Leonhardt et al., 2017);

		<p>Encouraging consumers to refrain from consumption</p> <p>Educational engagement: presentations about how to run an enterprise differently; enterprises as structural policy actors or as cultural change agents, offering alternative societal visions for and implementing these in their business activities</p> <p>Restraining/moderating sales and advertising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No manipulative marketing campaigns - Influencing public perceptions regarding the importance of reduced consumption 	<p>Structural policy action by companies aims to correct systemic misaligned incentives that lie outside the corporate sphere</p> <p>Strengthening of enterprise's resilience towards external shocks</p>	<p>(Niessen, 2013); (Posse, 2013); (Posse, 2015); (Tschumi et al., 2020)</p>
<p>Entrepreneurial Basics</p>	<p>Legal form</p>	<p>Democratic ownership and equity; a legal form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that allows an enterprise to survive without growth, e.g., cooperatives - that allows employee participation, e.g., cooperative structures - reduces the risk of losing control over the entrepreneurial vision and mission, e.g., benefit corporation, limited company <p>Private ownership for small companies</p> <p>Shared ownership (amongst workers or stakeholders) for medium and large companies</p> <p>BUT: The enterprise's purpose is more important than its legal form; with a post-growth purpose, almost every legal form could be aligned with post-growth ideas</p> <p>NOTE: Listed stock companies are not post-growth compatible because their profit-oriented shareholders – who normally buy stocks in order to earn some return – exert growth pressure on the enterprise in order there is some dividend and an increase of the stock value and hence they leave little room for the enterprise's interests regarding (non-)growth</p>	<p>Reduced pressure to realize or even maximise growth</p> <p>No or very limited growth dynamics through absent shareholder interests</p>	<p>(Binswanger, 2013); (Bocken & Short, 2015); (Deimling, 2016); (Gebauer, 2018); (Johanisova & Fraňková, 2017); (Niessen, 2013); (Posse, 2013); (Reichel, 2013a)</p>
	<p>Size of enterprise</p>	<p>Small or medium, self-managed enterprises are advantageous</p>	<p>Reduced strive for growth</p> <p>No negative economics of scale</p>	<p>(Deimling, 2016); (Deimling, 2017);</p>

	<p>Purpose and relevance of growing in company size: reaching a size that allows companies to pay reasonable salaries and to work efficiently</p> <p>Tight organisational borders: Conscious decision of enterprises to set tight borders to reduce organisational complexity</p> <p>BUT: No adequate firm size; optimal firm size⁴¹ needs to be found by enterprise itself</p>	<p>Higher crisis resilience</p> <p>Reduced dependency on market dynamics</p> <p>Quick adaptation to changes on the market</p>	<p>(Gebauer & Mewes, 2015); (Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015); (Niessen, 2013); (Posse, 2013); (Tschumi et al., 2020); (Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018)</p>
Finances	<p>Financial independence; refuse to take on external capital</p> <p>Reduced capital intensity in production</p> <p>Small advertising expenditures</p> <p>Redistribution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing salary models democratically - Raising salaries <p>Reducing financing-related growth drivers through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct contact to investors (which results in reduced expectations regarding return on investments) - Collaboration with investors who share the same interest - Raising of interest-free capital <p>Increased importance of environmental or social returns on investment compared to importance of financial returns on investment</p>	<p>Reduced strive for growth</p> <p>Reduced capital commitment</p> <p>Reduced debt capital and interest</p> <p>Reduced pressure on return on investments to earn interest and dividends</p> <p>Reduced external control through external investors</p> <p>Limited growth dynamics through reduced demand triggered by less advertisements</p> <p>Reduced financial pressure; more scope for decision-making</p> <p>Offering products and services that align with the entrepreneurial vision</p>	<p>(Deimling, 2016); (Gebauer & Sagebiel, 2015); (Leonhardt et al., 2017); (Liesen et al., 2015); (Niessen, 2013); (Posse, 2015); (Tschumi et al., 2020); (Wiefek & Heinitz, 2018)</p>

⁴¹ Dependent on business sector and development phase of the business and the market

Appendix B

Interview Guide ('XXX' replaces the enterprise's name)

Basic Data on XXX

Established in:

Number of employees:

Legal form:

Position of the interview partner in the company:

Introductory Questions

- 1) Does XXX want to grow in the future and if yes, what should grow?
- 2) Why does XXX want to grow/not grow?
- 3) How important is growth – of whatever kind – for XXX?
→ On a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 10 (very important)
- 4) How would you describe sustainability, short and neat?
- 5) What would you consider the most important business strategies to achieve sustainability?
- 6) Have you heard about post-growth before my interview request?

Questions regarding Entrepreneurial Post-Growth Characteristics

Topic: Legal form

- 7) What is the reason for XXX's legal form?
- 8) Do you think that the legal form of XXX promotes the growth of the company because, for example, you have to pay out dividends and therefore make enough turnover?

Topic: Regionalisation of procurement, production and sales

- 9) How many countries are involved in the XXX value chain approximately («from cradle to consumer»)?
- 10) To how many countries could this value chain be reduced considering a lot of effort?
- 11) Where and by whom are XXX products produced?
- 12) Where and by whom are XXX products sold?

Topic: Finances

- 13) To what extent is XXX dependent on external financial support?
→ On a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much)
- 14) How important is financial independence for XXX?
→ On a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 10 (very important)
- 15) How high do you estimate the percentage of XXX's annual expenditure on advertising?
- 16) How important is advertising to XXX?
→ On a scale from 1 (unimportant) to 10 (very important)

Topic: Size of Enterprise

- 17) The management of XXX consists of how many people?
- 18) Have you ever thought about the development of the company size?
- 19) Are there any growth limitation ideas at XXX?

Topic: Business model

- 20) What would you consider special about XXX?

Topic: Products

- 21) Would you consider XXX products as niche products and if yes/no, why?
- 22) What is the estimated lifespan of a XXX product which is used relatively frequently and intensively?

Topic: Labour

- 23) How many part-time employees are there at XXX (80% and less)?
- 24) Have you ever thought about reducing these normal working hours or making working hours more flexible (e.g., annual working times accounts, shift work etc.) for all employees?
- 25) How extensive is XXX's maintenance and repair service, i.e., how many employees are involved in those services?

Topic: Relation to external actors

- 26) How would you describe the contact with customers, other outdoor equipment producers as well as retailers?
- 27) How do you feel about the competition in the outdoor equipment sector?
- 28) Would you say that competition is pushing XXX to grow?

Topic: Communication

- 29) Does XXX communicate its environmental and social performance and if so, how?
- 30) What message does XXX want to send to the public?

Topic: Business Philosophy

- 31) What are the basic values of XXX and what is the resulting vision?
- 32) Do reflection meetings take place at XXX where the whole team discusses the current and future business philosophy of the company?
- 33) What indicates success in the company XXX (e.g., growth of the company, customer satisfaction, operating in harmony with nature as much as possible etc.)?

Topic: Role of manager

- 34) What qualities of a managing director seem important?

Closing Questions

- 35) What would you consider the greatest obstacle or difficulty for a company producing outdoor equipment in realizing growth independence?
- 36) Would you find a post-growth guide on how to reduce growth dependency interesting for XXX? And if not, what would you find useful?

Appendix C

Types of data sources used for the pioneering Outdoor Equipment Enterprises (author's creation)

<i>Enterprise</i>	Vaude	Patagonia
<i>Type and description of data source with the reference</i>	<p>Newspaper article: Interview with Bettina Roth (Leader of quality and chemical management at Vaude) (Brünger, 2021)</p> <p>Vaude CSR Report 2019 (27 different websites of the reference type (Vaude, 2020p))</p>	<p>Newspaper article: Interview with Ryan Gellert (CEO Patagonia) (Kaufmann, 2021)</p> <p>Magazine article: Interview with inter alia Yvon Chouinard (founder of Patagonia) (Streep, 2017)</p> <p>Magazine article: Story of Patagonia (Gunther, 2016)</p> <p>Magazine article: Patagonia and the 'post-consumerist economy' (Dumain, 2012)</p> <p>Patagonia's footprint (17 different websites of the reference type (Patagonia, 2021c))</p> <p>Academic Paper: Towards a sufficiency-driven business model: Experiences and opportunities – Patagonia as one case study (Bocken & Short, 2015)</p>
<i>Number of pages with data in the writing programme 'word'</i>	22	23

Appendix D

Information on the Swiss enterprises' attitudes towards growth and sustainability. In bold: aspects directly related to post-growth. In the thesis text, only those are touched upon (author's creation)

Enterprise	Attitude towards growth	Attitude towards sustainability
E1	<p>Past growth phases: no extensive growth phases; currently growing As a clothing start-up, growth is needed They need to grow in order to cover all the costs, pay the team and support the Swiss textile industry through generating orders to stop it from dying and to become independent from clothing manufactures (e.g., through having own sewing machines) If all the costs are covered, they do not want to grow any further Growth limitation ideas in the enterprise: producing in Switzerland only is a limit to growth</p> <p>Obstacles towards growth independence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lacking power of decision-making: an enterprise needs to decide on its own what to achieve and what to do with the money earned - Growing too big <p>In order to realize growth independence a good team, good structures and the greatest possible independence from external financial pressure is needed Competition is not perceived as a driver of growth Importance of growth⁴²: 10 Growth in: sales</p>	<p>Three pillars of sustainability are integrated in entrepreneurial sustainability strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecological sustainability: (1) detox programme: no harmful chemicals used, (2) CO₂-neutrality through partnership with myclimate, (3) closed loop: circular economy (e.g., recycling) - Social sustainability: Production of garments as much as possible in Switzerland; this is the only way to have full control over how things are produced by whom under what circumstances - Economic sustainability: (1) investing money in political activities (acknowledging the political power of a brand) in order to show that doing business sustainably is possible, (2) price fairness for suppliers and customers, (3) price transparency for every product (what part of the product costs what)
E2	<p>Past growth phases: no extensive growth phases; currently growing Aiming for growth on an international market with a current focus on the DACH⁴³-region</p>	<p>Sustainability is seen as a balance between instant gratification and long-term satisfaction of all stakeholders Important business strategies: (1) be efficient: focus on creating value, (2)</p>

⁴² On a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 10 (very important)

	<p>Objective: becoming a leading luxury fashion sports brand</p> <p>Obstacles towards growth independence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong competition - Low point of difference; competitors are very similar <p>Competition is not perceived as a driver of growth; rather it is pushing the enterprise to improve its products</p> <p>Importance of growth: 9</p> <p>Growth in: knowledge</p>	<p>listen to all the stakeholders, including the customers, (3) be transparent</p> <p>Sustainability does not only include the environment; it is about everything around a company</p>
E3	<p>Past growth phases: yes; the enterprise has a subsidiary in the US. Hence it has experienced growth</p> <p>No pursuit of growth as an enterprise</p> <p>Focus on quality instead of quantity</p> <p>Growing regarding communication is intended: increase of staff to strengthen and improve the communication of the enterprise, especially regarding the communication of sustainability efforts</p> <p>No pressure from corporate management to make profit</p> <p>On post-growth: The company is aware of the fact that they cannot solve the environmental problem only by e.g., using better materials; there has to be less production</p> <p>Obstacles towards growth independence: price competition; as long as there are low price shops, companies such as E3 risk to be displaced</p> <p>Competition is not perceived as a driver of growth; rather it is pushing the enterprise to communicate their activities more comprehensively</p> <p>Importance of growth: 3</p> <p>Growth in: if anything, the marketing team</p>	<p>Sustainability means to design actions in a way that they will still be possible in 10, 50 or 100 years without causing long-term damage to the planet and its inhabitants</p> <p>Focus on long-term partnerships for joint improvement regarding the reduction of the ecological footprint of all partners</p> <p>Clear visions and goals about CO₂-neutrality</p> <p>Reduce consumption of products through good and professional consulting from specialised retailers: if consumers buy products, they really need then consumption can be decreased</p>
E4	<p>Past growth phases: no extensive growth phases; currently growing</p> <p>As a young and still small company, growth is needed to cover all the costs</p> <p>Economy of scale play a role: the high costs for developing durable products</p>	<p>Try to act and produce as sustainably as possible without pointing at others</p> <p>Entrepreneurial sustainable strategies:</p>

⁴³ Germany (D), Austria (A), Switzerland (CH)

	<p>are not covered by only selling e.g., 100 products but by selling 1000 (in terms of effort, producing 100 e.g., pants is comparable to producing 1000)</p> <p>Offering not only winter products but also summer products would be an option for the company to grow</p> <p>Faster growth would be possible but the company does not collaborate with retailers which have different values regarding production processes</p> <p>Growth limitation ideas in the enterprise: the enterprise restricts itself regarding growth through their high product prices and their selective product distribution</p> <p>On post-growth: the company engages with post-growth ideas but is yet too small to abandon growth entirely and still survive</p> <p>Obstacles towards growth independence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finances: in order to realize the company's vision, it has to sell products - Encouraging people to invest in products of the company: the high price of the products stops consumers buying the products <p>Competition is not perceived as a driver of growth; it is rather the costs that are pushing the company to grow</p> <p>Importance of growth: 7</p> <p>Growth in: turnover</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Production of multi-use-products (e.g., have only one jacket instead of three) - Production of long-lasting products
E5	<p>Past growth phases: no extensive growth phases; currently growing</p> <p>No great growth ambitions: growth in turnover would be great in order to cover the production cost</p> <p>The company can only be financed because it is a secondary employment</p> <p>On post-growth: post-growth values are lived already in the company</p> <p>Obstacles towards growth independence: no information</p> <p>Competition is not perceived as a driver of growth</p> <p>Importance of growth: 6</p> <p>Growth in: if anything, the turnover</p>	<p>The Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is important in order to assess the production, distribution and disposal of the soles</p> <p>The producers of the soles should all have an ISO-14001 certificate, which shows that they fulfil environmental standards</p>
E6	<p>Past growth phases: yes; the enterprise is currently in a restructuring phase where employee numbers are reduced. Hence, it has experienced growth</p>	<p>Three pillars of sustainability are integrated in entrepreneurial sustainability strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ecological sustainability: (1) full transparency regarding the supply

Growth is part of the company's strategy

Profit is more important than turnover: the profit is invested in the locations, e.g., logistics, electronic data processing etc.

There are no growth limitation ideas but criteria for the quality of growth

Obstacles towards growth independence: competition

Competition is not perceived as a driver of growth; rather it is pushing the enterprise to increase its efficiency

Importance of growth: 5-6

Growth in: profit

chain, (2) plastic free supply chain, (3) circular and fashion projects (in collaboration with universities),

- Social sustainability: (1) fulfilling minimal wage standards (especially important for factors in Portugal), (2) efforts to pay women and men equally
- Economic sustainability: keep location in Switzerland

Appendix E

Detailed information on EPGCs in each of the Swiss enterprises. The table contains all the data that has been found through conducting interviews with the six Swiss enterprises. In bold: aspects of special importance according to the literature. In the thesis text, only those are touched upon. The numbers of the enterprises are displayed in the column on the far left (author's creation)

Category	Values	
EC ⁴⁴	Business philosophy	CEO characteristics/abilities
E1	<p>Important values: values underlying the sustainability strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Ecological sustainability:</i> (1) detox programme: no harmful chemicals used, (2) CO₂-neutrality through partnership with myclimate, (3) closed loop: circular economy (e.g., recycling) - <i>Social sustainability:</i> Production of garments as much as possible in Switzerland; this is the only way to have full control over how things are produced by whom under what circumstances - <i>Economic sustainability:</i> (1) investing money in political activities (acknowledging the political power of a brand) in order to show that doing business sustainably is possible, (2) price fairness for suppliers and customers, (3) price transparency for every product (what part of the product costs what) <p>Definition of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeping the Swiss textile industry alive - Gratitude from supplier because they receive orders - Be able to pay fair wages - Customer satisfaction <p>Reflection meetings with all employees every week: full transparency towards employees regarding the company's cost structure and regarding the company's current state</p> <p>Trade-offs mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Long lasting products through the use of chemicals vs. <i>less durable products without the use of chemicals</i>⁴⁵ - Stabilising fabric with synthetic yarn vs. <i>stabilising fabric with silk</i> - Performance vs. sustainable production 	Create an atmosphere in which employees can work well
E2	<p>Important values: products should be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eternal (lifelong product warranty and eternal designs) 	Listen to all stakeholders

⁴⁴ Entrepreneurial characteristics

⁴⁵ Italicized parts: priorities of the enterprise. If there is no part in italics: no final priority

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unique (detailed collections) - Limited (exclusive and non-repetitive collections) <p>Definition of success: profit and customer satisfaction</p> <p>Reflection meetings only with the management team</p> <p>Inputs from the whole team are welcome</p> <p>Trade-offs mentioned: Environmentally friendly production vs. <i>bad protection of customers</i></p>	
E3	<p>Important values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Democracy, respect, transparency - ‘Swissness’⁴⁶ - Producing only useful products which are produced under good environmental and social conditions <p>Definition of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain a healthy company - Consumer satisfaction - Work with nature and not against it - Act with integrity and responsibility - Be self-critical - Happy employees who tell their thoughts and ideas <p>One reflection meeting with the whole team so far with more to come</p> <p>Trade-offs mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Producing everything in China vs. <i>producing in several places</i> - Selling many cheap products vs. <i>selling less more expensive products</i> 	<p>Enable all employees to exploit their full potential</p> <p>Respond to the needs of employees</p> <p>Coach the team wherever possible</p>
E4	<p>Important values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability - ‘Swissness’ - Quality - Humour <p>Vision: To become the most important sustainable premium outdoor brand for kids</p>	<p>Enable a good internal communication</p> <p>Allow for reciprocal coaching of all employees no matter their position</p>

⁴⁶ Products developed in Switzerland with the Swiss accuracy (e.g., paying attention to details, quality before quantity)

	<p>Definition of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enabling kids to go outside as often as possible - Customer satisfaction <p>In reflection meetings, the whole team is involved in discussions with 'out-of-the-box-thinking' being encouraged</p> <p>Trade-offs mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fast growth vs. <i>sustainable production</i> - Produce cheaply in one country vs. <i>produce according to adequate environmental and social standards more expensively in several countries</i> - Having more money and work with non-matching⁴⁷ partners vs. <i>having less money and work with matching partners</i> - Built-in obsolescence and selling more products vs. <i>sustainable production and selling less products</i> - Jacket without polyester which leaks after two hours vs. <i>jacket with polyester which is waterproof the whole day</i> 	
E5	<p>Important value: not taking advantage if one is in a stronger position and hopefully not be taken advantage of when one is in weaker position</p> <p>Definition of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer satisfaction - Work with nature, not against it <p>Reflection meetings are taking place in a family context (since it is a family business)</p> <p>Trade-offs mentioned: Plastic wrapping which is transparent vs. paper wrapping which is not transparent</p>	<p>Appreciate employees, customers and suppliers</p> <p>Not always aim for perfection</p> <p>Be at eye level with all stakeholders</p>
E6	<p>Important values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of products - Sustainable production <p>Vision: produce the best socks in the world</p> <p>Definition of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customer satisfaction - Sustainable and intelligent production <p>Reflection meetings: only with corporate management</p> <p>No trade-offs mentioned</p>	<p>Listen to employees and incorporate their feedback business activities</p> <p>Clearly define the role of each employee</p>

⁴⁷ Matching in the sense of values

Category		Innovations		
Characteristics	General innovations	Product innovations	Labour innovations	
E1	<p>Projects and campaigns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Detox campaign planned: educating people about the production of textiles and all the costs that come with it - Swiss Merino wool project - Building a weaving mill to produce own fabric - Job-giving project in winter 2020: giving away jobs in the Swiss textile industry in order to support it (especially during the difficult COVID-19 period) <p>Open to new business model such as second hand, barter etc.</p> <p>External maintenance and repair service with few people engaged in since there are not a lot of repairs</p> <p>Instructions to ‘repair products yourself’ are handed out on request</p> <p>Very transparent cost structure towards employees</p> <p>The company is special because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Production mainly in Switzerland - Local supply chain - Not profit-oriented per se 	<p>No niche products because they should fulfil a multi-purpose use (e.g., buying only one instead of three jackets) but still a niche brand (not very popular yet)</p> <p>Focus on high quality and as low prices as possible in order to offer affordable products for everybody</p> <p>Products are not subject to fashion trends</p> <p>Lifespan of a jacket: 5-8 years</p>	<p>Employees are expected to work 42 hours a week</p> <p>No reduction of working hours planned because the company is still growing</p> <p>Employees like to work for the company because consider their work as meaningful</p> <p>Number of part-time employees: 5 (out of 7)</p>	
E2	<p>Repair service in Slovenia with two people engaged in (there are approx. 5-8 repairs a week)</p> <p>Products are repaired for free (life warranty on all products)</p> <p>The company is special because of the combination of quality with unique design (each collection is inspired by an ancient civilisation)</p>	<p>Niche products because of their unique design and high price</p> <p>Lifespan of a ski jacket: 10 years</p>	<p>There are two kinds of human resources in the enterprise with different working hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff in stores: working hours from 10am to 7pm - Backoffice: flexible working hours with no fix location of work <p>Number of part-time employees: 3.5 (out of 14)</p> <p>No reduction of working hours planned</p>	

E3	<p>Projects and campaigns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involved in pilot project from 2ndPeak (Swiss second-hand outdoor shop) - Providing sleeping mats to homeless people <p>Repair service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Switzerland: two people - In Germany and the US: three people each - Distributors have their own repair services <p>Belief that repairs are always worth the costs; attempts to sensitize consumers to repair products</p> <p>The company is special because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic democracy - Wage difference of 20%⁴⁸ - Flat hierarchy 	<p>Niche products because of their high prices</p> <p>Focus on quality not quantity in product development which increases the product price</p> <p>Focus on the essential in products</p> <p>No pressure to produce fashionable, seasonable products because there are no textile products sold, only hardware</p> <p>Production of ‘timeless runners’ which can be sold for several years</p> <p>Products are not subject to fashion trends</p> <p>Lifespan of products: 5-15 years (depending on product category)</p>	<p>Increase in staff in the past years in order to strengthen the communication team</p> <p>Basic democracy and wage difference of 20%</p> <p>Working hours model: annual labour time which can be adapted</p> <p>Everybody in the company would welcome reduced working hours (then all employees would have more time to go outside)</p> <p>Number of part-time employees: 14 (out of 24)</p>
E4	<p>Projects and campaigns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starting a reuse platform: taking E4 products back and offering a voucher for the regular E4 shop in return; after cleaning and repairing (if needed) the products are resold <p>Repair service with two people engaged in</p> <p>The company is special because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High quality of products - Pursuing own ideas and visions no matter what others say 	<p>Niche products because of their high prices</p> <p>Production of multi-use, long-lasting products</p> <p>Focus on quality not quantity</p> <p>Customers should have a reason to buy products; if there is no such reason, the product is not produced</p> <p>Attempt to eliminate built-in obsolescence in products through avoiding the use of materials that wear out quickly</p> <p>Products are not subject to fashion trends</p> <p>Lifespan of a jacket: 3-5 years</p>	<p>No reduction of working hours planned because the company is still growing</p> <p>Working hours model: flexitime⁴⁹</p> <p>Number of part-time employees: 5 (out of 12)</p>
E5	<p>The soles are not repairable</p> <p>The company is special because it sells a product that heats up because of the body weight; the energy is</p>	<p>Niche product because of its unique feature to generate warmth through body weight and motion</p>	<p>Since there is only one full-time job (which is fulfilled by more than one person), there is no need for discussions about reducing</p>

⁴⁸ Maximum difference between highest and lowest wage

⁴⁹ Flexible hours schedule that allows employees to start and finish their working they as they wish to (as long as they work the required number of hours a day)

	produced by humans themselves	<p>Products are not subject to fashion trends</p> <p>Lifespan of soles: 4-5 years (depending on how long the distances are that one walks with them⁵⁰)</p> <p>Sustainable way to generate warmth (no electricity or chemistry needed)</p> <p>Product is easy to handle</p>	working hours
E6	<p>Projects and campaigns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involved in a circular fashion project from a Swiss university - Charity project 'buy one, give one': per pair of socks sold, one pair is donated to those in need <p>Currently, the socks are not repairable (but maybe the circular fashion project can change that)</p> <p>The company is special because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The production happens mostly inhouse - Focus on developing high quality products - The socks are delivered within 24 hours throughout Switzerland 	<p>Within the textile industry, socks are considered a niche product</p> <p>Within the socks industry we offer both niche products (e.g., technical socks such as ski or trekking socks) as well as no-niche products (e.g., basic socks)</p> <p>Products are not subject to fashion trends</p> <p>Lifespan of socks: 4-5 years</p>	<p>No reduction of working hours planned</p> <p>Working hours model: flexitime</p> <p>Number of part-time employees: 10 (out of 27)</p>

⁵⁰ After walking 2000 km the sole starts losing its feature of warming

Category		Scope of action	
Characteristics	Regional scale	Relation to external actors	Communication with external actors
E1	<p>Number of countries involved in supply chain: 10 (Argentina, Italy, Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Japan, China and Taiwan)</p> <p>With a lot of effort this number could be reduced to 6 or 7</p> <p>Strengthening the Swiss textile industry as an important goal of the company</p> <p>90% (measured in meters of fabric) of the value creation takes place in Switzerland</p>	<p>To retailers: no retailers</p> <p>To suppliers: No pushing of producers to produce cheaply</p> <p>To customers: closes contact to a great fan community</p> <p>To other OEEs: no contact but open for collaborations</p> <p>No competitors: the material costs are too high for other OEEs to work with the company</p>	<p>Transparent communication of the company's efforts regarding social sustainability (e.g., where products are produced and by whom)</p> <p>Advertising: the enterprise tells its story via ads on social media which allows the company to reach many people, for little money in a short time</p> <p>Company's claim/main message to the public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Swiss made, Eco, Fair' or 'radically minimal' (minimal environmental damage, minimal costs and minimal social exploitation) - Emphasis on Swiss production <p>Future plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Get more engaged in political activities and thereby, acknowledge the power of a brand in order to raise awareness amongst people regarding the environmental and social difficulties in the textile industry - Publish reports from testing clothing for chemicals
E2	<p>Number of countries involved in supply chain: 30</p> <p>With a lot of effort (which would result in cost inefficiency and quality reduction) this number could be reduced to 10</p> <p>The final product is made in China because there is the most expertise regarding technical garments</p>	<p>To retailers: no retailers (not yet; there are plans to work with retailers from 2022 on)</p> <p>To customers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closes contact (focus on 'deep' data instead of 'big' data⁵¹) - Customers challenge the company to become more sustainable because they ask for sustainably produced products <p>To other OEEs: very little contact; open for</p>	<p>Slogans are of main importance to communicate the company's values to the public (e.g., 'function and design is what you wear')</p> <p>No extensive information on environmental performance yet since it is only a small brand</p> <p>Emphasis on the product lifetime warranty in the communication</p> <p>Convincing customers to wear their products for as long as possible</p>

⁵¹ Focus on detailed information about fewer customers instead of not detailed information on many customers

	<p>Efforts to bring production back to Europe (e.g.: the following winter collection will be mainly produced in Europe)</p>	<p>collaborations</p> <p>No competitors since the company is active in a niche market</p>	<p>Communication of social performance: new collection is partially made by indigenous peoples who inspired the design of the collection and they are paid adequately for it; therefore, products from this collection are also more expensive (fair trade)</p> <p>Company's claim/main message to the public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Buy now, wear forever' - Emphasis on the high quality and durability of the products <p>Future plans: displaying what product is made where on the website</p>
E3	<p>Number of countries involved in supply chain: 8 (production takes place in Taiwan, China, Vietnam and India)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This number could be reduced to 1 country only (China) 	<p>To retailers (retailers all over the world):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good contact to specialised retailers which is very important because the company is not selling its products itself <p>To suppliers: no information</p> <p>To customers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Important to sensitize consumers to repair their products - Consumers push the enterprise to communicate their business activities more comprehensively <p>To other OEEs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboration with other OEEs (e.g., E4) in order to complement capacities - Good conversations about sustainable strategies with other OEEs which benefits all; sustainability is perceived as a common aim of all OEEs - Difficulties with greenwashing companies⁵² and 'copyists'⁵³ 	<p>Increase of staff in the past year in order to support the marketing team</p> <p>Communicating the social and ecological performance of the company is of great importance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Customers' expectations to communicate our performance - Effort to be as transparent as possible (getting assistance from GreenroomVoice⁵⁴ in this regard) <p>Advertising is seen as a good option to communicate why products are produced the way they are produced</p> <p>Company's claim/main message to the public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Maximum outdoor experience with minimal means' - Honest communication of the fact that there is no entirely fair production; therefore, the company communicates 'choose your products carefully and buy consciously' instead of 'buy this product and then the world will become a better

⁵² Companies that pretend to act sustainably in order to gain sympathy from customers. In fact, they are not acting sustainably

⁵³ OEEs who copy the products of good, proven brands and who have them manufactured in Asia to be sold cheaply under their own brand name

		In competition with low price retailers	place’ - Emphasis on ‘Swissness’, quality before quantity and Future plans: providing more information on the company’s social and ecological performances
E4	<p>Number of countries involved in supply chain: approx. 8 (Austria, Lithuania, New Zealand, Switzerland, Slovenia, Vietnam and China)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This number could be reduced but it would not serve the purpose - Efforts to keep the supply chain as short as possible but if the raw material comes from e.g., China it also makes sense to produce it there 	<p>To retailers: good relationship (40% of products are sold via retailers and 60% are sold via the company’s online shop)</p> <p>To suppliers: no information</p> <p>To customers: close contact</p> <p>To other OEEs: long and good relationships and collaborations (e.g., with E3) respectively</p> <p>No competitors since the enterprise is focusing on its niche and tries to be as good as possible in it without concentrating on other enterprise</p>	<p>Communicate what production of outdoor equipment costs if it is produced fairly is of importance; customers have to understand how the high prices for the products come to be</p> <p>Company’s claim/main message to the public:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘We produce clothing so that kids can be outside as long and as light-hearted as possible’ - Producing kids clothing sustainably is possible <p>Future plans: expanding the marketing team, since there is still great potential regarding communication</p>
E5	<p>Number of countries involved in supply chain: 3 (Austria, Germany and Switzerland)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number cannot be reduced <p>Effort to keep transportation routes as short as possible</p>	<p>To retailers: good relationship to 15-20 retailers</p> <p>To suppliers: no information</p> <p>To customers: no close contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For some time, the company worked with customer feedbacks and set up a Q&A section on their website <p>To other OEEs: no information</p>	<p>All questions customers have regarding the company’s social and ecological performance can be asked directly and will be answered by the company</p> <p>Company’s claim/main message to the public: ‘you produce your warmth yourself’</p>

⁵⁴ Specialised agency which provides assistance to outdoor brands regarding their communication of sustainability (GreenroomVoice, 2021)

E6	<p>Number of countries involved in supply chain: 3 plus Far Eastern countries⁵⁵ (Switzerland, Portugal, Turkey and Far Eastern countries)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This number could be reduced to 2 countries (Portugal and Switzerland) <p>99% of the products are produced in Portugal; 1% is produced in Turkey and Far Eastern countries</p>	<p>To retailers: good relationship to sports retailers and more general retail businesses</p> <p>To suppliers: good relationship</p> <p>To customers: good relationship</p> <p>To other producers/brands: no information</p> <p>Strong competition in the OEI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The company is well positioned with its niche product - The competition from Far East is particularly strong 	<p>Company's claim/main message to the public: 'buy one, give one' (charity project)⁵⁶</p> <p>Future plans: expand communication about social and ecological performance and invest in storytelling</p>
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⁵⁵ Far East refers to countries in Eastern Russia, East Asia and Southeast Asia

⁵⁶ See general innovations, E6

Category		Entrepreneurial basics	
Characteristics	Legal form	Size of enterprise	Finances
E1	<p>Legal form: Ltd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reason for this legal form: it is easy to set up one is not liable as a private person <p>Becoming a stock company is no option because the enterprise wants to stay self-determined regarding their business activities</p> <p>A stock company is seen as disadvantageous regarding sustainable practices because stakeholders are not ready to pay the high costs of sustainable practices</p>	<p>7⁵⁷ employees (SME); 2 corporate managers</p> <p>Future plans: not becoming too big as a company in order to still be able to manage the team, adequately respond to all employees and choose employees according to their values</p>	<p>The company does not take out any loans form external financiers</p> <p>Assessment of financial dependency⁵⁸: 1</p> <p>Budget for advertising per year: 10%</p>
E2	<p>Legal form: unlisted stock company</p>	<p>14 employees (SME); 4 decision-makers</p> <p>Future plans: increase the number of employees to be able to work with retailers</p>	<p>The external financial support the company gets is used for the supply chain, since usually there is a lot of money needed at once</p> <p>Assessment of financial dependency: 10 (in times of Corona), 5 (in normal times)</p> <p>Budget for advertising per year: 10%</p>
E3	<p>Legal form: unlisted stock company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100% of the company is owned by its founders - Reason for this legal form: it was normal to found a stock company in the 80s <p>The enterprise is completely independent due to the ownership relations</p>	<p>24 employees (SME); 3 corporate managers and 2 board directors/founders</p> <p>Future plans: stay small and flexible in order to be able to adapt to market dynamics</p>	<p>The company used to work with a bank earlier, which was difficult; today it is working with an SME specialist who is interested in the actual needs of the company instead of only being interested in the profit</p> <p>Assessment of financial dependency: 3</p> <p>Budget for advertising per year: 1.25% (in global distribution), 5% (in self-distribution)</p>

⁵⁷ This number includes the whole team, including the corporate managers

⁵⁸ On a scale from 1 (not at all dependent on external financiers) to 10 (very dependent on external financiers)

E4	<p>Legal form: Ltd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The company is owned by a holding⁵⁹ which provides security when expanding to international markets 	<p>12 employees (SME); 2 corporate managers</p> <p>Currently, the company is growing fast</p> <p>Future plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Become profitable - Avoid growing endlessly 	<p>Financial support is needed as long as the company is not profitable</p> <p>In the textile industry, everything has to be pre-financed in order to be produced; this leads to enormous liquidity bottlenecks for about 4 months each year</p> <p>Assessment of financial dependency: 9</p> <p>Budget for advertising per year: 13%</p>
E5	<p>Legal form: Ltd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reason for this legal form: increased security if enterprise should fail; it is cheaper to found a Ltd than a stock company in Switzerland 	<p>1 employee (SME); 1 corporate manager</p> <p>Future plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase turnover - Focus on finding distributors 	<p>Special case: the CEO and owner of the company is at the same time its financier; hence, the company as an entity on its own is extremely dependent on external financial support, but the owner is not dependent on external financial support</p> <p>Assessment of financial dependency: 1 (from the interviewee's perspective), 10 (from the company's perspective)</p> <p>Budget for advertising per year: 20-30%</p>
E6	<p>Legal form: unlisted stock company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reason for this legal form: security for employees (there is an investor that supports the company in difficult times) 	<p>27 employees (SME); 5 corporate managers</p> <p>No further information</p>	<p>Assessment of financial dependency: 3-4</p> <p>Budget for advertising per year: 8%</p> <p>No further information</p>

⁵⁹ Company whose purpose it is to own shares of other companies (Wikipedia, 2021a)

Appendix F

Information on the pioneering enterprises' attitudes towards growth and sustainability. In bold: aspects directly related to post-growth. In the thesis text, only those are touched upon (author's creation)

Enterprise	Attitude towards growth	Attitude towards sustainability
Vaude	<p>On post-growth (Vaude, 2020k):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realization that less resource consumption is needed in order to enable a living on earth in the long term; therefore, thinking and acting in accordance with a post-growth world is necessary - For the enterprise, post-growth means to be critical about the growth of the enterprise and to conduct business in a way which does not exceed the earth's capacities - Post-growth is seen as a valuable addition to the understanding of sustainability - Collaboration with doctoral student in 2019 who investigated the post-growth characteristics already present in the enterprise <p>The enterprise wants to grow organically (grow while pursuing its own way of doing business and being able to finance itself) (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Waving growth entirely is no option because of the strong concentration processes in the outdoor and sport industry; hence, both competitors and retailers grow through takeovers and acquisitions (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Since there are no investors, the company has to generate enough</p>	<p>Sustainability is seen as a team sport: it can only be achieved through good partnership with material suppliers, producers, retailers and customers; that is why the company relies on cooperative, long-term business relationships based on partnership (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>CSR team consists of representatives from a variety of company divisions; divisions This means that the topic of CSR is firmly anchored in the core business throughout the company (Vaude, 2020e)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The representatives of each division are responsible for the implementation of sustainability aspects in their respective division - The team is led by the Managing Director for Sales and Sustainability - For the implementation of our CSR goals in the area of social standards and pollution management, it is enormously important that there are specialists⁶⁰ on site, who are regularly visited by CSR employees from Vaude <p>Integrated sustainability strategy (Vaude, 2020o):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The company is also concerned with current social issues such as climate change, the rise of nationalism and right-wing extremism, as well as the many crises and wars around the world that are driving millions of people to flee their homes - Based on fundamental values such as humanity, tolerance or trust and the company's own experiences, it wants to take a non-partisan stance on these issues, give courage and encourage constructive dialogue

⁶⁰ They know the local conditions, speak the language and would be on the spot quickly. They not only monitor the conditions, but also support the producers with their knowledge and experience

<p>turnover to finance itself; this turnover can be realized by extending the useful life of products through renting, refurbishing and repairing (Brünger, 2021)</p> <p>Growth is needed in order for the enterprise to doing business independently and to interact with customers and producers on an eye-to-eye level (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Economic growth helps to gain more influence within the supply chain, on production sites, material suppliers and customers which in turn enables the company to initiate further sustainability steps (Vaude, 2020a)</p> <p>Vaude has achieved continuous growth in all its product categories and as an enterprise overall (Vaude, 2021b)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statements on (1) immigration, asylum policy and integration (2) environmental and species protection, climate change and energy transition, (3) economic system for the common good and entrepreneurship, (4) diversity, gender equality, women's quota, (5) European community of values and economy
<p>Patagonia On post-growth: in his new book the founder of Patagonia writes that a 'post-consumerist economy' is needed where goods are high quality, recyclable, and repairable (Dumain, 2012)</p> <p>The enterprise has decided to not grow anymore (Kaufmann, 2021):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The enterprise has always struggled with growth - They want to decouple their concerns from growth - Growth is no longer a goal - In 2020, the enterprise took a break and started a reinvention process: in the future, the focus should be reselling second-hand products instead of producing new goods <p>New CFO⁶¹ in 2008 who pushed the enterprise to grow with the argument to become a bigger brand in order to have a greater impact in every regard (Streep, 2017)</p> <p>The revenue and profits have quadrupled over the past seven years (Streep, 2017)</p> <p>Sustainable business model element: growth ethos of growing</p>	<p>Overarching goal of the company: to become a climate-positive company (Kaufmann, 2021):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 85% of the company's emissions come directly from the materials we use - 12% of the emissions are processing plus transport of the products - Hence, the problem is the supply chain <p>The enterprise has been trying to be as sustainable as possible for 47 years, yet it is still taking more from the planet than it would replace; companies that sell themselves as sustainable are not being honest with themselves and their customers (Kaufmann, 2021)</p> <p>The company wants to inspire a movement of businesses who also aim at reducing their ecological footprint (Patagonia, 2021k)</p> <p>The company partners with other companies worldwide in order to manufacture and transport products as environmentally friendly as possible (e.g.,) switching to materials and processes that have a lower environmental impact, only using organic cotton, increasing the use of recycled material etc.) (Patagonia, 2021k)</p> <p>The enterprise has created a social-responsibility programme in order to analyse and manage the impacts of the enterprise's business on workers and communities in the supply chain; the goal of the company is not just to reduce harm, but to create</p>

⁶¹ Chief Financial Officer

sustainably and slowly (e.g., focus on second-hand) (Bocken & Short, 2015)

Capturing value is not understood as maximising economic wealth: The company's growth rate is restricted so it allows the company to scale its resources and relationships without losing integrity (Bocken & Short, 2015)

positive benefits for all the lives touched by the business practices (Patagonia, 2021m)

Several sustainability principle sheets which facilitate decisions regarding how best to make environmental choices (Preferable purchasing principles, Responsible Service Provider Principles, Sustainable Building Principles, Paper Procurement and Use Principles, Packaging and Merchandising Principles, Product Recycling and Upcycling Principles) (Patagonia, 2021l)

Slow resource use as a sustainable business model element regarding value captured for the environment and society (Bocken & Short, 2015)

Appendix G

Detailed information on EPGCs amongst the pioneering enterprise. The table contains all the data that has been found through the website and newspaper analysis about those two enterprises. In bold: aspects of special importance according to the literature. In the thesis text, only those are touched upon (author's creation)

Category	EC ⁶²	Vaude	Patagonia
Values	Business philosophy	<p>In order to conduct business within planetary boundaries, the company acknowledges several aspects that need to change in today's economy system (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One aspect is to redefine the measure of entrepreneurial success: away from measuring success in terms of turnover and profit towards measuring in terms of social and environmental aspects <p>Aim/vision: the company's way of doing business should have a positive impact on people and the environment and inspire others to conduct business in a sustainable manner too (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>The company is guided by a mission across all company divisions – and not by short-term profit maximisation (Vaude, 2020p):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entrepreneurship is understood as an obligation to contribute to the common good - As a company that acts sustainably, the company is guided by long-term, sustainable, ecological, social and economic goals. - The strength of the brand and the value of its products is the company's most important asset - Vaude Signpost: code of conduct in which the company's values are presented (result of a participatory project in 2016); the signpost is intended to serve as a guide for all employees in unclear situations, to provide support for appropriate behaviour and to make the company's culture of trust tangible 	<p>Business model: people should go out and enjoy nature, so the enterprise has to protect this place (Kaufmann, 2021)</p> <p>Mission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To build the best products that cause the least amount of harm; this ethos guides the company to take a vast look at all of the impacts its business creates (Patagonia, 2021k) - It is important for the company to look at where and how Patagonia products are sold around the world; in what context does the company put the brand and what does the company achieve with it? (Kaufmann, 2021) <p>Core values (Patagonia, 2021d):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build the best product: the criteria for the best product rests on function, repairability, and, foremost, durability - Cause no unnecessary harm: the company acknowledges that its business activities are part of the problem; it works hard to change its business practices and share the knowledge about alternatives with others - Use business to protect nature: leadership is required to face the societal and environmental challenges - Not bound by convention: the success of the company lies in developing new way to do things <p>The company wants to find a new definition of success (Kaufmann, 2021):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This includes eliminating any reference to growth in turnover

⁶² Entrepreneurial characteristics (EC) – with a post-growth interpretation (EPGC)

	<p>Trade-offs (Vaude, 2020g):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low prices for unfairly produced products vs. <i>high prices for fairly produced products</i>⁶³ (Vaude, 2020g) 	<p>figures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - However, the company also needs to be profitable - Therefore, the company strives for an acceptable, competitive amount of turnover <p>The company wants to learn to relax when leaving financial opportunities behind (Kaufmann, 2021)</p> <p>Trade-offs (Gunther, 2016):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce 'the best product' vs. 'cause no unnecessary harm' which are both part of the mission - For now, the company is investing in cleaner chemistry technology in order to identify a replacement that delivers the same performance as less clean technologies
CEO characteristics/abilities	<p>Role model function: the company's way of doing business should have a positive impact on people and the environment and inspire others to conduct business in a sustainable manner too (Vaude, 2020k)</p>	<p>Role model function (Gunther, 2016):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The founder of the company hopes to influence other companies to do the same thing (acknowledging their negative environmental impacts and trying their best to reduce them) - Success: one of the world's largest retailers asked the company for advice regarding doing business more sustainably <p>The founder of the company reflected upon how to use the company's money (give it away and stop doing business or invest into the company and continue doing business); he decided for the latter because he believes that in order for governments to change, stock companies should be changed first (the governments will follow) and in order to change stock companies, consumers should be changed first (the stock companies will follow) (Streep, 2017)</p>
Innovations	<p>General innovations</p> <p>Repair services (Vaude, 2020k):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Repair workshop in which Vaude products are repaired - Repair instructions to 'do-it-yourself' on iFixit with the 	<p>The enterprise believes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One of the most responsible things as company can do is to build durable products

⁶³ Italicized parts: priorities of the enterprise. If there is no part in italics: no final priority

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- possibility of ordering share parts and tools
- Vaude Repair Café with free expert guidance from Vaude employees (Vaude, 2020m)
- Upcycling projects** (Vaude, 2020r):
- eBay upcycling store: collaboration with eBay where eBay provides the necessary platform and Vaude the required residual materials from textile production, which are finally auctioned off
 - Vaude upcycling workshop: under the claim 'from waste material to raw material' Vaude produces unique and practical products with creative ideas and craftsmanship in its upcycling workshop
 - Upcycling community: external upcycling community and material exchange in cooperation with other companies, schools and creative people with the aim to create a platform where companies, including Vaude, can make valuable leftover materials available for upcycling projects; 'Upcyclers' would then be able to use them for their products and present their projects
- Rental service iRentit:** promoting shared use as an alternative to purchasing products (Vaude, 2020k)
- Customers can rent high-quality outdoor equipment and luggage in the Vaude stores, in the Vaude factory outlet at the company's headquarters⁶⁴ and online (Vaude, 2020n)
- Additional business field in the area of 'professional consumers', established in 2017 (Vaude, 2020s):
- Aim: reduce dependence on the trade and create optimisations on the production side through anti-cyclical production, as there is no seasonality
 - Target consumers: industrial enterprises of all sizes, public authorities, associations and other public institutions
 - Great potential in German-speaking countries

- One of the most responsible things a consumer can do is to keep their products in use as long as possible
- Patagonia helps consumers to do that through offering repairs (Patagonia, 2021h)

Worn Wear (product upcycling and recycling programme):

- Project aim: repair and reuse Patagonia products in order to extend their useful life (Patagonia, 2018)
- Programme slogan: 'buy less, demand more' (Patagonia, 2021p)
- The enterprise believes that the best thing people can do for the planet is to stop buying new clothes and get more use out of stuff people already own, cutting down on consumption (Patagonia, 2021n)
- A repair truck travels from city to city to animate people to get their outdoor products repaired (Conradin, 2017)

Reuse ideas for the future (Kaufmann, 2021):

- Customers should sell Patagonia products back to the company; the company then cleans and repairs those products and sells them again at significantly lower prices
- Rental service for Patagonia garments

Patagonia Provisions:

- In 2012, the environmentally conscious food venture was started which sells wild salmon, organic grains and beer (Streep, 2017)
 - First, there was a lot of scepticism around the venture (what has an outdoor company do to with the food industry?) (Chouinard, 2020)
 - The idea of the enterprise's founder (the same person who founded the brand Patagonia) was to save the planet from the destructive habits human have invented
 - Provisions is seen as a matter of survival; with provisions that are grown organically, the company believes to contribute
-

⁶⁴ In Tettngang-Obereisenbach, Germany

	<p>First company in the outdoor industry to pioneer the Economy for the Common Good (ECG)⁶⁵: the company measures its contribution to the common good (Vaude, 2020f)</p>	<p>to a new kind of future (Chouinard, 2020)</p> <p>Regenerative organic farming project (Patagonia, 2021o):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The enterprise acknowledges that growing food with industrial techniques has devastating effects on soil and climate - This is why it started the company started a regenerative Organic Certified™ programme in 2017 (holistic agriculture certification which encompasses animal welfare, fairness for farmers and requirements for soil health and land management) <p>The founder of the enterprise co-founded the ‘1% for the planet’ in 1985, an alliance of businesses understanding the necessity to protect the environment (Patagonia, 2021a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They do so through donating 1% of their sales per year to restoration and preservation projects - They understand profit and loss as being directly linked to the environment’s health and are concerned with the environmental and social impacts of the industry
<p>Product innovations</p>	<p>Core elements of product philosophy: quality, durability, timelessness and repairability (guideline for product development) (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Green Shape: criteria catalogue for environmentally friendly products which takes the whole product life cycle into account and enables a production as environmentally friendly as possible (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Green Material Goals: until 2024, the company aims at achieving a recycled or biobased material content of at least 50% in 90% of all Vaude products (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Main sales in Germany and the surrounding EU countries; the</p>	<p>Core value of building the best product: the criteria for the best product rests on function, repairability and durability (Patagonia, 2021d)</p>

⁶⁵ Economic model with the primary goal of enabling a good life for everyone – the Common Good. Core values: (1) human dignity, (2) solidarity and social justice, (3) environmental sustainability, (4) transparency and co-determination (Economy for the common good ECG, n.d.)

company exports products to almost 50 countries (Vaude, 2020s)
With a 65 percent share of sales, clothing is Vaude's strongest main product group (Vaude, 2020s)

Labour innovations

Vaude children's house (Vaude, 2020d)

- Founded in 2001
- Aim: enabling mothers to return to work soon after giving birth through an adequate childcare facility
- Combined with the introduction of flexible working hours, the company could increase the ratio of female managers to 43 percent in 2019

Vaude workplace at headquarters (Vaude, 2020b):

- Building out of natural wood, with bright rooms and open space concepts which are tailored to the needs of the employees.
- The workplaces are equipped to a high standard with ergonomic, height-adjustable desks, sophisticated lighting concepts and soundproofing measures.

Green campus at headquarters (Vaude, 2020b):

- A campus-like inner courtyard has been created with green spaces that are planted in accordance with the company's biodiversity concept
- The parking spaces that have been eliminated in order to build the courtyard are deliberately not replaced; instead, employees are encouraged to commute to work in an environmentally friendly way, for example with the company's own e-bikes or a shuttle service
- A climbing wall in the centre of the courtyard offers a sporting challenge to the Vaude employees

Certified organic canteen (Vaude, 2020b):

- Open to employees and external visitors
- Most of the ingredients are sourced from organic farms close by

Services for employees (Patagonia, 2021e):

- Company-paid health care and sick time
- Paid parental leave
- Access to on-site child care at the headquarters in Ventura and Reno (US) since 1983

The employee recruitment focuses strongly on aligning with the enterprise's sustainability ethos (Bocken & Short, 2015)

Scope of action	Regional scale	<p>Headquarters in rural region with around 1,000 inhabitants (Vaude, 2020d):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doing business in the village means not only providing jobs, but also causing disturbances for the residence (e.g., noise through traffic, construction noise) - The company acknowledges its responsibility and commitment towards the region and the local community through (1) saving the local open-air swimming pool from closure in 2006, (2) revitalising the village with its own organic canteen and kiosk <p>Emphasis of production in Europe: family business with headquarters and manufacture in Tettngang-Obereisenbach with a close connection to the region (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Production only in Germany is not possible due to a lack of German sewing factories; even if this was possible, it would be disadvantageous for the consumers and the company because the current sales prices would double (Vaude, 2021a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Therefore, the company's focus is less on the question of where the production takes place, but rather how: the company is committed to fair wages in Asia and the provision of good working conditions through its Fair Wear⁶⁶ membership <p>Number of countries involved in supply chain: 11 (Germany, Austria, Portugal, Lithuania, Ukraine, China, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea) (Vaude, 2020j)</p>	<p>Overarching goal of the company: to become a climate-positive company (Kaufmann, 2021):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 85% of the company's emissions come directly from the materials we use - 12% of the emissions are processing plus transport of the products - Hence, the problem is the supply chain <p>The enterprise owns and operates... (Patagonia, 2021l)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offices in the USA, the Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Chile and Argentina - Two distribution centres - Over 70 stores worldwide <p>Number of countries involved in supply chain: 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offices in the USA, the Netherlands, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Chile and Argentina (Patagonia, 2021l) - Suppliers in Bangladesh, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Hong Kong, India, Mexico, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the USA and Vietnam) (Patagonia, 2020)
Relation to external actors	<p>To retailers, suppliers and customers: sustainability is seen as a team sport and hence, cooperative, long-term business relationships are important (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Collaboration with eBay in upcycling project (Vaude, 2020r) and with iFixit in providing repair instructions (Vaude, 2020k) (see also</p>	<p>Each sales platform is reviewed individually: the company want to make sure that their partners align with their philosophy and values (if they do not align, the partnership is cancelled) (Kaufmann, 2021)</p> <p>Two clienteles (Kaufmann, 2021):</p>	

⁶⁶ Non-profit organization with the mission to support workers in the garment industry in realising their rights to safe, dignified, properly paid employment (Fair Wear, n.d.)

	<p>general innovations)</p> <p>On competition: competition in the outdoor industry is extremely dynamic, international and has been determined by acquisitions and outside capital for a few years now (Vaude, 2020a)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The size of the company and the associated brand strength are relevant in order to be successful in this competition - The company's goal is be internationally competitive as a strong, sustainable, European brand <p>Distribution (Vaude, 2020s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specialised trade (incl. online shop): 90% of revenue - Retail (shops and outlets): 10% of revenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those who buy Patagonia products for sports - Those who buy Patagonia products for supporting the company's mission and value <p>Collaboration with eBay and iFixit to facilitate the reselling or repair of products for customers (Bocken & Short, 2015)</p> <p>Close partnership to other companies worldwide in order to mitigate the environmental harm of producing outdoor equipment (Patagonia, 2021k)</p>
<p>Communication with external actors</p>	<p>A transparent sustainability report and information on price tags of products enable consumers to decide consciously for their purchase (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>The corporate identity (see CEO characteristics) allows the company to send messages 'from the same mould' in the media, but also in communication with the customers (Vaude, 2020l)</p> <p>Sensitizing consumers for conscious consumption and for using products as long as possible is of great importance for the company: the company's website provides information on what consumers can do and how Vaude supports them (Vaude, 2020k)</p> <p>Communication of the price-performance ratio: the company wants to be transparent regarding how its product prices come about and what services the customer gets (Vaude, 2020g)</p> <p>Customer feedback is very important for the company in order to improve its products and services (Vaude, 2020u)</p> <p>Company's claim/main message to the public: 'Spirit of mountain sports' (Vaude, 2020t)</p>	<p>Transparent information about the company's footprint is displayed on its website (Patagonia, 2021j)</p> <p>Sensitizing consumers for conscious consumption and for using products as long as possible through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reminding customers to reuse and repair products with a labels inside of each garment (Bocken & Short, 2015) - Encouraging customers not to buy things they don't need (e.g., via ad with the headline 'Don't Buy This Jacket' in The New York Times on Black Friday in 2011) (Gunther, 2016) - Making consumers aware of their power regarding changing how cloths are made through the worn wear programme's slogan 'buy less, demand more'⁶⁸ (Patagonia, 2021p) - Having sustainable business model elements such as conscious sales in place (Bocken & Short, 2015) <p>Main sufficiency strategy of the company: consumers are encouraged to rather reuse or repair their products instead of buying new ones (Bocken & Short, 2015)</p> <p>Company's claim/main message to the public: 'We're in business to</p>

⁶⁸ 'Buy less': what consumers buy is a choice and has an impact on the environment; customers should buy quality, used and multi-functional gear (wear it, repair it, repeat). 'Demand more': customers should ensure that their products are produced mindfully and ethically and should hold brand accountable for what they produce and how the produce (Patagonia, 2021c)

		<p>Educational engagement (Vaude, 2020k):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support of producer and material suppliers in implementing sustainability requirements in supply chain - Vaude Green Shape Campus: retailers are educated on sustainability in order to enable them to inform and advise customers competently - Vaude Academy⁶⁷: educational format for schools, university as well as workshops for enterprises on sustainable business activities through which knowledge and expertise is passed on <p>Political engagement (Vaude, 2020k):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call for a supply chain law that reduces competitive disadvantages for sustainably operating companies - Support of the economy for the common good 	<p>save our home planet' (Patagonia, 2021i)</p> <p>Educational engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advising other companies (such as Walmart and Nike) regarding their supply chains and sustainable practices (Streep, 2017) <p>Political engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political position regarding e.g., the Black Lives Matter movement: the enterprise acknowledges the deep racial injustice around itself and recognizes that it is a white led outdoor company who is reliant on the recreation of stolen Native lands that are not yet safe for all (Patagonia, 2021i) - Hosting of voter-education events which were linked to environmental issues at the company's 30 US retail stores during the presidential election in 2016 (Streep, 2017) - Activism: The company supports grass root movements that approach issues with a commitment to long-term change (it only supports environmental work) (Patagonia, 2021b)
Entrepreneurial basics	Legal form	<p>Legal form: Ltd & Co. KG (Vaude, 2020t)</p> <p>Family business (Vaude, 2020t)</p> <p>Collaborations with banks (Vaude, 2020a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In order to pursue business in balance with people and nature, the company recently started a collaboration with GLS Bank, a sustainable "green" bank - All other partner banks deal with eco and social issues and have published sustainability reports <p>Profit participation certificate (Vaude, 2020a):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VAUDE offers its employees a total amount (tranche) of € 100,000 annually in the form of profit participation certificates with a fixed interest rate of 2 percent and a profit participation of 2 percent (share in losses is excluded) 	<p>Legal form: Certified Benefit corporation (Gunther, 2016) which...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is not listed (Underwood, 2021) - Codifies the company's values legally (Gunther, 2016) - Incentivises the company to create environmental and societal benefits through its business activities (Bocken & Short, 2015) - Could avoid the loss of control over the company's vision and mission (Bocken & Short, 2015) <p>Family business; the founder never wants the company to go public (Gunther, 2016)</p>

⁶⁷ The Vaude Academy is built as a social business which means that its main goal is to solve social or ecological challenges with economic means. The focus is on the social benefit and not on the pure maximisation of financial profit. The profit generated is reinvested in the business field (Vaude, 2020q)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The term of the profit participation certificates is 5 years in each case - Employees can use this tax-free as salary conversion up to an annual amount of € 360, for example by converting € 30 per month in salary conversion - The company thereby strengthens its equity capital and at the same time offers employees the opportunity to participate in the company as shareholders with attractive conditions 	
Size of enterprise	<p>558 employees (Vaude, 2020i); 3 corporate managers (Vaude, 2020c)</p> <p>The corporate management team is responsible for all overarching issues such as risk management, orientation of business units, financing and sustainability strategy, economic decision (e.g., budget approvals) (Vaude, 2020c)</p>	Approx. 2000 employees (Patagonia, 2021f)
Finances	<p>Safeguarding financial independence through projects such as profit participation certificate (Vaude, 2020a)</p> <p>Example of price structure of a Vaude jacket (price of 200 Euros) (Vaude, 2020g):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State: 19% taxes - Retail: 36% costs + 2% profit - Brand: 17% costs + 3% profit - Producer: 20% costs + 5% profit 	<p>Money is reinvested in the company; hence, the company is independent form external investors (Kaufmann, 2021)</p> <p>Now, that the enterprise is slowing down its growth, financial discipline becomes very important (Kaufmann, 2021)</p> <p>1% of the yearly turnover (not profit) is given to grassroot movements who work for clean water, clean air and clean soils (see also general innovations) (Kaufmann, 2021)</p> <p>The company's founder is not fond of bankers and finance people (Streep, 2017)</p>
