MANAGERIAL ORIENTATIONS TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BRITISH AND GERMAN MANAGERS.

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Abstract

In spite of growing interest in environmental and especially sustainability oriented business literature, little attention has been given to one major actor in this context: the manager. How do managers make sense of environmental issues and deal with them?

Even less research has been undertaken to explore cultural variations in managerial orientation to environmental issues. These research questions are addressed through a comparative cross-cultural study with British and German managers in the Food Retail and Energy Sector using a social constructionist approach with a focus on how "environmental knowledge, risks and problems are socially assembled" (Hannigan 1995:31).

In this study the differences between the two countries in how managers present the 'ecological element' of their identities and how they talk about environmental issues in business are pronounced. While the German managers claim that a sound knowledge in environmental issues is part of being a good manager, British managers stress that they only attend to environmental issues if it is in the interest of their company and its financial objectives.

In line with their attachment to a notion of moral neutrality, British managers argue that the business system require them to make the 'business case' in assessing whether to include environmental improvements or not. They refer to the existing business system as an 'objective reality'. This perception of a social system as objective was questioned by Habermas (1984). Applying Habermas' distinction of 'instrumental and communicative reason', it is apparent that German managers employ a different 'instrumental reason' to that applied by British managers. In addition to the cost-saving potential of environmental efficiency the German managers favour investing in environmental improvements as long as the survival of the company is not at risk. Furthermore, they constantly intertwine 'instrumental and communicative reason' by dwelling on environmental considerations as reasons for their business decisions. It is also presented as socially acceptable by German managers to discuss private views and philosophical insights in business and to raise business related issues in private meetings. The British managers present themselves as distinguishing between and separating the private world from the business world.

Differing concepts of 'economic rationality' are also applied by the two groups in how they identify and evaluate the relative importance of stakeholders. British managers give priority to shareholders and argue that they do not want to impose their values on customers. In contrast, German managers seldom mention shareholders. Instead they talk for example about the challenges posed by customers who leave packaging at the till.

The pronounced differences in the two countries are further highlighted in how managers refer to cultural institutions and influences they perceive to be responsible for their environmental awareness and sensemaking. The study argues that an environmental education in school and exposure to a broad range of subjects beyond the age of sixteen has an impact on how managers draw later in life on different subjects in dealing with business decisions. The insights offered by this study make it possible to propose suggestions on how the teaching of sustainability could be improved.

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"And if the world would end tomorrow, I would still plant an apple tree today."

Although my sincere hope is that humankind will come to reason in time – in this hope I have written this PhD thesis.

1   Introduction

"This German company wanted to sell copy machines on ecological grounds. I had to teach the German salesperson that this is no selling argument in Britain."

This statement was made informally to the researcher and in a context quite separate from her formal research. However, the statement by this Irish manager currently working in Britain neatly captures the spirit of the formal research covered in this thesis.

Recent years have seen an increase in environmental management systems and other efforts to improve the environmental performance of companies. In the management literature various books offer guidance on how and why to implement environmental reporting and management systems (Bennett and James 1999, Piasecki et al 1999; Schaltegger, Burritt and Petersen 2003). But little research has been done so far about managers in this context: How do managers make sense of environmental issues and deal with them?

Most of the few studies previously undertaken focused on one country. Environmental issues however seem to get different amounts of attention depending on the cultural setting. This study has sought to explore these differences in how managers talk about environmental issues by undertaking a comparative cross-cultural study in Germany and the UK. The research questions of this study are therefore:

- How do managers make sense of environmental issues?

- Based on these understandings, what do managers claim to be influential in shaping their actions?

- What is the extent of cultural variations in managerial orientation to environmental issues?

In order to address these research questions, the methodology in this study has built on the social constructionist approach to environmental issues as developed by Hannigan (1995) in recognising "the extent to which environmental problems and solutions are end-products of a dynamic social process of definition, negotiation and legitimation both in public and private settings."(31) However, it is important to note that "social constructionism as it is conceptualised here does not deny the independent causal powers of nature but rather asserts that the rank ordering of these problems by social

actors does not always directly correspond to actual need." (Hannigan 1995:30). But the focus of this approach is on how "environmental knowledge, risks and problems are socially assembled" (Hannigan 1995:31). This approach has allowed developing the following further questions in its application to the societal group of managers:

- How do managers choose, assemble and present environmental knowledge and concerns?

- How do they act upon these according to their own description?

- How do they make sense of their experiences with environmental issues in the past?

To answer these questions attention was paid to how managers utilized discursive resources to make sense of each speech about environmental issues. In particular, the process of sensemaking by Weick (1995) has informed the analysis of the accounts studied. Especially his notions of identity construction, the focus on extracted cues and his theory of ongoing and retrospective sensemaking has helped to evaluate the possible patterns in the reported orientations and actions of managers. Furthermore, attention has been given to the cultural dimensions of sensemaking, an area not stressed enough by Weick. The present study also had an interest in how managers would explain which cultural influences made them environmentally aware. In addition, Habermas' (1984) differentiation between the 'instrumental reason' and the 'communicative reason' has been employed in this study in order to understand how managers relate environmental issues to their perceived understanding of how the business system works.

The research has adopted a qualitative case study approach, an embedded multiple-case design (Yin 1994). A 'multi-stage cluster sampling' method was used to identify the case study individuals for the semi-structured interviews. The study was carried out in two different countries, UK and Germany, to explore the cultural variations in responses to environmental issues. The interviews took place in 2002 to 2004 with managers in the Food Retail and Energy Sector; two different sectors being selected in order to explore whether the industrial background had an impact on the responses. The companies in the food retail sector were further divided into two groups, one with what the researcher termed an 'ecological corporate identity', companies selling exclusively or predominantly organic products. Here the idea was to investigate whether managers working for such a company would present themselves similarly in both countries, so that the environmental orientation would override national characteristics.

In the next chapter the literature review is presented. It starts off by evaluating the few studies exploring the managerial sensemaking of environmental issues in the UK or in Germany, followed by a discussion of the two existing cross-cultural studies. Given the small number of cross-cultural studies of managerial environmental behaviour and assuming that environmental values are part of ethical values in general, it has been helpful to have a look at other comparative studies of managers and their values in different cultural contexts. They have offered insights in how culture is conceptualised with regard to ethical values and which components might explain different attitudes. For the purpose of the present study, it has been also important to go outside management studies to look at how other disciplines like psychology and sociology explain the rise of environmentally responsible behaviour and why some individuals report a higher commitment to tackle environmental problems than others. This might throw light on why managers argue and behave differently. Some of these psychological and sociological theories were utilized in consumer research studies; they often offer good illustrations of the theories employed and have been presented along them in the same section. The few attempts to link environmental values to classical theories of moral development offered the background for a summary on how human beings/ mangers might acquire environmental values. In all studies, British and German managers referred to the 'economic rationality' that has to be used in the business world when dealing with environmental issues. This construct has been evaluated and set in relation to Habermas' theory (1984) of 'instrumental' and 'communicative' reason.

In the third chapter the methodology, the conceptual framework and the methods chosen for this study are explained and evaluated. The fieldwork undertaken by the researcher is described in detail with a focus on the access problems faced in this research. Information is given on the background and stance of the researcher as well as her perception of the interviews. The process of designing the survey is outlined and the translation of the survey, a crucial step in a comparative cross- cultural study. The chapter concludes with describing the analysis of the gathered data, which was inspired by grounded theory.

The analysis of the case materials revealed a number of themes that are discussed in chapters four to six. Quotes from British managers are used alongside the original German quotes. Translations of the German quotes are given underneath the originals to help readers who have not a sufficient understanding of the German language. However, these translations can only give an indication, as translations in general are

already interpretations. The English word 'Business' for example has ten possible translations in German; one translation would be 'Unternehmen', but this word has twenty-three other connotations in English (according to LEO, the online translation service provided by the University of Munich, accessed on 16.08.2006). The translation was done by the researcher herself and her aim was to stay as close as possible to the words used by the German managers. Therefore the quotes might be awkward to read as English grammar and style were partly ignored and some English words were created in order to understand the German sense making. The researcher also followed some online discussions of the translating community as provided by LEO, where professional translators struggled to find appropriate translations for certain expressions such as the 'business case'. Additionally she used the CD-Rom 'Eurowin.ag: Power Translator Professional'.

More specifically, the fourth chapter explores how managers in both countries presented their identity with regard to environmental issues. In the first section British managers, their own identity construction and their perception of environmentalists are discussed. Special attention is given to the way managers utilized the attributes 'emotional' and 'rational' to distinguish between different groups and different opinions and how they seemed to use the discursive resource 'as a scientist' to underline their credibility. In the second section, the accounts of the German managers will be analysed. The focus will be here on how German managers discuss environmental consciousness as an integral part of their understanding as managers and how they relate to environmentalists. The chapter finishes with an investigation whether the managers reported a different environmental behaviour at home and in their role as a manager and whether there are cultural differences in how managers defined these roles.

The fifth chapter explores the cultural influences managers make responsible in their discourse for their development of environmental awareness. Managers were asked when they first were exposed to environmental issues. An emphasis was put on childhood experiences and places. Furthermore, previous studies had suggested that managers might report environmental incidents as a starting point for their environmental concern. Hence, the accounts of the managers are analysed to ascertain whether they claimed that environmental incidents have raised their environmental awareness. This chapter also puts an emphasis on how cultural institutions such as school and other cultural influences such as religions and role models have shaped the environmental sense making of managers.

In the sixth chapter, the accounts of the managers are analysed utilizing the distinction between 'instrumental reason/business world' and 'communicative reason/ life world' as conceptualised by Habermas (1984). The first section deals with the questions how managers in the UK present their understanding of the business world and how they define the 'business case', the main metaphor used in their 'instrumental reasoning'. A description of this 'instrumental reason' is followed by an investigation of how - if at all – British managers introduce 'communicative reason' when discussing environmental issues in business. The difference in the German understanding are outlined in the second part of this chapter, which analyses the intertwining of 'technical and communicative reasoning' in the German accounts. The third part will investigate how managers in both countries describe the role and importance of various stakeholders as prominent figures in the business world. This aspect was under-investigated in the earlier German studies and offers some new insights especially when compared to statements of the British managers. In the fourth part the suggestions managers made on how they would do business in the cultural context of the other country will be presented. This suggests that managers speak in a way as if business systems abroad will follow the same economic rationality they perceive as the 'universal one'. Finally, the argumentation of some managers in both countries will be analysed, who went into business to solve environmental problems, this could be interpreted with Habermas (1984) as a move from the 'life world' to the 'business world' in order to introduce 'communicative reason' and transform the 'instrumental reason'.

The seventh chapter summarizes the research project and draws out the most important insights gained by this study. The main themes of the study are reviewed and discussed in relation to existing literature: The 'ecologic identity construction' of managers is discussed on the background of the especially in the Anglo-American context proclaimed value neutrality of managers. It is shown how managers in line with this construct of moral neutrality claim that the existing business system requires certain behaviour with regard to environmental issues. Their concepts of 'economic rationality' is analysed employing the device by Habermas (1984) of 'instrumental and communicative reason'. The difference between German and British managers in their 'technical reasoning' is highlighted, followed by an exploration of the importance managers attribute to certain stakeholders. The pronounced differences in both countries are further highlighted by the reported cultural influences managers made responsible for their development of environmental values and sense making. Throughout the

chapter, remaining gaps in the existing knowledge are indicated and future research projects outlined. Suggestions are made on how the insights of this study could be utilized to improve the teaching of sustainability. Finally, the limitations of this work are also considered.

2   Managers and the environment – the existing literature

At the beginning of this chapter, the studies undertaken in UK and German speaking countries of managers and their approach to environmental issues are summarized. The studies examined employ different models and assumptions, but what they all have in common is that they explore the question how managers relate to environmental problems and how they integrate environmental concerns into their daily business decisions.

So far only two comparative studies have been undertaken between managers of UK and Germany and their understanding of environmental problems. However, quite a few studies were carried out to compare managers' values in different countries. As environmental values are part of ethical values, these comparative studies offer useful insights into how to conceptualise culture and its impacts on managers' values. These are presented in the second section.

For the purpose of the present study it is also important to understand how other disciplines like psychology and sociology explain the rise of environmentally responsible behaviour and why some individuals report a higher commitment to tackle environmental problems than others. This might throw light on why managers argue and behave differently. Some of these psychological and sociological theories were used in consumer research studies; they are often good illustrations of the theories employed and are presented along the corresponding theories in the same section. The few attempts to link environmental values to classical theories of moral development allow us to illustrate how human beings/ managers might acquire environmental values.

In the last section of this chapter the construct of 'economic rationality' and its relevance in the discourse of managers about environmental issues is highlighted and evaluated.

2.1   *Managers' approach to environmental issues – Studies in the UK and Germany*

Early studies (Touche Ross 1990; IOD1992; IOD1993) focused on the question of how companies incorporate environmental issues into their business activities. In all these surveys managers were asked whether the company has an environmental policy, who is responsible for environmental problems in their company and how they would assess their knowledge of environmental legislation. In addition, the consultancy Touche Ross

(1990) compared the responses of 32 major UK companies with other European firms. They highlight some interesting differences: "Most UK companies do not believe that future Green legislation will significantly affect their industry, while the majority of companies interviewed in mainland Europe see future legislation as having a major impact on all aspects of their business. (….) A number of UK firms claim to make no impact whatever on the environment, while all firms in other countries of the EC recognise some environmental impact." (1) In its surveys over three consecutive years, the Institute of Directors (IOD 1993) was especially interested in how much time is spent on board meetings dealing with environmental issues, which they saw as an indication of serious engagement.

However, these earlier studies were largely descriptive. They summarized the action taken within companies to integrate environmental issues, as recommended by various publications. They also showed a very diverse picture whereby some companies would introduce environmental policies, others would improve their processes such as implementing a recycling scheme, and others would start to use environmental improvements as marketing tools. But these studies explored only indirectly the factors that drive managers to integrate environmental issues into business policy. Was it compliance with legislative standards or anticipation of upcoming regulations? Were they influenced in their own opinion by the environmental discourse in their society? Did they react to the driving demand of customers?

2.1.1 Managers' perception of environmental issues in the UK - Fineman's studies (1996, 1997, 1998, 2000)

The first major study in the UK of how managers understand and define environmental issues was undertaken by Fineman (1996). Taking a social-constructionist approach he conducted semi-structured interviews with 112 middle-level and senior managers in four major industries: Supermarkets, Automotives, Power generation and Chemicals. In each industry six UK-based companies took part. The interviewees included a director or senior manager responsible for environmental affairs and in two-thirds of the sample at least two functional representatives.

His findings were presented in various articles and book chapters (Fineman and Clarke, 1996, Fineman, 1996, Fineman, 1997, Fineman, 1998a, Fineman, 2000b). In each of them, he explored different aspects and used different frameworks for his analysis. The following will highlight some of the theories and models used and his conclusions. In

all of them 'the environment' is not defined per se; this term and especially the metaphor 'green' (green stakeholders, green manager, greening the firm) is broadly used for anything related to the integration or expression of environmental concerns.

One of his major findings was that even in companies with a higher commitment to green issues like environmental policy or waste management, managers would describe themselves as "at most, light green" (1996:485) and would admit that they are more committed to environmental issues in their work role than they are at home. Even though they would express enthusiasm about the 'caring attitude' of their company or about environmental achievements, their reasoning would not include any appreciation of the values of sustainable development as such. "The managers had, undoubtedly, digested the corporate vocabulary of socially responsible actions and enthusiasms, which influenced their pro-environmental emotions and behaviours. Nevertheless, these were routed in enlightened self interest rather than a substantive sense of care or concern for others." (1996:485)

The environmental activities were evaluated according to traditional business criteria and a common statement was that they "wouldn't do it if it didn't help the bottom line"(1998:242). Only a few managers were actually trying to promote environmental initiatives beyond the boundaries of the organisational culture. If they were in a senior position, they would often fulfil the role of the 'environmental champion', who was seen as the driving force for the greening of the company by their subordinates. Other managers had to introduce such initiatives carefully and to 'translate' them into business language. Most managers, however, felt no special responsibility for environmental issues. They saw themselves as "tiny cog in a huge wheel" (1997:33). In addition they tended to play down environmental problems using a selective interpretation of technical arguments. "At present, the portentous sense of crisis generated by some readings of the planet's ecological state is not shared by managers; at least not to the extent to significantly challenge still-rewarding ways of doing business." (1997:37)

Not surprisingly, as a result many managers distanced themselves from environmentalists. A favoured, defensive self-description was "not being 'lentils and sandals' types"(1997:33). Campaigners were seen as too emotional and their usage of moral language inappropriate for the business world. But even though the managers of 'greener' companies shared this perception, they also acknowledged the positive role of green pressure groups as a 'surrogate conscience' reminding the managers of a moral

agenda. Managers from less greener companies appeared to be more aggresive. They often demonised green pressure groups and ignored or depreciated their claims. Based on psychoanalytic literature Fineman concluded that "'audacious', 'marginal', 'shouting', 'blackmailing', 'unconventional' green groups (emotive labels themselves) stir unease in the managers about their own image and worth, especially in relation to social responsibilities they feel they should, but cannot, discharge." (1996:490).

Facts presented by green pressure groups were almost always disputed, but public relations damage was very real to all managers, so that campaigners were seen as a powerful stakeholder. In their analysis using a stakeholder approach, Fineman and Clarke (1996) could only identify one other stakeholder as being influential: Regulators. All others- including customers- were marginalized. Managers were confident that British consumers in general are not very interested in environmentally friendly produced products, so they were simply supplying what the market wanted but "silent…on the way corporations engineer their customers' 'wants' through marketing and advertising" (Fineman, 1998a: 243). Fineman and Clarke highlighted that the moral (green) influence of stakeholders can only be exercised when other interests of managers are challenged, such as reputation. "The clearest coercion comes from regulators, for whom managers hold no great affection, but the regulator's power to exact financial penalties and prescribe environmental improvements is a real personal/professional and commercial fear for managers." (Fineman, 1996: 496)

Fineman regarded the regulators as major drivers in bringing environmental issues onto the companies' agenda. And in line with his analysis as described above this had an impact on the professional stance managers took with regard to environmental problems. Managers reported that at home their spouses would "push them into recycling" (1996:485). Only the questions of their children seemed to punctuate the apathy causing concern about environmental problems.

Using Kohlberg's (1969) model of cognitive moral development, Fineman concluded that managers "rarely move beyond Stage 3 (living up to the expectations of key role-senders at work) or Stage 4 (being legally justified in their actions). The few who were mildly concerned about the environmental degradation were unwilling to honour this at work, or to justify their work actions in terms of the environmental welfare of others (Stages 5 and 6)" (1997:36). Although this interpretation of Kohlberg is contentious, it

is interesting to note how Fineman summarised the ethical orientation of the managers interviewed.

According to Fineman young managers said that they are more willing to listen to environmental champions. Unfortunately he does not elaborate on this aspect in this or any of the other papers, but he assumes that these young managers represent a shift in organisational ecology; of "inevitable organisational change through selection and replacement" (1997:37).

Mainly following his analysis of stakeholders Fineman moved on to focus on the interrelations between companies and regulators (Fineman, 1998b, Fineman, 2000a). But his findings pose also other questions: Why are these young managers more willing to listen to environmental champions? What caused this shift if there is one? Were they influenced by societal changes or exposed to a different education? How do other societal groups besides the companies' immediate stakeholders shape managers' perceptions of environmental problems?

Furthermore, Fineman concentrated on UK companies. However, including other countries as for example Germany might offer other results. First of all, it would be interesting to investigate whether managers prioritise the companies' stakeholders in the same way as the UK managers. Secondly, Fineman's insights into the identity construction of managers and their perception of environmentalists might depend on a cultural understanding of the role and attributes associated with 'a manager' in different business cultures. Overall, his analysis raises the question how managers construct, integrate and solve new moral dilemmas raised by environmentalists in relation to existing (cultural) methods of decision-making.

2.1.2   Schaefer and Harvey's study (2000)

Schaefer and Harvey (2000) also researched the environmental perceptions of managers in six British companies (water/electricity utilities). They focused on the questions what and/or whom managers will identify as main drivers for environmental changes. Similar to the managers in Fineman's studies, the interviewees cited legislation and regulation as very influential. In addition, they expressed the belief that public awareness of environmental issues has risen and that they would experience a backlash if they would fall short of expectations. Even though these external factors were considered as more important, managers also identified individuals within the organisations as change

agents: Top managers, environmental managers and 'environmental champions' in any position. Top managers could promote environmental issues, but their positive attitude towards the environment was a bonus, not a must. Only a hostile attitude of top managers was seen as having a high impact in the sense that it would block any environmental efforts. Senior managers below top management level on the other hand seemed to play a more important role. According to the interviewees environmental improvements in the divisions and departments depended on the commitment of the responsible senior manager. 'Environmental Champions' working in any managerial or non-managerial position made a difference in their part of the organisation; often their abilities such as the successful organisation of waste management became known throughout the company and they were asked to implement their environmental programmes in other departments or on company level. Finally, the change potential of environmental managers was attributed to their persuasiveness, not to their formal role. Overall, managers claimed that environmental issues had gained in importance. Some explained this with a change in corporate culture slowly embedding environmental management and awareness. Others were convinced that despite all the talk about environmental issues and the measures implemented the underlying business culture was still focused on cost and revenue concerns.

2.1.3   Studies of German managers

The above studies focus on British managers. This pattern might be expected to be different in other North-European Countries, particularly in Germany where companies appear to be more proactive with regard to environmental issues. The range of environmentally friendly products such as envelopes made of recycled paper is far wider in Germany than the range available in the UK. One explanation could be that German managers are reacting to an increased demand for 'green products' on behalf of German consumers. German managers might also have a different perception of environmental issues than their British counterparts, maybe as part of a cultural shift in German society.

The differences to the UK studies are pronounced in the study of Heine and Mautz (1993/1995) with 80 German managers in the lower and middle management of two chemical companies. As the chemical industry was the first to be a target of environmental criticism in Germany, the managers refer frequently to this discourse. Heine and Mautz even suggest that their self-identity is constructed in contrast and in response to the arguments brought against them. Being often labelled as 'environmental

polluters', the managers insist that far from it, they are the ones who bridge the gap between environmental knowledge and behaviour. They claim that critics of the chemical industry only talk about environmental protection, but that the managers make it happen. They report that they face the strongest critique in private meetings with their own friends and family. They are not allowed to adapt a private role but are instead questioned as representative of their industry and often morally disputed. In response they highlight that they are even morally superior as they accept their responsibility and are actively involved in promoting environmental improvements within their company as part of their corporate loyalty and in best interest for the company. They blame their critics for exhibiting double standards, such as not acting environmental-friendly where their own comfort is concerned. The managers also claim that their rationality is morally superior as they seek to analyse the problems in all its dimensions and have a holistic approach rather than the one-dimensional approach of their opponents. Overall, they assess their own rationality as superior to that of non-experts. The managers see themselves as the only ones who assess the environmental problems based on scientific knowledge and without being influenced by emotions, fear and prejudices. Therefore they are in the position to determine the environmental problem correctly and to solve it. However, most of them admit, that without the public environmental discourse their companies would have neglected environmental protection. Despite all conflicts with critics, the managers therefore endorse the public pro-environmental discourse as it prevents the companies to focus solely on profit maximisation. In addition they perceive humans as too weak and easily tempted so that they need to be under surveillance. Finally they stress the point that they depend on the public because the public opinion will influence consumer decisions and regulation. Therefore, they should use their role as managers to influence the public discourse and communicate their rational insights into the causes of and solutions to environmental problems.

2.1.4   *'Corporate environmental awareness'-Study by Hammerl (1994)*

Another study with a broad empirical base was undertaken by Hammerl (1994) including a senior manager or board member each from 123 companies (Industries: 70, Retailer: 14, Service: 39). Her aim was to develop a theoretical understanding of the construct 'Betriebliches Umweltbewusstsein' (Corporate environmental awareness) which she defined as "the environmental awareness of a company as shaped by its employees" - "das durch die Mitarbeiter gepraegte Umweltbewusstsein eines

Unternehmens"(1994:24). In a second step she tested her hypotheses empirically using a standardised questionnaire.

Hammerl identified three dimensions as part of an environmental awareness:

1. Cognitive dimension (Ecological knowledge)

2. Affective/evaluative dimension (Ecological values and attitudes)

3. 'Konative' dimension (Environmental behaviour)

Besides a reduction of each dimension to only a few operational items in the questionnaire, her usage of common judgements such as 'consumers have the biggest influence on environmental protection through their own behaviour' further diminishes the possible connotations. Only a few stakeholders for example were included in her pre-formulated quotes so that her finding that consumers have the highest influence, lacks explanatory power. However, despite these methodological shortcomings, some of her findings are worth noticing: Most managers admitted that they have serious environmental problems in their company, but they are convinced that these can be solved with technical-economical methods. According to the managers the solutions demanded by pressure groups were often not based on facts and too emotional. However, the managers seemed to have their own ambitions in achieving certain environmental improvements; 15% for example claimed that they want to change to public transport in the following years. Environmental protection is seen as an important business objective as it is positively linked to reputation and the long-term realisation of profits. Managers claim that environmental protection might be incompatible with short-term profit maximisation, but as the latter is ranked as the second lowest business objective (only the development of so-called 'third-world-countries" is ranked lower), Hammerl concludes that the assumed incompatibility between ecology and economy is proving to be less valid.

2.1.5   The influential study by Schuelein, Brunner and Reiger (1994)

An important study of German speaking managers and their approach to environmental issues was undertaken by Schuelein, Brunner and Reiger (1994) in Vienna interviewing 16 managers in companies with more than 500 employees. The study is here included as it is often cited as _the_ study of managers' environmental perceptions in the Environmental Awareness Research (Homburg and Matthies, 2001) and as it is assumed that Austrians and Germans share not only the same language but also other cultural

characteristics. Furthermore, Schuelein et al carried out a more comprehensive interview than other two German studies, including questions on respondents' private life and their personal beliefs as well as their professional attitude.

From a professional point of view managers argue that environmental protection needs to be part of technologically and financially sound management. But environmental protection is not seen as a value in itself and the managers never made any connections between the business activities of their own company and ecological problems worldwide, even though they regretted that the ecological situation in the 'third world' is in inevitable decline. Regulation was judged according to whether it is financially feasible and technologically possible, but only seldom as to whether the regulation would actually improve the environment. However, respondents stressed that regulation is absolutely necessary as every company is asked to fulfil the same targets, therefore reducing competitive advantages for environmentally less concerned companies. Although the managers claimed that technical solutions and economic growth would solve most environmental problems in the future, they would recommend a risk-benefit analysis for any technology. With regard to nuclear energy for example most of interviewed managers said that the risk outweighs the benefits and that further use of nuclear energy is irresponsible.

Similar to the UK managers in Fineman's study managers in this study also complained that environmentalists, residents close to corporate premises and the media were not able to participate in a rational discourse. Environmentalists and residents were only interested in getting into the limelight but they had not sufficient knowledge of environmental problems. Therefore they were not regarded as a threat for companies as either the public pays not so much attention to them anyway or as companies can easily influence them by providing them with the 'right kind of information'. The media on the other hand was seen as more powerful as they could single out certain incidences and blame the whole industrial sector for it. Especially in cases where environmentalists 'used the media for their own interests', managers reported public relation damage to their companies. The managers admitted that some environmental improvements were a reactive response to these public pressures but tried to present them as voluntary actions.

Schuelein et al (1994) also reported that the managers of their study claimed that their economic-technological worldview was being challenged, especially in informal private

encounters (private Lebenszusammenhaenge). Despite their low interest in ecological matters they expressed a felt need to deal with these questions. At home their wives confronted them with ecological questions, used environmentally friendly products and technology and expected the same attitude of their partners.. Many of them, however, presented the decisions at home as joint decisions and displayed a high environmental concern especially with regard to food. As consumers they would question the environmental claims made by other companies, which was in strong contrast to how they presented their own companies as trustworthy. Especially in their leisure activities such as skiing the managers would report the observation of environmental degradation and highlight that business interests in the tourism industry should not overrun environmental protection. However, only a few areas were identified as in need for environmental protection, in general the managers would question sceptically the public 'agitation' with regard to many environmental problems. They express also here a general distrust in the media and seem to be more concerned when they can actually observe negative environmental impacts themselves and verify the claims made by others.

The interviewed managers describe their children as radical in environmental questions and assume a value shift there but, criticise their inconsistency: Children force their parents into environmental actions such as cleaning yoghurt pots for recycling, but would not take care of actually bringing them to recycling facilities.

Overall, the study highlighted that managers were not very interested in ecological questions per se. But in recent years family members in particular challenged their economic-technological worldview. In response these managers have started to open up to environmental questions.

2.1.6   Differences between British and German managers

The review of the existing studies with regard to managers and the environment has shown that the interviewed managers in the UK and in Germany both regard environmentalists from pressure groups as too emotional. But while most UK managers distance themselves not only from these environmentalists but also from environmental problems per se, German managers claim that they act more environmentally responsible than the environmentalists who only talk. Only the Austrian managers follow a similar line of argument as the UK managers in that environmental protection is not seen as an objective in itself but implemented if it helps the bottom line or if it is

requested by regulators; however in some circumstances the Austrian managers would sacrifice business considerations when a technology is seen as too dangerous for the environment as in case of nuclear energy.

German and Austrian managers seem to participate in a broader societal discourse about environmental issues to which they refer frequently, but these statements might be also due to the different designs of the studies undertaken and need to be investigated further by asking similar questions to UK managers.

Another pronounced difference is that friends and families question German and Austrian managers in their moral identity for being involved in business activities that might have an impact on the environment. The UK managers on the other hand are only 'pushed into recycling' at home by their spouses; they do not report that their spouses or anybody else is questioning their business activities with regard to environmental issues. But again this needs further investigation as Fineman (1996) and Schaefer/Harvey (2000) did not elaborate on this point.

Regulators are seen in both countries as important stakeholders; the role of customers in pushing for environmental products is not fully explored., particularly in the German studies

Managers in all three countries referred to the economic (-technological) rationality that they employ in business decisions. However, this economic rationality is conceptualised in different ways. These important variations will be analysed in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

2.1.7   Cross-cultural studies about managers' perception of the environment

Little research has been done so far comparing managers' perception of environmental problems in one country with the perception of managers in another country. The Touche Ross (1990) study was already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, however their focus was on UK companies; the surveys in the other European countries were less detailed and mainly used for comparison.

Interestingly, the Science Centre in Berlin in collaboration with the University of Bath (UK), the State University of New York in Buffalo (US) and the Maquarie University in Sydney (Kessel, 1983, Fietkau and Thiede, 1986, Milbrath 1981) undertook the only other cross-cultural study identified in the literature search as early as 1979. Generally,

business leaders tended to choose the values of industrialism such as productivity, individual achievements, material wealth, while environmentalists occupied the other end of the scale, which was termed by the authors as the 'new environmental paradigm'. However, business leaders were less a cohesive group than environmentalists. For example they varied broadly in their responses whether nature should be used to produce more consumer goods. The authors therefore suggested, "We cannot be certain that most people in the United States or England ever held a belief that man should dominate nature. What does seem clear from these recent data, however, is that now it is a minority view." (Milbrath 1981:50) UK managers were either neutral or inclined towards environmental protection over economic growth, similar to German managers, while US managers were slightly in favour of economic growth. Surprisingly, according to Kessel (1983), German managers did believe stronger in the ability of self-regulatory forces of the market to allocate resources appropriately, while Milbrath claimed that "the German translation conveyed a different emphasis and is not truly comparable"(Milbrath 1981:50). Another interesting difference is that German managers were more convinced than their English and American colleagues to contribute specifically in their role as managers to the solution of environmental problems.

Purvis et al (2000) interviewed managers in the UK, Germany and France, but they analysed them as one group without comparing the attitudes of managers in each country. Their observations are therefore less useful for the present study as the latter is mainly interested in how managers describe and assess environmental problems in one cultural setting.

Given the small number of cross-cultural studies of managerial environmental behaviour and assuming that environmental values are part of ethical values in general, it is helpful to have a look at other comparative studies of managers and their values in different cultural contexts. They can offer us insights in how culture is conceptualised with regard to ethical values and which components might explain different attitudes.

2.2   Comparative studies: ethical behaviour /values of managers

One of the first investigations of managers and their values in various countries is the study of Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966). Their aim was to find out whether managers

in various countries would express the same opinions with regard to leadership practices, their managerial role and motivation/satisfaction[1] in their work, in short whether there is an universal managerial culture. In case it would differ they were interested in "a readily discernible pattern in managers' responses by clusters or groups of countries" (Haire et al., 1966:1). Due to the literature at their time of investigation in 1966 one hypothesis was that differences in managerial style would be mainly aligned with the level of industrialisation. Their survey of 3641 managers in 14 countries revealed that this economic explanation is only relevant for developing countries in their study (Argentina, Chile, India). All other clusters (Nordic: Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden; Latin-European: Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and Anglo-American: England and USA) "include countries with strong bonds of similarity in language and religion, and with many common elements in their cultural background. Indeed, in one case, where a country was divided into two samples, the same trend was evident. (…) Even though the two parts of Belgium tended to go together, their differences tended to split along cultural lines. North Belgium, with its Protestant history, moved in the direction of the Nordic cluster, while predominantly Catholic South Belgium was more like the other Latin countries." (Haire et al., 1966: 11f). Accordingly, Japan was not part of any of the clusters.

Across all the three areas studied, England and Germany were amazingly negatively correlated (-0.50). One interesting illustration of these differences is the following example: Compared to their German counterparts, English managers said that they are more satisfied with the autonomy they have to voice their own independent thoughts . But it has to be taken into account that this study was done before some major social changes occurred at the end of the sixties. Therefore the individual answers to certain questions are more interesting from a historical point of view. However, most important for other cross-country comparisons appears to be a shared (or similar) language as well as cultural/religious influences for the construction of managerial ideas, values and concepts. Nevertheless, it is also significant to note that economic or political circumstances can sometimes override a shared language, which was also shown later by Schluchter (1996) when he compared the assessments of the events around Tschernobyl by former East-Germans and West-Germans.

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[1] The later was based on a slight modification of Maslow's systematic classification of needs (Haire, M., Ghiselli, E. E. and Porter, L. W. (1966) *Managerial Thinking: An International Study*, John Wiley & Sons, New York.:74).

2.2.1 *Hofstede's cross-cultural study (1968, 1972)*

One of the most influential studies of employees (including managers) and their values was conducted by Geert Hofstede 1968 and 1972 within subsidiaries of one large multinational business organisation (IBM) in 72 countries. He defines culture as "…the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. (…)The "mind" stands for the head, heart, and hands – that is, for thinking, feeling, and acting, with consequences for beliefs, attitudes, and skills.(…)culture in this sense includes values; systems of values are a core element of culture." (Hofstede, 2001: 9f)

His understanding of culture is strongly influenced by Clyde Kluckhohn whom Hofstede cites on page 29 : "Every society's patterns for living must provide approved and sanctioned ways for dealing with such universal circumstances as the existence of two sexes; the helplessness of infants; the need for satisfaction of the elementary biological requirements such as food, warmth, and sex; the presence of individuals of different ages and of differing physical and other capacities." (Kluckhohn, 1962: 318). Following this framework, Hofstede developed his four (later five) dimensions of national culture differences, which he saw as common problems faced by all societies but handled differently (Hofstede 2001: 29):

- *Power distance:* How to solve the basic problem of human inequality?

- *Uncertainty avoidance:* How much stress is associated with an unknown future?

- *Individualism versus collectivism:* How do individuals see themselves in relation to primary groups?

- *Masculinity versus femininity:* How are the emotional roles divided between men and women?

It is important to notice that Hofstede differentiates between the culture as a whole and the values of an individual. "Cultures are not king-size individuals: They are wholes, and their internal logic cannot be understood in the terms used for the personality dynamics of individuals." (2001:17) Hofstede's study therefore helps to understand the aggregated behaviour of employees in one nation as opposed to another nation, for example how employees on average agree that employees are afraid of expressing disagreement with their managers (central question measuring 'power distance' (2001:53). Hofstede also indicates how certain values are related on a national level, but

his analysis does not provide answers on how a manager individually is influenced by the underlying values in his culture nor how he personally prioritises differing values.

A detailed evaluation of Hofstede's work is beyond the scope of the present study, but it has to be highlighted that the way in which Hofstede relates work goals to certain indices such as the Individualism Index Values and their quantification within the indices (Hofstede, 2001: 492ff) is questionable. For example it might be common sense to assume that a preference for personal time is a characteristic of individualism, but could we all agree on his assumption that the importance of having good physical working conditions is negatively correlated to individualism (Hofstede, 2001: 214)?

His conceptualisation of the four/five dimensions would need to be revisited and partly modified or/ and extended in order to use his constructs for the analysis of how nations deal differently with the common problem of environmental degradation. Such an attempt was made by Kim (2002) in her comparison of American and Korean consumers investigating the impact of various variables on pro-environmental behaviour. Based on Hofstede's distinction between collectivistic and individualistic cultures, she assumes that as collectivism values the needs of the society (the collective) higher than the needs of individuals, collectivistic culture will display a stronger pro-environmental behaviour as part of their focus on collectivist values. In her study she demonstrates the effects collectivism has on pro-environmental behaviour, which seems to be more or less self-evident. More significant is her analysis of the importance of Perceived Consumer Effectiveness (PCE); this concept is described and evaluated in the next section.

2.2.2   *Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars (2000)*

By contrast, Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars are clearer in their definitions and concepts (2000). They collected the responses from forty-six thousand managers from more than forty countries on six dimensions of cultural diversity (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 2000: 11). Their method and analysis is based on dilemma theory. Managers are asked to choose between two possibilities how they would act in a certain situation. However, as they realised themselves (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars, 2000: 253), this approach does not leave the respondent any room for modifications or 'grey areas'.. Recently Turner and Trompenaars changed their questionnaire offering five alternatives so that managers do not have to choose between one value or the other anymore. However, these alternatives still prescribe the choices managers can make.

The researchers selected the values considered to be important and left no room for the interviewees to introduce values nor to make their own links or to give different explanations.

2.2.3 Carroll and Gannon (1997)

A broader concept is used by Carroll and Gannon (1997) to understand the relationship of national cultural differences to managerial ethical behaviour. It is not a large scale empirical study as the ones described above; according to the authors they have used an " eclectic approach that combines several sources of data, which include surveys, actual published cases on unethical decisions by managers in many countries, and published descriptive information on the many characteristics of nations around the world that we wish to compare." (Carroll and Gannon, 1997: X).

Culture is understood as "the patterned way of thinking, feeling, and reacting that exists in a particular group, organization, profession, subgroup of a society, nation, or group of nations" (Carroll and Gannon, 1997: 4). For their analysis they have a developed a model of culture and ethical behaviours among managers (Carroll and Gannon, 1997:7), which is presented in figure 1.

Origins of Culture	National Cultures	Primary Mechanisms of Cultural Transmission	Secondary Mechanisms of Cultural Transmission
History Resources Geography	Managerial Practices Managerial values and beliefs	Parenting & Socialization Education Religion	Laws Human Resource Management Systems Organizational Culture

Modal Values and Beliefs of Managers	Modal Ethical Behavior of Managers

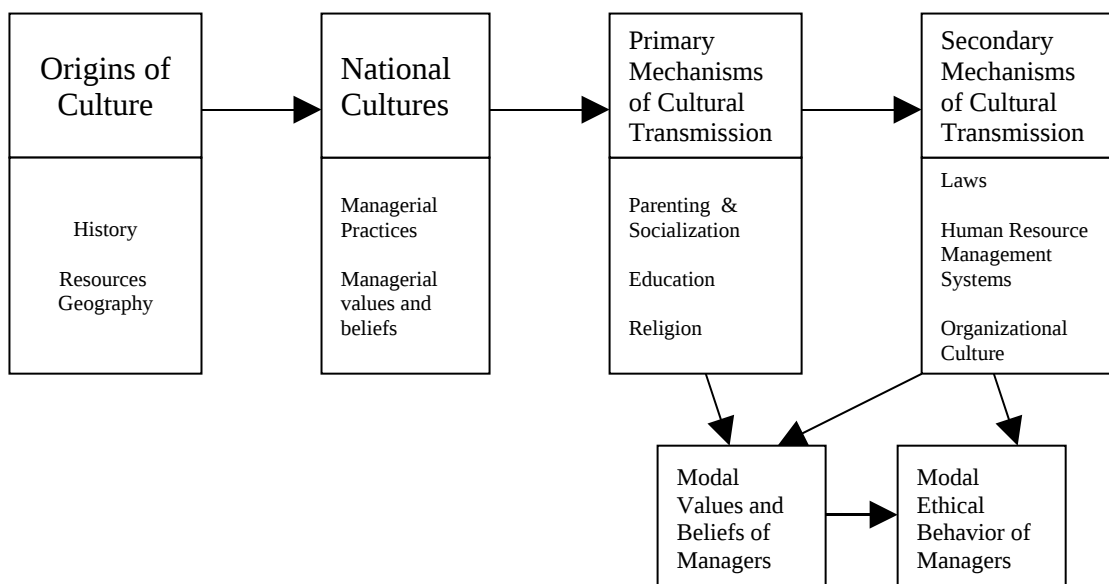Figure 1: A Model of Culture and Ethical Behaviors Among Managers (Carroll/Gannon 1997)

Important here is the difference between primary and secondary mechanisms of cultural transmission. According to Carroll and Gannon secondary influences can override the individual preference for a certain behaviour; for example "tight management control systems decrease unethical behaviors" (Carroll and Gannon, 1997:13).

In contrast to the studies described above, Carroll and Gannon do not follow a 'black-and-white-approach' in determining managers' ethical preferences. Instead they allow various shadows of grey, offer systemic relationships between different values and try to understand the origin of ethical behaviour. However, as they do not let the managers speak for themselves, their observations can be seen as highly biased. They say for example that in Germany "tutoring of 4-year-olds is quite common"(Carroll and Gannon, 1997: 11) – a practice totally unknown to myself or any of my family/friends I have asked. This made me very suspicious about how much of other countries' reports are merely a reflection of the prejudices or practices wrongly understood by two Americans…It would have been more convincing if they would have used reports of managers native to the countries investigated.

In the present study therefore (as described in more detail in the next chapter), Carroll and Gannon's idea of a more systemic approach (though strongly modified) was combined with self-reports from the managers in the two countries studied.

The cross-cultural studies about managers and their values describe more the status quo than the changes in business values. As environmental values just emerged in the business world during the last decades, it will be interesting to understand the factors that might have influenced this development. In the next section theories about moral development in general and more specifically the psychological and sociological explanations for environmental awareness and environmental friendly behaviour will be therefore explored

2.3   The rise of environmental values: Sociological and psychological explanations

Much of the existing Business Ethics literature conveys the assumption that the way managers talk about or possibly think about environmental matters will directly influence their behaviour (Velasquez 1986; McEwan 2001). However, this belief is not supported by evidence. *Psychological studies* carried out to investigate the relationship between different aspects assumed to be part of environmentalism (for example environmental knowledge and self-reported environmental behaviour), showed that general environmental knowledge has had very little effect on reported actual behaviour. This section will present psychological and sociological studies that try to explain the rise of environmental awareness and pro-environmental attitudes. In order to

understand the different concepts we need to define and differentiate the various words that describe the way humans relate to the environment such as 'environmental awareness'. As this review will include English and German literature some consideration is given to the different words used in both languages and in any translations.

Wimmer (2001) points out, that on the whole research into the psychology of environmental behaviour has taken no notice of research into Sustainable Consumption even though these studies often include empirical investigations of models and frameworks or their modifications. In the following section the attempt is made to present relevant consumer research studies alongside the appropriate psychological research tradition.

Another concern is that, although various environmental research studies suggest ways on how to foster environmentally responsible behaviour, only a few attempts have been made to link them to classical theories of moral development such as Kohlberg (1969). Applications of these models to environmental value development are analysed followed by a summary of the different constructs on how human beings/managers might acquire environmental values.

2.3.1   Environmental awareness - Definitions

In the German literature ecological research as a social science subject is divided into two main areas: environmental education research (Umweltbildungsforschung) and environmental awareness research (Umweltbewusstseinsforschung). However, the German 'Umweltbewusstsein' has no exact equivalent in English as it encapsulates more aspects then any one of its translations (awareness, concern, consciousness, behaviour). In everyday speech the word is used for a concept that describes the individual perception of environmental problems, the emotional reaction with regard to the threatened environment, cognitive aspects like environmental knowledge, attitudes towards policies, fundamental value orientation and even environmental behaviour – as in the case when a person refers to a certain behaviour to illustrate her environmental engagement (Diekmann and Preisendoerfer, 2001:100f). In the following the English term 'environmental awareness' is used in the same broad sense, so that it <u>can</u> cover environmental knowledge, concerns, attitudes, consciousness, behaviour, in short any environmental thinking, feeling and acting. This broad definition was also suggested in a glossary for a teaching module of the Open University: "Environmental awareness:

This goes beyond environmental knowledge in that a person who is environmental aware naturally integrates environmental considerations into her/his thinking and ways of acting." [2]   In the paragraph below a closer look at the different definitions and constructs that have been used show which dimensions are included.

In 1978 the German Consultative Forum on the Environment (Rat der Sachverständigen für Umweltfragen)[3] defined 'Umweltbewusstsein/ environmental awareness' as "(...) Einsicht in die Gefaehrdung der natuerlichen Lebensgrundlagen des Menschen durch diesen selbst, verbunden mit der Bereitschaft zur Abhilfe(...)" (Umweltfragen, 1978:445; translated: "(...) insight into how the natural bases of life for human existence are endangered by human beings themselves, and corresponding corrective action")

This is one of the possible definitions used in scientific discourse. Neither in the Anglo-American nor in the German research tradition a consensus has been achieved in defining environmental awareness and its components (Fuhrer and Woelfing, 1997).

2.3.2   Environmental awareness - a one or a multi-dimensional construct?

The NEP (New Environmental Paradigm)-Scale from Dunlap and Van Liere (1978) is regarded as the most frequently used scale to measure environmental awareness in the Anglo-American context (Stern et al., 1995). Environmental awareness is conceptualised as a one-dimensional construct, depending on a specific worldview. It is assumed that a paradigm shift towards the 'New Environmental Paradigm' is necessary to tackle environmental problems. To measure this shift, 12 items are chosen such as 'There are limits to growth beyond which our industrialized society cannot expand.'

Most researchers, however, agree that environmental awareness is a multi-dimensional construct. Maloney and Ward (1973) were among the first to develop such a more dimensional construct. Their Ecological Scale consisted of the following elements:

a) Knowledge Scale (Knowledge about Environmental Problems) such as 'How long does DDT take to deteriorate into harmless chemicals? (multiple choice, 5 items such as a) it never does b) 10-20 months depending on weather conditions)

b) Affect Scale (Emotional reaction to environmental problems) for example 'I get depressed on smoggy days.' to be answered with 'Yes' or 'No'

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[2] http://www5.open.ac.uk/t205demo/public/block3/glossary/block3glossary.cfm (2.09.2004)
[3] The Consultative Forum on the Environment is a consulting committee of the Federal Government with the mandate to represent and examine the environmental situation and environmental policy in the Federal Republic of Germany and to point out environmental trends.

c) Verbal Commitment Scale like 'I would be willing to stop buying products from companies guilty of polluting the environment….'

d) Actual Commitment Scale such as. 'I have contacted a community agency to find out what I can do about pollution.'

The scale was tested with three societal groups, among them one especially active group in respect of environmental issues (Members of the Sierra Club). The latter achieved significantly higher results in all four areas than the other two. Other researchers used the Ecology Scale as a measurement instrument and came to similar results (Synodinos, 1990, Dispoto, 1977). More studies of this nature, with different components followed (Kley and Fietkau, 1979, Schahn and Holzer, 1990); the researchers were interested not only in defining the aspects assumed to be part of environmentalism such as environmental knowledge and self-reported environmental behaviour, but also in the correlation between these aspects. To summarise, these early studies on environmental awareness demonstrate that environmental knowledge has little or no impact on the reported actual behaviour (De Haan, 1998, Hellbrueck and Fischer, 1999, Degenhardt, 2002). The authors take this as their point of departure and explain why they have chosen to investigate another supposedly influential factor for environmental behaviour.

2.3.3 Environmental knowledge

However, as Bodenstein et al (1997) rightly criticises, environmental knowledge can be differently conceptualised and operationalised. As in the example of the Ecological Scale, given above, most researchers test lexical knowledge of topics such as which animals are threatened by extinction or which pesticides are harmful. According to Bodenstein et al such knowledge rather indicates the interviewees' educational background, particularly in science subjects, and their newspaper reading habits than the knowledge relevant for environmental behaviour. They claim that what really matters for the actual environmental behaviour is the concrete knowledge of alternative behaviour. As their study focuses on the relationship between environmental behaviour and consumer decisions, they assume that consumers need to have an ecologically sensitive market appreciation as their action orienting knowledge. In other words, only customers with knowledge about ecologically oriented brands and companies are expected to show environmental behaviour for example by buying ecological products. The statistical evaluation of their interviews with German consumers seems to support this interpretation: 80% were able to answer questions related to lexical environmental

knowledge, but only 30% could name at least one ecological brand or company even though 71% claimed that they care a lot about the environmental friendliness of products (Bodenstein et al., 1997: 45).

Another study illustrates also nicely how important a specific knowledge about the appropriate action alternatives seems to be for environmental behaviour: Kempton (1996) analyses the environmental perception of five different American sub-groups. In their responses the interviewees link global warming to ozone depletion, therefore they claim that energy efficiency and reduced energy consumption have no impact on the greenhouse effect. According to their understanding it is pollution control or reduction of CFC that would help to solve problems. For this reason, they support policies in this area, but are against anything related to energy tax or similar measures. This study also suggests that action oriented knowledge depends on a specific knowledge about the causes of a particular environmental problem.

Independently, O'Connor et al (1999) made a similar observation in their study of risk perception and climate change behaviour in the United States: "…knowledge about the causes of the global warming is a powerful predictor of behavioral intentions, independent from believing that climate change will happen and have bad consequences." (O`Connor et al., 1999: 469)

In their meta-analysis of research on environmental behaviour Hines et al (1986/87) also highlighted that a prerequisite to action is that individuals are aware that a certain problem exists; and "an individual must also possess knowledge of those courses of action which are available and which will be most effective in a given situation"(Hines et al., 1986/87: 6). Besides these cognitive skills Hines et al point out that individuals need to develop action skills in order to apply knowledge of action strategies to a given issue appropriately.

In conclusion, these studies demonstrate that environmental knowledge needs to be conceptualised in at least three different sub-categories: the lexical environmental knowledge, a specific cause-related knowledge and the knowledge of ecological action strategies.

Further research is needed to analyse whether good knowledge about action strategies has indeed an impact on environmental behaviour. However, this also raises the

question, <u>why</u> people do not acquire action related environmental knowledge. Different explanations are possible and offer scope for future research:

- The role of the educational system and the media in providing (or not, as the case may be) action related knowledge

- The marketing strategies of ecological oriented companies and why they are not successful

- The impact of environmental action related knowledge on environmental awareness and vice versa

Furthermore, it has to be noted that people tend to present different levels of knowledge (lexical, specific as well as action oriented) with regard to various environmental problems. Some studies even suggest that there is no <u>general</u> environmental awareness (Bodenstein et al., 1997, Diekmann and Preisendoerfer, 2001). People report different kinds of knowledge, attitudes and behaviour when asked about specific environmental problems with different connotations such as littering or transport.

2.3.4   *Low-Cost-Hypotheses*

According to the Low-Cost –Hypotheses, which constitutes an application of Rational-Choice-Theory to environmental behaviour by Diekmann and Preisendoerfer (1992), environmental awareness has a higher impact on environmental behaviour in so called low-cost-situations such as littering, so that people tend to behave environmentally conscious when the costs to them (material and immaterial such as time) are low. In an empirical test of their hypothesis (1998) interviewees were more engaged in recycling (classified as a low-cost behaviour) than in changing their means of transport (classified as a high-cost behaviour). They therefore suggest that people will express their environmental awareness as environmental behaviour when the 'costs' to them are reduced, for example if public transport is more readily available. However, their hypothesis fails to explain why some people engage in 'high-cost-behaviour'.

Another concern is that most studies conceptualise behaviour as self-reported behaviour and in addition offer prescriptive answers so that the interviewees are guided in their responses. More research needs to be undertaken to observe the actual environmental behaviour. In his very innovative study, Kesselmann (1997) interviewed 331 customers directly after their shopping about their views**.** At the beginning of the interview, they

could choose between different products as a reward for their participation. He then asked them to evaluate these different products for their environmental compatibility. As each product range included one with a better ecological performance, he offered them to exchange their gifts if they had chosen products harmful to the environment. Only 10 % accepted his offer. In his analysis, he determines as essential the interviewee's ability to understand the information given as relevant to their environmental behaviour. This ability appears to be linked to the interviewee's educational background and general environmental knowledge as well as to motivational aspects such as openness to new insights and to reflection.

2.3.5   Behavioural Interventions to Preserve the Environment

The research into 'Behavioural Interventions to Preserve the Environment' focuses also on actual behaviour. This approach is well established in the Anglo-American research tradition and was introduced to quickly investigate how people change their environmental behaviour (Dwyer et al., 1993). Traditional psychological research into the reasons why people develop a certain environmental behaviour had taken too long and the results were very diverse. By using this approach, research conclusions can be drawn about triggers of behavioural changes. Among these are financial incentives (higher prices for petrol, savings with regard to energy efficient technology), behavioural incentives such as giving easier access to recycling facilities, and the stimulation of social norms such as self-commitment. These studies offer useful insights for policy makers, campaigners and marketers into how people could be encouraged to adopt environment friendly behaviour. However, as these studies belong into the psychological tradition of behaviourism, their idea of the human being and research epistemology differs from the one chosen in the present study; furthermore they offer no explanation why people react so differently to the same incentives.

2.3.6   The Fietkau and Kessel-Model (1981)

So far we have critically analysed the concepts of environmental knowledge and environmental behaviour. Another construct frequently used to predict environmental behaviour is the attitude-concept of Rosenberg and Hovland (1960). Attitudes are defined as opinion related behavioural intentions that include cognitive, affective and behavioural components. But again, empirical studies testing the relationship between certain attitudes and environmental behaviour can often contradict each other(Hellbrueck and Fischer, 1999), which seems to question the assumption that

human behaviour can be determined by one single attitude. Other attitude-models included more variables, for instance the 'Theory of reasoned action' by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). In 1981 Fietkau and Kessel applied and modified the Fishbein/Ajzen-Model to describe the influential factors on environmental behaviour; their model is presented in the following figure 2 (in translation).
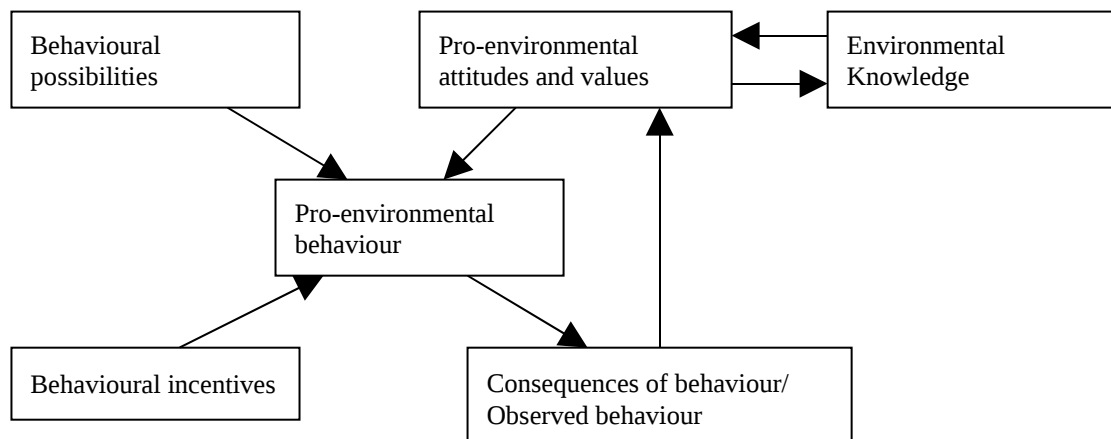
Figure 2: Model of influential factors on environmental behaviour (Fietkau and Kessel 1981)

According to this model environmental knowledge only has an impact on environmental behaviour if it is accompanied by pro-environmental values and attitudes. They originate from environmental knowledge, but also influence the selection of relevant information. Fietkau and Kessel criticise that environmental initiatives in the past had their focus on disseminating knowledge and changing attitudes and values. Based on their research they claim that environmental behaviour of citizens is even more influenced by the following factors:

- Behavioural possibilities: Individuals are motivated to recycle when they actually find recycling facilities in their vicinity. Other examples are bicycle networks, car-sharing facilities, and good public transport.

- Behavioural incentives: Material and non-material rewards such as the same money for each distance disregarding whether the journey was undertaken by car or by bicycle.

- Consequences of behaviour: Fietkau and Kessel promote visible displays to show the impact environmentally friendly or unfriendly behaviour has on the environment such as indicator units for emissions.

Furthermore, they refer to the insights of social psychology that attitudes are more easily influenced by changes in behaviour than vice versa even if these changes are only in the first place motivated by incentives. More research needs to be undertaken according to the authors to understand the impact behavioural incentives and possibilities could have on attitudes and values.

2.3.7 Locus of Control

Other models used to explain altruistic behaviour were applied to environmental issues. The following study serves as an illustration for this approach. Kim (2002) investigated in an empirical cross-cultural study the relationship between values, beliefs, attitudes and their impact on pro-environmental behaviour. She compares American and Korean students and how their personal values are influenced by the dominant culture using Hofstede's distinction between collectivistic and individualistic cultures as described in the last section. In addition she develops her own model combining Schwartz's 'Theory of Altruism', Stern et al's 'Social Psychological Model', the 'Value-Attitude-Behaviour-Model' of McCarty and Shrum and the 'Theory of Universal Content and Structure of Human Values' by Schwartz and Bilsky. She defines pro-environmental behaviour as a form of altruism, as pro-social behaviour. Besides demonstrating the importance of personal pro-social values on environmental awareness, she highlights the concept of PCE (Perceived Consumer Effectiveness) as a belief in the effectiveness of a certain behaviour/shopping decision for problem solving to be possibly a more important constituent in the actual behaviour than any articulated concern for the environment. If someone has the belief that his/her action will not count towards meeting the environmental problem that she/he is concerned about then he/she might not adopt pro-environmental behaviour despite a definite concern.

This is in line with the concept of 'locus of control', which Peyton and Miller (1980) applied to environmental behaviour. "Locus of control represents an individual's perception of whether or not he or she has the ability to bring about change through his or her own behaviour."(Hines et al., 1986/87:4) If people have an external locus of control they attribute changes to fate or to the influence of external others such as God or politicians. If people believe in their own ability to influence a course of action, they have an internal locus of control. The latter are more likely to claim that they engage in pro-environmental activities (Hines et al., 1986/87, Peyton and Miller, 1980).

2.3.8 Ascription of Responsibility

Recent studies suggest that perceived 'ascription of responsibility' (Guagnano/ Stern/ Dietz 1995) and the individual 'risk assessment' (McDaniels et al., 1997, O`Connor et al., 1999) have a higher influence on attitudes towards the environment. Both constructs seem to be the best predictors for self-reported environmental behaviour.

In their study about curbside recycling Guagnano et al (1995) investigated the impact of three attitudinal factors (Awareness of Personal Costs, Awareness of Recycling Consequences and Ascription of Recycling Responsibility) and two external conditions (the provision of a recycling bin for each household or recycling facilities in the community) on environmental behaviour. Only one attitude, the ascription of recycling responsibility, had a direct, significant effect on recycling behaviour. This attitude was conceptualised following Schwartz's norm activation theory "that for an individual to act altruistically, she or he must be aware of negative consequences for others (…) of a state of affairs and ascribe responsibility (…) to individuals like herself or himself who, by their action or inaction, can create or prevent such states." (Guagnano et al. 1995:707). However, it has to be noted that in this study most households started to recycle when provided with a bin, thus the external factor overrides in this case the attitudinal factors. Moreover individuals even change their attitudes in response to the external factor; the respondents had a higher awareness of consequences though their ascription of responsibility stayed the same. As recycling can be classed, as described above, as a low-cost behaviour, it would be interesting to research the importance of ascription of responsibility in more complex situations such as transport; here the improvement of external factors like the provision of public transport seems to have not such a big impact on the behaviour of individuals. In this case, the ascription of responsibility might be the most important factor, whether an individual chooses the more environmental friendly option or not.

2.3.9 Risk assessment

Studies of risk perception have been concurrent with, but generally independent from environmental awareness research. According to O'Connor et al (1999:462) risk perception is reflected in the following three elements:

1. Expectations that the problem will be or is happening

2. Expectations that negative consequences are likely for oneself and others

3. Knowledge of the causes of the problem

With regard to these elements O'Connor et al. reported as one of their key findings in their study about risk perception and climate change "that the specific risk perception variables retain their predictive power [on behavioural intentions] even after the environmental belief measures enter the equation" (O`Connor et al., 1999: 467). Based on their risk assessment and especially their understanding of the likely causes the respondents expressed their intention to act against global warming independently of their belief whether climate change will actually happen. Other empirical studies (Baldassare and Katz, 1992, Weber, 1997) came to the conclusion that risk perceptions are linked to self-reported and observed environmental behaviour. Residents for example who regard air and water pollution as a serious threat are more likely to report that they drive less, that they recycle and that they embark on other environmentally friendly behavior.

Including other variables in their conceptualisation of risk assessment than O'Connor, McDaniels et al (1997) highlighted the importance of controllability in their study about perception of ecological risks to water environments. The lay and expert samples in their study both rated ecological problems, which were seen as more controllable such as clear-cut logging, as more in need of regulation. Interestingly, climate change was perceived as the risk with the highest ecological impact but it was rated as less controllable and therefore less in need of regulation. McDaniels et al. therefore concluded that "Recognizing the salience of perceptions of controllability can aid risk managers in communicating effectively with the public about tactics to minimize a risk, and in implementing risk management programs that require community participation." (McDaniels et al., 1997:351). A detailed analysis of other factors, which individuals use to evaluate risks, can be found by Renn (1995). For the present study it is important to note that according to Renn most people evaluate risks using simultaneously various mental tools, which are shaped through cultural and social learning. Only on few occasions individuals are exposed directly to risks and learn in this direct contact to assess them; in most cases risks and their magnitude are socially communicated through media, institutions, parents, and other social groups. Renn suggests to combine the two school of thoughts that have evolved to understand risks: Science with its focus on calculating probabilities can help to assess the magnitude of a risk associated with a certain technology, but as the importance and acceptability of a risk is socially

constructed, a societal discourse needs to follow including all relevant stakeholders to agree on a course of action.

2.3.10 Individual social representation

While most of the theories introduced so far have focused on the individual, Fuhrer et al (1995 and 1997) criticise that the environmental awareness research has neglected social systems in favour of individualistic preconceptions. They argue that individuals are very much influenced by being members of various micro- and macro-systems such as associations, nations, and language groups. This is even more evident with regard to the environmental discourse as many environmental problems such as global warming are invisible and therefore most individuals form their own opinion by following the environmental discourse as framed in their own society, in the media and in their peer groups. This process is termed by the authors as 'individual social representation' (Fuhrer and Woelfing, 1997: 53) highlighting in difference to Moscovici's 'Social representation' (1984) the input each individual has on integrating or modifying the social discourse according to existing preferences, values and opinions.

In their study with over 1000 car drivers in Switzerland they used this concept to investigate how individual environmental concern is framed by social presentation. They therefore choose interviewees that differed in their belonging to one of the three language groups and in being members of either a transport association with a strong affinity to public transport (Verkehrsclub der Schweiz) or a car association in favour of individual transport (Automobilclub der Schweiz). Not surprisingly, the "membership in a transportation association with a particular orientation toward environmental problems associated with transportation appears to have a more pronounced impact on environmental concern than residence in a region with a distinctive language or culture."(Fuhrer, 1995:72). However, one could argue against Fuhrer (1995) that individuals with a certain environmental concern choose to belong to an association, which represents their own opinion, so that this association might be less an opinion former than an opinion expresser. The differences among the three language groups were not very pronounced, even so the components of environmental concern (knowledge, values, intentions) are slightly stronger developed in the German speaking part than in the Italian speaking part and least developed in the French speaking part of Switzerland. The authors conclude that in a small country like Switzerland the common national discourse and partly shared media offer a common interpretive frame that

overrides differences in languages. However, face-to-face communication appears to have a higher influence on environmental values and intentions (but not knowledge) than the media, so that social groups in the immediate surrounding of an individual can be quite influential. This finding is even more supported by another observation of the study that knowledge itself will become part of the individual social presentation only if communicated alongside appropriate values and concrete intentions such as practical suggestions on how to improve the environment. They also argue that individuals express a higher sense of responsibility if they feel under threat, which then leads to stronger intentions. The authors therefore suggest taking these aspects (face-to-face, knowledge highlighting the risks and presented with values and intentions) into account when developing a strategy to raise environmental awareness.

2.3.11 Lifestyle research

The connection between the individual and societal groups is also highlighted in the Lebensstilforschung (lifestyle research), emerged in the last twenty years as one of the main research traditions within the German environmental awareness research (Reusswig, 1994, Luedtke, 1999, De Haan, 1998). Environmental behaviour is seen as part of a lifestyle, which helps to establish an identity in relation to and in distinction from other members of society. Instead of a class-distinction the population is divided into about six to twelve lifestyle-clusters based on various 'active' variables (Luedtke, 1999). These variables often include social factors, life goals and aspirations, values, and aesthetical-expressive behaviour like clothes, buying behaviour and leisure activities (Degenhardt, 2002).

The following study by Degenhardt (2002) is an interesting example of this approach. Degenhardt conducted narrative and guided interviews with so called "Lebensstilpioniere" (lifestyle-pioneers). Others selected his 22 interviewees on criteria of displaying a sustainable lifestyle. There was one group of entrepreneurs who had incorporated sustainable activities into the management of their companies, although Degenhardt does not distinguish in his analysis between them and two more groups (people living in alternative communities, personalities with a special social and/or ecological reputation). His main research interest was the question why his interviewees had chosen a sustainable lifestyle.

All his interviewees had stated as their main motivation an emotional concern not only for their own welfare but even more so for the welfare of other non-human and human

beings. Degenhardt suggests therefore that empathy and the ability to express these emotions and reflect on them in the light of environmental knowledge are the main contributors to an actual sustainable behaviour.

Degenhardt identified the following key competences as typical for a sustainable lifestyle:

1. The interviewees claim that they have consciously chosen to pursue certain values like solidarity in their daily actions. Degenhardt understands this as an example for 'wertrationales Handeln' (value oriented rational behaviour) in the tradition of Max Weber (Degenhardt, 2002:36).

2. They want to be authentic in their actions in following their own personal values and convictions.

3. With regard to the big environmental problems in the world, the interviewees stress their own responsibility. While being aware that their actions have little impact, they nevertheless cherish the hope that others will follow their example.

4. All interviewees show a very good understanding of general environmental knowledge, and even more so of concrete action alternatives and their implementation.

5. In line with the empathy regarded as their main motivation the interviewees also display a holistic understanding of the world using cognitive, emotional and intuitive dimensions.

6. All interviewees understand themselves as part of an ecological, social and economical worldwide system, in which each of their actions has an impact. Their competence in system thinking allows them to understand the interdependences and to pursue a sustainable behaviour.

7. These lifestyle pioneers are constantly evaluating their own actions. On the one hand they seek to reduce complexity by developing certain routines, on the other hand they are reflecting on the consequences of their behaviour in order to improve it. Here they especially seek out like-minded people for an exchange of ideas and information.

8. Finally a common statement was that their knowledge is limited. The constant search for more knowledge and creative solutions is seen as a source of fulfilment. But with regard to the limits of human knowledge, they also want

people to refrain from certain technologies like GM food until humankind has a better understanding of the consequences.

In addition, Degenhardt asked his interviewees which biographical experiences they considered important for the development of their sustainable lifestyle. One group explained their current lifestyle with the positive nature experiences they had in their childhood and with the influence their parents or other close adults had as positive role models. The other two groups referred to a negative experience such as seeing factory farming either in their childhood or as adults. The associated emotions were reflected upon, morally assessed and integrated into a new lifestyle.

2.3.12 Ecological identity work

Thomashow (1995) makes similar observations as Degenhardt in   his   ecological identity work with environmentalists. Environmentalists in his classes also have "fond memories of a special childhood place, formed through their connections to the earth via some kind of emotional experience, the basis of their bonding with the land or the neighbourhood. (…) And what stands out is the quality of the landscape – full descriptions, vividly portrayed, embedded in their memories." (Thomashow, 1995: 9). He refers to different studies, which suggest that children in the age between 7 to 11 explore their immediate surroundings, and form a special map of the characteristics, a little river, which seems to be huge in memory, animals, and plants. This world is normally explored on foot and tends to be small but with significant meaning. During this time children "establish their connections to the earth, forming an earth matrix, a terrain symbiosis, which is crucial to their personal identity." (Thomashow, 1995:10) The majority of his students though have experienced the irrevocable change of these childhood places, destroyed and/or polluted, which fuels their environmental concerns.

Similar to Degenhardt, Thomashow also stresses the importance of taking responsibility as part of an ecological identity and the ability to reflect on and admit to wrongdoing. With regard to environmental problems people often blame the externalised others (such as the government, 'the system' or inherent necessities) and/or feel out of control to make any changes. Thomashow tries to understand the source of conflict and tension hidden by the blaming. Often people experience a strong feeling of guilt when they start to think about the reason of environmental problems realising how their lifestyle and decisions contribute to the problems. Overwhelmed by these feelings and the magnitude of the problems they might start (again) to blame others neglecting or minimising their

own contributions. People can stay in this loop constantly, shifting from blame to guilt to denial and back to blame.

According to Thomashow assuming responsibility is a positive action to construct the world, as we would like it to be. Furthermore, he highlights that "intrinsic to an ecological worldview is the ability to see an ecosystem as a part of oneself. This knowledge is gained both through an understanding of scientific ecology and the ability to observe and internalise the interconnections and interdependences of all living things"(Thomashow, 1995:12f).

2.3.13 Interconnectedness

This view is shared by the already mentioned German Consultative Forum on the Environment (Rat der Sachverstaendigen fuer Umweltfragen). In 1994 they coined the term 'Retinitaet' derived from the Latin word 'rete' (net) as key principle for environmental ethics: In order to fulfil their personal dignity as rational beings in relationship to themselves and others, humans have to make the consequences anticipated as part of the interconnections and the interdependences between the cultural (human created) and the natural world the underlying principle of their ethical behaviour. The understanding of interconnectedness (oneself as part of larger ecosystem) is therefore a key qualification to be obtained through environmental education (Michelsen, 1999). Also Randle (1991) bases his teaching concept on the insight that human beings who see themselves as part of a bigger system are more willing to take responsibility.

In her study of MBA students at Harvard Business School, Park (1993) also suggests that it is important to teach students the concept of interconnectedness. During interviews the students expressed a strong sense of interpersonal accountability such as having to be trustworthy, yet they only showed a limited awareness of systemic harm and injustice and of the effect of their own actions on the world. "The absence of connections, particularly between different societal domains, was evident in the response of students who, for example, thought it very important to pay greater attention to the natural environment but believed that business could offer little or no leadership in doing so. Similarly it was easy for most students to assume a privileged material lifestyle for themselves while expressing concern for the conditions of the growing underclass – never suggesting any relationship between the two."(Parks, 1993: 34)

2.3.14 Studies following the social constructionist methodology

In recent years more studies have been published that follow social constructionist thinking (Bolscho and De Haan, 2000, Bolscho and Michelsen, 2002). Homburg and Matthies (2001) summarizes some of these describing the main methods used (semi-structured interviews, Repertory-Grid-Technique and 'Strukturlegetechniken'- cognitive mapping of environmental problems such as acid rain) and highlighting some of the findings: Environmental problems are presented in various and heterogeneous ways. The interviewees often refer to the scientific discourse, though sometimes their application differs from that of the scientific community. The main emotions expressed are fear and helplessness. "In den Studien wird deutlich, dass Umweltschutzinterventionen (…) sich damit auseinandersetzen muessen, dass sie (auch) auf eher ohnmaechtige und pessimistische Menschen treffen, die nicht einfach zu motivieren sein duerften." („The studies show clearly that interventions to protect the environment (…) will have to come to terms with the fact that they will meet rather powerless and pessimistic people who are unlikely to be motivated easily." (Homburg and Matthies, 2001: 76) But Homburg and Matthies also question why people develop such pessimistic attitudes. In search for an answer they turn to studies about the micro-social conditions of environmental awareness. Only a few studies were undertaken. They suggest broadly that environmental awareness is learned through the socialisation process in family, at school and at work. An important factor seems to be that people have learned to assume responsibility for their own actions and that they also got the opportunity during their socialisation process to behave responsibly.The authors also suggest that conveying positive future scenarios that incorporate environmental change will reduce anxiety and pessimism in one's outlook.

2.3.15 Environmental education

As most empirical studies include socio-demographic variables, most researchers noted the significance of school education, but so far no one developed hypotheses or theories as to why school education is so important for environmental awareness and which precise part of the education is significant. Here Homburg and Matthies point to a clear theoretical gap (Homburg and Matthies, 2001: 60).

In environmental education it was always assumed that environmental awareness can be learned, but educators disagreed about methods and content (Bolscho and Michelsen, 1999, De Haan, 1998). Until recently, environmental education research took little

notice of environmental awareness research. De Haan and Kuckartz (1998) criticise the lack of empirical knowledge and insufficient testing in environmental education research. Teaching concepts are rarely questioned according to whether they achieve the aim they were set out to achieve: The rise of environmental awareness.

The work of Spada and Opwis (1985) is one of the positive exceptions. They developed an ecological dilemma game called the 'Fischereikonfliktspiel' (Fisheries conflict game) as an education tool and intensively researched the learning process throughout the game. Mosler (1993) transferred it into a computer-simulation-game and studied the environmental behaviour of participants under these conditions. A similar game– 'Fish Banks, Ltd.'-was developed by Meadows (2001) at the University of New Hampshire. These games are based on the basic theory of fisheries exploitation, game theory and on the renowned article 'The Tragedy of the Commons' by Hardin (1968). Hardin illustrates how the behaviour of herdsmen sharing a pasture as 'the commons' is prototypical for human ecological behaviour. As they seek to maximise their personal gain, the commons will unalterable fail be it in sharing of land, air or fish stocks. Homburg and Matthies (2001) counter that the commons were used over centuries and are still used in some parts of the Alps so far successfully. Therefore they questioning Hardins' assumption that one of the basic human dispositions is the orientation towards short-term and individual gains. Instead they suggest that whether humans will behave cooperatively or not in real life ecological dilemma situations depends on cultural traditions and the social embedding (Homburg and Matthies, 2001:155).

2.3.16 Culture-specific construction of environmental risks

Comparing the environmental risk perception of Germans and the French, Graumann and Kruse (1990) also highlighted the culture-specific construction of environmental behaviour and risks. While the French were especially concerned with poisoned food, for example in cheese, Germans rated nuclear risks very high, a topic with little importance in the French public opinion. For Graumann and Kruse the most interesting comparison was the perception of forest degradation: "To take the most conspicuous example, although the *Waldsterben* (dying forests) has, for several years, been the leitmotiv of environmental concern in Germany, there is no equivalent (or even a translation) in France. If *le Waldsterben* is discussed at all there, it is presented as an odd quirk of the German psyche, which entertains irrational and romantic bonds with the German forest."(Graumann and Kruse, 1990: 217f)

Graumann and Kruse's observations suggest that each nation will express the highest environmental concern when their most valued cultural objects are in danger, in this case the food for French, the forest for Germans. However, it also has to be added that a nations cultural characteristic will be often linked to the natural environment. In Germany, even today forests cover about one third of the country.[4] Many Germans live close to a forest and it is therefore not too surprising that the forest features so high in songs, poems and in leisure activities. Although France has some forests, most French are far way from the next forest; other landscapes and their characteristic plants such as the lavender fields in the Provence form here part of the national culture.

Yearley (1996) stresses a similar point when he argues that sociology has focused too much on the social characteristics to describe a nation's identity. Especially with regard to environmental problems sociology should pay more attention to the geographic conditions of a country. 'In particular, if one is interested in the sociology of international environmental problems one cannot overlook the differential consequences which, in part, follow from a society having a high or low rainfall, having alkaline or acidic soils, or being a region of high or low biological diversity. Accordingly, sociology's view of society as made up of a series of nations needs to be complemented with an explicitly geographical view of what countries' characteristics are.' (Yearley, 1996: 13).

2.3.17 The Reflection Hypothesis

These characteristics are taken into account in one of the most popular sociological theories to explain the rise of environmental awareness, the Reflection Hypothesis (Hannigan, 1995: 23) Here the rise of environmental awareness is understood as a direct reaction to the observed increasing deterioration of the environment in the industrialised world. But Homburg and Matthies (1998) highlight although air pollution was much more visible in the first half of the 20th century than in the second, this did not lead to the emergence of an environmental movement. Hannigan (1995) also stresses the point that most environmental problems such as ozone depletion tend to be invisible to the naked eye. Especially in these cases the perception that we have a crisis is shaped more by the descriptions of scientific experts, environmentalists and the media than by observation of local circumstances. On the other hand, there are certain countries that

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[4] 10,740.00 ha forest compared to 35,702.00 ha
(http://www.fao.org/forestry/foris/webview/forestry2/index.jsp?
siteId=5621&sitetreeId=22027&langId=1&geoId=0)

are more exposed to environmental problems such as Bangladesh to flooding or Middle America to hurricanes. However, individuals will already disagree about the question whether these 'natural' catastrophes are on the increase or not and even more so about the question whether they are caused by global warming or due to normal fluctuations. It would be interesting to study how and if individuals change their opinion when faced with a major natural disaster such as a hurricane. It might be that individuals become more environmentally aware when exposed to these problems in their immediate vicinity and as a result more open to consider other 'invisible' environmental problems.

2.3.18 The Post-Materialism Thesis

Another sociological explanation, the Post-Materialism Thesis, is based on Inglehart's theory of a value shift in advanced industrialised societies (1977). Utilizing Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' (1954) Inglehart suggest that the so called 'baby boom' generation, raised after the Second World war, started to strive to fulfil their non-material needs such as women's liberation or the pursuit of personal growth once their material needs were satisfied. The British sociologists Stephen Cotgrove (1982) linked Inglehart's thesis to environmentalism but also challenged it. By investigating four different societal groups he discovered that environmental concerns are expressed along with other post-material values like progress towards a less impersonal, more human society. However, material fulfilment does not necessarily lead to the development of post-material values; quite the opposite: a reasonable assumption was that the interviewed industrialists earned better salaries than the environmentalists who worked predominantly in the non-market sector, hence the material needs of the industrialist should have been even better fulfilled but they still prioritised material values. Cotgrove observes that "to the environmentalists, commitment to economic growth is seen as the imperative which generates the negative aspects of industrialization. The rejection of the hegemony of economic values and economic individualism has an ideological significance which goes far beyond the satisfaction of material and security needs in an affluent society, and the search for personal fulfilment and self-actualization. It is this political dimension of value change which is important and which cannot be reduced to need satisfaction and deprivation. The commitment of environmentalists to post-material values is part of a more general ideology which legitimates and justifies a quite different social ideal."(Cotgrove, 1982:52)

However the problem of this study and other studies (Ester et al., 1996) which seek to establish a relationship between a post-material worldview and a higher environmental concern, lies in the conceptualisation of post-material values. Cotgrove for example chose two statements (out of four) that classified people's direct say in governmental and work related issues as his main indicators for post-material values (1982:130); Ester et al (1996) on the other hand assumed that a Christian worldview is part of an industrial worldview and were surprised to find out that a large proportion of core church members claimed to support the new ecological paradigm.

2.3.19 The Gallup-Study

The Post- Materialism Thesis was also questioned by the outcomes of an international survey conducted by the George H. Gallup International Institute with twenty-four economically and geographically diverse nations in 1992 (Dunlap and Mertig, 1996). It was expected that poorer nation would express less concern about environmental degradation than their wealthier counterparts. But on the contrary, "residents of the poorer nations are significantly more likely to see their local community as suffering from various forms of environmental degradation, just as they were more likely to rate the quality of their community environment as lower"(Dunlap and Mertig, 1996:150) It might indicate that these communities are actually more exposed to environmental problems in their immediate surroundings as environmental legislation tends to be less strict in less developed countries. This could also explain why poorer nations give higher scores for the support of environmental protection measures in order to minimise environmental impact. However, Kuckartz (1997) is questioning the assumption that 'real problems' cause a higher environmental awareness. He suggests further research to assess whether the media with its focus on environmental problems in developing countries, such as the destruction of rainforests, shape the perceptions of people worldwide including the citizens of the affected nations. According to Kuckartz, the tendency in all nations (besides Russia) to rate global environmental problems as more serious than national and local problems also reflects the influence of the media and of television in particular in communicating these threats.

Furthermore, the Gallup-Study challenged also another assumption of the post-materialism thesis that poorer nations would prioritise economic growth over environmental protection. Although poorer nations did not give as much priority to environmental protection in absolute terms as wealthier nations, they all gave higher

priority to environmental protection than to economic growth (Nigeria being the only exception). Besides, in three nations (Nigeria, Philippines and surprisingly Japan) the citizens are generally even willing to pay higher prices for environmental protection. Again the only difference was that wealthier nations are willing to pay more for environmental protection, which is not surprising given that they can afford more. Overall Dunlap and Mertig (1996) suggest that environmental protection is perceived as a basic need and not as a post-materialist quality-of-life issue.

Beck (1992) expresses a similar view when he states that "poverty is hierarchic, smog is democratic" (Beck, 1992:36). Although one could argue that some environmental problems seem to be hierarchic, so that poorer nations/citizens are exposed to more hazards while others such as global warming seem to be truly democratic. Yearley (1996) contradicts the latter when he highlights the importance of national wealth for the assessment of environmental problems and risks. The global warming for example is a higher threat to Bangladesh than to the Netherlands although they are both more exposed to the rise of the oceans than other nations. Industrialised nations like the Netherlands might have the technical expertise and the money to prevent the consequences of environmental pollution; the developing countries are more likely to be exposed to catastrophes.

Specifically criticising the Gallup-Study, Rukavishnikov (1996) highlights the limitations of contemporary methodological approaches in comparative studies. Despite the difficulties of finding appropriate translations that convey the same meaning, respondents in different countries tend to react differently to the same question depending on their cultural background. Furthermore, people's opinions might reflect the discourse of the media in their country or what they consider an appropriate socially acceptable answer. This point was also stressed by other authors such as Bodenstein (1997). However, the main point for Rukavishnikov is "that environmental views and behaviour have been shaped and guided largely by the wider cultural context which embraced the overall value system of a given society. To find out *why* people have different environmental attitudes, *why* people behave in different ways and *what* prompts their views, scholars have to explore the link between social psychology, culture, laws and the stage of economic development of a given society." (Rukavishnikov, 1996:221)

2.3.20 The construction of environmental problems, risks and knowledge

A similar route as the one suggested by Rukavishnov (1996) was taken up by Hannigan (1995) in his book 'Environmental Sociology. A Social Constructionist Perspective.' He demonstrated how environmental problems are defined within social, political and cultural processes. Contemplating his own experiences as a child in Windsor, Ontario, he recognises that environmental conditions have an objective reality but that they are only recognized as a problem when social actors define them as "being unacceptably risky and therefore actionable" (1995:30). Applying this social constructionist perspective Hannigan identifies three characteristic tasks in the construction of environmental problems: Assembling, presenting and contesting environmental claims (1995:42). For each of the tasks different social actors take the lead role. While scientists are often the ones identifying and assembling environmental claims, the media usually legitimates the claims and commands attention by invoking for example convincing visual images such as the 'ozone hole' (which 'sells' better than the thinning of the ozone layer as described by scientists). However, the presentation of environmental claims does not necessarily lead to environmental action; here again other social actors get involved such as political decision-makers, so that even a well-presented claim might not result in immediate action or any action at all, for example " opponents within government bureaucracies may use a number of tactics – postponing discussion, referring an item back for further research or amendment – which ensure that a problem will not immediately be acted upon." (1995:49).

Hannigan analyses these discourses in detail in science, media and politics; furthermore he highlights the impact of cultural factors on these discourses. He compares, for example, how different countries contested or embraced the issue of acid rain and concludes: "Whereas acid rain plodded along as a political-environmental issue in the UK and America for the better part of a decade, in Germany it went from the discovery stage to that of decisive government action in less than three years." (1995:144) According to his analysis the later was triggered by a highly influential media campaign, the growing influence of the Green Party and spectacular actions by a new environmental action group called 'Robin Wood'. However, Hannigan's investigation of cultural influences on the making of environmental claims could have been broadened; more research is needed to understand how and why nations differ in their approach to various environmental problems.

A similar study was undertaken by Hajer (1995), who also followed a social constructionist approach in analysing the acid rain controversies in Great Britain and the Netherlands. In employing a new perspective, which he calls 'social-interactive' discourse theory (1995:52) he "focuses on the level of the discursive interaction and argues that discursive interaction (i.e. language in use) can create new meanings and new identities, i.e. it may alter cognitive patterns and create new cognitions and new positionings. Hence discourse fulfils a key role in processes of political change." (1995:59)

Special attention is given to the creation of 'story-lines', which Hajer defines as "narratives on social reality through which elements from many different domains are combined and that provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggest a common understanding." (1995:62). A new 'story-line' might for example alter how a forester sees reality: "If the forester noticed needle loss or discoloration of leaves before, he or she would have had to see it as the product of natural stress caused by drought, cold, or wind. With the acid-rain story-line the forester might also see it as a result of pollution. What is more, once he or she has become familiar with the acid rain narrative the forester that had so far not been aware of widespread damage in his district, might change his or her way of seeing reality, in this case the forest: occurrences that he or she had previously conceived as evolutionary, might be interpreted as evidence of pollution. The discourse of pollution is thus empowering in the sense that it gives the fishermen and forester a focus for protest and the argumentative ammunition to argue their case." (1995:64)

Using the device of the 'story-line' Hajer's analysis offers more depth than the one undertaken by Hannigan (1995) above.

2.3.21 Environmental awareness - Summary

The analysis has shown that environmental awareness should be presented as a multi-dimensional construct associating various elements with environmentally responsible behaviour. Contrary to most studies, which conceptualise environmental knowledge as lexical knowledge, the last section has highlighted the importance of cause-related knowledge and action-oriented knowledge. In order to act upon the specific environmental problem individuals also need to know in general how to solve problems and employ action skills. According to more recent studies it is even more important for pro-environmental attitudes to take root, that individuals accept responsibility for the

problems caused by environmental degradation. They need to understand their interconnectedness with everything living, to develop the necessary awareness regarding the impact of their own actions (internal locus of control). In addition to these cognitive dimensions it was suggested that committed environmentalists are able to express emotions and reflect upon them. Their statements conveyed a strong empathy with other beings. They also articulated a stronger risk perception than others who felt no need to address environmental problems. However, other studies imply that fear, guilt and helplessness are the main emotions that contradict a responsible environmental behaviour. Here it was suggested that positive future scenarios would help people to overcome these emotions and give them suggestions on how they could strive for environmental solutions. A visible display of the environmental achievements such as a reduction in emission would provide positive feedback on how much they have accomplished. Behavioural intervention strategies on the other hand might be useful to entice people into environmentally responsible behaviour even when they have no other inclination to do so. But even when people want to behave environmentally friendly they depend on certain behavioural possibilities such as recycling facilities.

Overall, it was highlighted how all these constructs and dimensions are shaped by culture. Culture here is understood as the natural surroundings and how these are valued by people living there; the possible risk a country is exposed to and its assessment on a societal base and all other values and action strategies designed to address environmental problems. Role models such as parents and school education were identified as the main transmitter of these cultural characteristics.

Asked about their moral development, interviewees recalled memories of positive childhood experiences with nature along with positive role models; some environmentalists quoted the destruction of their childhood places as influential for their environmental commitment. Other individuals identified challenging environmental experiences during their youth or as adults as the main cause why they became environmentalists.

How do these statements relate to classical theories of moral development? Do these theories help to understand the development of environmental awareness? The next section will explore these questions further.

2.4 Moral Development: Kohlberg (1969) and its adaptation in Environmental Awareness Research

The most cited theory for moral development is 'The Cognitive-Developmental Approach to Socialisation' from Kohlberg (1969). Adapting his model and extending it with further dimensions, Hoff and Lecher (1994) designed a new framework to explain environmental moral development, which will be presented in this section. Kohlberg's various stages and levels are explained along with their utilisation by Hoff and Lecher. A more detailed presentation and evaluation of the different stages in Kohlberg's model is beyond the scope of the present study; but of special interest here is Kohlberg's understanding of transition from one stage to the next. Some suggestions are made on how managers might reach a 'higher' stage of moral reasoning with regard to environmental issues.

2.4.1 Model of Hoff and Lecher (1994)

Dissatisfied with the methods and conceptualisations used in the environmental awareness research, Hoff and Lecher (1994) developed their own model to explain the different levels of what they called 'Oekologisches Verantwortungsbewusstsein' (sense of environmental responsibility). General 'Verantwortungsbewusstsein' (sense of responsibility) on its different levels depends according to the authors on two characteristics:

- The locus of control, which as described before differentiates between whether an individual makes himself, other person or/and impersonal ideas such as fate responsible for events and problems that occur.

- The moral reasoning which following Kohlberg's approach (1984) can be either predominantly self-centred (pre-conventional level) or it might refer to the needs and ideas of others as well as it might be guided by laws and regulation (conventional level) or it might find its orientation in higher principles and the specifics of each situation, which can even override laws (post-conventional level).

On the highest level an individual will combine a post-conventional moral reasoning with an interactionist locus of control, which means that he sees himself as subject or/and as object of action with an appropriate understanding of his scope of action , depending on the situation. Furthermore, Hoff and Lecher assume that an individual

who has such a high moral reasoning and understanding of his responsibilities will also have a complex understanding of environmental problems as all these characteristics are based on an ability to understand cognitive complexity.

The following table shows the different stages of awareness of ecological responsibility:

Ecological Awareness	Ecological locus of control	Environmental moral reasoning
Concrete-punctual level *Stage 1: Non-causal* Stage 2: Pre-causal	Fatalistic-external level Believe in coincidence, fate and own powerlessness	Pre-conventional level Stage 1: {Self-centred Stage 2: {Orientation
Causal-generalising level Stage 3: Mono-causal Stage 4: Multi-causal	Causal-deterministic level Internal and/or external: Subject of personal world, Object of outside influences for example in politics, and economy	Conventional level Stage 3: Group norms Stage 4: Laws
Systemic-process oriented level Stage 5: Simplistic-systemic Stage 6: Complex-systemic	Interactionist level At the same time subject and object, solution to problems individual and collective	Post-conventional level Stage 5: Principles for humankind, for "System Earth"

Table 1: Hoff and Lecher's model: 'Awareness of Ecological responsibility' (Hoff and Lecher, 1994: 220; in translation)

At the first level of environmental awareness, which Hoff and Lecher term concrete-punctual, individuals do not ask for causal explanations of environmental degradation (non-causal stage) or they only connect one event with one cause such as the destruction of birds through an oil split but without making generalisations (pre-causal stage). In a similar attitude as they do not reflect on environmental degradation and its causes, they also do not reflect on their own moral responsibility and their contribution to the problem. A typical argument at this level is the following statement: 'I am not morally responsible for environmental problems as it is not in my power to do anything against it anyway.'

At the second level individuals explain environmental problems linear; they normally identify one or more causes for the environmental problems but complex systems, cycles, interdependencies and reciprocity are beyond their cognitive abilities. Similarly, they also view responsibilities mono – or multi-causal so that they often identify one institution, nation or person as the only one who can respond to the problem. A common statement would be: 'I cannot do anything as an individual, the government/ the law/the board has to implement changes.' This corresponds to a conventional moral reasoning, where the individual follows the example of his peers or superiors and/or the laws and regulations in existence.

At the third level individuals have an understanding of ecological interdependencies and cycles either in a more simplistic form or highly complex integrating time and space dimensions. These interdependencies are not only identified in ecological systems but also in societal and normative systems. The individuals see themselves as influencing the outcome and as being influenced. They can assess the impact they might have, the limits a single action has but also the combined effects with others. A prototypical reasoning at this stage would be: 'As I am always and in principle responsible for myself, others and the environment (of which I am a part), I have a moral duty to estimate where my input might achieve the best results – as an individual or as a group.'

Hoff and Lecher have tested their framework in intensive interviews with employees. In general, interviewees presented a cognitive reasoning at the same level in all three categories, with clear differences to individuals at other levels. The only exemption was the conceptualisation of the locus of control and its different stages. Here, Hoff and Lecher, realised that the same individual for example might argue that his actions have an impact on the environmental state of the planet but then express fear and resignation with regard to the long term and cumulative effects that he cannot influence (enough). The researchers expressed their intention to reformulate these stages allowing for more and parallel running variations.

Hoff and Lecher stress the point that these stages do not only differentiate between individuals but also between the different developmental stages one individual might reach in his lifetime. Without explicitly discussing it they assume that individuals (only) need to learn to think more complex and then they will behave more pro-environmental. However, Straughan (1986) rejected Kohlberg's approach and pointed that individuals can display a moral reasoning consistent with the highest stage and still behave badly.

He argued that Kohlberg's method of analysing and interpreting verbal responses to hypothetical dilemma "lack that first-hand immediacy which is an essential ingredient of genuine moral experience. In making a real-life moral decision, my motives, feelings, wants and emotions may run counter to my hypothetical reasoning and judgments, which will often need to be modified if I actually find myself in such a situation. Direct emotional experience of a situation is a necessary condition of participating in it as a moral agent…."(Straughan, 1986:150f) Neglecting emotions is a major weakness not only in Kohlberg's approach but also in the framework developed by Hoff and Lecher. Not everybody who has the intellectual capacity to think in a complex way in all three dimensions will actually display a pro-environmental behaviour. It might be useful to review Gilligan's ethics of care (1982) not as a feministic alternative to Kohlberg's approach but as an attempt to integrate emotional aspects into moral reasoning. However this requires theoretical and empirical research, which is beyond the possibilities of the present study.

Nevertheless, in addition to emotional aspects such as empathy, the above reviewed environmental awareness research also highlighted the importance of an internal locus of control and an understanding of causes, systems and interdependencies as constitutive for environmental awareness. Hoff and Lecher's framework offers additional insights in the sense of illustrating the states of cognitive thinking through which an individual might have to first proceed in order to achieve a higher awareness of environmental responsibilities.

2.4.2 Ethical dilemmas as transition stage?

But how do individuals develop a higher moral reasoning? Kohlberg suggests that people who are faced with an ethical dilemma in real life or through training will develop a 'higher' moral understanding (or in his words proceed to the next stage). Indeed some interviewees in Degenhardt's study (2002) explained their environmental engagement by referring back to a negative environmental experience, which they claimed, made them think about environmental values and allowed them to integrate them into their moral reasoning. This is also in line with some of the sociological studies described above that people develop an environmental awareness when exposed to environmental degradation assuming that they understand it as a dilemma between going on with their life style or changing it to reduce their impact. But the moral reasoning with regard to environmental issues needs to be further investigated.

Another aspect of Kohlberg's work (1971) is worth noticing here as it supports one of the suggestions made in the environmental awareness research to increase cause-related and action oriented knowledge: Kohlberg argues that "moral judgment determines action by way of concrete definitions of rights and duties in a situation" (Kohlberg, 1971:229). In other words, the ability to complex moral reasoning helps to clarify why and how we should act in a certain situation. Utilising Kohlberg's framework and Rowan and Reason's three level of individual consciousness (1981) Lovell (1995) concludes that a scientific and technical rationality is on the same level as either the pre-conventional or conventional moral reasoning of Kohlberg's analysis. In order to achieve a higher level of cognitive reasoning he suggests that individuals need to develop "an enhanced notion of autonomy (in the psychological sense)"(Lovell, 1995:65) which includes cognitive emancipation and independence. Therefore Hoff and Lecher's (1994) suggestion that individuals need to proceed through different cognitive stages in order to be able to evaluate complex environmental problems and to develop appropriate action strategies is one among other useful recommendations for environmental education.

The final section of this section now summarises the different constructs on how managers might obtain environmental values. One possibility would be that, when asked, managers would refer to experiences of environmental degradation and how they integrated these upon reflection into their moral reasoning. Also they might refer to other encounters with environmental dilemmas, maybe even only theoretical in a training set such as the classroom, where they started to see the complex nature of environmental problems. It might be also that their societal or business network posed these ethical dilemmas to them by questioning their moral integrity (as some studies of German managers suggest). Role models on the other hand might have offered positive suggestions on how to solve ethical dilemmas. Managers might also refer back to childhood experiences in nature, which might have given them from early on principles on how to judge environmental problems or a sense of caring for other beings.

The research undertaken will examine these constructs and how the managers studied describe their first encounter with environmental problems and how they incorporated environmental values into their business morals.

2.5   Ethical Decision-Making Models: Identifying the environmental problem as a moral one

Moral reasoning/development as conceptualised by Kohlberg (1984) forms only one part of the ethical decision-making process. Managers will take further steps to identify a given situation as an ethical one and to act upon it. Jones (1991) has analysed various existing models of ethical decision-making and used these to develop his own model, which emphasises the impact of moral intensity as described in figure 3.
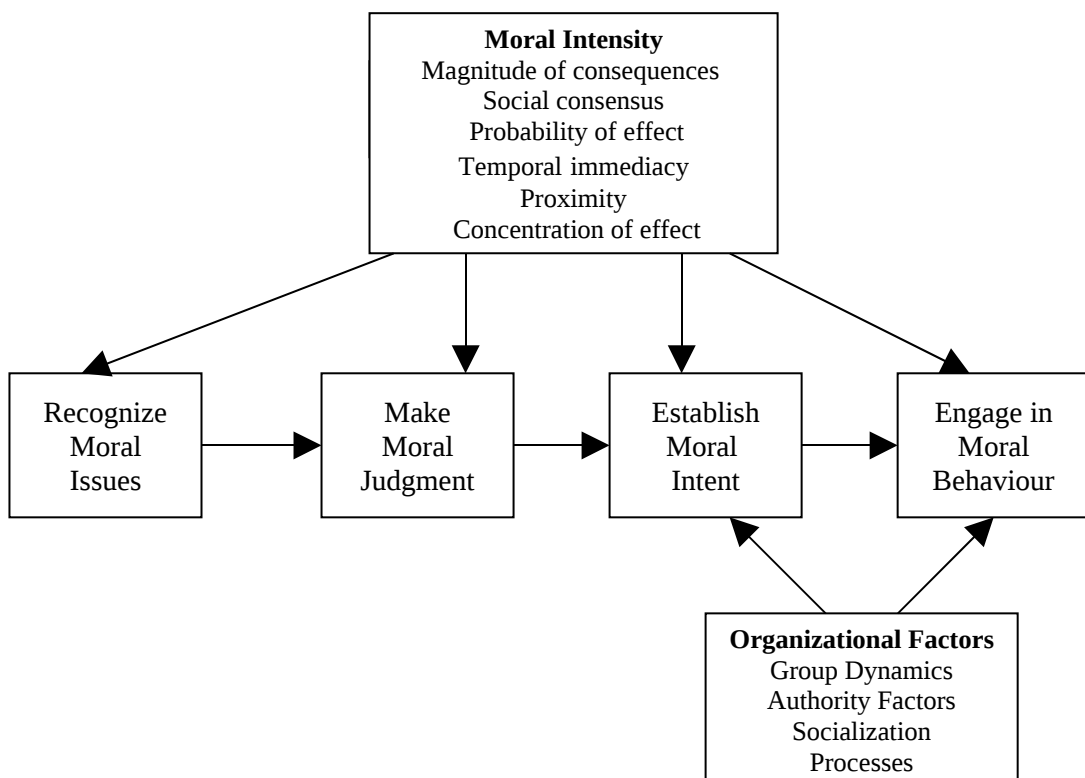
Figure 3: An Issue-Contingent Model of Ethical Decision Making in Organizations (Jones, 1991:379)

Especially important with regard to environmental issues is the first step that the manager identifies a given business situation as a moral one. "A person who fails to recognize a moral issue will fail to employ moral decision-making schemata and will make the decision according to other schemata, economic rationality, for example." (Jones, 1991: 380) As will be discussed later in section 2.6.3 Crane (2000) has observed that there is a trend in the Anglo-American business context to amoralize issues of greening. Environmental problems are not presented as an ethical problem; they are analysed and tackled using a bureaucratic, resource oriented approach. As Matten and Crane (2007) point out, all stages, not only the first one in the ethical-decision-making process are influenced by the issue's moral framing; the most important aspect of moral framing being the language in which moral issues are presented. The problem they

observe is " that many people in business are reluctant to ascribe moral terms to their work, even if acting for moral reasons, or if their actions have obvious moral consequences." (2007:153) This so-called moral muteness of managers will be also further discussed in section 2.6.3.

Jones (1991) highlighted that the experienced moral intensity, the nature of the moral issue involved, will strongly influence the ethical decision-making process, how the problem is perceived and how it is solved. He defines moral intensity as "a construct that captures the extent of issue-related moral imperative in a situation. It is multi-dimensional, and its component parts are characteristics of the moral issue such as magnitude of consequences, social consensus, probability of effect, temporal immediacy, proximity, and concentration of effect." (1991:372) With regard to environmental issues three of the six by Jones identified factors (probability of effect, temporal immediacy and proximity) are not in favour of framing an environmental problem as an issue of high moral intensity. Managers might perceive for example that climate change is less likely to take place and to cause harm, than commonly predicted (probability of effect), that it will not happen immediately (temporal immediacy) and that it will more likely affect people distant to them (proximity), all factors that would contribute to frame this environmental problem as an issue of low moral intensity and therefore managers would feel less need to act upon them.

However, Crane and Matten (2007) rightly argue that the attributed intensity of an issue "is not necessarily an objective, factual variable, but rather depends on how the issue and its intensity is understood and made meaningful within the organization." (2007:153) `They therefore consider situational factors as the most influential in terms of *recognizing* ethical problems and actually *acting* in response to them. Apart from the previously mentioned moral framing, they put a high emphasis on systems of reward, authority, bureaucracy, work roles, organisational norms and cultures and the national and cultural context. Crane and Matten perceive the national and cultural context of the organization, not the nationality of the individuals, as having "significant effects on whether a moral issue is recognized, and the kind of judgements and behaviours entered into by individuals" (2007:162). However, according to the authors there has been little, if any, empirical research how the national and cultural context affects the ethical decision-making.

2.6   Environmental Decision-Making: The Business Case

In this section the studies of managers and the environment will be revisited to examine in more detail to what extent and how managers when prompted take environmental considerations into account when making decisions. In all studies manager refer to the 'economic rationality' that has to be used in the business world. This construct will be evaluated against Habermas' theory (1984) of instrumental and communicative reason.

2.6.1   Revisiting the British and German studies about managers and the environment

Fineman (1996/1997/1998) describes in his studies how managers reconstruct environmental problems - put forward to them by pressure groups or regulators - as technical problems, which are to be solved in a traditional bureaucratic manner. In their negotiations with regulators managers would aim for cost minimization. "Nature and its protection was sometimes symbolized as a BATNEC - best available techniques not entailing excessive cost."(Fineman, 1998a:241) Most managers would stress the point that they separate their own morals and feelings from what is in the companies' best interest. This would entail the requirement to grow due to the commercial pressures and to serve their stockholders and customers. Customer expectations in particular were seen as the driving force neglecting any influence marketing techniques have on their wants. Managers would also postulate that businesses should not reduce or change their product range according to somebody's moral views (neither their own nor of specific customers). This position assumes that the existing product range is objective and not influenced by any moral decisions, which is questionable. For example the decision to sell or not to sell rugs made by children is a moral one whatever the outcome. Fineman contrasts the moral, emotional world of the eco-transformers with the "language of rationality"(Fineman, 1998a: 247) dominant in the business discourse. He describes the managers as "skilled in techno-rationalization – taking the emotional string out of the environmental debate…"and suggests that "….moral conduct requires more than the application of certain ethical rules. It is 'felt'. The anxiety, guilt or shame that triggers feelings of responsibility for the broader effects of one's actions are learned in situations beyond those of just the organization." (Fineman, 1997: 36) His way of contrasting rationality and emotionality reinforces the view that there is an 'objective, neutral stance' managers can take and that morals are introduced later or as an add-on.

Schaefer and Harvey (2000) reported that some managers found it easier to relate to an environmental manager with "a business-focused approach, emphasizing business risks

accruing from a 'less than professional approach' to environmental issues" than to an environmental manager with "a deep-ecology discourse, less concerned with reducing business risks than with promoting genuine ecological concern."(Schaefer and Harvey, 2000: 175f)

The German and Austrian studies reported similar findings in that managers described their rational discourse as based on economical and technological facts and not biased by emotions and prejudices. However, their understanding of rationality differed, especially with regard to environmental issues. Rather than stressing an economical point of view some managers would claim that industry is better prepared than anyone else to solve environmental problems based on scientific knowledge and a holistic approach (Heine and Mautz, 1995). Other German managers introduced more economical considerations into their definition of a rational approach. They linked environmental protection positively to reputation and long-term profit realisation, while short-term profit orientation was judged as short–term thinking and a bad management decision. (Hammerl, 1994). The managers in Schuelein et al's study (1994) also displayed an economic-technological worldview. But although they were convinced that most environmental problems could be solved in the future using the right technology and utilising economic growth, they would refrain from certain technologies such as nuclear power when the risk-benefit-analysis proves that the environmental risks outweigh the benefits. Overall, all managers in German speaking countries integrated environmental issues into their economical-technological reasoning and where under certain circumstances prepared to sacrifice financial (short-term) gains. Environmental protection was seen less as an emotional topic, although the German managers would stress as much as their UK colleagues that their decisions are based on facts rather than emotions. However, the German managers introduced moral considerations into their rational discourse when they claimed for example that their rationality with its holistic approach is morally advanced, while the UK managers argued that economic rationality is free of any moral judgements, which they seemed to put on a level with emotional reasoning.

2.6.2   *Managers – morally neutral characters?*

In his philosophical analysis of moral reasoning MacIntyre (1981) makes the observation that "Managers themselves and most writers about management conceive themselves as morally neutral characters whose skills enable them to devise the most

efficient means of achieving whatever end is proposed."(MacIntyre, 1981:71) He then argues that not only the ends but also the means employed such as effectiveness are distinctively moral concepts. His arguments are taken up by Roberts (1984) who suggests that, if at all, managers seek to justify themselves morally only with regard to the ends they aim to achieve. "Thus typically it is the pursuit of the survival and growth of the 'organization as a whole' that for most managers is the *assumed* moral basis of their action and that provides them with a blanket justification for a whole variety of practises."(1984:288) Anything that needs to be done to achieve this goal is regarded as morally neutral, which includes the dominant concept of effectiveness, and other means such as satisfying shareholder demands, engineering and fulfilling customers' needs and 'managing human resources'. But as Watson (2002) points out 'No managerial act can be morally neutral because every such act occurs in the context of relationships in which there is, at the very least, a potential for exploitation."(2002:448) The question posed before, whether a company sells rugs made by children or not, is a moral one whatever the outcome. Every other managerial task in this context such as the salary the children get, how they are controlled, how many breaks they get, which possibilities they have to learn new skills, are moral questions, where managers have a choice between different values. However, not only the means are morally disputable, also the ends are. In Watson's ethnographic study (1998) one of the managers emphasized this when he posed the question "You could have a death camp operating with a clear morality where all the guards trusted each other, were open and honest with each other, treated each other fairly and, well, would that be moral?" (1998:265)

2.6.3   The moral muteness of managers

The reluctance of managers to use moral arguments in business was also observed by Bird and Waters (1989), who labelled this phenomenon the 'moral muteness of managers': "Many managers exhibit a reluctance to describe their actions in moral terms even when they are acting for moral reasons. They talk as if their actions were guided exclusively by organizational interests, practicality, and economic good sense even when in practice they honour morally defined standards codified in law, professional conventions, and social mores. They characteristically defend morally defined objectives such as service to customers, effective cooperation among personnel, and utilization of their own skills and resources in terms of the long-run economic objectives of their organizations." (1989:73)

Crane (2000) investigated this moral muteness further with regard to 'corporate greening'. Not only did he also observe the reluctance of managers to use moral language, but he even advanced the proposition that "there is a tendency in corporations for greening to be accompanied by a process of *amoralization*" (2000:673), which he later defines as "the denial of moral status for the environment, or the avoidance of moral reflection or attachment in relation to greening; essentially, it concerns the phenomenon whereby greening is rendered an amoral subject" (2000:674).

This process of amoralization could take a different course depending on the organisational type. Crane found the strongest evidence of amoralization in the conventional companies, which he researched. Here respondents were very reluctant to talk about green issues in moral terms. "Essentially, what this amounted to was the appropriation of 'rational' discourses of science, commercial logic, costs, and/or customer satisfaction to communicate environmental issues, and privileging these discourses over what were referred to as the 'emotive' discourses utilized by the media or pressure groups." (2000:682) In his second group of companies, the Business-NGO Collaboration, Crane observed the dominance of the techno-rationalist discourse as exhibited by the corporate members, but also some evidence of a more moralized discourse brought in especially by the NGO members. Interestingly in his third group of companies, which Crane termed 'social mission companies' and which consisted of companies that gave prominence to social over economic goals, senior managers spoke intensively about their own moral values but were reluctant to introduce this moral language into other levels of their organizations.

However the question here is whether this process of amoralization or/and moral muteness is typical for managers in a British context, where Crane's study was undertaken, or in an American context as in the case of Bird and Waters (1989) or whether this is a phenomenon, which can be observed across managers in various cultures.

The investigation of how 'economic rationality' is constructed in relation to morality offers a first insight that there might be variations in the business discourses of different cultures. In an Anglo-American context the term 'economic rationality' is often defined with regard to the assumed moral raison d'être of company survival and growth. In his article about economic rationality and ethical behaviour, Le Menestrel (2002) analyses the relationship between economic rationality and ethical behaviour, concluding that

both are of rational nature. The only irrational behaviour is to not behave ethically and at the same time to not follow economic rationality. Throughout his article he also conceptualises economic rationality as solely pursuing profit maximization. However, this is only one of many possible definitions for economic rationality. However, there are other reasons, such as

- To provide in a given economy as many individuals as possible with work and a decent salary

- To distribute efficiently scarce (renewable and finite) resources (Wollenberg, 2000)

- To fulfil the basic needs of as many individuals as possible

The definitions given by the German-speaking managers above do not only highlight different underlying morals but also indicate the possible variations how environment could fit into a concept of economic rationality.

2.6.4   The Lifeworld and the Business System (Habermas 1984)

Various other definitions of economic rationality could follow. These possibilities indicate that every so-called rationality was created by humans in the first place. Habermas (1984) described in his "Theory of Communicative Action" the decoupling of social systems and the lifeworld. This is based on the idea that a culturally and historically created social system loses its connection with the normal every day life. The social system, such as the capitalist system, is not perceived as a human creation anymore. Its rules and actions are not questioned and are perceived as objective reality. Actors in this system claim that they have to follow certain inherent necessities. Their way of thinking and acting is seen as morally neutral, so strong is the disconnection from the lifeworld. Habermas calls the prevalent rationality in such a system instrumental reason and distinguishes it from the communicative reason, which keeps the boundaries open between the lifeworld and the social system.

"Unlike instrumental reason, communicative reason cannot be subsumed without resistance under a blind self-preservation. It refers neither to a subject that preserves itself in relating to objects via representation and action, nor to a self-maintaining system that demarcates itself from an environment, but to a symbolically structured lifeworld that is constituted in the interpretive accomplishments of its members and

only reproduced through communication. This communicative reason does not simply encounter ready-made subjects and systems; rather, it takes part in structuring what is to be preserved." (1984:398)

Denhardt (1981) stresses a similar point when he describes that "we originally sought to construct social institutions that would reflect our beliefs and our values; now there is a danger that our values reflect our institutions, that is organisations structure our lives to the point that we become locked in their grasp. We wind up doing certain things not because we choose to do them, but because that's how things are done in the world of organisations."(Denhardt, 1981: 322)

In this context environmental reasoning can become part of instrumental reason, so that environmental issues are subsumed under the prevalent paradigms in the business world such as short-term or long-term profit maximisation. On the other hand individuals might use communicative reason to structure the economic system differently in order to tackle environmental problems. Habermas (1987) himself highlight how "'green' problems noticeably affect the organic foundations of the lifeworld and make us drastically aware of standards of livability, of inflexible limits to the deprivation of sensual-aesthetic background needs." (1987:394)

It would be interesting to investigate in more detail how managers in the UK and Germany explain their environmental reasoning in relation to the business case. The existing research has shown that most managers referred to instrumental reason so that experiences coming from the lifeword did not enter the business system and its existing inherent logic. However, there was a slight indication in some of the German and Austrian studies that the barriers between the lifeworld and the business system are opening or have been kept more open so that moral reasoning, which is part of the communicative reason according to Habermas (1987), could modify the rules and reasoning in the business system.

2.7   Summary

The review of the existing literature has given some indication that the attitude of British managers differs from that of their German counterparts when about it comes to environmental issues. British managers highlighted in most cases the incompatibility of environmental issues with good management practise at least if 'it doesn't help the

bottom line'. German speaking managers on the other hand claimed that a good manager integrates environmental consideration into business decisions. Some even describe themselves as the 'better environmentalists'; others refer to risk-benefit-analysis to exclude certain technologies considered to have an ecological impact nonwithstanding the business benefits these technologies might offer. The construct of an 'economic rationality' is employed by all managers but differently conceptualised. The main difference seems to be that German managers refer much more to what Habermas (1984) termed the 'lifeworld'. These managers utilized in their responses moral arguments and pointed to family members and friends challenging their opinions about environmental issues. However, the design of the German studies might explain to a certain extent these differences as they explicitly included questions on how managers deal with the societal discourse or/and specific environmental problems discussed at home. Future research needs to be done how British managers would response to the same questions. On the other hand the British studies focused more on stakeholders and their influences, an aspect, which is under investigated in the German literature. Overall, it is difficult to describe from the existing literature the differences between the two cultures as each study was undertaken only in one country using different frameworks and models. A cross-cultural study would offer the advantage to be consistent in assumptions and applied topics allowing for differences to emerge within a given framework.

Existing cross-cultural studies of managerial values suggested that managers refer to and employ different values in their business practises, which are transmitted through language and socialisation. Although they all participate in a business discourse, as they have to accomplish similar tasks, their business transactions are framed by country specific cultural characteristics. With regard to environmental values, cross-cultural studies need to be undertaken to assess the cultural variations of whether and if so, how managers integrate environmental concerns into their managerial practises.

Little attempts have been made to draw on existing sociological and psychological theories on environmental awareness and behaviour to explain managerial attitudes and preferences. Previously, it has been argued that environmental awareness should be presented as a multi-dimensional construct. Various elements have been identified that might explain the rise of environmental awareness. Each of these constructs could be employed to analyse why managers differ in their assessment of environmental problems and their relevance for managerial decisions. Further research could

concentrate on a specific element, for example the importance of specific cause-related environmental knowledge to identify and hopefully promote environmental responsible behaviour in companies. But more research needs to be also done on the relationship between different elements such as locus of control and risk assessment and how managers would describe their own position with regard to these aspects. However, it is not only important to explore the present attitudes and opinions of managers but also to get an understanding of how these opinions might have developed over time and how future managers might be encouraged to develop a higher environmental awareness. Hoff and Lecher (1994) suggested a model to illustrate how individuals/managers differ in their awareness of ecological responsibility and how they might proceed through different stages of complex reasoning. Their research could be used to analyse managerial environmental reasoning - whether managers can be categorised in groups employing similar patterns of reasoning and how this reasoning is related to their (reported) environmental behaviour. While Hoff and Lecher fell short on any explanations on how to achieve a more complex (moral) reasoning, Kohlberg (1969) suggest exposing individuals to ethical dilemma. It would be interesting to explore which impact environmental dilemma scenarios have on the reasoning of participants. But it might also be necessary to question the assumptions Kohlberg has made by asking managers whether they recall ethical or environmental dilemma as being influential on their moral reasoning and on developing a higher environmental awareness. Furthermore, it has been argued that a 'higher' moral reasoning does not necessarily result in a more responsible behaviour; even so it might help by visioning action strategies. Further investigations are necessary to understand the interplay between complex reasoning and emotions in encouraging environmental friendly behaviour.

The evaluation of the existing literature has outlined various gaps in the current knowledge that need further investigation. The present study necessarily focuses on certain aspects and leaves others for later studies. The selection made will be described in the next chapter along with the methodological assumptions and the methods employed in this study.

3   Studying managerial environmental sensemaking – Methodology, Conceptual Framework and Methods

The previous chapter has shown that gaps in the existing literature are so manifold that a study about the environmental sensemaking of managers could take various directions. In this chapter, the choices made in the present research study will be presented and explained.

The aim of the study is to understand how managers in the UK and Germany make sense of and act with regard to environmental issues. More specifically, the main objectives are to find out how managers describe their past and present position(s) in thoughts and actions towards the environment and to ascertain the extent of cultural variations in managerial orientation to environmental issues. In the next section the methodology considered appropriate for this purpose, a social constructionist one, applied to environmental issues by Hannigan (1995), is discussed. The methodological stance taken has shaped the conceptual framework, which follows. This leads on to an exploration of the embedded multiple-case design chosen as the research strategy with semi-structured interviews as the main research method. Subsequently the actual fieldwork is described. Here special attention is given to access problems, the selection of the interviewees, the role of the researcher and the design and translation of the survey guidelines. The chapter ends with a description of the tools used for the analysis of the accounts, which were inspired by grounded theory.

3.1   Research methodology

UK-FC3: "Very strange approach. Hmm. I don't understand your line of thought, your questions, how you got to those questions, what your thinking was behind it. Perhaps you could explain how you got to those questions (…) I'm not sure I agree with that approach. It' psychological this, is it? (…) It's the job of a scientist is to be rational though – to perhaps have an outline point to start with. As a scientist you have to assess the data and critique it, which is perhaps different from other people's approach. That's part of scientific training – as part of a PhD you train your mind to analyse data and (…) I don't think it's necessary a straightforward approach I'm not sure. It's not what I was expecting."

Researcher: "What were you expecting?"

UK-FC3: "I thought you were going to ask me about much more factual type stuff."

This was a critique given to the researcher by one interviewee, who was struggling with the methodological stance taken in this study. The following paragraph explains why the present study was 'straightforward' research but how it differs from the scientific approach the interviewee as someone educated in natural science expected. The dominant research paradigm in the natural science is positivism. In essence positivism argues, "that there is a neutral point at which an observer can stand back and observe the external world objectively. This is called a subject-object dualism where the observations that are registered about an external social and natural world (i.e. the object) by a passive knower (i.e. the subject) are separate and independent of the processes of observation (i.e. dualism)."(Johnson and Duberley, 2000: 23).

This was challenged by Habermas (1974), who shares with his predecessors at the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer and Adorno 1942; Horkheimer 1972) the notion that no researcher, not even in the natural sciences, can adopt a neutral position. The researcher is always embedded in the beliefs and interests of his society. Pretending to take a neutral position conceals the hidden agenda. Furthermore, every description of reality is already based on a priori cognitive principles. We cannot describe reality with a theory-neutral observational language. Despite his subjective epistemology, that our knowledge is always determined by our social constructs, Habermas (1974) believes in an objective ontology, that reality exists independently from our understanding. Therefore he points out that we cannot create every possible theory; reality puts limitations upon our theory building. Czarniawska-Joerges (1992) describes the process as follows: "A stone exists independently of our cognition; but we enact it by a cognitive bracketing, by concentrating our attention on it. Thus 'called to life', or to attention, the stone must be socially constructed with the help of the concept of stone, its properties, and uses." (34) The 'construction' of the stone will depend on the a priori cognitive principle of the researcher; some might describe the healing power of the stone, some might focus on the technical use, some might highlight its radioactivity (as positive or negative) to name only a few.

While the researcher in any science, natural or social, influences through his choice of parameters and assumptions the outcome of his research (subjective epistemology), the question in the social sciences arises, whether the social world is different in its being from the natural world (ontology). Positivists assume that the social reality, such as culture, organization, and behaviour exists "independently of the ways in which people in society interpret their circumstances" (Watson, 2003:15) Interpretivist methodologies

as the other dominant research paradigm argue that the social reality comes into existence through the interaction and interpretation of human beings. 'Reality' is therefore socially and culturally constructed. The various interpretivist streams can be differently conceptualised "but a common concern is to understand how people assign meaning to their world" (Best 1989:252).

3.1.1 Social constructionist approach to environmental issues

The methodology to be adopted in the present study will be interpretivist and build on the social constructionist approach to environmental issues as developed by Hannigan (1995) in recognising "the extent to which environmental problems and solutions are end-products of a dynamic social process of definition, negotiation and legitimation both in public and private settings."(31) However, it is important to note that "social constructionism as it is conceptualised here does not deny the independent causal powers of nature but rather asserts that the rank ordering of these problems by social actors does not always directly correspond to actual need." (Hannigan 1995:30). A good example for this is tobacco and its potential impact on human health. Around 1930 tobacco companies even advertised cigarettes as health improving (Diekmann and Preisendoerfer, 2001: 55), which was denied considerably over the following decades. But even when a smoker does not share into the current social construction of smoking as a health risk he might still die from even this reality. However, it is important to see that this description and explanation of reality is always for the time being. It might be that smoking does not cause lung cancer but to our best knowledge at the moment there is a connection. There might be other explanation, which we have not even considered yet. The example of smoking offers a good illustration on how social actors have assembled knowledge claims, from a promotion of cigarettes in 1930 over denial of the health issues in the 1970 to the current practise of putting a warning on each cigarette package.

But how can we then know the validity of a theory, how can we assess our knowledge of the world? 'Pragmatist theories of truth' evaluate how well a theory or concept helps us to understand and act in the world. Although we might redefine our cognitive theories and frameworks later, because they are always open to new social constructs, they provide for the moment the best understanding upon which we can act. "If one theory, one research study, or even one piece of fictional writing, is thought to be more

helpful in informing our practical projects than another, then it is a *better* theory, article or book. It is 'truer' in the pragmatist sense of 'true'." (Watson, 2002:29).

The focus of Hannigan"s (1995) social constructionist approach is on how "environmental knowledge, risks and problems are socially assembled" (31). This approach will be applied to the societal group of managers: How do managers choose, assemble and present environmental knowledge and concerns? How do they act upon these according to their own description? How do they make sense of their experiences with environmental issues in the past?

3.2   Conceptual Framework

In particular the process of sensemaking as investigated by Karl Weick (1995) will inform the analysis of the accounts studied. Weick suggests that the central questions in the research of sensemaking are "how they construct what they construct, why and with what effects"(Weick, 1995:4). In contrast to interpretation sensemaking deals with the question, how "particular cues were singled out from an ongoing flow of experience (…) how the interpretations and meanings of these cues were then altered and made more explicit and sensible (…) Sensemaking is about authoring as well as interpretation, creation as well as discovery.." (8). Weick offers further characteristics of sensemaking, some of which are discussed below and used for the present study.

3.2.1   Sensemaking grounded in identity construction

Sensemaking begins with the person that is trying to make sense of himself, his experiences and the world in general. Sensemaking is therefore grounded in identity construction. New experiences will be evaluated in the light of who I think I am. New experiences can also challenge the assumptions on which I have based my identity. For example if I had an understanding of myself as a person who always keeps calm and suddenly I find myself shouting at someone, I need to make sense of this 'strange' behaviour, which might include redefining my identity. So far we have talked only of 'one identity', but each individual will refer in his sensemaking to different identities depending on the situation. Who am I as a friend? Who am I as a mother to my children? Who am I as a manager? Weick suggests that "identities are constituted out of

the process of interaction. To shift among interactions is to shift among definitions of self. Thus the sensemaker is himself or herself an ongoing puzzle undergoing continual redefinition, coincident with presenting some self to others and trying to decide which self is appropriate." (1995:20) Identity construction can be therefore defined as a process by which an individual makes sense of who he is and as whom he wants to present himself in a given situation to another person.

One of the interests of the present research is how managers present themselves and describe their identity with regard to environmental issues. Who am I that I am responsible for the environment or that I am not responsible? In a more specific sense: Does it fit to my role as a manager to be environmentally aware or even an environmentalists? The present study will also explore whether managers report a different environmental behaviour at home and in their role as a manager. However, the research has to take into account under which preconditions the managers are interviewed. If they are approached as managers and interviewed in a business setting they might present themselves differently even when talking about their private lives than in a different setting such as a pub.

3.2.2   *Sensemaking and culture*

The studies undertaken so far suggest that UK managers marginalize ecological problems as part of their identity construction. According to Fineman's studies a favoured, defensive self-description was "not being lentils and sandals types" (1997:33). German managers on the other hand stressed that they were the 'better environmentalists'. These comparisons propose that German and British manager differ in their understanding of the managerial role with regard to environmental issues or that they at least present themselves differently when questioned about their attitudes to environmental issues. Here another property of sensemaking can be seen, which is not stressed enough by Weick: how much sensemaking is depending on the culture, in which the sensemaker lives. Culture can be best understood with the assumption made by Kluckhohn (1962) that "Every society's patterns for living must provide approved and sanctioned ways for dealing with such universal circumstances as the existence of two sexes; the helplessness of infants; the need for satisfaction of the elementary biological requirements such as food, warmth, and sex; the presence of individuals of different ages and of differing physical and other capacities." (318)

In this sense it can be added that every society needs also to develop patterns for how to deal with environmental issues. Every society produces waste and needs to decide what to do with the waste even if they decide to just throw it somewhere without paying too much attention to it. Industrialised societies specifically tend to use finite resources and to emit substances. Whether these substances are framed as pollution or not will depend on the meaning attached to them, however, every society has to make sense of certain environmental circumstances. To use an even more drastic example, people need to make sense out of a hurricane, which just destroyed their house. They can apply various meanings to it such as 'a sign of global warming' or 'a natural disaster', but they cannot ignore it as they cannot ignore the existence of two sexes. Though, it has to be noted that many environmental problems are not as visible as the devastation caused by a hurricane. An example would be global warming; here individuals will differ whether they take notice of this environmental problem at all or not, in the latter case they will not even start to make sense of it. The various interpretations attached to rising temperatures will be highly influenced by the societal discourse and how the problems are presented in the media.

Some of the existing cross-cultural studies highlighted the influence language has on this sensemaking. Language offers the concepts and tools to be used for sensemaking and often sets the boundaries. A comparison between different languages shows the differences in how similar issues are understood. When Germans for example talk about 'Waldsterben' (Dying of forests) a totally different image emerges than talking about deforestation in the English language. Interestingly, the German business vocabulary is full of English words, which have (partly) replaced the German equivalents. One could speculate whether this is an indication that the Anglo-American perspective more and more dominates the Business world or whether this has expedient reasons to ease business transaction in a world economy or both. In a world where individuals are exposed to different languages they often can choose between concepts from various sources for their sensemaking. I have realised that I sometimes use an English word when I talk to my German friends such as the word 'mind-set' or 'framework' because I find this expresses better what I want to say and as they all have a certain understanding of the English language they will understand me nevertheless.

However, often individuals belonging to one group such as a nation or a company will use a similar language and concepts to express their ideas. Culture can be therefore understood as the patterned way of expressing one's ideas and opinions that exists in a

particular group such as an organisation, a group within a society or a nation as well as certain forms of behaviour considered to be appropriate within this group. Following this definition we speak of the business culture or the profession of accountants, the British culture or a European approach; in this sense managers belong to at least two cultures, business and nation. Previously it was shown that with regard to other values the earlier cross-cultural studies showed that national characteristics would override the notion of belonging to one profession. However managers in all cultures will refer to business activities and express their ideas differently than for example nurses in the same culture. The present study will investigate how managers make use of the various resources offered to them by their societies and the profession they belong to. Special attention will be given to the discursive resources used by managers to make sense of environmental issues. This action can be termed discursive framing, following a definition by Watson's (2002): Discursive framing is the "process whereby human beings draw on sets of discursive resources (concepts, expressions, statements, etc.) made available in their culture to make sense of a particular aspect of their lives and are thereby influenced in the way they conduct themselves in that part of their life." (119).

As pointed out before individuals are on one hand constrained by the discursive resources available to them in their language and their cultural setting, on the other hand they can employ different discursive resources experienced in encounters with other cultures and they can even create new concepts and understandings. Discursive resources related to the environment are an especially good example for the creation of new concepts as many of them such as 'acid rain' or 'greenhouse gases' were only developed in the last decades. The studies undertaken have shown that managers frame the concept of environmentalism differently in each country. Furthermore, they might employ a similar discursive resource such as they both refer to economic rationality in their argumentation but this term has a different meaning. The latter also indicates that even when managers use similar terms that are parts of the business culture they might express very different ideas. Overall, managers in each culture expressed certain shared ideas of how to make sense of environmental issues. Furthermore there seemed to be a common cultural understanding of how a manager should relate to environmental issues, how he should argue in his role as manager and how he should present himself. One of these common understandings presented in the existing studies is for example that a manager has to argue rationally and that this includes for a British manager to

refrain from expressing own feelings or morals and to concentrate instead on 'what is in the best interest for the company'.

3.2.3 The lifeworld and the business world

Individuals are often not aware of these cultural influences. They might argue that 'this is the way things are done here.' Or they might even refer to 'the system', which requires certain behaviour. But as Weick (1995) points out: "They act, and in doing so create the materials that become the constraints and opportunities they face. There is not some impersonal 'they' who puts these environments in front of passive people. Instead the 'they' is people who are more active. All too often people in organizations forget this. They fall victim to this blindspot because of an innocent sounding phrase, 'the environment'. The word 'the' suggests something that is singular and fixed; the word 'environment' suggests that this singular, fixed something is set apart from the individual. Both implications are nonsense." (31/32) Weick therefore describes as one of the properties of sensemaking a process that is enactive of sensible environments. By making sense of something individuals often create what they face. When managers for example are convinced that customers are only driven by price they will build their marketing strategy just around this aspect reinforcing the customer to focus on price and so on. It is even difficult to decide who actually started this process. For every player it seems to make sense to focus on price. The price-driven economy has become something like an objective reality. Previously the research has shown how managers seem to be convinced that the features of economic rationality are objectively fixed, there is only one way in which business can be done. But it was also highlighted how managers in the UK and Germany gave different definitions of economic rationality; what seems to be rational behaviour in one's environment is not so in the others. Using the device by Habermas (1984), it was argued that German-speaking managers refer more to the lifeworld. They feel challenged by friends and family who question their morality. They also use arguments that are not part of the inherent logic of the business system. British managers stressed their moral neutrality; an indication that they have disconnected the business system from the lifeworld.

However, it was suggested that this might be partly due to the design of the studies undertaken. The present study will specifically ask whether and if so how managers relate to the lifeworld, and whether UK managers will report similar moral challenges posed to them by friends and families. For the analysis Habermas (1984) differentiation

between the instrumental reason and the communicative reason will be employed. The instrumental reason is understood as the prevailing logic within a social system such as the business system. Communicative reason according to the definition given by Habermas refers "to a symbolically structured lifeworld that is constituted in the interpretive accomplishments of its members and only reproduced through communication. Thus communicative reason does not simply encounter ready-made subjects and systems; rather, it takes part in structuring what is to be preserved." (398) First of all the present study is interested in how managers describe the business system and its inherent logic with regard to environmental issues. In a second step the accounts of the managers need to be analysed whether their arguments could be framed solely as instrumental reason or whether they employ communicative reason as well. From the previous study it can be assumed that German and UK managers will both use instrumental reason, although German managers might include environmental considerations in their instrumental reasoning. These different concepts of economic rationality will be presented along with a short description of the system they help to maintain. However, the managers might also suggest that the business system is a human creation and that it needs to be restructured if new challenges arise like scarcity of resources or global warming. They might question the sensemaking in the business system and search for new concepts and redefinitions that would make sense. In this case, they would actually use communicative reason to create a new system.

3.2.4 Sensemaking is ongoing and retrospective

It became obvious from the existing studies that managers started only recently to consider environmental issues in their business activities and in most cases claimed that they were forced to do so. German managers were for example challenged by family members and friends, who questioned their moral integrity. This also applies to the strong negative labels UK managers put on environmentalists: Weick (1995) would argue, suggest that they feel disturbed in their sensemaking. "Negative emotions are likely to occur when an organized behavioral sequence is interrupted unexpectedly and the interruption is interpreted as harmful or detrimental. If there is no means to remove or circumvent the interruption, the negative emotion should become more intense, the longer the interruption lasts."(47) Positive or negative emotions trigger the need to review how we make sense of former events. In general, sensemaking is a process that is retrospective. Not only emotions but "whatever is occurring at the moment will influence what is discovered when people glance backward." (Weick 1995:26). And as

the circumstances change, so will change our glance backwards. We might recall an event in the past very differently depending on our emotions and the experiences we had since then. And even when we make sense of something that just happened to us, the meanings attached to it will vary. First we single out from the stream of ongoing experience just a few events and aspects to focus on and in a second step these will be then evaluated in the light of who I am in the moment, which mood I am in and other experiences I have made. Sensemaking is therefore not only retrospective looking always at an event that just happened, but also ongoing. We never start afresh, every new experience, every new information will be evaluated using former feelings, thoughts and experiences and might be revisited in the future. For example when a manager is asked about his attitudes to environmental problems, he will refer to former experiences, thoughts and feelings, as they seem to make sense to him in the light of his current thinking. Nevertheless, being exposed to critique he might start to look at them or present them in a different way.

3.2.5 Environmental sensemaking and cultural institutions

The present study will ask managers when they first came into contact with environmental problems and how if at all managers think environmental considerations entered their reasoning. As just discussed above their responses have to be analysed with caution, as their current sensemaking will inform which experiences they will choose and how they will present them. Their responses might even reflect more the question posed to them; if the researcher asks them explicitly about childhood experiences they might try to find anything there that could explain their current thinking. Therefore, the researcher needs to keep the questions as open as possible to allow the managers to choose various explanations. The different discursive resources employed by managers to explain how they became environmentally aware and the cultural institutions they make responsible for this development will be presented. In their model described previously, Carroll and Gannon (1997) have identified primary and secondary mechanisms of cultural transmission such as parenting, education, religion, laws, and organizational culture. Their model is offering a starting point to design questions for the interview schedule to be used in the research, so that the researcher could ask for example whether they recall any environmental education in school. However, attention has to be paid to have open questions such as "When you think back, when do you think you first came into contact with environmental concerns?" Managers might report an environmental dilemma as a starting point;

however the research will explicitly ask for this kind of experience, which according to Kohlberg (1969) is the major incentive to develop 'higher' moral reasoning. The aim is not to fill up predefined categories as Carrol and Gannon did, but to let the managers decide what they consider as important. It is anticipated that a model similar to that of Carroll and Gannon will be developed, which presents the cultural institutions and concepts managers identified as influential on their own environmental sensemaking.

The framework presented in figure 3 gives a summary of the different levels of analysis to be employed in the present study. The boxes on the right highlight the main questions to be adressed in the corresponding chapters.
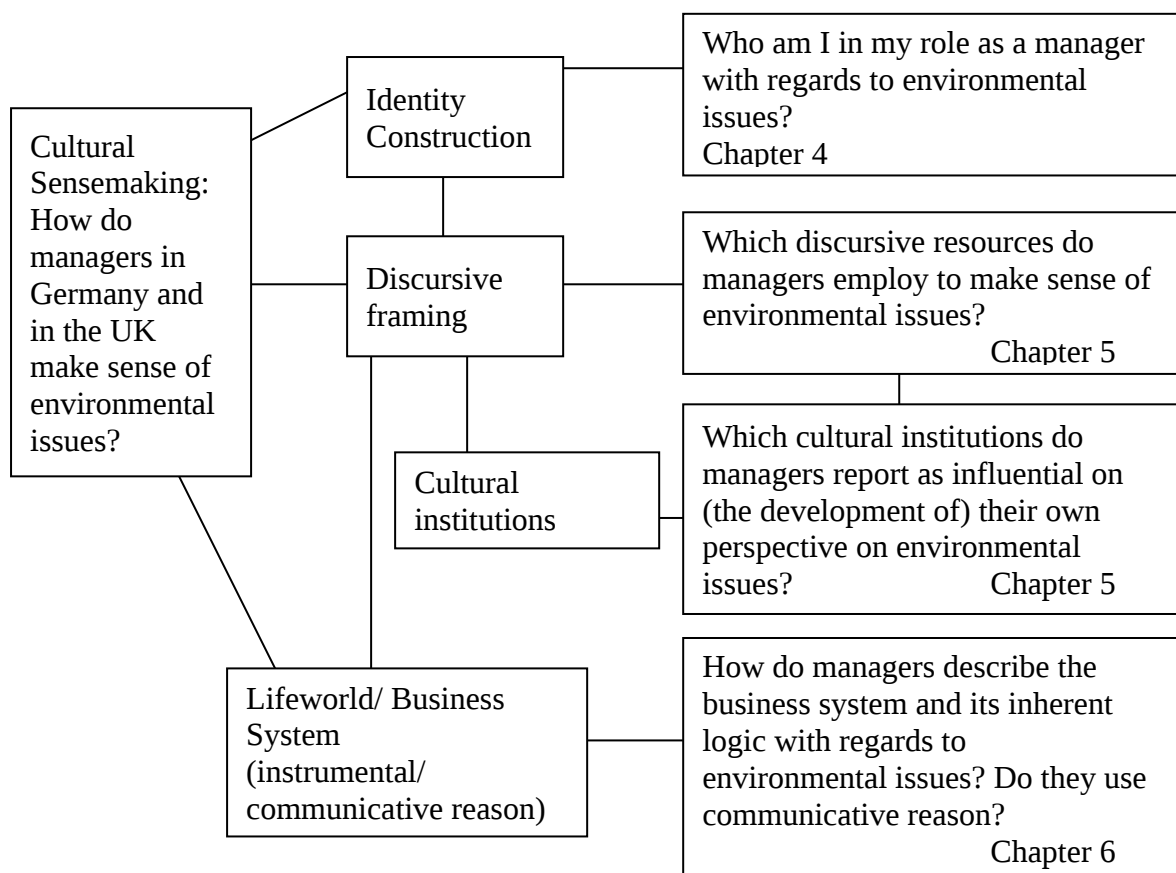
Figure 3: Levels of analysis and corresponding chapters

3.2.6 Inductive or deductive approach?

The research process in the present study was deductive and inductive at the same time. Although the inductive approach is often linked to an interpretive epistemological position (Bryman 2001), the interpretive paradigm also highlights that the impact of the researcher on the research process needs to be considered (Saunders et al 2000), which

could be classified as deductive: The researcher has already some theories or at least assumptions when he embarks on the research process, which will have an impact on the questions raised. In the present study some of the theories, which were developed in earlier studies as presented in the literature review in the previous chapter, formed the background for the questions posed in the survey schedule. Thomashow's (1995) observation for example that childhood experiences and especially the destruction of cherished natural places explored as a child fuel a raised environmental awareness, lead the researcher to ask his interviewees about their childhood experiences with the environment. Moreover, sensemaking as described before is ongoing and retrospective. Therefore, when the interviewees were asked about their childhood experiences, they were presented with a theoretical device and tried to make sense of their current values with the help of this device. They could have refused it, but often they would try to find an explanation within this framework. In this sense, the researcher employed a deductive approach that some existing sociological and psychological theories inspired her to ask certain questions, which then influenced the accounts of the interviewees. However, she has not attempted to develop theories and hypothesis to be tested through the collection and analysis of data, which according to Hyde (2000) would be the typical deductive approach. The approach taken here was that the researcher used some existing theories to design questions and to make sense of her data (deductive), but that she also posed new questions, tried to analyse her data with an open mind and developed different explanations than the ones given before (inductive).

3.3   Research Strategy

An inductive study is normally associated with collecting qualitative data, a deductive study with quantitative data (Bryman 2001; Saunders et al 2000). However, Bryman (1988) suggest that instead of framing the two approaches as opposites or associate them with a particular epistemological position, "…quantitative and qualitative research are each appropriate to different kinds of research problem, implying that the research issue determines (or should determine) which style of research is employed" (106). As this study investigates how managers in Germany and the UK make sense of and act with regard to environmental issues, a qualitative approach has been chosen because it emphasises the interpretations of the people studied and considers the context they live in (Bryman 1989).

More precisely, the research has adopted a qualitative case study approach, an embedded multiple-case design (Yin, 1994). As Yin (1994) points out "case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context." (1)

The unit of analysis and therefore of the case can vary. It can focus upon a single organization, a single location, a person or a single event (Bryman and Bell, 2003:53f).Yin (1994) suggests that the unit of analysis should be defined in response to the initial research questions. The present study is interested in how managers make sense of environmental issues; each manager constitutes therefore a separate case. According to Bryman and Bell (2003) these case studies, which focus around a person, "are characterized as using the life history or biographical approach" (54). But this study is also interested in comparing how managers differ in their response to environmental issues, therefore a multiple-case design has been chosen. This comparison includes different levels, sometimes it concentrates on how German managers argue differently from their British counterparts; sometimes it compares managers who consider themselves as environmentalists with managers who differentiate between themselves and environmentalists. The same case study therefore involves different units of analysis, firstly German versus British, but then several subunits. The inclusion of one or several subunits in comparing several cases is called an embedded multi-case design.

There has been a considerate debate about the validity and reliability of qualitative case studies (Schofield 2000). Guba and Lincoln (1982) state that generalization from case studies "are impossible since phenomena are neither time-nor context-free"(238). They suggest instead using the concept of 'fittingness'. This entails a clear description of the situation studied and how the conclusions were drawn, so that other researchers can assess whether the research results are applicable to other situations and settings. In addition, Goetz and LeCompte (1984) highlight the importance of clear and detailed descriptions to provide what they call 'comparability' and 'translatability'. 'Comparability' "refers to the degree to which components of a study – including the units of analysis, concepts generated, population characteristics, and settings – are sufficiently well described and defined that other researchers can use the results of the study as a basis for comparison (228)", while 'translatability' asks the researcher to define clearly his theoretical stance and research techniques. However, it should be

noted that case studies are especially useful in generating new ideas and theories (Feagin et al 1991), which is sometimes termed analytical generalisation (generalising to theory) and differentiated from statistical generalisation (generalising to populations) (Amaratunga and Baldry 2001). With regard to the present research the case studies are clearly restricted to the time period when they were conducted (2002 to 2004) with a distinctive political culture, economic situation and other situational circumstances in both countries and therefore not applicable to other populations. On the other hand, the research was more interested in *analytical generalisation.* An example of that would be whether the study of environmental issues in school has an impact on the environmental concern expressed in adulthood. As mentioned before, these generalisations are suggestions on how to explain certain phenomena. If they are able to give a more valid explanation than other theories before, then they follow the logic of pragmatist theories of truth in helping us to understand ourselves and the world better. Similar when people read the analysis of the accounts and get the feeling that this is in line with their own experiences, how they perceived German Managers, German Culture or British Business Thinking, then the case studies offer them a generalisation, which is valid for this person and this moment in time.

3.4   Research Methods

The next step after defining the research strategy is the selection of the appropriate research method(s). Different qualitative research methods can be employed to gather relevant material such as individual interviews, group interviews, observations and unobtrusive means such as archives and company documents (Ibert et al 2001).

The main method employed for this study is semi-structured interviews. In addition observations will be made and documentations analysed. The interview method is particularly suitable to explore the perceptions and attitudes of individuals (King 1994). An interview can be defined as a purposeful conversation between two or more individuals (Kahn and Cannell 1957). The structure and formalisation of interviews can differ (Rubin and Rubin 1995), but in a multiple-case design some structure is required "in order to ensure cross-case comparability" (Bryman and Bell, 2003:346). In a semi-structured interview, the researcher develops a survey or interview guide, which lists relevant topics and questions to be covered, but the researcher can also follow up topics or remarks introduced by the interviewee (Bryman and Bell 2003).

Company documents allow the researcher in advance to gain an understanding of the wider work context, in which the interviewees operate as well as of company values they might share (Marshall and Rossman 1995). Furthermore, documents and observations can supplement the interview material to clarify meaning and create depth to the research (Flick 1992). In the present study, the researcher analysed documents and used unstructured, non-participant observation (Bryman and Bell 2003) to enrich the interviews. This approach is explained in its practicalities later in this chapter.

3.4.1 Fieldwork

The studies were carried out in two different countries, UK and Germany, to study the cultural variations in responses to environmental issues. The decision to focus on these two countries was driven by the biography and abilities of the researcher. German is her mother tongue, so it made sense to include a German speaking country to facilitate the interviews. It was also seen as advantageous that the researcher is familiar with German culture and traditions, which would have been slightly different in Austria or Switzerland. The UK was chosen as the researcher had spent the last two years prior to this research project in Manchester, which had improved her English language skills and made her familiar with some aspects of the British culture. Furthermore, the researcher had experienced on a daily base the differences between the UK and Germany in dealing with environmental issues. She had difficulties to get certain ecological products, as the range of environmentally friendly products such as envelopes made of recycled paper seemed to be far wider in Germany than the range available in the UK. Companies in Germany also appeared to be more proactive in environmental issues. The researcher became interested in explaining these differences. She was wondering for example whether German managers are reacting to an increased demand for 'green products' driven by German consumers or whether German managers have a different perception of environmental issues than their British counterparts, maybe as part of a cultural shift in German society.

In addition, the UK and Germany were chosen as two countries that represent very different versions of present-day capitalism. As Williams (2000) points out, these differences have been further accentuated by the introduction of the term 'shareholder value' coined "in 1980s by US consultants who were selling value-based management to companies already under stock-market pressure to increase returns" (2000:1) and the

impact this had during the next decades on the economies.

An empirical comparison already shows these differences: While Britain has a stock-market-dominated financial system - the economic activity within the quoted and corporative sectors accounting for half of British GDP - with approximately forty per cent of households having significant shares invested in the stock market, in Germany only six per cent of adults own shares (Williams, 2000:2). Furthermore in Germany, "shareholder value is a 'recent, interesting and ambiguous development in a general hostile environment' that limits what managers can do and crucially prevents hostile takeover which remains virtually unknown in Germany. Despite a variety of minor changes, the pillars of the German system of corporate governance still stand: bank-based finance, industrial co-determination and productionist management orientations have all obstructed the advance of shareholder value through the 1990s." (Williams 2000:5)

In the British context this form of financialization has changed the economy and the objectives of management. In addition to satisfying consumers' demands in the product market, managers have now to manage and meet the expectations of professional fund managers and the capital market. "The result is a new form of (financial) competition of all against all whereby every quoted firm must compete as an investment to meet the same standard of financial performance. The implication is that social science has paid too much attention to the collapse of distance and local protections and not enough to the imperative of at least 13 per cent return on capital employed (ROCE) with no sectoral exceptions." (Williams 2000:6) Referring to William's term of 'financialized economies', Thompson (2003) highlights that "capital markets are no longer merely intermediaries in relations between economic actors, but a regulator of firm and household behaviour" (2003:366). This has shaped the interest in corporate governance and broadened its definitions, whereby Thompson perceives Germany to "be at one end of the governance spectrum" (2003:369). In comparison to France for example there has not been a significant shift towards financialization in Germany withstanding the impact of foreign institutional investment and new approaches in corporate management.

Fisher and Lovell (2003) point out that Germany has adopted a corporatist approach, where the "interests of employee groups, non-equity finance, and sometimes the state, are represented alongside the interests of equity shareholders, on senior decision-making boards" (2003:4). The Anglo-American approach can be on the other hand

broadly classified as 'classical-liberal-economic', where the interference of government into business is kept to a minimum and where the main objective is "meeting the demands of equity shareholders" (2003:4).

Similar to these variations in corporate governance, Matten and Moon (2008) highlight in their article the differences in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in relation to the national business system. They propose that CSR as an explicit element of corporate policies has been developed in liberal market economies like the United States, while "CSR as an implicit element of the institutional framework of corporations" (2008:411) has been a dominant feature of coordinated market economies such as Germany. Matten and Moon focus in their article on a comparison between CSR in the United States and Europe (including the UK) and highlight also with regard to environmental issues that "the main element of transatlantic differences lies in the institutional framework, both in terms of informal institutions such as social values and expectations and the mandatory legal framework" (2008:414). Furthermore, Matten and Moon demonstrate how in the last decades explicit CSR has been more and more adopted by European companies along with changes in national business systems, the UK taking a lead in this development. The latter is also reflected in another study by Matten and Moon (2004) into the provision of CSR education, whereby the U.K. "certainly is the leading country in provision of teaching and research of CSR in Europe, both on the level of enrolments as well as institutions offering programmes and modules" (2004:335).

The above has shown that managers in both countries have to deal with very different challenges posed by their version of present-day-capitalism. This study investigates how managers respond to these challenges and assesses the cultural variations.

The next step was to select the industries, in which the research would be carried out. The researcher decided to concentrate on two industrial sectors, Food Retail and Energy sector, as she was interested whether managers would differ in their environmental sensemaking depending on the industry they were in. Especially in the Energy sector companies in Germany and the UK went both through a process of privatisation, which might have overridden the national cultural differences. This possibility was one of the reason, why the researcher chose to focus on these specific two sectors, the others being related to her own experience, previous research and the following characteristics of the industrial sectors selected.

Firstly, the researcher felt that she is familiar with the products and procedures in these industries. As a customer, she shops on a regular basis in food retail outlets and due to her ecological preferences she is very familiar with the environmental friendly products on offer. She is equally aware of the ecological options of energy providers available to her as a private customer. Besides that, the researcher worked with both industries in a business context. She was involved in a consulting project to one major UK supermarket chain during her MBA studies. And she took part in a discourse ethics project with representatives of the energy sector and researchers into all forms of energy production such as wind power or nuclear energy. The aim was to create an energy system for the federal state "Baden-Württemberg" of Germany, ordered and later adopted by the federal government.

Secondly, previous research in the UK was undertaken in the supermarket and power generation industries (Fineman and Clarke 1996) and in electricity utilities (Schaefer and Harvey 2000). Therefore further research into these industries enables to make comparisons and to highlight new developments or issues formerly not addressed.

Thirdly, within the food retail companies have evolved with different attitudes towards environmental issues in both countries. Besides these interesting similarities retailers are also in the middle of the supply chain, on one side the end - customers, on the other side the producers of goods. "Supermarkets occupy a vital 'gatekeeper' position in the economy of food and non-food distribution. Their policies have a determining influence on farming prices, car use in grocery shopping, recycling and packaging, organic food production, local sourcing and the success of Fairtrade goods. As around three-quarters of the UK population now shop at one of the main supermarkets and their proportion of market share grows, their power, and consequently the responsibility of major companies in relation to ethical production and consumerism, has risen. In broad terms, these developments are being given increasing attention by environmentalist organisations". (Wiggin 2005:13) This special position of supermarkets could help to understand how managers perceive the influence of the market forces and how they describe their own input in shaping the demand. Besides the similar cultural shift from publicly owned organizations to private organizations mentioned before, the energy sector was also chosen due to the controversial debates surrounding nuclear energy in Germany and the apparently different attitude of the British public towards nuclear energy.

In the food retail industry companies exhibit very different attitudes towards the environment. In the last years quite a few companies have evolved such as 'Onefood', who sell exclusively organic products. And this development was similar in both countries. The researcher was wondering, whether the sensemaking of managers would be different in these newly formed companies with a strong commitment to environmental issues. She was also asking herself whether managers in these companies, which present themselves as ecological concerned, would use the same arguments in Germany and the UK, so that again national characteristics would be less important. Hence, the researcher decided to divide companies in the food retail sector in two groups, one with what she termed an ecological corporate identity and one, which she described as conventional. The group with an ecological corporate identity consisted of companies that sell exclusively organic food, further companies, that belong to the health food shop movement in the UK or equivalent outlets in Germany called 'Reformhaus' and finally supermarket chains, which are differentiating themselves in their marketing strategy as an ethical or environmental company such as the Co-Op in the UK. A similar approach was planned for companies in the energy sector but proved difficult for the UK as most 'conventional' energy provider have now embarked on offering a green tariff and/or created a subsidiary with a focus on renewable energies. There are only few companies who offer solely 'green energy', so that it was not feasible to construct two groups.

In the UK most major supermarket chains but one participated in the study, but it is not possible to explain the participating companies in more detail as strict confidentiality was granted; this is also reflected in the abbreviations used to describe the interviewees. The researcher decided against using the job titles. The main reason was that some job titles are shared only among a small group of employees such as environmental programme manager and some are even unique titles used only within one company making it possible to identify the individual (and the company). Furthermore, the researcher came to the conclusion that the job of the interviewee is negligible; far stronger seemed the differences in opinions and reported environmental behaviour being related to the cultural background (Germany-UK) and the ecological corporate identity, to some extent also to the industrial sector. The following abbreviations in box 1 were therefore used to classify the interviewees.

Box 1: Abbreviations used to classify interviewees

3.4.2 Selecting the interviewees

The researcher aimed to employ a 'multi-stage cluster sampling' to identify the case
study individuals for the semi-structured interviews. "With cluster sampling, the
primary sampling unit (the first stage of the sampling procedure) is not the units of the
population to be sampled but groupings of those units. It is the latter groupings or
aggregations of population units that are known as clusters." (Bryman and Bell,
2003:99) The sampling was to follow three stages: First companies in the retail sector
and in the energy sector in Germany and the UK were identified. In both industries –
food retail and energy –companies were then chosen with a different approach to
environmental issues. All other factors beside these two were kept as similar as possible
in the different companies such as size. In the third stage it was anticipated to select
from each company three individuals, preferable one 'environmental champion', one
environmental manager and one marketing manager as 'environmental champions' and
environmental manager were named in earlier studies (Schaefer and Harvey, 2000,

Fineman, 1997) as drivers for environmental change. The researcher was especially interested in how the champion perceives himself and why he became a champion. She also assumed that environmental managers have an interesting background, which made them choose this career path. Additionally, the researcher wanted to include marketing managers to extrapolate if according to their perceptions the company influences or educates the consumer or if the consumer exercise pressure. Furthermore, it was seen as beneficial to get the perspectives of three different individuals within one company.

However, due to the significant access problems the researcher experienced, which will be described in the next section, it was not possible to follow this sampling approach. The researcher managed at least to get similar interview partners in the two countries and industries. She also managed to include companies that were different in their environmental commitment as shown in the breakdown of the interview sample in the next section. But only in two companies was it possible to interview more than one manager and even in these cases she could not interview managers in all of the roles described above, which she would have found interesting.

3.4.3 Access problems

Access was a significant problem in this study, even though confidentiality was granted. All forms of communication were employed to gain access. Direct access without prior recommendation was nearly impossible. Letters and emails were not answered. Cold calls into companies normally ended by the researcher being referred to Public Relations, who denied permission. Only in three cases (one UK, two Germany) managers agreed to take part in the interviews without the researcher needing a recommendation. Often managers seemed to be very interested on the phone but told the researcher that they had to ask for permission, which was then denied. A more successful strategy in Germany was to walk straight into the supermarkets and ask to see the store manager. They often expressed an interest but had to confirm with headquarters whether they can participate. This was again a huge obstacle, as they often got no permission. However, one German manger was so keen to participate that he ignored headquarters but asked for absolute confidentiality.

However, most of the interviewees in the UK and Germany were recruited by utilizing personal contacts. The researcher asked for one year everyone in her reach, her MBA

students, colleagues at NBS and MBS, family and friends and even friends of her parents whether they knew someone working in food retail or the energy sector. Even with these personal recommendations access was often denied. In one case for example with a major UK supermarket chain, where the researcher had personal contacts through her MBA, a two hour meeting about the purpose and the content of the research interview resulted in the senior staff first promising to choose appropriate managers, later sending an email that all relevant information can be found on their website.

Additionally the researcher managed to interview store managers from the supermarkets where she used to shop in Hannover and one manager who she knew by face due to weekly shopping in the UK. After an interview managers were asked whether they could recommend another colleague or employee to be interviewed. This worked well in some companies; in others interviewees promised and never delivered any additional contact details (despite the researcher sending uncounted reminder emails). Overall the method used for selecting the interview partners can only be called 'snowball sampling', where "the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses these to establish contacts with others." (Bryman and Bell, 2003:105).An advantage of this method is that people will normally recommend or ask people "with experience of the phenomena being studied in the sample" (Hussey and Hussey 1997:147).

Despite the difficulties, the researcher was aiming for a balance between energy sector and food retail sector. She also selected a variety of companies in all 'shades of green'; companies that present themselves as very environmentally conscious in their product selection and advertisement and on the other side of the scale companies with no reference to environmental issues whatsoever (besides a few organic products in their range).

The breakdown of the 31 interviewees was as follows:

	Food Ecological	Food Conventional	Energy
UK	4	4	6
Germany	5	5	7

Table 2: Breakdown of interviewees

The breakdown in the energy sector into two groups with different environmental orientation was not possible, as many companies have now embarked on developing their input from renewable resources. Several interviewees were therefore responsible for the conventional part of the business as well as the new renewable section.

Efforts were undertaken to get matching managers in Germany and England with regard to gender, age and role, but it could not be achieved in all cases due to access problems. Due to some personal business contacts in the UK British managers in the food retail sector tended to be on a higher hierarchical level than in Germany such as fruit buyers for a supermarket chain. On the other hand German store managers – at least the one included in this study – have more freedom to make their own decisions about what to stock, how to present products in their stores and other marketing initiatives. It could be therefore argued that the managers included in this study from both countries have similar decision power, only that the decisions taken by the UK managers influence more stores than one. Only one German store manager, the one who participated without getting permission from headquarters operated under similar conditions as store managers in the UK chains. Furthermore, due to access problems it was not possible to be selective about gender or age, so that female managers are underrepresented and no conclusion could be drawn whether female managers would argue differently in some aspects than their male counterparts. In the presentation of the findings characteristics such as age or educational background are only highlighted when they help to explain certain similarities such as in chapter five that most German managers in the age group from 20-40 years would refer to their school education as influential with regard to environmental issues.

3.4.4   Interviews

The interviews in the UK took place in different English towns while the interviewees represented different regions in the UK. As the researcher drew on personal contacts, most of the German interviews were conducted in North Germany, only two in Munich. Overall, most interviewees were North-Germans; only one store manager was raised in Baden-Wuerttemberg (South), but had lived in Hanover for almost 20 years; two interviewees had moved from East Germany to Hanover after the reunion of Germany.

The interviews lasted on average between two and three hours. It was possible to conduct the interview within one hour, but all aprt from two interviewees extended the time frame, sometimes repeatedly. Of the 31 interviews one interviewee wanted to be interviewed in a private location, the others were either conducted in the interviewee's office or in a meeting room on the premises of the company. All interviews agreed to have the interview tape-recorded. The interviewees seemed to be not distracted by the microphone. The interview was only disturbed when the disk had to be changed or another employee entered the room with questions. However, most of the interviewees made sure that they were not disturbed and transferred the phone. Sometimes parts of the interviews were not recorded because neither the researcher nor the interviewee noticed that the mini-disk-player had stopped recording. At the end of the interviews the researcher kept the mini-disk-player on to record the closing remarks of the interviewee.

The researcher always checked the disks after the interviews whether the quality of the recording was good. In one case she so discovered that the tape-recorder had mal-functioned, so that the researcher had to reconstruct the interview out of her memory. Besides testing the equipment, the researcher also took field notes after each interview, where she recorded observations, feelings and additional remarks before or after the interview. She also tried to summarize the 'highlights' of the interview, stories and comments that seemed to illuminate her research questions.

3.4.5   Collecting material: Observation and documents

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher analysed company documents, which she found on the Internet or which she requested directly from the company. She was especially interested in environmental policies, environmental reports and marketing material. In the retail sector she either visited the supermarkets, where the interviewee worked as a store manager or in case of interviews with headquarter personnel, she visited one of their outlets a few days before. Special attention was given to the range of organic or/and environmental friendly products, how the staff would react to questions concerning the environment and how environmental issues were presented and maybe marketed. This information was then integrated into the interview to illustrate a question, to clarify a statement made or just to reinforce contributions of the interviewee. An example of this approach would be the following: "I see that you have asparagus from Nienburg [town close to Hannover] on display − do you source your

products locally?" Often these observations were used as 'icebreaker' and the interviewee seemed to enjoy the special interest and knowledge shown in these remarks. In some cases it also helped the researcher to highlight a contradiction in the sense of "You just said….but in your supermarket….". Sometimes the researcher also visited the supermarket again afterwards to verify claims made by the interviewees such as remarks about a new product range. In the energy sector the researcher had to rely on the (electronic) material provided by the company or some observations she made while she was guided to the interview location. However, she also tried to personalize these interviews with examples.

3.4.6   Design of Survey Guideline

The design of the survey guideline was undertaken after the initial review of the literature. The researcher started with a brainstorming session and noted all questions that seemed interesting to her. She then developed further questions by aligning the theories or research questions informed through the literature review with appropriate survey questions, which would explore these theories further. The following table is an excerpt of this approach:

Interview Schedule	Research Theories/ Questions
(…)	(…)
When you think back, when do you think you first came into contact with environmental concerns? How did this influence your approach to environmental issues? How would you describe your approach to environmental problems in the past? Today? In the future? How did it change and why? Is there someone you would view as a role model in regards to these environmental issues? Are your ideas influenced by philosophers or/ and theologians? By the church or other groups?	Reported reason for higher environmental awareness: a) Reflection Hypothesis (Hannigan 1995) Environmental awareness = Reaction to the environmental deterioration, increasing due to worsening situation ⇒*Do German manager present more situations where they directly faced pollution, maybe even in relation to their childhood memories?* ⇒*Do German and English managers refer to own experiences with pollution when they explain how they became aware of environmental problems?*
Do you consider yourself an environmentalist? If yes, how would you describe the characteristics of an environmentalist? If no, what characterise a typical environmentalist for you?	b) Post- Materialism Thesis (Inglehart 1977, Cotgrove 1982) Environmental concerns go along with other post-material values like progress towards a more human society ⇒*Do managers express other post-materialist values? What is most important in*

How do you think your peers view these problems?	*their life? What are their goals and aims?*
What are the most important values in your profession?	
(…)	(…)

Table 3: Interview Schedule and related research theories/questions

Both lists of questions were then revisited and four broad areas identified with sets of selected matching interview questions. The four broad areas were: current position; past influences; risk assessment/responsibilities; stakeholders. The whole survey guideline can be found in Appendix 1 (English) and Appendix 2 (German).

Before the interviews the potential interviewees were also informed in a letter or an email about these four broad areas giving them some example questions (see Appendices 3 and 4)

During the interviews the researcher asked the questions in the same order, as she believed in line with her research paradigm that this might influence the ideas the interviewees develop. It might make a difference for example whether the interviewees are questioned about their first experiences of environmental problems within work-related questions or within family oriented questions. In the latter case, they might be more inclined to use other discursive resources such as school education. However, the researcher sometimes used personalised questions as described above and she also followed up interesting issues raised by the interviewees. In the few interviews that lasted only an hour she had to focus on the main sets of question. Furthermore, the researcher added some questions in later interviews based on the analysis of earlier interviews to identify emerging patterns and relationships.

3.4.7 Translation of Survey Questions

As Rukavishnikov (1996) points out, in a comparative cross-cultural study the translation of the survey questions is crucial. "When we regard survey research from a comparative perspective, we see that the wording of the questions used in polling, including that with the definitions of actual environmental problems, plays an extremely important role compared with the other elements of the study. Unfortunately, severe mistakes made on the stage of questionnaire design inevitably have an impact on the false inferences, and devalues the entire study."(Rukavishnikov, 1996:225). The researcher was aware of the importance of a good translation and used the following

approach to minimize ambiguous or misleading translations: She developed the survey questions entirely in English and translated the final sets into German. She then asked a professional English-German translator to check her translation and offer alternatives where necessary. From these alternatives the researcher chose the ones, which seemed to convey the sense the best. The German survey schedule was then sent to a friend in Germany, who runs her own company and was considered to have a similar understanding as other managers to be included in the study. She was asked to improve the wording of the questions and to identify ambiguous questions. In most cases, the researcher used her wording but also clarified whether the question still transferred the same meaning as its English counterpart. She also rephrased the German questions that seemed to be ambiguous.

3.5   Role of Researcher

One of the assumptions of a social constructionist approach is that the researcher influences through his research and survey questions and his behaviour such as gestures and facial expressions the research results. Reich (2000) suggests that in order for his audience to understand the actions of the researched the researcher has to describe his own actions within the research process. In order to appreciate the research results in the following chapters it is therefore important to describe here the researcher's environmental position and how she perceived the research process.

The researcher considers herself an environmentalist and is very passionate about environmental issues. She tries to act in an environmentally friendly way in her daily actions with far reaching consequences such as that she and her husband do not owe a car, eat predominantly organic and recently renovated their house using the advice of an architect specialised in sustainability. However, her environmental worldview is not fully reflected in her appearance, at least not in a business context; for the interviews she was always wearing a normal suit or business dress and normally ecologically produced shirts and shoes, which her interview partners might not necessarily recognise as such. However, some of the German interview partners noticed that her interview schedule was printed on white paper and commented on it, by saying for example: 'We use here recycled paper for our business, not the white paper you are using.'

Holding back her own opinion was a strong learning experience for the researcher during this research process. In the first interview she started to argue quite often with the interviewee; this interview (UK-E1) was therefore only used with caution for the analysis. After this her supervisors gave her useful advice on how to stay calm and 'rational' even if the interview partner expresses a contrary view to her own. They suggested seeing the research as a big jigsaw and distancing herself by asking how this new piece fits into the bigger picture and especially in the expressed worldview of the interviewee. This strategy worked well for the researcher, even more, she found it intellectually challenging to understand another person's viewpoint as a whole without judging or arguing in between. Moreover, she realized that sometimes she might even understand to some extent a different viewpoint when the interviewee has the room to explain himself. Her reaction shifted from 'How can he say this?' to 'Why does he say this?' and her whole feeling was much more one of curiosity and enjoyment in exploring worldviews. It seems that through this strategy the researcher appeared to be neutral with regard to environmental issues, which was reflected in some comments of her interview partners, who asked her after the interview, where she was standing. Some even said that it was an unusual experience for them, because they normally know what the other person thinks and adapt their arguments accordingly, a strategy, which was not possible in this interview. Some interviewees also appreciated that they could explore their own opinions in so many depths, which according to them were made possible by the way the interview was conducted. However, the researcher might have shown more empathy and approval towards managers with a similar strong environmental commitment. In one interview the researcher could not hide her disapproval (UK-FC3) but this was also taken into account during the analysis assuming that the interviewee felt not comfortable to express her own views.

The researcher is also aware that her cultural background and language skills might have influenced how people responded to her. It is therefore important to know that the researcher's mother tongue is German but that she had already been living for three to four years in the UK when undertaking the interviews. The researcher felt that she could respond to her German interviewees with more flexibility carefully choosing appropriate words, while in English she had a more limited vocabulary. Sometimes she had to circumscribe an expression because the 'right word' was not available. Due to her strong German accent British interviewees perceived her as a foreigner, which sometimes resulted in them explaining 'how we do this in the UK' or in comments like

'I don't know how you do this in Germany, but we…'. On the other hand, the researcher also realised that being in a British context for four years had influenced how she would express herself in German. One German interview partner for example corrected her when she used the word 'Konkurrent' (a direct translation of the English word ' Competitor') that German businesses do not use this word, instead they prefer to talk of 'Mitbewerber' (Co-Applicant). Furthermore, the German interviewees also explained to her how things are done in Germany, especially the more recent events and developments, as they knew that the researcher now works and lives in England. The researcher also had to admit that she knew more about the newest development in the UK with regard to organic products and other ecological issues. However, it was easier for the researcher to relate to the experiences and opinions of the German interview partners, especially when they referred to events in the past such as the 'anti-nuclear-movement' in the Eighties. The researcher tried to gain an understanding of the recent British history and politics especially in the Seventies and Eighties (through literature and conversations), but this felt short behind experiencing it. Furthermore, she was more accustomed to German habits and ways of expressing themselves. With regard to the UK interviewees, she was and is still in the phase of trying to understand the British culture. But it has to be said that comparing two cultures is as much about understanding the 'foreign' culture as reflecting upon the limits, the content and unquestioned 'truth' in the 'native' culture.

All said so far about the German culture and the easiness of relating to German experiences was quite different in the interviews with two former East- Germans, an amazing experience for the researcher. Both had no East-German accent, so the researcher was not aware of their origin, however in both cases the researcher could not relate to their accounts as she could with other German interviewees sharing the same cultural and historical background. These two interviewees seemed to the researcher to be more 'foreign' in some of their opinions than their UK counterparts. In the first case the researcher was searching for an explanation until after thirty minutes it finally dawned on her, so that some indirect additional questions revealed that the interviewee came originally from East-Germany. Some of these differences will be highlighted in the following chapters, however it would be interesting to conduct additional research comparing East-and West- Germans or East- and West-Europeans with a focus on how the socialist system has influenced and still has an impact on environmental perceptions and behaviour.

3.6   Analysis

Grounded theory and its tools inspired the analysis of the research material. Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined grounded theory as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process. In this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another." (12) They requested that the researcher should have no preconception about the topics under investigation and that the theories should follow the data. But the social constructionist research paradigm chosen for this study assumes that we cannot gather theory solely from data; by asking certain questions during the research process we already influence the data that we will collect. In this study these questions were developed using existing theories as explained in chapter 3.4.6. Therefore this study has not adopted grounded theory. However, the present research followed the approach taken in grounded theory insofar as theories were drawn from the data during the research process and these theories were then further explored during the next interviews. For example, very early on German managers referred unprompted to school education as influential for their environmental awareness; in later interviews therefore all managers in both countries were asked whether environmental issues featured in their school education as the researcher was seeking to develop a theory about the impact of environmental education as part of the school curriculum. Interviews in a later stage were also used to explore and refine theories and ideas, which according to Charmaz (2000) is the main concern of theoretical sampling, one of the "defining property of grounded theory" (519). For example, the researcher was exploring whether the British interviewees had some explanations why environmental topics are seldom raised in a pub discussion with friends and how they would be raised if at all.

Additionally, some tools of grounded theory helped to analyse the vast amount of data generated through the interviews. At the beginning of the analysis, the researcher employed 'open coding', which Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe as "the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorizing data." (61). While the interviews were either fully transcribed or the main sentences of each track-marked paragraph noted, each paragraph was coded. These codes were either related to the theories and concepts identified though the literature review such as 'childhood experiences with the environment' or emerged as new labels such as 'role models in the

environmental movement'. The different labels were then transferred to coloured post-its together with a significant quote or other element such as the name of the role model for example. The different colours represented the broad categories identified as areas of interest while designing the survey guideline such as 'moral development' later renamed 'Discursive resources and cultural institutions'. Within these broad areas the post-its, each representing only one element, were then grouped together under meaningful labels such as 'role models' within 'Discursive resources and cultural institutions'. The aim of these labels or concepts was to find a level of abstraction that would cover different elements within set boundaries. The method used was very similar to the one used by Prasad (1993) in developing concept cards. But instead of writing concept cards, each concept with its various elements was visually displaced on a poster and later transferred to a word document, which allowed the researcher to reorganise ideas and add new labels or reorganise elements as new research data was gathered.

As the researcher used post-its there was scope for rearranging the post-its on the poster over and over again. This allowed the researcher for example to sort one code such as 'role models' to all the categories under investigation. The researcher would divide the post-its on the poster according to differences in gender, age, sector, level of education, corporate identity or/ and nationality, the latter in most cases turning out to explain the differences better than any other category. In addition the researcher listened to the tapes frequently always with a different category such as age differences in mind.

Then a process similar to that of 'selective coding' was applied. Strauss and Corbin (1990) define ' selective coding' as "the procedure of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (116). In the present study all possible concepts were revisited, relationships explored and those who offered the most interesting insights were selected. Each of the concepts was allocated to one of three main categories. Some of these were still the main categories identified after the initial literature review such as 'identity construction of managers'; others emerged during the analysis such as 'the lifeworld and the business world'. After identifying these three categories, the researcher went through all interviews and field notes again to analyse each paragraph whether it was contributing in any way to the three main categories and their related concepts. Some new concepts were then developed within these three categories and new material added to the existing labels. The researcher explored

relationships between the concepts and noted the results in the existing word document. Based on these word documents the outline of the following three chapters was developed to present the research results.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology, the conceptual framework and the methods chosen for this study. The fieldwork with its challenges and decisions made was outlined in detail. The chapter ended with a description of the analytic process of the data gathered.

In short, the methodology adopted for this study is based on the social constructionist approach as applied to environmental issues by Hannigan (1995) with its focus on the social assembly of environmental knowledge, risks and problems. More specifically, the conceptual framework is centred on the process of sensemaking as investigated by Weick (1995). Special attention is given to the identity construction of managers with regard to environmental issues and the influence culture has on their sensemaking and their environmental reasoning in a business context. The research strategy employed for this study is a qualitative embedded multiple-case design, which uses semi-structured interviews as its main research method enriched through observations and company documentations analysed in advance and fed into the interviews. The studies were carried out in two countries (UK and Germany) within the food retail and energy sector. The companies and the managers included in this study were selected using 'snowball sampling'. Despite massive access problems the researcher managed to include companies with different levels of commitment to environmental issues. It was shown that not only the access problems but also the cultural and linguistic background of the researcher had an impact on the study. In the design of the survey guideline the researcher aligned questions to theories developed in previous studies but also added new perspectives. Special consideration was given to the translation of the survey questions, as this is considered crucial for cross-cultural bi-lingual studies. The analysis of the accounts was inspired by the grounded theory. Using different coding methods the researcher identified three categories as a framework for the research results, which form part of the conceptual framework shown earlier in this chapter (see figure 3). She dedicated to each of the three categories one chapter, which are to follow on the next pages.

4 The 'ecological' identity construction of managers

This chapter will deal with the question how managers in both countries present their identity with regard to environmental issues. Previously it was argued that any sensemaking is grounded in identity construction; therefore any managerial sensemaking of ecological questions and problems will be related to how a manager perceives himself: Who am I that I am responsible for the environment or that I am not responsible? Does it fit to my role as a manager to be environmentally aware or even an environmentalist?

The reviewed studies suggested that British and German managers showed a different understanding of their 'ecological identity': British managers marginalized ecological problems as part of their identity construction. According to Fineman's studies a favoured, defensive self-description was "not being lentils and sandals types" (1997:33). Furthermore British managers distanced themselves not only from these environmentalists but also from environmental problems per se, which were seen as emotional topics. In contrast, German managers claimed that they act more environmentally responsible by finding practical solutions to environmental problems than the environmentalists who only talk. They stressed that they were the 'better environmentalists'. Another pronounced difference was that friends and families questioned German and Austrian managers in their moral identity for being involved in business activities that might have an impact on the environment. The UK managers on the other hand were only 'pushed into recycling' at home by their spouses; they did not report that their spouses or anybody else is questioning their business activities with regard to environmental issues. These few comparisons propose that German and British manager differed in their understanding of the managerial role with regard to environmental issues or that they at least present themselves differently when questioned about their attitudes to environmental issues.

In the latest British study of Schaefer and Harvey (2000) though, managers claimed that environmental issues had gained in importance. Some explained this with a change in corporate culture slowly embedding environmental management and awareness. Others in the same study were convinced that despite all the talk about environmental issues and the measures implemented, the underlying business culture had still its focus on cost and revenue concerns. The present study is interested in whether managers in the UK have developed a new understanding of the ecological element of their identity as

these findings of Schaefer and Harvey (2000) might suggest and whether the cultural differences between managers in the UK and Germany are still pronounced. There also might have been a shift in how German managers present themselves with regard to environmental problems and the 'emotional environmentalists'.

The chapter explores in the next section how British managers portray themselves in the present study with regard to environmental issues and especially environmentalists. Special attention is given to the way managers utilize the attributes 'emotional' and 'rational' to distinguish between different groups and different opinions and how they seem to use the discursive resource 'as a scientist' to underline their credibility. In the second section, the accounts of the German managers will be analysed. It will become clear that the notions of 'emotional' and 'rational' are less important in the German discourse. The focus will be on how German managers discuss environmental consciousness as part of their 'managerial identity' and how they relate to environmentalists. The chapter will finish with an investigation whether managers report a different environmental behaviour at home and in their role as a manager and whether there are also cultural differences in how manager define these roles.

4.1 British managers and their perception of environmentalists

The British managers in the present study expressed environmental concerns and awareness, but stressed the point that they were not environmentalists. Very important in their argumentation was the notion of rationality versus emotionality, which they associated with environmentalism or environmental reasoning. The following quote is a good example of how managers raised their concerns, sometimes using quite an emotional laden language, but at the same time struggling with these emotions contradicting it with the appropriate rational responses to environmental problems.

> "I can't abide waste, I hate to see waste …pollution isn't quite a waste but it is similar. (…)I do have some tolerance to pollution but rationally I don't like it…less tolerant of waste, wasted energy in particular. I suppose emotionally I am more disposed to preserve the environment although in rational I know it is a false concept because the environment…man has affected the environment so much for the last two thousand years that picking any environment from the last two thousand years is arbitrary …" (UE3)

Despite his own feelings about environmental issues, this manager stressed later in the interview that he is much more rational than environmentalists:

> "People who are obviously more concerned about the environment than I am, I tend to get suspicious of because I think they are more emotional than rational about the topic in general, but in fact it could be unfair in some cases. In lot of cases it won't be,

because people can't do the numbers, they can't work out the magnitude of what we are talking about, the world is incredible big, it's much bigger than they actually comprehend (...) To turn this round, are actually my views rational and factual, I know they can't be, but people to either side of me are less rational (laughs)....but who knows?" (UE3)

Here as in other statements managers used the differences to environmentalists to shape their own 'ecological identity'. This 'ecological identity' was labelled as being 'mildly green', 'just over the fence' or 'part of the majority'; the arguments ran along the lines of the following examples:

"I would probably see myself as 'mildly green' (..) Sort of got a green tinge, I suppose. You know, obviously working in the area, I am very conscious of environmental impacts and that we need to reduce and mitigate some of the things that we are doing as a human race, but I think, why I say that is, because I have a number of environmental professionals working for me, who, to them it is a vocation, it is part of their lifestyle. They have got very strong opinions about a lot of issues that I have not. So, while I try and recycle, and, you know, try and pick things with less packaging, I am probably not, I am not as committed as they are.(…) An environmentalist I would describe as someone who has a strong commitment to the environment, stronger than me." (UK-FE3)

"An environmentalist would put the environment before money whereas the majority of people would put money first…. I am more part of the majority." (UK-E6)

UK-FE4: "An environmentalist? Someone who is concerned about saving the environment, worried about the environment."

R: "And you?"

UK-FE4: "I am just over the fence…"

R: "..and where are the environmentalists?"

UK-FE4: "On the fence…."

Another manager also struggled a lot with the definition of an environmentalist. On one hand he expressed a positive image that they were very educated, on the other hand he viewed them as fanatics. He then chose to go for himself as "environmentally sympathetic" (UK-FC3) to avoid this fanatic connotation.

Accordingly, similar to the following manager, all but three of the British managers distanced themselves from environmentalists.

UK-FC4: "I want to do my bit but I don't want to be categorised as an environmentalist…"

R: "So what does differentiate you from an environmentalist?"

UK-FC4: "They are maybe more passionate…I wouldn't' show a great deal of passion…what I think I have is the ability to influence and I would do that, because this is what I do in my life, be it the environment, be it sales, be it my children (..)I know how to sell food safely, I know how to sell food legally, I know how to motivate people.

> In doing that, I am aware of the need to take recycling, environmental issues seriously as a person and you know I feel confident that my company is doing all it can."

Only one of the three managers, who described themselves as environmentalists, seemed to be comfortable in stating this.

> "Someone who cares about the environment, who wants to have the best for himself and the world….yes, I would regard myself as an environmentalist." (UK-FE1)

The second one was open about her commitment, but still classified it as "a bit nerdy".

> "You have to work with business and on a personal level as well, (…) I am pretty up to speed on how much a van produces compared to a boat and all this stuff…I know that kind of stuff…a bit nerdy but there you go….but yeah I mean it is about to reduce your own personal impact and households as well." (UK-FE2)

And the third manager would not admit to being an environmentalist in front of other colleagues.

> "Somebody who cares passionately about the environment…value system…I am not sure if I consider myself one…yes, I am, I guess I am, but I am a bit worried to be taken as a green (…) I wouldn't say to my colleagues I am an environmentalist, not in a thousand years I would say this (..) our CEO, he is an environmentalist but in a different sense, how can I make money out of it is in the back of his mind, I am not fully sure whether he wants only to get money out of it!" (UK-E2)

The latter statements propose that 'being an environmentalist' is not seen as socially acceptable among the interviewed managers. They also highlighted why environmental issues as 'emotional issues' are not discussed among the peer group, which might suggest a certain amount of fear to appear less rational than the colleagues.

> UE3: "I am probably more concerned about the environment than most of my peers. But again we are engineers and we don't talk about emotional things like the environment. If you can't describe it in numbers we don't talk about it…so that's the perception I could be wrong"
>
> R: "How would you describe peers' attitudes towards it?"
>
> UE3: "More economically rational than me…. I am saying this, consciously we are not talking at all about things like that, so it's a perception. It might be the other way round that I am more economically rational than them but I don't see it. I guess in reality an outside observer would think we are all the same always on a normal continuum"

Throughout the interviews, all managers tried to present themselves as (economic) rational beings. Some also frequently referred to the self- identity 'As a scientist, I…', often to distance themselves from 'environmentalists, who do not deal with the real facts'.

The following manager for example highlighted several times throughout the interview that she defines herself mainly as a 'scientist' and that she reflects on issues 'from a pure scientific point of view':

"As a scientist you are interested in knowledge (…) If you are a good horticulturist, you want to get the optimum for plants. You have to get the balance right. If you know how to do it properly you don't need excess fertilizer and pesticides. (…) Organic growers still use chemical stuff…if you take it from a pure scientific point of view…organic has to have contact to soil, this doesn't have to be."(UK-FC2)

Later in the interview, she claimed that organic vegetables and fruits are not richer in nutrients than conventionally produced products. Her response to the researcher asking her on which studies she had based her opinion, gave an account of her scientific approach and what she classified as scientific.

"UK-FC2: You have to know what you are comparing. Strawberries have different nutrients if you test them in the evening or in the morning, after rain or depending on the soil. So if you compare an organic strawberry tested in the morning with a conventional strawberry in the evening, this is not scientific.

R: So when you do it the proper way, is there no difference?

UK-FC2: As I said if you get the organic strawberry in the morning and the conventional one in the evening, you can't compare them, it is not scientific.

R: Yes, I got that. But when you do it scientifically, what is the difference?

UK-FC2 (very angrily): I just told you, you can't compare things this way."

The managers who considered themselves 'environmentalists' also stressed the point that their opinions were based on a 'scientific' analysis and used the phrase ' I am a scientist' to underline their credibility.

"I am a scientist, you know, who appreciate data… yes, it is true that the earth had times when it had ice and a bit of land and then it melts and then it comes back again and that's the earth going round that's the geology behind it but we have contributed to this…the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change has statistically come out and said that now… that we…. that man has been responsible for that increased global warming .." (UK-FE2)

Some managers would also argue that they are not in the position to give an informed opinion on environmental issues, as they are not experts and that they have to focus on their own area of expertise.

"I mean I don't know, ….you know …whether alternative power sources are required, I don't know how big or small the old reserves are and so, I don't know that because I am not an expert. But, you know, what I hear is what one hears within the media and there has to be something there must be some concerns. So you do what you think is right to do your bit, that is the way I see it (…) unfortunately none of my partners, none of my friends are experts in the environment. They may have an opinion based on what they have heard, but they couldn't offer their own personal opinion because they are not experts or because they haven't got one." (UK-FC4)

"Well, I will carry on worrying about how to deal with technical problems and hope that we will get some proper class politicians who are capable of cutting through it.(…) But in the wider environmental arena it is very hard for laymen to get informed views because so much conflicting or wrong information out there….there is probably a lot of

right information out there as well but it is difficult to disorder from the confusing…” (UE3)

Most managers argued against the perceived biased arguments given by environmental groups such as ‘Greenpeace’ highlighting that they have their own agenda.

> “Well, again, because I’ve got a science background, I can come to my own opinions about things. But, you know, you should be sceptical, but you should not just be sceptical of the establishment. You should also be sceptical of campaigners, because they’ve got their own agenda. And I think, you know, Brent-Spar is a good case in point, isn’t it. Greenpeace were very adamant, it was not a good thing to sink it; yet, the actual science behind it would say that was the best thing to do with it. So you have got to be careful about different perspectives on things, because everybody has an agenda.” (UK-FE3)

Taking this into account the researcher frequently asked the managers how make an informed decision. Interestingly, few of the managers, mainly the ones who considered themselves ‘environmentalists’, actually described how they try to make an informed decision by gathering the facts from all societal groups.

> “I do not have a main one because the problem is you have to question everything… there is a thing just been released about Forest Stewardship Council Paper, FSC paper, which is like the seal of approval for like this notepad, what you supposed to be able to do is all right, this piece of paper came from this tree from this forest in this country because there is an audit trail and you get a certificate to proof where it is from, and to proof they could planted the tree back again, because it is a sustainable managed forest…but there is just been a big document, like this thick, published by the Rainforest Foundation that actually trashes the whole system for forest stewardship council and is really critical of the whole process…so I have to wade through that now and read it and make a judgement and say, right, when I am reading that what I will do ..I draw up a little table and I am asking questions like evidence, I will look for third parties independent verifications, witnesses, testimonies, that sort of thing and then I make a list of my analysis and then I go right, what is the FSC’s response been to this, do they answer these questions, if they haven’t answered these questions, why haven’t they answered these questions? Is there a reason behind it? The one thing you can’t do is just to accept a NGO coming in through the door and saying: Ooh this is terrible look at this… this is happening people are being whatever…bad things are happening … without evidence… you can’t make a business decision without seeing everything in front of you ….so you have to be quite critical…but it puts you in a mindset …you are trying not to get emotionally involved in the issue but just to focus on what the realities are….sources are pretty wide…”(UK-FE2)

Maybe the managers who presented themselves as environmentalists felt a stronger need to proof that they work scientifically. This might be a reaction to the opinion that environmentalists are emotional, an opinion, as shown above, frequently mentioned by other managers.

4.2   German managers as environmentalists?

It is interesting that for British managers being not interested in environmental issues is seen as the rational thing to do. Even Fineman (1996) followed the same line of argument when he described the managers in his studies as skilled at techno-rationalization (taking the emotional string out of the debate), which included in his opinion the environmental issues. However, one could argue that it is very irrational to destroy the environment, on which we as human beings depend. This line of argument is the one German managers tended to follow.

Not every manager though was as opinionated as the following manager who considered everyone not interested in protecting the environment issues as stupid.

> „Ich glaube es ist jeder ja irgendwo Umweltschuetzer, wenn er nicht ganz bloede ist, ja? Da sind ja so diese ganze Stufen, ja? Der eine, dem einen reicht es schon, zu sagen, ja, ich tu was für die Umwelt und trenne den Muell, ja, und habe einen Katalysator im Auto. Ja? Und der andere sagt, ich möchte gerne da mit Lebensmittel handeln, und der dritte sagt, ich steige sogar auf den Atomreaktor drauf und opfere mein Leben dafür, dass – oder ich riskiere mein Leben dafür, daß dieses Ding jetzt hier – dafuer daß das Ding jetzt abgestellt wird." (G-FE2)

> "I believe that everybody is somewhere environmentalist, if he is not completely stupid, right? There are these whole steps, right? For one, it is enough to say, right, I do something for the environment and separate the rubbish, right, and I have a catalytic converter in the car. Right? And the other says, I want to trade edibles, and the third says, I climb even on a nuclear reactor and risk loosing my life for it, that - or I risk my life for it that this thing now here - for it that this thing is now shut down." (G-FE2)

However, another manager voiced a similar opinion when he claimed that nowadays people tend to make jokes about personalities not concerned about the environment such as George Bush. Therefore, non-environmentalists would risk becoming a laughing stock (sich zur Lachfigur machen).

> "Ich glaube einfach, wer da weiterhin noch durch die Lande laeuft, der macht sich ja eigentlich selber zur Lachfigur mittlerweile. Das hat sich ja sehr gedreht, nicht! Also frueher waren die Fundamentalen Oekos eher so die, die da mit den Cartoons zerrissen wurden. Und heute ist doch eher George Bush, ueber den man lacht. Ja?" (G-FE1)

> "I think that in the meantime those who do business as usual have become the laughing stock. That has changed a lot, hasn't it? So before the fundamental environmentalists were the ones, who were torn apart in cartoons. And today it is rather George Bush, who gets laughed at. Right?" (G-FE1)

These two quotes were from managers working for a company with an 'ecological identity', but also managers from 'conventional' companies in Germany considered themselves as environmentalists or at least very interested in environmental protection. They reported proudly about their environmental achievements. One manager for example considered himself an environmentalist and was very proud about a reward he

received for a mini-garbage-project he initiated (G-FC2). During the project he advertised products that produce less wastage than others. Selected products were labelled with information about their environmental impact with the aim to guide the customer in their buying choice. He had stopped this extra effort due to the small responses of customers, but the award was still outside the shop on the wall. A preliminary observation of the shop outlet however had indicated that there was nearly no organic food on offer. During the interview it became clear that this manager associated environmental problems mainly with packaging and recycling and that all his attention was focused here.

Another manager highlighted that he tried to be always informed about all environmental issues, because he wanted to answer questions with competence. He also mentioned straight at the beginning of the interview, when he was still asked about his professional role, that he would look stupid to his friends if he wouldn't know these issues:

> "Ich wuerde schoen dumm vor meinen Freunden dastehen, wenn ich das dann nicht wuesste!" (G-FC1)
>
> "I would get egg on my face in front of my friends, if I wouldn't know that then." (G-FC1)

Other managers also reported about the importance of having a good 'ecological' reputation with friends and family. This reinforced the findings of the earlier German studies about the influence of family and friends on managers. By contrast, British managers never reported being questioned in their ecological behaviour in private encounters. This will be further discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

Even when managers in Germany differentiated themselves from environmentalists, they had a different understanding of their own 'ecological' positioning than the British managers. One manager for example claimed to be in the middle (of environmental consciousness), as someone trying to live her life consciously. She associated with 'Being in the middle' that she is not going on the streets to demonstrate:

> "Na ja, ich gehe ja nicht auf die Strasse, zeitlich bedingt, ich habe einfach nicht so viel Zeit, mich damit zu beschaeftigen." (G-FE3)
>
> "Well, I do not take to the streets, for time reasons, I do not have simply so much time to engage with it." (G-FE3)

On the other hand 'Being in the middle' also meant for her that she is annoyed about her neighbour selling coffee in plastic cups but that she nevertheless wouldn't like to follow his example to increase her profit:

"...das aerget mich, dass die da immer Kaffee rausholen, aber das mache ich nicht, das geht zu weit!" (G-FE3)

"...this makes me angry that there are always people coming out of his shop with a coffee in their hand, but I won't do that (to sell coffee in plastic cups), this goes too far!" (G-FE3)

The attribute ‚taking to the streets' seemed to be an issue for the German managers when defining environmentalists. While the manager above and others highlighted for example that they are not environmentalists, because they ‚do not take to the streets', others defined themselves as environmentalists despite the fact that they are not ‚do not take to the streets' as for example the following manager:

" Ich gehe immer noch nicht auf die Strasse, mache das mehr von wissenschaftlicher Richtung, dass man auch was Gutes tut mit Altlastensanierung…" (G-E4)

"I do not take to the street, I approach it more from a scientific direction, that one also does something good with cleanup operation…" (G-E4)

Generally, German managers either claimed to be environmentalist or described themselves as environmentally conscious. In the other cases if they didn't consider themselves environmentalists then because they felt that they did not 'deserve' that label: Environmentalists were seen as better, they invest more time, they are 'taking to the streets' as mentioned before or they are more consistent. The following manager for example highlighted that he would have to invest more time privately into environmental protection in order to qualify as an environmentalist as the time, which he has dedicated to environmental protection, is just about fulfilling his professional duties.

R: "Also Sie wuerden sich nicht selber als Umweltschuetzer sehen?"

G-FC5: "Kann ich nicht machen, weil ich gar nicht, sagen wir mal, so viel Zeit privat da investiere, und beruflich gehoert es zu meinem Aufgabenbereich. Ja, da kann ich mich nicht so bezeichnen.(…) auch ich tue meinen Teil dafür, aber – vielleicht ein bißchen mehr als andere – aber weil ich da taeglich mit konfrontiert werde, aber daß ich mich da als Umweltschuetzer bezeichnen würde, das ist nicht der Fall."

R: "So you wouldn't see yourself as an environmentalist?"

G-FC5: "I can't do this, because I not at all, let's say, invest a lot of time privately and professionally it belongs to my area of responsibilities. Yes, therefore I can't call myself this.(…) also I do my part for it, but - maybe a bit more than others - but because I am daily confronted with it, but that I would call myself an environmentalist, that's not the case."

Some managers would define environmentalists slightly different as the next quote shows:

"Jemand, der sehr ueberzeugt ist und an seine und die Zukunft der Menschen denkt… selbst nicht in so hohem Masse, da bin ich nicht so konsquent!" (G-FE3)

"Somebody, who is very convinced and thinks about his and the future of human beings…myself not to such a great extent, as I am not this consistent!" (G-FE3)

The German word for 'environmentalist' is 'Umweltschuetzer', which would be better translated into 'protector of the environment'. Therefore it has a very positive connotation, which might also explain, why German managers are more inclined to describe themselves as 'protector of the environment'. One manager was directly questioning the meaning of the term whether the environment could be still protected. When asked about her own 'ecological' identity however, she again like some of her peers associated 'being an environmentalist' with 'going on the street' or as she phrased it 'going public'.

G-FE5: "Umweltschuetzer? Umweltschuetzer sind bemueht, wie das Wort sagt, die Umwelt vor etwas zu schuetzen. Was aber im Endeffekt 100%ig leider gar nicht mehr geht, gell? Man kann da schon schonend, daß schonender mit der Umwelt umgegangen wird. Aber total schuetzen kann man sie gar nicht mehr. Da ist schon am kaputt gehen."

R: "Und wuerden Sie sich selbst als Umweltschuetzer bezeichnen?"

G-FE5: "Umweltschuetzer sehe ich natuerlich wieder, wie Sie jetzt fragen, die an die Oeffentlichkeit gehen. Das bin ich eigentlich nicht. So ich arbeite – mehr im Untergrund."

G-FE5: "Environmentalist? Environmentalists endeavour, as that word says, to protect the environment against something. But the bottom line is that it is unfortunately not 100% possible anymore, is it? One can act with consideration, treat the environment with respect. But you can't protect it totally anymore. It's already being destroyed."

R: "And would you decribe youself as an environmentalist?"

G-FE5: " I see more environmentalists going public again. This is not me. The way I work is more in the underground."

The few managers, who had a negative image of environmentalists, argued slightly different from their British counterparts. One for example criticised that they just came into his shop to put stickers on certain products considered to be gene-manipulated without talking to him beforehand and asking for his opinion:

"Die brachen einfach in meinen Laden ein ohne ueberhaupt mit mir zu reden." (G-FC1)

"They just broke into my shop without even talking to me." (G-FC1)

Another managers associated them with "Oekofuzzis in Wollpullis gegen Castor" (G-E4; Greenies in knitware against Castor), which is maybe the German equivalent for the British "not being lentils and sandals types" as found by Fineman (1997:33), but this manager highlighted in the next sentence that everybody should care about environmental protection:

"…aber Umweltschutz geht uns alle an, denn wir leben alle auf diesen Planeten, so dass unsere Enkel noch leben koennen" (G-E4)

> "...but environmental protection concerns us all, because we live all on this planet, so that our grandchildren still can live" (G-E4)

Only one manager had a similar perception of environmentalists as the British managers describing them as less matter-of-factly:

> "Umweltschuetzer, so wie Greenpeace, die machen etwas radikalere Aktionen, die aber aufruetteln und auf normales Problem hinweisen, hinterher kann man das dann sachlicher bearbeiten. Da ist aber gewisser Teil Wahrheit dabei!" (G-FC4)

> "Environmentalists, such as Greenpeace, they make some more radical actions, which however jolt and point towards a normal problem, afterwards one can work with it more matter-of-factly. But there's a bit truth in it!" (G-FC4)

In the last quote environmentalists were indirectly labelled as emotional (less matter-of-factly), but this was the only exception where the attribute 'emotional' was brought into the discourse. In all other accounts the notion of 'emotionality versus rationality' was just not mentioned. But even this German manager highlighted that there is a 'bit of truth' in the argumentation of the environmentalist and he described his own ecological identity as follows:

> "Nee, kein Umweltschuetzer, aber ich fuehle mich der Umwelt gegenueber verantwortlich, kaufe z.B. Mehrwegflaschen, aber da kommen dann auch andere Gruende hinzu, dass man dann z.B. nicht so viel Muell hat…" (G-FC4)

> "No, not an environmentalist, but I feel responsible towards the environment, buy e.g. reusable bottles, but there are also other reasons in place, that one then e.g. has not so much rubbish…" (G-FC4)

In general, most German managers had a positive image of environmentalists or even considered themselves to be environmentalists. The few critical of environmentalists however made an effort to show that they still care about the environment.

Due to this positive image of environmentalism managers, who considered themselves environmentalists, had no problems in stating this, very different to the British managers. It went even so far that one of the Energy managers didn't hold back his anti-nuclear engagement; however he claimed that he was not too outspoken about it as quite a few of his actions would bring him into conflict with the law.

> "Ist im Unternehmen bekannt, aber ich haenge das nicht an die grosse Glocke, wuerde auch nicht Vorstand Details erzaehlen. Bin ja aber keine gespaltene Persoenlichkeit und das steht ja schon auch in Zeitung, aber ist eben manchmal nicht so ganz gesetzeskonform (…)wuerde gern Atomenergie verbannen, in XX haben wir das geschafft, Kernenergie frei, was mir sehr wichtig ist…"(G-E5)

> "It is known in the company, but I don't shout it from the rooftops, also wouldn't tell the board details. I am not though a split personality and that is also already in the newspaper, but it is now sometimes not in accordance with the existing law (…) would gladly banich nuclear energy, at XX we have achieved this, nuclear energy free, which is very important for me…"(G-E5)

In the present it was especially important for some of the managers that they communicate a positive image of being an environmentalist:

> "Ich achte darauf, dass man nicht so altbacken daher kommt, Umweltschutz kann auch Spass machen, nicht so griesgraemig daher kommt, klar bin ich Umweltschuetzer, ja klar, aber weiss, dass es abschreckend wirken kann." (G-FE1)

> "I look to it, that one doesn't appear too frumpy, pollution control can also be fun, doesn't appear too crabby, surely I am an environmentalist, yes surely, but I know, that it can act as a deterrent." (G-FE1)

4.3   Environmental activities at home and in their role as managers

With regard to the differences between work and home roles there has been a slight change since Fineman and Clarke (1996) reported that managers were pushed into recycling by their wifes, but suspended their beliefs when slipping into their work roles. In the present study, managers were very vocal about their activities at home. They would choose examples from their private life to illustrate their points, but were very silent about their activities at work.

> "I try and do my bit, at home for example, because you know at home we have you know these recycling bins for that we put out for the dusting men, for newspapers, yeah? Em we've got separate …bags if you like for cans and …and we have been recycled…we have a separate bin for recycling garden wastes within our house (…) because you know …the resources that we have within the world isn't going to go forever if we don't try and do something about it." (UK-FC4)

> "All my light bulbs at home besides two are energy efficient…we started to recycle…" (UK-E6)

Even when they were in charge of business activities that had a huge environmental impact they would discuss environmental problems they had chosen to tackle at home often spending a considerable amount of thoughts on it. One manger for example reported about taking the kids to the bottle bank and most of his environmental reasoning was about these private home activities. On the other hand he was head of a department that made the buying decisions for fresh produce – *"we are buying from 26.000 farmers" (UK-FC3)* – but not at any point during the interview would he discuss the environmental impact these buying decisions might have such as air miles despite expressing his concerns:

> "I feel quite strongly as a parent about environmental issues, there is a long term sense to protect things and we do a lot. I go with the kids to the bottle bank…." (UK-FC3)

It might be that he took refugee in the easier to handle private activities; it would have been interesting to explore this further, however the researcher was not sure how to

raise this discrepancy without being too confrontative. Further research into this area might be necessary to explore the question why British managers seem to be reluctant to speak about their environmental activities within their work role. If at all they were using examples from the business world, they would choose examples such as using a mug for the coffee machine or separating litter, which could be classified as the 'more private aspect of their work role' as they were not related to their core work as managers:

> "We have this coffee machine…you know with plastic cups…I have brought mugs in, because you can press the button and then you can use your own cup…but I don't think many person in this company do this …you have to have legislation." (UK-E2)

> "It is a joke downstairs…they observe it because I am more senior…. I look through litter and get the papers out." (UK-E3)

This reluctance to speak about environmental business decisions might be due to their confidential nature. It might be also related to the reluctance of British managers to let personal views influence business activities as for example highlighted by the following manager:

> "If you are talking about values and value judgements, you are bound to be influenced by your own personal convictions. And that is what I was saying. You've got to be careful that you don't get your own personal convictions, don't persuade you and carry you off to make decisions within business that are not good for your business. And that's, that's the separation. So I don't, you know --- I don't really, I can't really say that I am on a personal crusade through work, that is what I am trying to get at." (UK-FE3)

Therefore they might perceive it as easier to talk about how they act as private person than in their business role. This separation between private world and business world will be discussed further in the next two chapters.

Only one British manager explained in detail how she achieved environmental improvements in her private role and in her work role and how they were related, not only for her but also for other employees, who she tried to influence.

> "I think you can have a two-front-attack…you have got your house where you wake up in the morning and then you go to work in the factory or shop or whatever….and the two you are interrelating your life now…. In business for example one of the first things I did when I came here I had an energy efficiency day where we were giving out a free energy-light-bulb in return for filling out a questionnaire about you house (…) so if people are coming to work and they take something home then they are much more likely to go back to work thinking about it…so it is about education, training, and I think the two, the work life and home life, they are in parallel really...because a lot of people work here in the XX because of the values (…) and they wouldn't want to work anywhere else because it is personally, aligns with their own beliefs, for other people this doesn't mean anything they are not bothered about it…but yes, it can be a cyclical process between work and home life…."(UK-FE2)

Her whole way of presenting herself was similar to her German counterparts, who worked in a similar ecological oriented company. They all explained how they went into business to implement environmental changes. The other three British managers, who worked for ecological oriented companies however described their way into an environmentl oriented company as coincidental.

All German managers, working for a company with an ecological orientation, highlighted how privileged they feel that they can bring their own values into business. Furthermore, they stressed that they would have problems to market products with a bad impact on the environment.

"Ich denke aber natuerlich, ich habe den Vorteil, daß ich echt mit Produkten arbeite, die der Menschheit noch etwas Gutes tut, ja? Von daher finde ich es schon für mich, also ich wuerde nicht gern, heutzutage nach meinem Wissen, im normalen Lebensmittelmarkt arbeiten. Ich möchte da den Leuten schon was vermitteln, wenn ich schon den Nutzen durch das – ich verdiene ja dadurch, nicht so ein ganz schlechtes Gewissen zu haben, den Leuten was andrehen zu müssen..." (G-FE 5)

"I think however needless to say, I have the advantage, that I genuinely work with products, that do something good to mankind, yes? Therefore I find it already for myself, so I would not like to do, nowadays according to my knowledge, to work in the normal food product market. I would like to convey to the people already something, if I already have the use out of that - I earn, yes, thereby, not to have such a bad conscience, to have to foist something to the people..." (G-FE 5)

"Marketing zu betreiben, wo man nicht luegen muß, ist richtig – richtig gut, ja? Man muß nie luegen und was erfinden, nicht! (…)Das ist eine große Genugtuung, dazu dafür arbeiten zu duerfen ist ein Luxus .. für mich immer gewesen. Das ist ein großer Luxus, eine große Erfuellung, das machen zu duerfen. Das haben nicht viele, diese Moeglichkeit etwas Sinnvolles zu tun" (G-FE1)

"To do marketing, where one doen't have to tell a lie, is justly – really good, yes? One doesn't have to tell a lie and to invent something, does one! (…) That is a large satisfaction, to to be allowed to work for it is a luxury ... for me has always been. That's a large luxury, a large fulfilment, to be allowed to do that. Not many have that, this possibility to do something meaningful." (G-FE1)

"Und ich wuerde sagen, das ist hier eine Moeglichkeit, eine Alternative zu entwickeln, und dem tradierten oekonomischen und zerstoererischen Wirken einfach Marktanteile wegzunehmen. Das ist schon relativ befriedigend. Dafuer arbeite ich auch gerne lange und viel, und laß mich im Verhaeltnis zu dem, was sonst realisierbar wäre, schlechter bezahlen und laß mir auch mehr gefallen, ja? Was ich mir sonst wahrscheinlich nicht gefallen lassen wuerde." (G-FE2)

"And I would say, that's here a possibility, to develop an alternative, and take simply market shares from the traditional economic and destructive operation. That's already relative satisfactory. For it I work gladly long hours, and let myself be paid less in relation to what could be otherwise realised, and I put up with more, yes? What I probably wouldn't put up with otherwise." (G-FE2)

"Berichte nehmen mich mit, aber ich selbst nicht so viel tun kann. Aber ich kann nur

etwas tun, indem ich entweder im oekologischen Bereich arbeite und versuche, Dinge, die der Umwelt schaden zu veraendern" (G-FE3)

"I am touched by reports, but that I can't do so much myself. But I can only do something, while I either work in an ecological area and try to change things, that damage the environment." (G-FE3)

Most of them compared the differences between their work role and their home role. One manager claimed that she was stricter in her private life, behaving more environmentally friendly:

"Also meine Position ist da schon ein bißchen strenger. (…)Weil die Mutter Erde, die - da haben wir schon eine Verantwortung. Wir können die nicht immer nur ausnutzen, sondern wir so sollten eigentlich ein bißchen schonender mit ihr umgehen.(…) Privat, z.B. ich fahre bis moeglich kein Auto, wirklich gehe zu Fuß oder fahre mit dem Rad. (…) Also das ist meine Einstellung, private Einstellung." (G-FE5)

"So my position is already a bit more strict. (…) Because 'the Mother Earth', the – there we have already a responsibility. We cannot always exploit her, but we should actually treat her a bit with respect.(…) Privately, I for example drive by the time possible no car, really I go on food or drive with the bicycle. (…) so that's my approach, my private approach." (G-FE5)

Another manager claimed that they were 'normal' at home, which she defined as

"achten auf Verpackung, halt so ganz normal auf die Umwelt"(G-FE3)

"to pay attention to packaging, just normal attention to the environment"(G-FE3)

However she also wanted to raise her ecological profile in the next year:

"In den naechsten Jahren moechte ich mich komplett oekolgisch ernaehren. Jetzt kaufe ich z.B. fuer die Kinder das gute Steak, das auch besser schmeckt, und ich esse ein konventionell hergestelltes…!" (G-FE3)

"In the next years I want to nourish myself completely organic. Now I buy e.g. for the children the good steak, that also tastes better, and I eat a conventionally produced one…!" (G-FE3)

Interestingly two of the managers, who considered themselves environmentalists, highlighted that they were taking environmental problems less seriously than in the decades before:

"… also diese kleinen Geschichtchen, die man da so macht, mit Recyclingpapier und ... (lacht) und und, ja, auch Muelltrennen, und die letzte .. das letzte Silberfoelchen auch noch da in den Alubehaelter bringen(…)Was weiß ich. Mache ich ja auch heute nicht. Aber wenn man da ein paar ... es ist nicht mehr alles so wahnsinnig bitter ernst, und so ... Nicht? Das hat sich alles auf eine ganz, auf einer normalen, allgemeinen Ebene eingespielt. Das hat sich einfach veraendert." (G-FE1)

"… so these little things, which one does, with recycled paper and ... (laughs) and and, yes, also to separate rubbish, and to bring the last .. the last little silver foil also still into the right aluminium container (…)what do I know. I do it today. But if one a few ... it is not any more all so mad acrimoniously serious, and as ... isn't it? That has now levelled itself, on a normal, general level. That has simply changed." (G-FE1)

Both managers described themselves as more radical - " ein richtiger Oeko" (a proper environmentalist G-FE2)in the time before they could implement their environmental values in their daily work. Their interpretation was that in the present they would focus their efforts within their business role and were a bit less engaged in their private role.

Also some managers from conventional oriented companies claimed that they have been stricter in the past within their home role, as the following manager put it - 'he was cleaner before' - but at the same time he seemed to apologize for falling short of the ideal way:

> "Ich kaufe im Bioladen, habe aber auch schon Fleich beim Metzger gekauft, privat zu hause noch sauber, aber hier in der Kantine kann ich nicht vegetarisch essen und das Fleich ist bestimmt nicht oekologisch hergestellt." (G-E5)

> "I buy in an organic shop, but I have also already bought meat from the butcher, privately at home still clean, but here in the canteen I cannot eat vegetarian and the meat is surely not produved organically." (G-E5)

Overall, German managers reported for both roles, but even more with regard to their home role, how their behaviour had changed over the years. British managers spoke more statically about what they do less indicating whether they are planning to do more in the future or changed their views recently. Even when the researcher asked in latter interviews, whether they have any future plans for environmental improvements in their home or business role, most of them fell silent.

German manager were also more likely to report about the interchanges between their work role and their private role, for example how they use knowledge acquired within their work role for tackling problems in their home role and vice versa:

> "Aber was man beruflich machen kann – das ist auch der Vorteil, wenn sich bei uns etwas aendert, kriegt man die Informationen automatisch. Man weiß, diese Aenderungen greifen auch im privaten Bereich. Dann kann man das gleich weitergeben, sagen wir mal, zuhause spricht man darueber, eventuell im Bekanntenkreis.(…) Auch, sagen wir mal, auch ich privat auch aus Umweltgruenden, sehe zu, sagen wir mal, da verzweigt so ein bißchen Beruf- und Privatleben, weil ich auch aus vielen Sachen, die ich hier kennenlerne, die ich hier dazulerne, die ich hier bearbeite(…) Also sagen wir mal, gewisse Vorgaben von wegen Umwelt, vom Umweltgedanken her gesehen, sollte man nicht nur privat, sondern auch hier erfuellen. Und – sagen wir mal, Gott sei Dank, haben wir schon vor Jahren das Bewusstsein geweckt." (G-FC5)

> "But what one can do professionally - that's also the advantage, if something changes for us, one gets the information automatically. One knows these changes affect also the private sphere. Then one can pass that in a moment, say, at home one talks about it, possibly in the circle of friends.(…) Also, say, also I privately also out of environment concerns, see to, say, there intermingles a bit job - and private life, because out of a lot of things, which I get to know here, which I learn here, which I work on here (…) So say, certain guidelines because of environment, seen from an environment perspective, one ought to fulfill not only privately, but also fulfil here. And - say, thank God, we have already years ago woken up that consciousness." (G-FC5)

Here again a manger mentioned that business related environmental problems were dicussed in private encounters, this will be explored more in the next chapter.

4.4   Summary

To sum up, the present study suggests that there has been a slight shift in the ways that British managers position themselves with regard to environmental issues. The managers now expressed environmental concerns and awareness; however, the responses indicated that 'being an environmentalist' was still not socially acceptable among the interviewed managers. Even discussing environmental issues was regarded as an emotional topic and therefore to be avoided within the business context, where managers wanted to appear rational and unattached to personal values. All British managers, even the ones who declared in the interviews to be environmentalists, stressed the point that their opinions were based on a 'scientific' analysis, that they were (economic) rational beings and often used the phrase ' as a scientist' to underline their credibility. Most managers perceived environmentalists, especially from environmental pressure groups, as outside the scientific discourse by giving biased arguments; however managers, who presented themselves as environmentalists highlighted that one can only make an informed decision by getting the facts from all societal groups.

While British managers considered environmental topics emotional, the attributes 'emotional' and 'rational' as well as the affirmation 'I am a scientist' had less importance in the German discourse.

Generally, German managers either claimed to be environmentalist or decribed themselves as environmentally conscious. Their accounts suggested that for them a sound knowledge in environmental issues was part of being a good manager. This also became obvious when asked about environmentalists. Although many of them claimed that they were not environmentalists, their argumentation was mostly going along the lines that they were not as consistent, didn't spend as much time or didn't express their opinions in public, as environmentalists would do. Managers would often describe environmentalists as 'someone, who is taking to the streets' and would use this connotation to define their own 'ecological identity'. The German word for 'environmentalist' is 'Umweltschuetzer', which would be better translated into 'protector of the environment'. Therefore it has a very positive connotation, which might explain, why German managers were more inclined to describe themselves as 'protector of the environment'. Even managers who criticed environmentalists made an

effort to show that they still cared about the environment. Due to this positive image of environmentalism, German managers who considered themselves environmentalists had no problems in stating this, other than their British counterparts, who would never mention this in a business environment.

Therefore the present study seemed to suggest that for German managers an active engagement for environmental issues is part of their role description as managers. In contrast, British managers define their role as manager to work solely in the interest of the business and to exclude anything they regard as emotional topics such as environmental issues.

Their understanding of the managerial role might also explain why British managers tended to use examples from their private life when discussing environmental issues. It seemed to be socially acceptable to show a certain environmental engagement in their home role but not in their business role. The usage of private examples might be further related to the reluctance of British managers to let what they consider as personal views – and this includes environmental protection- influence business decision.

German managers working for a company with an ecological orientation on the other hand highlighted how privileged their feel that they can bring their own values into business. Most managers, also from 'conventional' companies, compared the differences between their work role and their home role and gave examples from both. They also reported how their behaviour had changed over the years, sometimes becoming less strict or sometimes highlighting their more ambitious aims for the future. British managers spoke more statically about what they do less indicating whether they are planning to do more in the future or changed their views recently. German managers were also more likely to describe the interchanges between home and work role and how they discuss with friends and family business-related environmental problems. This will be now further discussed in the next chapter.

5   Discursive resources and reported cultural influences

In this chapter the different discursive resources employed by managers to explain how they became environmentally aware and the cultural influences they make responsible for this development will be presented. But managers were not only asked about when they first came into contact with environmental problems, the research also explored which cultural institutions they considered influential for their ongoing sensemaking of environmental issues.

In their model described previously Carroll and Gannon (1997) have identified primary and secondary mechanisms of cultural transmission such as parenting, education, religion, laws, and organizational culture. Their model was offering a starting point to design questions for the interview schedule to be used in the research, so that the researcher could ask for example whether they recall any environmental education in school. However, the aim of the present study was not to fill up predefined categories as Carrol and Gannon did, but to let the managers decide what they consider as important. Therefore the interview schedule consisted also of open questions such as "When you think back, when do you think you first came into contact with environmental concerns?" However, as argued before sensemaking is a process that is retrospective and ongoing. Not only emotions but also "whatever is occurring at the moment will influence what is discovered when people glance backward." (Weick 1995:26). Therefore, even the order of the questions might have influenced the responses given and each time the researcher offered a theoretical device such as school education the managers would try to make sense of their current values with the help of this device. Sometimes they refused it, but more often they would try to find an explanation within this framework. Furthermore, it has to be noted that the researcher would offer an example, when the managers failed to answer the first open-worded question. For example, when the managers could not think of anything, which might have kicked of their sense of environmental awareness, the researcher would directly ask about their childhood experiences. From the previous studies, it was also anticipated that managers might report an environmental dilemma as a starting point for their environmental concern; for this reason the research explicitly asked for this kind of experience, which according to Kohlberg (1969) is the major incentive to develop 'higher' moral reasoning.

The following section will explore these starting points of environmental reasoning. Many of them were placed in the childhood of the managers, which might be due to the introduction of the topic by the researcher as just described. In the following sections the cultural institutions, managers identified as important are presented. Special consideration is given to the cultural differences in these reports.

5.1 Childhood Places

Many managers spoke fondly of their childhood places, which as they suggested might have had an impact on how they value nature today. The following manager went into a quite detailed description; she also suggested that being a bird watcher was her first contact with the environment:

> "I always used to be into bird watching when I was little, not anymore, it is a bit of a sad thing… birdwatcher…because I grew up on the coast of A (…) very lucky there is a big massive beach there, lots of pinewoods, lots of diversity…as a child we just used to get on the bikes and cycle down to the beach and play in the sand and sandcastles and stuff ... in a sort this is in a way inspirational because you have got the river and you have got the sunset and ..there is space ….and the woods and you interact with that environment, don't know… and when you see rubbish on the beach you sort of think that it shouldn't be there….you know as a kid that this is wrong… it is naughty… someone will tell you off. …. I suppose that is just where I grew up really and a desire to protect what we had on the doorsteps." (UK-FE2)

Other managers were not as descriptive, however quite a few expressed an appreciation of being in the countryside:

> "My family went for walks every weekend; I was fascinated by beautiful landscapes and also by science, how this all works together…I enjoy science." (UK-E 2)

Some managers, especially in Germany, just assumed that if one grows up in the countryside one has a stronger connection to nature:

> "Umweltschutz in Beruehrung? Ja, eigentlich schon immer ein bisschen, weil ich bin auf dem Dorf gross geworden. Und da ist es immer ein bisschen anders. Da geht man immer verbundener mit der Natur, man waechst ja mit der Natur auf. Da verinnerlicht man das schon ein bisschen mehr, als wenn man in der Stadt gross geworden ist, ja." (G-FE 5)

> "Encounter environmentalism? Yes, actually already always a bit, because I was raised in a village. And there it is always a bit different. There you are always more connected with nature, one grows up yes with the nature. One internalises that already a bit more, as if one grows up in a town, yes."

Others grow up in the city centre, but still had plenty of experiences with nature. The following manager for example described how they built tree houses in the city forest and how much she enjoyed spending her holidays on a farm, which has influenced her leisure activities into the present time:

> „Wir fahren immer noch viel mit den Raedern in die Natur und dann moechte man das natuerlich auch erhalten, ist dann schon Betroffener." (G-FE 4)

> "We drive still a lot with the bicycles into the nature and then one naturally wants to conserve it, is then already a person concerned."

Other managers were convinced that growing up in the city centre made them longing for the countryside, where they also chose to live as adults:

> „Ich bin in der Stadt aufgewachsen. Das hat bestimmt damit zu tun. (...) Denn, wenn man, so sagen wir mal, keinen Garten hat – mich hat es schon immer in die Natur gezogen. (...) Wir wohnen auch jetzt privat seit 12 Jahren auf dem Land, weil man doch da, sagen wir mal, ganz anders lebt, und mehr Ruhe hat, und sich mehr – sagen wir mal, in seiner Freizeit erholen kann. Fuer Natur hatte ich schon immer was uebrig." (G-FC 5)

> "I have grown up in a city. That has certainly to do with it. (...) Because, if one, let's say, has no garden - it has drawn me always into the nature. (…) We live also now privately since 12 years in the countryside, because there one lives, let's say, whole differently, and has more peace, and can recover more – let's say, in their leisure time. For nature I had already always some love."

Another manager complained about the smog in London he experienced during his childhood, which also made him move to the countryside later.

> "I was born in London, when we were children there was smog, thick for days (..) I didn't think about it – must have been pollution – 6 years old (..) No, not discussable thing…when you live in London then you have it! (..) I like to live in the countryside where there is no fog…I want a farm and a field close by…then we moved here…and then it hit you….fresh air…not many car…just trees…no roads…no traffic…it makes you think: I don't want to live where there s pollution." (UK-FE4)

He like some other managers expressed a strong need to be in an unpolluted environment, but made no connection to his own polluting activities such as "driving a big car" as he proudly reported only a few sentences later. It is also interesting that some managers described their childhood environment as very polluted but they claimed that it was not seen as an environmental problem nor was it discussed in the family. Surprisingly, these managers also did not consider themselves environmentalist despite these negative childhood experiences. One manager for example grew up next to Sellafield:

> UK-FE3: "Oh, God. Ahm --- well, I suppose, in many ways the environment and issues around the environment have been a backcloth to my childhood. (…) Mhm. The majority of people who, who work within the town where I was brought up, well not the majority, but a great number of them, were employees at Sellafield, family members worked there. So it's, it's something that's always been there."

> R: "And how did your, can you remember as a child, how did you perceive it?"

> UK-FE3: "Well, I think the best way to describe that is, when I was 16, they used to have an apprentice scheme at Sellafield. They used to take on something like 200 apprentices every year from our local schools. But only two of them were instrument

mechanics, which is a very sort of technical apprenticeship. I got one of those jobs when I was 16 and I refused to take it. So there you go."

R: „Ja? Oh! OK (laughs). That must say something."

UK-FE3: "That does say something about my views on Sellafield."

R: "Ahja, so what was the very first, that was at 16, what was the very first memory with 5, 6 or so that you came across this issue or, also the very first?"

UK-FE3: "I cannot really remember. As I say, it's always been part of the backcloth of the, of life growing up in Cumbria, really. That you've got Sellafield there, you've got legacy of coal mining, and steel works, -- I would imagine, the first, see even as a child, as a young child, 6 or 7, we used to live near a chemical plant, and occasionally it would send up a plume and it would kill all, kill all the roses in the front garden. So, even 6 or 7 I was conscious that there is an environmental issue.(…)

UK-FE3: "Ahm - Well, again, I think it, I think part of it is, if you sort of live in a relatively sort of industrialised area, it's just part of life, isn't it? You know.

P: So it was not really a problem. It was not discussed as a problem, 'what do we do with all this'?"

UK-FE3: No, not really, no. I think, I think, I think that is quite interesting because it was not. I think because it was more of a national debate about Sellafield, as I can remember as I grew older, people would discuss, it was something to talk about. But not the chemical plant, very strange. (…)Well, again, it's, while I got awareness of it, I don't think my family are particularly anti it. Again, there is a mixture of, while you can see some risks with it, it brings employment, it brings money. So, you can't. It's not a one-sided argument. There is, you got to balance that against the benefits that come with it as well. (…) So, I think my own personal view is that I have quite a lot of faith in humanity's ability to sort these things out. And while I can see, there are a lot of things that we are doing, that over time are damaging, you know, I do, I suppose I honestly think that we will manage to sort these things out."

Thomashow (1995) and Degenhardt (2002) had suggested that most environmentalists have very positive memories of their childhood places, a landscape or garden they cherished. The interviews of the present study indicate that all the managers who claimed to be environmentalist talked about these fond memories and that surprisingly managers who grew up in a polluted environment expressed a longing for nature but without mentioning an environmental engagement. Thomashow (1995) had also observed that many environmentalists talked about experiencing an irrevocable change of their loved childhood places through destruction or pollution fuelling their environmental engagement. In this study however only two managers reported such a loss, one made a connection between his first experiences of environmental destruction and his environmental engagement, the other did not.

"I was 6 or 8, behind the house we had open space, they built on it. I lost my playground and cried my eyes out. I remember throwing snowballs at workers, (laughs) maybe my first environmental protest action…" (UK-FE1)

"Actually where I lived when I was four there was a corn field – was it actually a corn field? Maybe it was a meadow and it came close to the house and I remember that being

harvested in September I can remember this being done….and not long after we moved from there they actually built houses on that which I suppose - I never thought of this that much - but it never seemed to me a better use of land…it was much more pleasant to look out on the fields than to look on other houses….” (UK-E 3)

As mentioned before, after the first question, where managers were free to choose any discursive resource they saw as a trigger to their environmental awareness, the researcher guided their reasoning by asking them about their very first contact with environmental problems. Therefore, it is not surprising that they searched for clues in their childhood but it is also interesting to notice that not all found clues in their childhood. Some managers in both countries just summarised that their parents taught them the "usual things such as that you should clean up behind you, not throw paper on the floor..." (UK-FC 1). A few older managers made the connection between these rules and the scarcity their parents experienced during the war and how it coloured their personalities:

> "I suppose as a child when I was told to turn the light off or to shut the door to keep the heat in. I suppose my parent's generation grew up during the war when there was rationing, things were in short supply, I mean they were children then, and things were rationed, everything had to be drawn out to have the most benefit from it because it couldn't be replaced or there was no more food around, so this coloured their personalities. It's been passed on because they were very keen not to waste anything and if you grow up in this environment and not rebelled against it totally and obviously I didn't', it coloured my view on the environment …yes, you see, what I said before I am more obviously concerned about waste." (UK-E 3)

Some German managers referred to cruelty to animals they saw as children. One manager for example mentioned that even in the 'Kindergarten' he felt pity for suffering animals:

> „Ja bei mir begann das relativ frueher. Ich habe ja auch schon zu – Zu Kindergartenzeiten habe ich mir schon erste Gedanken darueber gemacht, was die Leute da eigentlich anstellen und es hat sich komischerweise auch, auch manifestiert zu einer fruehen Schulzeit mit 8-9-10 Jahren, mm, daß ich eigentlich immer mehr mitbekommen habe, was eigentlich in der Welt so passiert, ja? An zerstoererischen Dynamik - komischerweise ohne daß irgendjemand aus meiner Familie da irgendwie sozusagen derartige Gedanken, Besorgnisse oder aehnliches gehegt haette. (...)Ich kann mich nicht erinnern. Ich weiß nur, daß ich immer Schwierigkeiten damit gehabt habe, Fleisch zu essen, weil ich wußte, wie die Viecher gehalten werden. Das hat mich immer beschaeftigt." (G-FE 2)

> "Yes, for me it began relatively early. I have also already during - during kindergarden times I had already my first thoughts about it, what the peoples are actually doing and it has manifested itself funnily enough in primary school days with 8-9-10 years, mm, that I actually was more and more aware, what actually happens in the world, yes? Destructive dynamics - funnily enough without that anybody of my family has cultivated anyhow so to speak such thoughts, concerns or similar things.(...)I can not remember. I know only, that I always had difficulties to eat meat, because I knew, how those animals were kept. That has always been a concern."

However, this manager and a few other managers who described themselves as environmentalists, expressed the feeling that this concern for animals was just there from the beginning of their life. The manager just mentioned related it for example back to some experiences in his former life (see also below). Another manager joked that it might be in her genes, why she became a birdwatcher in an early age:

> "Came from me looking out the window- on a wet rainy day I suppose– it rains a lot in XX, yeah it is more interesting than reading books when you are little looking at things, exploring things….My son is 3 ½ now and he always wants to go outside …this is how I was … I didn't want to be holed up in a boring house or a boring school or something……where it came from… this is the way I am…it's in my genes…yes, I did not meet my grandparents, maybe they were green or so..".(UK-FE2)

Another manager also recalled a strong connection to animals from an early age, however he also referred to a shocking experience in his youth as the trigger for his environmental engagement, which happened when he visited farmers with his father, who was a butcher, and saw the different way animals were raised.

> „Also wir hatten da so als Kinder mit Tieren zu tun, ja? Pferde, wir hatten Rinder. Uuund – das war eine ziemliche Verbundenheit mit denen, nicht? Und die lebten bei uns sehr frei, genauso wie wir auch frei lebten. Und wir lebten mit denen zusammen und wir haben die gepflegt, irgendwie gepflegt. Und eines Tages hat dann, da hat man gesagt: ‚Du, wir muessen jetzt mal – muessen mal die Stelle anschauen, wo die Schweine herkommen, die wir verarbeiten bei uns in der Industrie, ja? Wie die leben, was so die Bauern machen ...' Und da sind wir da raufgefahren Richtung Fechte in der norddeutschen Tiefebene, wo die Schweinestaelle sind. Da hat es mir eigentlich – da war ich vielleicht 13 oder 14 – da hat es mir richtig abgestellt. (..) Ja das waren Haltungsbedingungen, ein Gestank und eine Nervositaet, und zusammengepferchte Tiere, und Spaltenboeden, und kranke Tiere zwischendrin. – Da war ich ja noch juenger – das hat mir richtig – das hat mir – das hat mir richtig wehgetan. Da habe ich gemerkt, daß es auch anders geht. Das war so tief – tief – Schock, na ja – aber das war tief - eine tiefe Erfahrung so - diese Geschichte." (G-FE 1)

> "So we did had contact as children with animals. Horses, we had cattle. And - that was quite a connection with them, wasn't it? And they lived with us very freely, in the same way as we also lived freely. And we lived together with them and we looked after them, somehow looked after them. And then one day, one said: ‘You, we must now - must now look at the location, where the pigs come from, the ones we process in our industry, yes? How they live, what the farmers do ... ‘And then we drove in the direction of Fechte in the North German Lowlands, where the pigsties are. It has me actually - as I might have been 13 or 14 - it has put me right off. (..) Yes those were keeping conditions, a stench and nervousness, and penned up animals, and concrete slat panels, and sick animals between everything. - As I was yes still younger – that really got to me- that really hurt me. Therefore, I noticed, that it also can be done differently. That was as deep - deep - shock, right - but that was deep – an amazing experience - this story." (G-FE 1)

Other managers in both countries also traced their environmental awareness back to an incident later in their lives, often as an adult. However, some were struggling whether

they should classify this as an environmental problem or whether the environment was still intact.

> "I would probably go out fishing nine years ago maybe maybe longer and catching nothing where three years earlier I would be throwing my rod in and pulling out everything and you know, you'd perhaps ask the question 'why am I not pulling any fish' and you thought perhaps you were fishing poorly, your technique, or whatever and then you were finding that … you know the people who were fishing, were also not pulling any fish out and then the result of that the fish within those canals were … disappearing because of the pollution, the fact that the water was polluted. So maybe that influenced, maybe, other than that I don't think, yes I like to go into the Lake District and I would only do that maybe twice a year. But I have not experienced any difference in that environment in the last twenty years, I've not seen any difference its still appears to be …nice and bright and cheerful and a nice place to be, so …you know I would have to say that perhaps other than perhaps the fish, no the countryside does not influence me in thinking about environmental issues." (UK-FC 4)

A few managers highlighted specific environmental news and how these impacted on their awareness. The following manager for example expressed that his fears were triggered by the stories about the 'greenhouse effect', how he made connection to his own life experience and how it made him concerned about the future for the youngest generation even though he does not have children himself:

> " I know that greenhouse thing that really scared me. Just, just by people saying, I remember reading some sort of these stories about icecaps melting, and, and, just generally temperatures getting warmer, and then you just noticed that the weather has changed so much since I was a child, you know. (…)So, that to me, the changes in the weather and what you read about the implications of why that happened, I think is particularly scary. Ahm, and – we don't have children, but it does worry me, what it will be like in another 50 years. You know, that actually worries me probably more than anything. (…) If you got kids, I've got nieces and nephews and godsons, and you wonder what it will be like in 40 – 50 years time, you know. Just, which bits are going to be flooded - yes, it's concerning." (UK-FC 1)

One British manager claimed that environmental issues only became a topic when she started to work in the energy sector:

> "I think in terms of environmental issues as in environmental issues, then I think it was really at work. Ahm – I think, as I said to you before, in terms of getting involved in this, sort of, this arena, my primary issue, the prime motivation has been the issues of equity and fairness, more than environmental, environmental issues. (…) as I say, I think personally, it really just came on my agenda sort of when I, when I was starting to work in the energy, in the energy world, and probably then around, mostly around, 1990-1991, that sort of time frame." (UK-E 5)

Both managers, who originally came from East Germany, had very different responses than the other German managers. One actually said that he was shocked when he saw in 1989 for the first time all the packaging in the West, how much problem he had with it afterwards and how it triggered his environmental engagement. Similar to his other

'East German'colleague he reported how recycling was done in the GDR on a big scale as school activity:

> „Die haben uns von der Schule herumgesandt, um Flaschen zu sammeln und Papier. Das waren richtig grossangelegte Aktionen."(G-E6)

> "At school they sent us out to collect bottles and paper. Those were really large scale activities."(G-E6)

However, these recycling activities were not classified as environmental protection; even during the interview one of the two managers claimed that he was not doing anything for the environment, but later in the interview he referred to all the recycling he is doing and only when the researcher made the connection, he agreed that this could be classified as an environmental activity. For this manager the first introduction to environmental problems happened in his first employment in West Germany through the company. It was very interesting how he referred to the nuclear accident in Tschernobyl. According to him, the East-German news reported about radioactivity on West German fields but that there was nothing to be worried about in East Germany. When I asked him whether he thought that this was a false statement given the closeness of the fields in both Germanies, he seemed to be surprised:

> G-FC 4: „Ach ja Tschernobyl…aber das war nur im Westen…"

> R: „Hat Sie das nicht verwundert?"

> G-FC 4: „Nee, dafuer war ich noch zu jung, erst 15 Jahre alt. In DDR technische Erklaerungen, so gehen wir mit radioaktiven Abfaellen um…"

> R: „Aber die Felder liegen doch direkt nebeneinander, das konnte doch nur eine falsche Meldung sein..."

> G-FC 4: „Wie meinen Sie das?"

> G-FC 4: "Oh yes Tschernobyl…but that was only in the West…"

> R: "Were you not suspicious?"

> G-FC 4: "No, for that I was still too young, only 15 years old. In the GDR technical explanations, this is how we deal with radioactive waste…"

> R: "But the fields were directly side by side, that could only be a manipulated report..."

> G-FC 4: "What do you mean?"

So far there have been no major differences between the managers in the UK and Germany; childhood experiences and environmental incidents later in life seemed to have had a similar impact on managers. However German managers would also refer to cultural institutions such as school as very influential, the following manager mentioned his teachers when asked about his first contact with environmental problems:

> „Das waeren gruene Lehrer, die aber nicht missionarisch waren." (G-FC 1)

„They were green teachers, but they were not missionary." (G-FC 1)

In the next sections different cultural institutions are explored and the cultural differences highlighted, not only in raising environmental awareness but also in the ongoing environmental discourse.

5.2   Family/Friends

The importance managers attributed to their parents in teaching them the basic rules such as not to put litter in the landscape was already mentioned before. This was similar in both countries, however some German managers recalled some special experiences with their parents. One for example explained how she was impressed by the car scheme her father had joined, which indicated through a ‚green point' on the windscreen that he was willing to give someone a lift:

> "War meinen Eltern sehr wichtig, und meine Grundschullehrerin wohnte nebenan, immer Diskussionen in den 70er Jahren, und mein Vater hat beim gruenen oder roten Punkt, weiss nicht mehr, was nun, wahrscheinlich gruen, macht ja Sinn, mitgemacht….hatte gruenen Punkt am Auto als Zeichen, dass man bereit ist, jemanden mit dem Auto mitzunehmen, wenn er irgendwo hinfuhr, hat staendig jemanden mitgenommen!" (G-FE 4)

> "Was very important for my parents, and my primary school teacher lived next door, always discussions in the seventies, and my father participated in the green or red point, don't know anymore, which one, probably green, makes sense yes ….had green point on car as a sign that one is willing to take someone with the car, when he drove anywhere, has constantly taken along someone!" (G-FE 4)

The family was also for many German managers a place, where topics such as environmental issues were discussed. Often the children would learn about environmental problems in school and would challenge their parents with their insights:

> „Ja. Und in dieser Zeit, als meine Geschwister noch jung waren, haben wir halt viel schon mitbekommen von der Oekologie und den logischen Fragen. (...) So war das natuerlich für uns dann, kann man das immer sagen, aus der Schule schon das Futter, um unserem Vater zu sagen, was er alles falsch machte. (...)Da ging es eigentlich los, diese Diskussionen (...) Das war die, der Urgrund eigentlich, anders denken zu wollen." (G-FE 1)

> "Yes. And in this time, when my brothers and sisters still were young, we noticed already a lot about the ecology and the logical queries. (...) As that was natural for us then, the school gave us the food for thought to question our father about all the things he had done wrong (...) There it started, these discussions (...) that was the, the core reason actually, wanting to think differently." (G-FE 1)

These discussions were also mentioned in the earlier study from Schuelein, Brunner and Reiger (1994), albeit here from the perspective of the managers who reflected on these

discussions with their children. Despite their low interest in ecological matters they expressed a felt need to deal with these questions of their children.

While in these earlier studies the managers reported that their economic-technological worldview was challenged by family members or friends, the managers in the present study seemed to have changed their own position as already mentioned in chapter four so that the discussions with friends and families were more presented as exchanges of ideas as in the following example:

> „Also so die Klimaveraenderung, da spricht man schon darueber. Wie kommt das? Über die Ursachen, was kann man dagegen machen? (...)Also Klimaveraenderung, das ist ein Thema. Ueberhaupt, wenn dann so Katastrophen sind. (...) Wir - wie nehme ich meine Umwelt wahr? Was tue ich, um es nicht zu verschlechtern? Tue ich etwas, um da, um da entgegenzutreten, um etwas zu verbessern?" (G-FC 5)

> "So the climate change, people already talk about it. How does it happen? About the causes, what one can do against it? (...) So climate change, that is a topic. Actually when there are catastrophes. (...) We – how do I perceive my environment? What do I do, so that it doesn't deteriorate? Am I doing something in order to, in order to stop things, to improve something?" (G-FC 5)

This exchange with friends is often seen as a way to get more information about environmental issues and to exchange ideas on how to tackle problems:

> „Erstens natuerlich mal Information, Austausch. Und natuerlich will man selber was machen. Man kann ja andere immer kritisieren und selber nichts machen. Und einen Weg für sich selber suchen, wie man dann am besten mit umgehen kann. Man kann ja nicht andere erziehen, man kann nur sich selber aendern." (G-FE 5)

> "Firstly of course information, exchange. And of course one wants to do something. One can always criticize others but doesn't do anything oneself. And to find a way for oneself, how one can best deal with it. One can not educate others, one can only change oneself." (G-FE 5)

Two managers stressed the point that there was nothing new to discuss anymore about the cause of environmental problems, the discussion among their friends and relatives was now about solutions.

> „..alle Themen zur Oekologie sind eigentlich erforscht. Und es gibt für alles Lossungen. Die weiß man auch. Es ist eher die Frage, wie kann man die eigentlich durchsetzen? Die eh die diese Loesungen, die in allen Schubladen ... die sind da. (...) Das sind die Sachen, die Durchsetzungsfaehigkeit, über die man jetzt diskutiert in der Familie. Ja! Diese Eigennutze, die Interessen der Wirtschaft, ja! Das sind diese politischen Fragen. Das in der Wirtschaft, und was kann die Politik da ausrichten? Und welche Systeme brauchen wir, damit damit etwas, damit sich etwas bewegt. Das sind also mehr die Fragen." (G-FE 1)

> "..all themes about ecology are actually investigated. And there are solutions for everything. One knows them. It is more the question, how one can actually enforce them? The… eh the these solutions, they in all drawers ... they are there. (...) These are the things, the enforcement, about which one now discusses in the family. Yes! This self interest, the interests of businesses, yes! Those are the political questions. That in

the economy, and what can politics achieve? And which systems we need so that, so that something moves. Those are much more the questions." (G-FE 1)

All German managers reported that they discuss these issues frequently with their friends and families. Some stressed the point that their friends were also environmentally aware:

> „Meine Freunde sind auch umweltbewusst, fahren meistens Fahrad und viel zusammen in die Natur." (G-FE 4)

> "My friends are also eco-sensitive, drive mostly bicycles and a spend a lot of time together in the countryside." (G-FE 4)

And for many managers it was very important what their spouse, their friends would say:

> "Ich wuerde schoen dumm vor meinen Freunden dastehen, wenn ich das dann nicht wuesste!" (G-FC1)

> "I would get egg on my face in front of my friends, if I would show ignorance." (G-FC1)

Some managers would highlight how they had chosen partners who would have a similar worldview.

> „Gut, also ich glaube schon, daß man sich seinen Partner irgendwie so aussucht, daß sie irgendwas damit zu tun haben, ja. Und daß ... da sozusagen ein Feedback kommt. (...) Und das ... das ist auch notwendig, weil wenn man, wenn man sehr sehr intensiv sich mit einem bestimmten Thema beschäftigt, und einfach einen großen Teil seines Lebens ... seines taeglichen Studenbudgets irgendwie mit solchen Fragen verbringt, dann ... man tut das auch nicht ohne das Engagement. Dann dann, glaube ich, braucht man auch irgendwie den Austausch, ja? An der Stelle. Und da sind dann Freunde, Partner usw."(G-FE 2)

> "Well, so I do believe, that one chooses his partner somehow so that they have something to do with it, yes. And that ... as so to speak they give feedback. (...) and that ... that's also necessary, because if one, if one very very intensely is occupied with a certain topic, and a great part of one's life ... his daily hours somehow deals with such questions, then ... one does not do that without that commitment. Then then, I believe, one needs also somehow the exchange, yes? In this area. And there are then friends, partner etc."(G-FE 2)

The support of their spouses for environmental activities seemed to be an important issue, not only in exchanging ideas but in some cases also in providing the space for their engagement:

> „Meine Partnerin hat die gleiche Meinung, wir haben uns bei Demonstrationen kennengelernt. Frueher selbst engagierter, aber sie unterstuetzt meine Aktivitaet, so dass ich am Wochenende weg sein kann...aber ich gehe nicht mehr auf jede Demo, den Kindern zuliebe." (G-E 5)

> "My partner has the same opinion, we got to know each other during demonstrations. In the past more self engaged, but she supports my activities, so that I can be away at week-ends...but I go no longer to every demo, for the sake of the children." (G-E 5)

Interestingly, in the present study one manager even complained that he was more environmentally engaged than his family but that he could not convince them to change their behaviour:

> „Ich kann mich da nicht durchsetzen, ich selbst fahre mit oeffentlichen Verkehrsmitteln, mache keine unnoetigen Fahrten, aber ich kann mich da nicht durchsetzen... 4 Autos auf 4 Personen,.. ‚wir fahren Autos, die schoen aussehen und Spass machen' da kann ich micht nicht durchsetzen." (G-E 4)

> "I can't get my way, I take the public transport, make no unnecessary rides, but I can't get my way... 4 cars for 4 people,.. 'we drive cars that look stylish and are fun' there I can't get my way." (G-E 4)

British managers were not volunteering that they would discuss these issues with families and friends. When the researcher specifically asked them whether they would speak about environmental problems with their friends and families, quite a few of the managers reacted in a way from their body language that the researcher got the impression that they considered it a strange question. Most of them then offered examples where they had discussed a buying decision with their spouse or friends such as investing in a solar panel, buying a high efficient tumble dryer or installing solar panels as illustrated in the next quote:

> "Comes in conversation a bit for example we wanted to buy new light fittings. It was difficult to find any lamp where the energy saving bulbs would fit it…that makes me feel that most people do not buy these bulbs…for us cost saving the main issue and my wife didn't like the choice. I am a lot more environmental conscious than my wife.(…)I think what influences it if I discuss it with people like in the pub…but I discuss it from the cost side…environmental arguments would not convince anybody…"(UK-E 6)

If at all they would discuss other topics beside these buying decisions, it would be related to other topics such as a holiday.

> "Again its not discussed, its something that may come up as part as a discussion on some discussion on a holiday yeah, so somebody has been on holiday somewhere and has experienced whatever, so that becomes environmental doesn't it? But it is not something, certainly not my friends would say right ok, what do you think about global warming, it wouldn't happen, it wouldn't happen you know if the environment was the cause of not being able to play golf then it would be discussed, of not being able to fish, then it would be discussed. Or you know perhaps somebody would talk about why there are hurricanes in the Caribbean and I don't think we should go on holiday in September or October in the Caribbean because there are hurricanes, but it would have to be topical if that is the word." (UK-FC 4)

One suggested that he would discuss it on a broadsheet level with his friends:

> R: " With your family and friends, do you discuss this, environmental issues in a pub or is it not an issue you would discuss?"

> UK-FE3: "Ah – I try not to. (laughs) No, not really. Only to the level where you would say more a general discussion, whether it be politics, whether it be about George Bush, or whether it be about the environment. At that sort of a level (…) I don't think they are

that connected to the environment that it makes a big difference. As I say, while we discuss lots of issues at the general knowledge sort of level, the informed reader, the broadsheet reader --- I don't think that most of them have enough environmental background to be able to discuss them at any depth from that. – Other than 'it's good' or 'it's bad', or 'not keen on that'. But other than that sort of level of – no."

Another manager claimed that he would try to steer away from such an emotional topic:

"I suppose I tend to steer the conversation back to my comfort zone, which is less potentially emotional, and just concentrate on issues of waste, because every one can agree that we should minimize waste, minimize pollution. …I tend to steer away from what I think are the more less factual discussions about what it actually means, what it actually means for our children and grandchildren. But what we have to do we have to preserve the world order, we have to make sure that there is a future for our children and grandchildren, clearly, but that is a balance between sustainability and having some economic future as well. These things are all very hard I guess, I mean only a few lecturing among us will have enough understanding to understand everything in full clarity and to know what policies mankind should adopt but for most of us it is not possible." (UK-E 3)

Two managers seemed to discuss it on a broader level with their friends, but did not explain it in depth as the following quote illustrates:

"Not much. I am still in contact with friends from school. They are much more idealistic in their perspective on life, one is a teacher, and one is an artist…they have got quite a naïve, cynical perspective on business…I have definitely talked about these issues with them...but I try to ignore them (laughs)…they are too idealistic, they don't live in the real world…but they don't practice what they preach...I don't see them recycling." (UK-E 2)

Many managers expressed that they would not like to impose their values on someone else and that each person should be entitled to their own life. If at all they would offer some ideas or even presents to their relatives but would not insist on it if they do not take it up.

"It is a subject with families and friends. They ask me what I am doing but wouldn't try to influence me." (UK-FE 1)

"Mmmh, my parents would be happy for me to stack shelves in XX, they don't really have…as long as I have got a job and I can pay the bills they don't really bother too much what I am doing…which is great because I had great freedom I could have been a nun, I could have been an aircraft pilot, I could have driven trains (…) They know I am keen on environmental issues but really you know they don't understand what I am doing. I talked to them about it...I gave them a copy of that…and they 'all right, she has her name on it'…, but they always have known that I am quite academic. They know I like this kind of stuff…not really I mean they live their lives…(…) Oh yes, they put the light bulb in, if I can save them a bit of money (laughs) I am trying to give them a compost heap at the moment but this is proving difficult…(…)They can see the benefits but…I think they just have other priorities at the moment to put it this way." (UK-FE 2)

One manager was quite surprised how his mother-in law (from a Scandinavian country) would behave even in his house. He explained it with cultural differences:

> "I think it is, it's slightly cultural, I think it is a case of, you know, children grow up with a more healthy respect and therefore – ahm – you know, if I look at my, my mother-in-law particularly, she is very passionate about, you know, not wasting things and tidying up the rubbish, you know. She goes mad if I throw things in the bin, she takes them out. She does it in my house, as well, but, so therefore I think culturally people are much more conscious, much more aware of the damage that different decisions taken about the environment will do, they would be more conscious of what they buy." (UK-FC 1)

Some managers would even say that they try not to impose anything on their children:

> "I would not like to impose my views on my children. I would not, would not ---- would not sort of walk them off to church or whatever, that they would be inflicted with God either, so, why should I inflict any, you know, my personal views on my children. I know, you cannot help doing it to a certain extent. – But, I would hope that I would give them a balanced view of life. So, you know, I'd try to inform them. If they asked why we are recycling things, well yes, I would explain why, and things like that. But I wouldn't try to persuade them, you know, that's the only alternative."(UK-FE 3)

Others expressed their hope that they would lead their children by example but would restrain from discussing it:

> "When we do see our children it is not something that we will bring up…immediately, if at all really, because one of the hopes and beliefs that they will carry out what you've done 'cause they've experienced living with us and you would hope that with our example they would do whatever we do, but we don't sit down and talk about these issues, I can't say we do. (…) Although what I am saying we don't discuss it as a topic, you know we may discuss it as we are living our lives, as 'why do you do that, Dad?' 'Oh because this is how you do it.'" (UK-FC 4)

5.3   Children

On the other hand, children seemed to have quite an influence on their parents' sensemaking of environmental issues. A few managers in the UK said that they started to think about environmental issues when their children or grandchildren were born:

> " It changed when I became a parent. Before I only heard about ozone and so on but without paying too much attention to it. You have to protect the earth for your genetic offspring...everybody has a responsibility to care for the earth…I am picking up litter on my way to work…when we are out I sometimes collect a whole bag…" (UK-FC 3)

Two female managers, one in Germany, one in the UK, stated that health related problems of their children increased their environmental awareness. The British manager for example reported that the child had asthma and she thought it came from traffic, then they found another reason, and now she was driving to work again but as she claimed with a bad conscience:

> "I never examined my environmental impact…I guess the biggest issue is travel, the travel I do. When I suspected that my daughter has asthma I thought about it a lot (…) I now drive to work again but with a bad conscience."(UK-E 2)

A few British managers but only one German manager also highlighted how their children would challenge them by bringing questions and ideas from school:

> "The kids are nagging me (…) my kids are more into environmental issues, they would say 'you can't just take them down to the tip, you have to recycle it!' (…) Yes, I do feel challenged by my kids, not regularly, but sometimes." (UK-E 6)

> "… and probably my youngest daughter who is twenty-one would be bringing environmental …homework, if you like to us, to discuss and so on and so forth you know, yes, it was certainly something that was topical then, certainly when my daughter was 15, 16, 17 then it was topical, yeah." (UK-FC 4)

This 'nagging by the kids' was not mentioned in Fineman's studies before, so one could argue that recently more managers in the UK have been presented with similar challenges by their children as German managers reported for the early Nineties. Furthermore, it might also reflect that environmental education now featured higher in the curriculum of British schools as some managers suggested:

> "And the kids are so much more environmental aware, they will be a different generation and they teach their Mum and Dad (…) more commitment and passion from kids than adults, they have different frames of references, I think it is due to the changes in the curriculum." (UK-E 2)

> "I think children today are far more, when you are talking about the environment as a child - that was an issue that wasn't brought up in schools. My exposure was from where I lived. But today it is different. It is part of the curriculum, so, they probably ask more questions about it." (UK-FE 3)

5.4   School Education

Most British managers said that they could not remember any environmental education in school.

> "No, not at all. Certainly not, certainly not in my school, I mean I didn't do any science A-levels, but, you know, that is the thing that environmental issues were seen as a science sort of thing, certainly was not discussed in any of the general sort of subjects I did at school. In this country you do sort of a qualification called 'General Studies' and you sort of, you would use, you would have some lessons to discuss, you know, current affairs and stuff like that. Now I really don't remember talking about environmental issues. That would have been in, what about 1982/1983, something like that. Ahm – didn't really happen when I was doing my degree. I did a history and politics degree. There wasn't anything on the history of environmental catastrophes or anything like that." (UK-E 5)

UK-FC 1: "No, I can't remember. It's a good question. Ahm – no, it doesn't, it doesn't form any great memory of school, to be honest. I remember, you know, reading about it and, and, and watching it, and understanding where I probably got my information from television. But it did not ever strike me that that was a biggish, or tend to be taught at school."

R: "And your 'A'-levels were not Biology or so?"

UK-FC 1: "No, Maths, Physics and Chemistry, so"

R: "But that could have been an issue there"

UK-FC 1: "Could have been, yes. Could have been, I suppose it could have been in chemistry. We learned about different things, but I remember chemistry as being all little things, you know. How little things work and reactions would work things, rather than having a big picture. I hate chemistry. Physics tended to be quite sort of mechanical in a lot of things, and a mass of responsive formalism. (…)I don't, no, I don't remember from school particularly being taught about nuclear power stations. You know, I mean, when I was at school, we had, the whole nuclear disarmament debate was enormous, and I remember at college we invited our local MP and had a debate against CND, which was quite interesting, given that he was a big full blooded Tory. Ahm, he was just very arrogant. And I remember there was a big debate about that. But it was more about weapons rather than nuclear power."

Neither in school nor in university they had to take environmental classes, it was, if at all, on a voluntary base as this manager recalled:

"No, nothing in school, I took Biology A-level. In University there were environmental classes but I didn't take them…first view early twenties, over years it developed…"(UK-FC 2)

Only one manager talked about environmental education in primary school. She was the youngest interviewee of the sample, born around 1975. Interestingly, she considered herself an environmentalist and spoke in many ways similar to environmentally conscious managers in Germany as already mentioned before.

UK-FE 2: "I just remembered when we were little we used to have 'nature days' – did you have this when you were a kid ?– at school you have a table and you bring in 'nature things' – I suppose that is really…I remember every Thursday we used to got out on a 'nature day' we would visit a farm and would go and visit a beach…..maybe this is what stuck in my head because it was lot more enjoyable than doing maths (laughs)."

R: "Was it in elementary school?"

UK-FE 2: "Yes, in primary school. They still do it….it is part of the national curriculum now anyway .. the environment…but back then it wasn't, it was just the teacher thought it was important for the kids to appreciate life (…) we did go to a beach…or we did go to local villages and had a talk on a farm, bit of agriculture…a dairy…yes, this is maybe where I got the interest for the environment, I don't know…"

Another manager, five year older than the previous one, also referred to school experiences when asked about her first contact with environmental issues, but in her

case in secondary school. She also considered herself an environmentalist, but stressed more the point that it had to make business sense:

> "It was at school - it comes into education a lot - most specifically I did Geographic A levels, did a project about nuclear power station, BNFL perspectives, Government perspectives and friends of the Earth perspectives… I learned that everybody was telling lies. I have a scientific background, figures without context, BNFL also not a balanced view … it made me wary in terms of where the truth might lie. Before I had a black and white view, but then the picture became bigger, also all the social issues, that the whole community was living from the nuclear power plant…"(UK-E 2)

All German managers born after 1963 said that they learned a lot about environmental problems and protection in school. Many managers would refer to experiences they had in secondary school, some would give examples from their primary school. One for example said that they had environmental education in the 'Landschulheim'. In Germany it was common for students from about eight years onwards to travel each year for one week with their fellow students and teachers to the so-called 'Landschulheim' (could be translated as 'school hostel in the country'). These homes were often in rural places, the mountains or the seaside and students would have lessons combined with leisure activities there such as going for a walk and observing mammals.

> „Wir haven viel in der Schule gemacht, viel draussen, hat alles viel Spass gemacht, sind z.B in der Grundschule in Erdkunde in den Wald gegangen. Und ab der dritten Klasse fuer eine Woche ins Landschulheim, haben da Umweltkunde gehabt."(G-FE 4)

> "We have done a lot at school, a lot being outside, was all a lot of fun, we went for example in primary school during geography into the woods. And from the third class onwards for one week to the school hostel in the country, there we had environmental education."(G-FE 4)

The managers mentioned that they had environmental education in the natural sciences such as nuclear power in physics but also in other subjects. Some reported that teachers from various political backgrounds would teach about environmental issues. There would be teachers highlighting the risks of nuclear enegy, but there would be also teachers promoting nuclear energy. They would for example organise an excursion to a nuclear power plant, so that students would get to know this technology.

> „Da hat die Klasse sich dann aufgespaltet in Oekofuzzis, AKW-Gegner und Technikbefuerworter. Wir hatten Oekolehrer mit Wollpulli und Oekoschuhen und konservative Lehrer. Wir sind dann nach Juelich gefahren, um das Atomkraftwerk dort kennenzulernen." (G-E 4)

> "Then the class split into tree huggers, nuclear energy-opponents and advocates of technology. We had Eco-teachers with woollen sweaters and eco-shoes and conservative teacher. We have then been to Juelich to get to know that nuclear power station there." (G-E 4)

Quite a few managers insisted that the teachers were not missionary in their approach, but that they wanted the students to form their own opinion:

> "Ich meine, man sollte sich eine eigene Meinung bilden. Man konnte fuer oder gegen Atomkraft sein, aber die Lehrer wollten, dass man nachdenkt." (G-FC 1)

> 'I mean you had to develop your own opinion. You could be against or in favour of nuclear power, but the teacher wanted you to reflect upon it." (G-FC 1)

However managers born before 1963 were stating that they had no or only little environmental education in school, but for some it became a big topic in university.

> "Das gehoerte zu meiner Vorstellung vom studentischen Leben, dass man sich als Weltverbesserer betaetigt. Was man tut, Umweltschutz beliebig, da waren ja so viele Probleme…Ich entschied mich, gegen Atomkraft zu demonstrieren, da dort die interessantesten Menschen waren. " (G-E 5)

> "That belonged to my images of the life as a student, that one works as a do-gooder. What one does, any environmental protection, there were so many problems…I decided to demonstrate against nuclear power, as there were the most interesting people. " (G-E 5)

The two East German interviewees, also both born after 1963, did not mention any environmental education in school. When the researcher asked them specifically they said it was not a subject in school and as mentioned before they did not classify the big recycling activities initiated by their schools as environmental activities.

5.5 Philosophy/Religion

When asked about influences religion or philosophical concepts had on their value development, most British managers struggled. The researcher had to put one question after the other to get them to express some ideas as demonstrated in the following dialogue:

> R: "Do you think yourself were influenced by any movements in your own values?"

> UK-FC 4: "Aehm?"

> R: "Also any movements also like philosophy, theology anything which would …"

> UK-FC 4: "That …its …it's very difficult that, because a lot of the things I do and I've done in life it's because it's automatic. And because maybe because some of the values that I've got, I've taken, I would hope, from my parents yeah? And … and probably …I am not very … I am not very easily influenced because… I've certain…I've certain beliefs and some of those beliefs may not be may not be other persons beliefs but I think I have got the ability to reason most things out and but sometimes you know, perhaps I am too impulsive, it is very difficult, it is psychoanalysis in there, isn't it?"

> R: "Yes, it is more of it, you say 'yes there is something or someone that influenced me' or 'I remember reading this book and it was really important to me and I would like to go back to it' or …?"

> UK-FC 4: "I think, I think all education influences you, doesn't it? And I don't think there is, there is not one thing that …sort of positioned me in terms of where I am in

terms of beliefs and the way I am. Maybe my parents is probably, (interruption through phone call) Influence, a….I mean I think I would be disingenuous to think that nothing that I have read has not influenced me but .. but not, I can't say one single book or one single thing has influenced me. I would say it would have to be many, many things have influenced me in terms of what I have read, what I've heard, …what I've discussed with a lot of people, I experience life, you know that influenced you but you didn't know it did. When somebody puts hard concrete evidence on front of you, then that influences you and so there is no, no one single thing I can say it influenced me."

R: "Would you say that you belong to a certain belief or so, would you say you are a Christian or …?"

UK-FC 4: "I'd like to think I was a non practising Christian I would like to think I was of you know I do believe in people, you know, I would like to think that ….that I would do sooner do a person a favour than not, I certainly wouldn't pass over somebody in the street that was injured or that …I would like to think I have the Christian beliefs but I am not practising Christian , but I am a good person I think."

R: "Yes, but is there anything else, any other philosophy that you would say 'here I am at home' or do you think you have kind of mixture?"

UK-FC 4: "I …I am…I wouldn't say I was an individual but you know, I feel, I feel that you know I can fit in to most environments you know and as long as I don't, of course I have got principles …but we all know that … sometimes…you haven't got the authority for those principles to …to be carried out in an environment that you are not responsible for."

If at all they would say that their company or their work had an influence on their (environmental) value development:

"I think in terms of environmental issues as in environmental issues, then I think it was really at work. Ahm – I think, as I said to you before, in terms of getting involved in this, sort of, this arena, my primary issue, the prime motivation has been the issues of equity and fairness, more than environmental, environmental issues. (…)I think not least because the more you read about energy policy the more you realise that – ah - the way we consume things in the world is not sustainable ahm, and that we have to, we do have to stop, literally stop, ahm - consuming. And just, and thinking that we can consume, but that's something that's grown over my time in energy. Ahm – so I think that's a very, if I've taken anything from, or where I've grown in my job, in my work here, it's getting more interested in environmental, environmental issues, away from the social, just purely the social, sort of the social policy issues." (UK-E 5)

"Philosophies, books? No. I don't think so…I think my company is quite influential on my opinions. I don't know if this is a good or bad thing…I think it's good…I can't think of any particular person…I think I have my own opinions (…) I think you life and life experience, from your parent, your school, what is on the telly… I think parents biggest influence, lots of smaller influences such as things on the telly…you got your values by the time you are an adult (…) I rather not…they are my values to be frank… okay, I am influenced by society and things around me…I don't follow any particular line of politics…I choose the parts that I think they do fit, everybody got good bits and bad things. (…) I am not religious…Religion has its place, can be good thing or bad thing or both…I don't mind being part of a religion…I see it more as a social cultural group…there are lots of good things coming out of it." (UK-E 6)

The latter quote indicated many other influences. It was also quite typical for the responses of British managers as it stressed the point that the manager chose from

different religious and social influences what he liked but without being very specific about it. Quite a few managers would also highlight that they have their own opinion:

> "No…no…there is no one I listen to…I have my own opinions…I don't read books only when I go on holidays….I actually read about rural life in France…about people going to live rurally in other countries…I admire these people who start from scratch…I admire someone who just goes off and leave England…we have been over to France, by the river Loire, rural and idyllic." (UK-FE1)

Most managers would argue that they do not belong to any religious or social group. They would stress their autonomy and openness.

> UK-FE 3: "Ahm - I am quite interested in politics, am a bit of a left winger. Again, it all sort of, that sort of social agenda, ensuring sort of wider protection of people, I suppose, I am quite sympathetic to. I am not religious at all, far from it. Not really, no. As I say I am not. I think I am me, I don't think I am, I am not easily swayed, I think". (laughs)
>
> R: "Is there anything in this area, to read philosophy or anything that could be, maybe form your opinion a bit, or is that not out of your interest?"
>
> UK-FE 3: "Not particularly. No. I have followed, I read things about politics, but I am not into the combined works of Wittgenstein or something like that. I am not into reading stuff like that, really." (…) I tend to either read the Times or the Guardian, in terms of newspapers. ---Ahm, we generally read these sorts of magazines, industry journals and things that come through the office, in 'Green Future' and lots of them come through."
>
> R: "Is that your favourite?"
>
> UK-FE 3: "Not particularly so, no, I try to be like a sponge."
>
> R: "Ah so, you take everything in?"
>
> UK-FE 3: "It's back to not being influenced by any particular view, I think."

Other managers would explain or state their own principle:

> "There should be some way of addressing this issue….my principle: Get most out of life without harming anybody else.(…) Church has influenced my values, no one is better or worse, I like the songs and the community but my values come more from my parents, maybe friends and school, most important that everybody is the same that you should not judge people on your prejudices….treat people like they want to be treated." (UK-FC 3)

> "Equity is quite an interesting concept with regards to sustainability, intergenerational equity, you might have come across this in Germany … intergenerational equity is about fairness over time for next generation, i.e. it's about your great grandchildren, so if you are dead and gone it is your grand-grand-child who has to clean up the mess and it is not a very fair system, so this intergenerational equity is quite a good thing it is what sustainability is all about….it is one of our principles…" (UK-FE 2)

On the other hand, most German managers would state that they are Christians. The following manager was for example talking about different movements and their representatives, who he found very impressive. First he talked about "die katholische Landjugend" (the catholic rural youth) and then about anthroposophists, especially

farmers of 'Demeter'-Products (food grown according to anthroposophical principles). Finally he talked about shamanism. The researcher expected after this discussion that the manager would consider himself a shamanist or anthroposophist, but he was very clear about seeing himself as a Christian and that he has his roots in his religious upbringing:

> R: „Also, wenn Sie zum Schamanismum tendieren – würden Sie sich irgendwo verorten – selber? Von Ihren - also ich meine, das sind jetzt alles Vorbilder aus diesen verschiedenen Bereichen. Was wuerden Sie selbst sagen .. wenn Sie jetzt jemand sagen ‚Ich bin ein ...'?'
>
> G-FE 1: „Ich bin Christ einfach, ja?...Bin auch jetzt nicht organisierter, ja? ...Ich bin unorganisierter – freier, wenn man so will... Das bin ich ... da fuehle ich mich schon ziemlich hingezogen. Das sagt mir was, das gibt mir was. Da bin ich auch ... dort bin ich auch erzogen worden ... ich bin evangelisch erzogen worden. Bin immer ausgetreten vor langer Zeit, weil ich mich tierisch über diese Kirchen geaergert habe. (lacht). So ging das halt. Da bin ausgetreten und bin dann ausgetreten. Aber ich denke schon mal wieder darueber nach, ob ich wieder mitmachen soll. Weil – wie – ist da wohl eine Geistigkeit und Nachdenken und solche Sachen. Die sind heute immer weniger, nicht! Und die Kirchen, so schlecht sie es auch machen, sind wenigstens noch solche Orte, wo wo so was erlaubt ist; wo sowas sogar gefragt ist. Ja, und wo es so was wie Andacht gibt, und Mitgefuehl – und - wie auch immer – und wo man mal darüber denken kann. (...) Also meine Mutter war da .... so eine richtige ... ja.... so eine richtige Protestantin. Die protestierte und die war Protestantin, ja? So ganz in der Tradition von Weber, so richtig so Arbeitsethik."
>
> R: "So, if you lean towards the Shamanism - would you position yourself somewhere? Of your - so I mean, that are now all role models out of these different areas. What would you yourself say .. if you would tell somebody now ‚I am a ...'?“
>
> G-FE 1: "I am simply a Christian, right?...I am not more part of the insitution. ...I am unorganised - free, you can say... That I am ... there I feel myself already drawn to. That tells me something, that inspires me. As there I am ... in this I was educated ... I was brought up Protestant. I have left church a long time ago, because I got very angry about their ways. (laughs). So this is how it went. I have abandoned church again and again. But I am wondering sometimes whether I should take part in it again. Because - as – there is spirituality and meditation and such things. There is today less, isn't there! And the churches, as bad as they are, they are at least such places, where this is allowed; where this is even asked for. Yes, and where there is something as meditation, and compassion - and - however - and where one can reflect on things. (...) So my mother was a .... a right ... yes.... a right Protestant. She protested and she was Protestant, yes? So fully in the tradition of Weber, so really work ethics."

Another manager had nearly the same arguments. She also had left church* and was very impressed by the anthroposophic movement. After a strong argument against the manipulation and exploitation by the church, the researcher again expected her to distance herself from Christianity, but she also insisted on being a Christian and that she follows Christian values such as the protection of creation.

*to leave church: in Germany, you officially belong to a church through baptism
and you have to make an official declaration, stating that you want to 'leave church'
if you do not longer want to belong to the institution church

G-FE 5: „Aber das heißt nicht, daß ich nicht an was glaube, gell? Also das hat nichts mit dem zu tun. Im Gegenteil, ich glaube jetzt mehr als zu der Zeit, wo ich in der Kirche war. Ich gehe aber zu keiner Sekte, nichts anderes. Nicht, daß Sie jetzt da einen falschen Eindruck .(...)

R: „Also, Sie wuerden sich insgesamt jetzt – also Sie moechten sich jetzt nicht bezeichnen als Christin – würden Sie sich so bezeichnen?"

G-FE 5: „Ich bin schon Christin."

G-FE 5: "But that doesn't mean, that I do not believe in something, yes? So that has nothing to do with it. On the contrary, I believe now more than at the time, when I was in the church. But I do not go to a sect, nothing else. Not for, that you get a false impression ."(...)

R: "So, you would call yourself now - so you would like to call youself not a Christian – what would you call youself?"

G-FE 5: "I am inherently a Christian."

This manager employed a religious phrase ‚Mother Earth' already at the beginning of the interview when discussing work related issues. Another manager introduced religious ideas when discussing why he is interested in environmental issues:

„Letzten Endes habe ich mir dann ueberlegt, nachdem ich lange geraetselt hab und ich nicht drauf gekommen bin, daß - sozusagen die Erlebnisse, die - diese Interessen oder diese Besorgnisse bewirken, irgendwie in einem frueheren Leben stattgefunden haben müssen. Ich glaube ja an die These eines vorausgehenden Lebens. Das ist natuerlich schulwissenschaftlich keine akzeptable Erklaerung. Aber das ist eine gefuehlte Erklaerung." (G-FE 2)

"At the the end I came to the conclusion, after I have long puzzled about it and I got no idea, that - so to speak the experiences, that cause these interests or these concerns, somehow must have happened in an earlier life. I believe in yes in the idea of a previous life. That is from a scientific point of view not an acceptable explanation. But that's a felt explanation." (G-FE 2)

Similar to the two managers mentioned above this manager discussed reincarnation and anthroposophy and then claimed that he would describe himself as a Christian. And again he would distance himself from the institution church (even so he is still a member) and describe his non-institutional belief in more detail:

„Eh ... ich bin nicht also im Kirchlichen .. im kirchlich gepraegten Sinne glaeubig, sondern ich bin eher ...also ich sehe Gott eigentlich in der Natur, ja?.. und deswegen habe ich so nicht einen festen Umriß, der jetzt kirchlich oder katholisch gepraegt ist, von Gott, sondern ich erkenne ihn eigentlich in jeder Ecke. Oder auch in vielen Begebenheiten, die jetzt im Leben passieren, ja? Und insofern habe ich eine sehr sehr enge Beziehung zum zum Glauben, zu einem Glauben, oder sagen wir mal meinen

Glauben – der aber irgendwie auf dem Fundament einer katholischen Sozialisation fußt." (G-FE 2)

"Eh ... I am not so in an ecclesiastical .. in an ecclesiastical sense religious, but I'm rather ...so I see God actually in nature, yes?.. and as a result I do not have a firm outline, be it now based on ecclesiastic or catholic ideas, of God, but I recognize him actually in every corner. Or also in a lot of circumstances that happen now in life, yes? And in so far I have a very very intimate relation to the to the belief, to a belief, or let's say my belief - that however somehow rests on the foundation of a catholic socialisation." (G-FE 2)

A few managers did not elaborate as much about their belief and influential movements as the ones decribed in more detail above.

Two managers declared their own principles, one had a similar argument as one of the British managers:

„Man sollte die Umwelt so weit pflegen, dass es noch fuer die naechste Generation reicht."(G-FC 4)

"One ought to look after the environment to make sure that there is still enough for the next generation."(G-FC 4)

5.6   Role Model

Very pronounced were the cultural differences with regard to role models. Most of the British managers did either name a person from the business community or they claimed that they had no role model. If they referred to a role model, most cited the CEO.

"The only person that comes into my mind which I find quite inspiring is our chief executive because he looks at the business side as well and so it is not just about what is the right thing to do, what is the right thing to do and what does this mean for business and how do we get strategic advantage…it is a message that best reaches people…he is also fostering relationships with RHSP, Nature trust, he was opening the doors for me." (UK-E 2)

"…so insofar as I know anybody well enough who is in the position to be a role model for example our Chief Exec who…I suppose there is not an emotional attachment to his point of view as a role model it's because I understand his logic position. I understand he is emotionally disposed to want to protect the environment ….I would imagine probably more so than me but probably not much more. (…) …that is probably true for the Chief Exec as well because he actually stands up in a potentially hostile – hostile is too strong a word – in a potentially unsympathetic audience to talk about the environment you might want to think he has some passion about it as well as the business logic. This seems to be to me a comfortable position to be in." (UK-E 3)

However most British managers stated that they had no role model and were arguing along similar lines as the following manager:

> "…the people who have driven the agenda forward, would have been true believers. They have been really strongly into it, Anita Roddick is not a moderate, and the Body Shop would not have developed as it did if she was. So I don't, again, I am not, I can't really think of anybody who I would see as a role model for it. I can pick out bits from various people that I can see are very good. But generally I would not say, there was anybody who I would say, 'that's the way I would like to do it'." (UK-FE 3)

Some of the managers would elaborate a bit more. A few said that some documentaries on the television had more an impact on them than any person. Some also highlighted that people might have their own agenda; they would pretend to be concerned about something but in reality they only were fostering their own career:

> "I have got to say no, because I haven't …there is no one person …that can influence me, or that has influenced me. Some of the … some of the documentaries that you watch on television …you know would affect …you know some of the wild life population of the world I think that has sometimes made an impact on me, when … when you could see …you know, some of the dangers, and …some of the damage that has been done by clearing out the rainforests, yeah, the issue …can affect me but … you know, there is no individual that has influenced me, I think its been the subject rather than the individual who is bringing it in my attention (…) you know , you can think about, ….you can think about ...you know celebrities .. who …who are taking up environmental issues, sometimes there are people like Sting , you know, who are taking up environmental issues, and sometimes he is not taking up environmental issues for the environment, he is taking it up to become a bigger celebrity….so …ok that might be me being sceptical ok? …and ….you know … I am sure you can think of others (…) but I am sometimes sceptical about their contribution in terms of what they are really trying to influence, whether you know they are just creating a job for themselves or just you know , but that is me being sceptical." (UK-FC 4)

Some seemed to try hard to find someone they could name as a role model and were pondering this question for quite a while. The following manager, who the researcher visited twice to finish the interview, opened the second visit with remarks about her search for a role model:

> "So where have we come up to…I remember all this personal stuff, who was my role model? And I have no one…"(UK-FE 2)

Others however said with emphasis that they want to be themselves and that they therefore would not take a person as a role model:

> " Role model? There are lots and lots of people I admire but not really a role model…I like to be me…(…) true leaders are the one who can adapt to the environment." (UK-FC 3)

> "I can't think of any particular person…I think I have my own opinions. Don't think I have a particular role model…I think of a few of my peers they are working good. I like to be 90% of this person, but not more. I don't think that's me, I am quite happy with whom I am." (UK-E 6)

Most of the German managers on the other hand referred to someone <u>outside</u> the business world such as a philosopher, certain Christians, politicians, friends, and teachers. In response to the question they would cite one or more personalities and would then explain straightaway, without further prompting by the researcher, why they think that this person is their role model and what they have learned from them. Often they would also express some emotional statement, how they were fascinated by their speech, approach or book.

> „Mm. Vorbilder, hm – Ja, es gibt ... es gibt ein paar Leute, die aus – die aus diesem oekologischen Bereich kommen, mit denen ich mich schon beschaeftigt habe, mit denen ich mich auch auseinandergesetzt habe... Aber die waren auch sehr unterschiedlich. Also z.B. habe ich mich mit ... lange Zeit mal - auseinandergesetzt mit mit dieser afrikanischen Primatenforscherin...Jane Goodall... jedenfalls diese Gorillaforscherin

> ...Was ich sehr beeindruckend fand war, weil die halt sozusagen gezeigt hat, wie sehr man mit einem Spielobjekt verbinden kann – im Sinne des Einfuehlens, daß es so ganz ander Valuesdimensionen bekommen kann. Die kann man auch ... und man kann da auch streiten, ob das der richtige Weg ist. Aber es uns ein sehr interessanter Ansatzpunkt, der zeigt, daß man zu ganz neuen Erfahrungsdimensionen kommen kann, ja? Wenn man einen anderen Weg geht, einen Weg der Auseinandersetzung. Ansonsten finde ich halt sehr wichtig, daß daß es Leute gibt, die sich eben wiederum .... sozusagen auf systematischer Ebene mit den globalen Zusammenhängen oekologischer Fragestellung beschäftigen. Hans-Peter Duerr ist jemand, der der das tut, das weiß ich – ich habe auch eine Menge gelesen von ihm. - Jetzt in neuerer Zeit, war ich z.B. bei Ernst Ulrich von Weizsaecker, bei dem ich auch studiert habe, eine Zeit lang." (G-FE 2)

> "Mm. Role models, humph - yes, there are ... there are a few people, they are - they are from that ecological area, people I took an interest with and with whom I have dealt with... But they were also very different. So I took an interest in... a long time actually – this African primates researcher...Jane Goodall... by all means this researcher of gorillas...What I found very impressing was, because she has, so to speak shown, how one can be connected with a play object - in the sense of empathy, that it can get totally different value dimensions. One can also ... and one can also discuss, whether this is the correct way. But it is a very interesting starting point for us, that shows, that one can come to whole new experience dimensions, yes? If one goes another way, a way of contradictions. Otherwise I find very important, that there are people, who themselves now again .... so to speak on a systematic level deal with the global relationships of ecological queries. Hans Peter Duerr is somebody, who does this, I know that - I have also read lots from him. - Now recently, I was for example with Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, whose lectures I attended, for some time." (G-FE 2)

He goes on for several paragraphs. Quite a few managers were elaborating on this subject in such detail as the manager just cited. In some interviews the transcript of the answer to this question filled a few pages. However, even if they would not elaborate as detailed as this manager, they would name the person and then give the reason for their choice:

> „Meine Grundschullehrerin, wie die natuerlich damit umgegangen ist, Joghurt selbst gemacht, mit viel Spass und Freude, nicht so verkniffen." (G-FE 4)

> "My primary school teacher, how she had a natural approach to it, made yoghurt herself, with a lot of fun and joy, not so strained." (G-FE 4)

It is interesting to note that the two German managers without 'Abitur' (The German equivalent to A-Levels) both chose someone from their company, similar to the British interviewees:

> „Ja, da muß ich ganz klar sagen, das ist unser Umweltbeauftragter, der Leiter der Abteilung Umwelt, der der der für uns diese Themen recherchiert, bearbeitet, sich selber informiert, Kontakt zu Behörden aufnimmt, und, sagen wir mal, diese Sachen weiterleitet oder umsetzt, bevor das ueberhaupt offiziell wird. (...) Also der macht das wirklich engagiert, und vertritt das auch so, daß man automatisch, gleich will ich sagen, mitgerissen ist. (...) Und wenn man dann auch selber davon überzeugt ist, so wie ich dann, setzt man das natuerlich auch ganz anders um." (G-FC 5)

> "Yes, as I have to say clearly, that's our environmental officer, the senior manager of the environment department, who who who investigates for us these topics, deals with them, informs himself, makes contacts to authorities, and, let's say, refers these things and implements them, before that becomes even official policy. (...) So he is really committed, and lives it, that one automatically, as I will say, is carried along. (...) And if one is then convinced as well, such as I am then, one implements that naturally in a different way." (G-FC 5)

These managers without 'Abitur' left school with 16. Maybe they were therefore in a similar situation as the British managers, who have to concentrate on one subject (area) at the age of 16 for their A-Levels and are not exposed to a wide area of subjects in school anymore. The German students on the other hand have to take for their 'Abitur' German, one foreign language and History, Politics, Religion or Philosophy along with Mathematics and Natural Sciences until the age of 19. This might broaden their understanding, so that later in life they draw on different tools even when they are working in one specific area like business.

5.7   Summary

Many managers from both countries described very positive memories of their childhood places, a landscape or garden they said they cherished. The interviews of the present study suggest that all the managers who claimed to be environmentalists talked about these fond memories and that surprisingly managers who grew up in a polluted environment expressed a longing for nature but without mentioning an environmental engagement. Some managers in both countries traced their environmental awareness back to an incident as a child or young person, where they witnessed environmental destruction or cruelty to animals; others talked about a similar incident later in life as an adult.

The main institutions seen as influential for the development of environmental awareness and for sensemaking were family and friends, school, religion and philosophy. There were pronounced differences between the two cultures.

The majority of British managers stated that they had no environmental education in school. They were reluctant to talk about their beliefs and claimed mostly that they had no role models. If at all, they would name someone from the business community. Environmental issues were not seen as an important topic for private encounters. If UK managers talked to their partners about environmental issues it seemed to be mostly related to buying decisions such as a new more energy efficient tumble dryer. Only their children would sometimes raise environmental topics or make them think about these issues.

For the German managers the 'nagging of the kids' seemed to be less influential as they discussed frequently environmental problems and especially solutions to these problems with family and friends. German managers born after approx. 1963 would also refer to environmental education at school. Furthermore, many of them were very outspoken about their religious beliefs and their role models, which were chosen from outside the business community and could be theologians, philosophers, politicians, teachers or friends.

Overall, the British managers presented themselves as distinguishing between and separating the private world from the business world. There were two very different spheres, each of them with different discursive resources. So the 'outside world' did not mix with the business world and therefore philosophy, religion, family, friends would be left 'outside'. The German discourse seemed to be more intertwined; ideas were flowing between the two worlds. However, it has to be noted that the managers were interviewed in a business setting. It might be that British managers would be more outspoken about their religious beliefs and their private views in a private encounter. Alternatively, it might be that these topics are of such a private nature that British managers would never discuss them at all. This is beyond the scope of this research; however, one could argue that it is socially accepted for German managers to discuss their private views and philosophical insights in business and to raise business related issues in private meetings. By employing Habermas' framework (1984) the responses of the British managers suggested that they clearly separated the 'lifeworld' from the

'business world' while the German managers transferred ideas between both worlds. This will be further explored in the next chapter.

6 The lifeworld and the business world

The review of the existing studies in chapter 2 suggested that managers in the UK differed from their German counterparts in their understanding of economic rationality. The UK managers argued that 'the bottom line' was the main criterion and businesses should only consider environmental improvements as far as they would help to improve the bottom line. For the German managers on the other hand, a morally advanced economic rationality included a holistic approach to solve environmental problems within the business. However, even more pronounced was the difference whereby German managers referred frequently to the societal discourse about environmental issues and the impact this had on them. The latter suggests that the interviewed German managers were more inclined to reflect on the business system and to consider arguments that questioned a pure financial orientation. Previously it was argued that German managers spoke in a way consistent with Habermas (1984)' notion of the 'lifeworld' and employed 'communicative reason'. Nevertheless, it was also questioned whether the design of the German studies encouraged managers to talk about the 'lifeworld' and whether British managers might also explore these issues when asked differently. In the interviews of the present study, managers in both countries were therefore encouraged to explain the relationship between environmental arguments and business considerations.

As mentioned in the third chapter of this thesis the accounts of the managers will be analysed utilizing the distinction between 'instrumental reason/business world' and 'communicative reason/ lifeworld' (Habermas 1984). The first section will deal with the questions how managers in the UK present their understanding of the business world, their 'instrumental reasoning' and how if at all they introduce 'communicative reason'. The difference in the German understanding will become obvious in the second part of this chapter, which analyses the intertwining of 'instrumental and communicative reasoning' in the German accounts. The third part will investigate how managers in both countries describe the role and importance of various stakeholders as prominent figures in the business world. As mentioned before this aspect was under-investigated in the earlier German studies and offers some new insights and comparative findings. In the fourth part the suggestions managers made on how they would do business in the cultural context of the other country will be presented. This suggests that managers speak in a way as if business systems abroad will follow the same economic rationality

they perceive as the 'universal one'. Finally the argumentation of some managers in both countries will be analysed, who went into business to solve environmental problems, this could be interpreted with Habermas (1984) as a move from the 'lifeworld' to the 'business world' in order to introduce 'communicative reason' and transform the 'instrumental reason'.

6.1   The framing of 'Economic rationality' in the UK

Most managers in the present research argued along similar lines to the managers in Fineman's study (1998): They evaluated environmental activities and issues using business criteria. While a common statement according to Fineman was that "they wouldn't do it if it didn't help the bottom line" (1998:242), the British managers in the present study referred frequently to the metaphor 'the business case' as the following two statements illustrate:

> "Well.—I think again, you've got to separate my opinions from what are the best interests of the organisation that you work for. And there you try to ensure they are as consistent as possible, sometimes there will be some divergence. And clearly, when you work in an organisation, sometimes you have got to put your own personal opinions to one side. And the way I try to, to get this across is that, whatever we do, we will always try and establish a business case for doing it." (UK-FE 3)

> "I think I have quite a key role and responsibility to highlighting problems and issues and it's highlighting them in a way that people take notice (…) I have to be careful…I have an employee who is very passionate and I have to protect him and he sometimes forgets the business case…"(UK-E 1)

Also in other references made to the 'business case' managers would usually not dwell on an explanation that this metaphor entails. They seemed to assume that everybody has a shared understanding of 'the business case'. Only one manager tried to explain the idea of 'the business case' and how she uses it as a tool to convey environmental ideas:

> " (…) and it comes back to people like me saying to our businesses' well if you spend this money now it will have paid for itself it 18 months…and then after this 18 months you will be saving money because you won't be spending anymore. It is just putting the business case to people…making it clear what the costs are going to be, what the benefits going to be…cost-benefits-analysis basically…..it's just about training really and keep drumming the drum I suppose and keep writing proposals and business cases and not letting it go (…) This cost of this it would pay for itself within two years, but it is just writing the business case to convince the management that it is worth spending 2000 pounds now as opposed to 400 pounds every month." (UK-FE 2)

Surprisingly all but one British manager expressed the same opinion that environmental improvements should be only made when you can establish a 'business case', so that the environmental improvements would actually save costs by using fewer resources such

as energy or water. One manager, however, highlighted that they would also improve a product if no additional costs occur:

> " And the way that we are trying to approach this is, that - avoiding any sort of cost implications, we will always try and provide a product that delivers a lot of these things, which is no animal testing, which is, no GM, such as fair trade now to a grade extent. As long as it, you know, we provide that as the mainstream option. We try, you know, we try to make sure that it's not just a niche market, you know. If we can provide it without any cost to that product, we'll do it." (UK-FE 3)

In the interviews the managers were asked how they would deal with a situation where the more environmental sound solution would not save money or would even cost more. The responses were similar, the following quote being quite typical:

> "We are too profit oriented, and these environmental issues would cost the industry too much, and also the shareholders and why should they do it, but if they would be forced to do it, then it would happen. They could do so much collectively but they wouldn't do it, they are focused on price…if you look at the apples downstairs only a few will be from the UK, the others will be from France, New Zealand…it's too competitive, that's the environment we are in, my goal is to maximise sales and to minimize costs…"(UK-FC 4)

As in this quote the managers often seem to have a notion of an environmental better solution; sometimes they would elaborate in such a way on the environmental implications of decisions made in the past that the researcher expected the story to end in a trade-off in favour of environmental issues and was surprised by the outcome as the following line of argumentation illustrates:

> "UK-E 3: Sincerely we tend to be on the side of the economically rational but I think you have to take each issue on its merits …but then as soon as you take each issue on its merits then we are back down to the judgement of the people involved what the balance is between the two things…
>
> R: Could you give an example?
>
> UK-E 3: Not easily, …well I can imagine we buy switchgear, one design which is filled with mineral oil not particularly environmental friendly, the other variety is filled with SF6, which is a bad greenhouse gas and/or the third variety which is vacuum so which has no environmental input at all…. In making the decision which of those three types to buy we first ask which has the lowest life time cost of ownership to us, so this does not include any externalities, any imbalanced situation also it would include cost of disposure as we currently see it, so the cost of disposing of SF6 is probably higher than the cost of disposing either oil or vacuum so we would actually do an analysis of the cost that affects our business, so with these three technologies there is not a huge amount to choose between them I guess in term of the environmental impact if they were managed …..but I think we might well now start to be prejudiced against SF6 not least because it is more difficult to deal with it from the environmental regulation view just because it is such nocuous substance. Oil is nocuous we would agree, oil is actually more dangerous to our staff, because if your switch gear is out of function then the oil is actually flammable turns the switchgear into a bomb.
>
> R: Nice...

> UK-E 3:Doesn't happen often but we had some major explosions with switchgears. But we are probably more likely to proceed with that and try to manage that risk than we are to live with the environmental risk posed by SF6, Sulfahexaflorin. Unfortunately the external drivers on cost here, the Environmental Regulations pushing in the same directions, so on economic grounds we would get SF6. If it would be the other way round there is no consensus in the company I guess and it would depend, I think it would depend on either on the company's corporate view of what the environmental damages was for the different options versus the differences in costs for the options."

More surprisingly, some managers would express a strong concern about certain environmental issues, but they would see the business decision with its focus on costs as inevitable and would not question it. One manager for example claimed that the extensive usage of pesticides and fertilizers are his biggest concern and that he would prefer to deal with ten suppliers rather than 26.000 so that he could control what they do. However, earlier in the interview he made the following statement:

> "I essentially make the policy…we spent the money (…) it all boils down to economics…if I want to spray less…no benefit for doing it now…."(UK-FC 3)

Even managers who described themselves as passionate about environmental issues would argue that they have to make the business case:

> "…everything you are doing in business has to add value to the company…so if you do not do it you wouldn't survive…and the environment adds value in so many different ways…instant cost savings if you change your taps you are saving water (…) the environment- this is very cheesy- the environment is the only thing in business that can save you money in business without having to increase your sales…so why not do it" (UK-FE 2)

Another manager, who also considered herself to be an environmentalist, just claimed that every environmental concern she has could be expressed as a business case.

> "R: How would you balance the business case and environmental case?
>
> UK-E 1: It has to make business sense, full stop! If it would harm the business in any way, then you shouldn't do it. If you can put some money behind it, it helps! (….) I don't start with the environmental values and put them into a business case...I think I have a gut feeling as that it makes business sense as well. If I can't find the evidence, it doesn't convince me…so I always have the business case…"

Sometimes managers would use the phrase of 'economic rationality', which seems to be based on the assumption that a rational behaviour in business is focused on profit maximisation.

> "… particularly in the area I am working in now, which is (…) renewable generation, our argument is that this is actually a growth area we are expecting businesses to develop this, we are also a business so if it is growth, in any normal economy those companies that are involved with growth they have the opportunity to increase their income and profits. So it is entirely economically rational for us to argue for the growth

of renewable energy because again in an economically rational society we as a company will benefit from that. So this is why we increase our activities…so potentially a double win here, we are doing it for reasons of sustainability and because there is an opportunity for business growth. "(UK-E 3)

Only a few managers, however, were this optimistic about environmental friendly products contributing to the growth of the business. Most of them discussed cost-savings as the main reason for their company embarking on environmental initiatives.

"R: Why do think the company did embark on this, it seems to be a very big system and a very serious implementation – why do you think they developed it?

UK-FE 2: Firstly there is no directed cost, cost savings are costs not occurred …that are two different things…if you would change all your light bulbs into energy saving light bulbs you are going to save money but you are also going to not spend money because you have reduced the kilowatts going into your energy system therefore over time you have saved a lot of money and you also have not spend a lot of money…it is a double way…Cost is king in any business…it is the bottom line…(…) then on the environmental side as well the risks associated with doing things and not doing things, reputational risks and I mean the risks to your stakeholders, which can be financial, if you annoy your shareholders they might decide to put their money somewhere else…"

The following paragraph shows in more detail how according to their own reports store managers in supermarkets are expected to control environmental costs.

"Well, I mean my main tasks within, within my role currently is again, you know I am responsible to ensure we maximise the sales in the store, em …whilst controlling all the costs that relate to achieving those sales, costs like labour, costs like electricity, costs like computer equipment, so I am judged on managing my store accounts if you like. So my boss, (…) he would look at my, what we call 'waste of markdowns', which is what we throw in the bin, there is a value attached to that. So he can judge me weekly by looking at my results. (…) We have centrally a department who look after, corporately, all environmental issues. Em…and similar to the range that we get a list of, then environmental issues in terms of recycling, in terms of, in terms of the gases that we use for the refrigeration, in terms of electricity, in terms of – again - cost saving –eh - and use of all the other power, gas etc.etc. is is predetermined for us in terms of they will tell us what to recycle, when to recycle it, how to recycle it and to what company it goes to. In terms of the electricity, then we are targeted in terms of usage…" (UK-FC 4)

One could argue that certain environmental issues such as scarce and therefore cost intensive resources can be easily integrated into the existing business paradigms due to their cost saving potential. However, it depends whether this cost is seen as a marginal cost or not as the following quote illustrates:

"Plastic bags? Why not reducing this cost? I believe people should be charge for carrier bags, they were fifteen years ago, but now consumers take as many as they can…but the cost of carrier bags is such an insignificant cost…and the costumer pay for it anyway, it is put on the products like a tax…but with other packaging we reduce this now…we squeeze and squeeze the suppliers and we try to reduce their costs and this is now only possible with regard to the packaging for the goods …." (UK-FC 4)

Some managers would give examples of their environmentally friendly actions without referring to the cost-savings associated with it, even though cost-savings might have been the prime motivator here as well:

> "(..) we are actually quite an environmentally friendly supermarket anyway. Ahm – you know, if you go into any of our supermarkets, we don't have any gas heating, all the waste heat is taken off the bakery, so the bakery heat taken up in the roof, cleaned and pumped back into heating the stores. " (UK-FC 1)

With all this focus on price and cost-savings, quite a few British managers were proud that the margins for supermarkets in the UK are higher than in many parts of the world. However, they never raised the question, whether supermarkets in other European countries maybe make less profit because they spent more money on environmental improvements, pay suppliers better or do anything else that is not profitable in the British sense. On the contrary, high profits were seen as a result of good managerial practice as the following quote indicates:

> "I think I you know as a country, I think it would be true to say that our supermarkets are probably the best in the world in terms of …profitability. I am not talking about quality, I am not talking about range, maybe even not the customer offer, but I think if you look at the margins that we make in the UK against the rest of Europe, then I would suggest that we…we are on another - on another level, because we have so much discipline. If you like, so much routine, so much protocol. But that is my opinion." (UK-FC 4)

Managers only rarely questioned the focus on price. Only one supermarket manager indicated that they like to challenge this price orientation, but that at the end they have to give in to the price domination. The way he presented his arguments suggest that he also perceives the business system as fixed and that another business system is not even imaginable:

> "Yes, we prefer to talk about value rather than just straight price. So we will charge a bit more, but hopefully our food will prove to be a bit better. But increasingly, - ahm - in terms of people's decision to shop, there are decisions where you, where you would make you decide where you shop, which shop, which invariably is price and location. And then there are decisions that make you decide whether you carry on shopping there, which is the quality of the produce, the queues at the checkouts, the friendliness of the staff. (…) Once you get people into the stores, then a lot of our customers aren't so worried about price because they are already there, they know what to expect. They want, they say, I want to buy better quality foods and things like that, and obviously, getting them into the store in the first place, which is where the price perception is important." (UK-FC 1)

The business system in its current form is not only described as unchangeable but some quotes even suggest that managers perceive it as given and not created by man. A

preferred argument is to refer to the 'real world', which opposes any consideration other than price, as in the following quote:

> "If we want to win contracts…maybe you have to have a certain standard like ISO 14001 but then the company cheaper or best able to do the job cheap…it has to be said that ay…that's the real world…good will doesn't count so much in the real world…"(UK-E 6)

Another metaphor frequently used is that of 'the market', which is often personalised and treated as the driving force behind many decisions. Some managers frame it as a 'given', as a law, in other quotes it is more expressed as their belief system. The following quotes give an example for each of these two approaches:

> "Where, when we are now offering in most of our stores, not all of our stores, in most of our stores a good organic range of fruit and vegetables, of meat …and…some canned products…and …because we had to, because the market has said that we have to, because you know the likes, our competitors and …obviously identified it sooner than we did." (UK-FC 4)

> "Also again free markets solutions will always find the right answer, free market solutions have no respect of participants, so some participants of free markets suffer and go out of business or go extinct but it is probably not so attractive to manage our relationship with the rest of the world, I mean historically you can point to famines and pests and wars and that is how the natural order is adjusted…but this is actually not acceptable to Western society anymore." (UK-E 3)

The only criticism of the existing business system, which managers frequently expressed was the orientation towards short-term profit maximisation. This was seen as problematic with regard to environmental improvement as some investments into energy saving appliances for example pay back only after a few years. However, even when managers promote a long-term perspective on environmental investments, they stay within the overriding paradigm that there has to be a business case for it. Therefore, these investments have to result in cost-savings, at least in the long run. The following quote gives a typical argumentation why a manager would introduce these investments:

> "And I am using the management cliché of the 'low-hanging fruit'. There is a lot of things we can do, that don't really need a lot of investment. Ahm – but again, coming back to this point, that there should always be a business case for doing that, we are starting to get to the point, where, we are starting to look more at initiatives that do require investment. But because, back to this, you know, the business case issue, those projects have still got to stack up in terms of payback. So if the business demands a seven-year payback period or a five-year payback period, those projects have got to fit into that as well. Which, generally they do. You know, there is not, there is not, there is not a lot of things I can think of that go beyond that sort of planning period." (UK-FE 3)

Some managers are convinced that their companies have already integrated the long-term perspective into their environmental decision-making:

> "Yeah, I …I do, overall I do and I do feel that you know…as a company we are trying to do our bit, I do appreciate that there are cost restrictions because going back to my point before, whether there is a cost there has to be a benefit , but I believe that …..to all the environmental issues, there is …there is a benefit and that may not always be as a company pound saving some pence but it may be that the cost to reclaim it instead of being in five years, it may have to be in ten years, but I do believe that …that this company are doing what they can, what they can. I think." (UK-FC 4)

Others see it as a major shift, which has to happen now in order to improve the environmental performance of companies, but which requires a mind-set change. In the opinion of the manager quoted below, managers tend to concentrate on short-term gains due to the existing appraisal system, which rewards efforts within a one-year-framework:

> "I think traditionally management that is not a criticism…because of budget they think in a very myopic way they think in a year-to-year-base…anything that goes over a year-to-year-base just doesn't come into their radar (…) All what we have been talking about- you could argue- is quite simple…here is your manager [starts painting]…and they work within a 12 months time scale …because of budgets…same is probably true for Germany…this person is only interested in what he or she can achieve by the end of the year…because at the end of the year they are going to have an appraisal with their manager and they will ask for more money, jobs satisfaction and all this rest of it…and then you start again on another 12 months…so if management is only operating on this year to year system how can you say…, right, take energy, we want to buy Green energy here it's going to cost us X…but it will have paid for itself by three years…if we put solar panels on the roof…look, this person here [shows on the manager] is not going to do it…because in three years they might have left the job anyway and in twelve months they cannot get a pay increase because they can't show the performance, they can't show the payback so it is going from the kind of the short term to the long term and that is where the sustainability element comes in from the environmental point of view because if you can get out of this focus on budgets being one year …this myopic tunnel vision…to thinking right we are still going to be here in five years let's plan a bit more strategically and think. 'Right, we might have to make this investment now but if we invest in this environmental technology now…chiinnnggg [moves along her diagram] three years down the line we will be out competing our competitors because our technology will be superior or what ever, less resource inefficient that sort of things…and you will have actually saved yourself money and then year on year on year after that the savings go straight back to the bottom line of the business. But it is getting that different cultural mindset from the twelve months to the five or six years. …that is the hardest thing, that is the hardest thing…because people again it's money you know your job interview at the end of the year you are not going to be asked 'o, how is the five-year-project going?' you are only going to talk about the five-year-project when it comes to the end, not at various stage of it…"(UK-FE 2)

One manager extended the problem to all people involved in setting the business agenda including the government:

> "I think, I think, I do speak deeply, I think life, life, whether it is people's lives or politicians' or companies', is run really on a maximum of a 3 to 5 year time span. I don't think many people look forward, much more forward than three or five years. (..) So there, and governments tend to be in four or five year cycles. So therefore to get a government to think about a ten-year plan I think is quite a challenge, and I think that is also part of the reason why the environment does not get any attention it gets, because it is a long-term issue." (UK-FC 1)

The last quote is also a revealing example of how managers in the UK integrated communicative reason into their arguments. In this case the manager highlighted that "environment is a long-term issue" and therefore not easily compatible with the existing business systems. Most references UK managers made to what Habermas (1984) called the 'lifeworld' were brief and unelaborated. They rarely made suggestions how the business system could be changed to accommodate new insights.

Only one manager criticised the existing business system in detail. He argued that the true environmental costs are not reflected in the current allocation of costs. He then moved on to make suggestions as to how the system could be improved. His argumentation is a good example on how 'communicative reason' could be used to reflect and modify the existing business system:

> "…within a box that you might draw for the energy industry [starts drawing] where there are certain extenuates (sic) not accounted for like the environmental cost…the environmental cost does not figure in the energy industry now in this country apart from things like climate change levy …..sorry for that this is a recent production…..in the economic universe of the energy industry it has become very efficient so customers are paying for the minimum costs that are inside that universe…if you introduce a disturbance like more wind generation then the economy of scale that has driven the cost down here doesn't support the cost of developing wind generation now…then you need to ask so who is going to pay for the disturbance? The customer might not pay more depends on where the cost actually lies – you can subsidise the wind by government through taxation – so the energy cost remain the same and the development is done by taxation…alternatively you can change the structure of the industry…for example some of the costs are absorbed in the industry, taxation remains the same and then the charges go up…if you are going to make the customer pay for environmental damage then if you take all those things together it actually costs him less by more wind being connected because of the environmental savings…but it is not obvious…so apart from maybe some academic work which might not have seen the light of day no one has tried to make that overall analysis (…)
>
> I have a view that is how society works…money is the primary driver of most things certainly how business works…which is why I was making the point before .. I was not making the point but it is why things like the external cost assumption is in my mind. If you want to make the right decision these decisions are only made in one direction, which is money so all the actual costs, all the real costs need to be reflected in the decisions we made on money terms.
>
> (…) If you would try to cost things like climate change then they seem to be basically costs on any changes in a twenty-year-window it is probably still quite inaccurate. So also, I think it is the right thing to do to try to capture the real costs you know in any

business decision but in actually doing so it probably operates the wrong costs but that is probably better than having no environmental costs at all. So I think I suppose I am arguing we should do it but it will never be easily done because everybody will have an opinion about the level of costs. I wouldn't be surprised if you saw two or three orders of magnitude difference in the estimated costs of environmental damage. So how a government would agree on how to cost environmental issues in any area is fraught with difficulties, so there are big arguments and debates about it but this is not a reason not to do it." (UK-E 3)

But this was an exception, most managers stayed within the prevalent logic of the existing business system rarely questioning its purpose or anything else. The most basic form of integrating 'communicative reason' was that a few managers made a connection between the cost-savings they associate with environmental issues in their company and how these investments or strategies help at the same time the environment. It might have been that they thought about the environmental implications of their business decisions for the first time within this interview as all the other questions centred around environmental issues; at least the way they present their arguments suggest that they have not developed a special rhetoric yet as the following quote illustrates:

„ I really don't know. You know I suppose em …… ….. maybe there was the hole was appearing in the ozone layer and people where forecasting. I truly don't know but certainly it was. You know …environmental issues is an everyday thing now and it is that ….it is something …you know …. I am conscious of now but not only in work but work necessarily because what we've been hearing in the media…. is an actual fact implemented in my working environment. For sure, which never was ten years ago, when I was with [A] one was always told to turn the lights out when you were in an office, but you know, you did that necessarily because you thought that people were just being tight. Yeah you didn't have a concern about the fact that you were, working …or ….or power would disappear. You know we now don't just turn the light out because we are saving money, we turn the light out because you know …energy is ….is a very, very important component of our lives, isn't it?"(UK-FC 4)

One manager suggested twice during his interview that companies should have another purpose than profit maximization but without elaborating on it:

"Firms need some other purpose than only money. (….) There has to be something else than power and money…I don't know if it is God or…"(UK-FC 3)

However, most managers use the term 'profit maximisation' without any hesitation or questioning. Only one manager actually suggested that he would prefer to speak of profit optimisation.

"We prefer to speak of profit optimisation than profit maximisation." (UK-FE 1)

He later elaborates a little on what he sees as the problems of the current business system and how the business system could be changed:

"(…) Greedy multinationals…rich western countries…there is a lot of people who don't think about it enough…careless pollutants, careless exploitative practices …demands of stock exchange, short term reward drives people that's what I am paid to do (…) consumers could change it.. it would have a knock-on effect…our work won't achieve anything if not catalyst for change…beginning of quiet revolution [laughs] drivers for most change the consumer, at present the driver for foreseeable future legislation, but generally consumer could be biggest driver……role of companies? Demands of stockholders…keep our brand; enhance our brand reputation, the more good we do the more we attract customers…." (UK-FE 1)

Another manager explicitly refers to the 'lifeworld' as he stresses the connection between society and business in facing the same challenges:

"Well, I think our challenges have got to reflect those of society. Well, if we think that things like global warming are going to be a major issue, we've got to try and tackle them in our business as well. So, that's energy efficiency, CO_2 reduction, and to try to mitigate what we do." (UK-FE 3)

His company seems to reflect this approach in its business decisions. With regard to green energy, for example they have certain targets, which they would like to achieve. These targets are first formulated independently of financial considerations as the following narrative of the manager suggests; only in a second step these targets are then adapted to financial viability. However, the introduction of green energy is still a cost for the business and one of the few examples in the present study, where a British company went beyond a cost-saving investment:

UK-FE 3: "All these arguments about sustainability, in the back of your mind, you have always got to be clear that you are in business and making money, you've got to be a sustainable business. And therefore, at any given time, it may temper what you may wish to do, as an individual or as a management team, and say, well, you know, that's going a step too far at the moment. There is a number of smaller steps we can take to get where we would like to be. And therefore – you've got to, you've always got to be conscious, working in an organisation, you move as fast as that business is capable of going. So you might want to be totally buying green energy, but of course, as a huge energy consumer, green energy is relatively expensive. So, can we go totally toward green energy, possibly not. We purchase 20% of our energy as green energy. We are probably the biggest consumer of green energy in the UK. So. We are not doing bad, but, could we go further? Well, probably not at this moment in time. So, it's those, you are always making, you are always having to make compromises between your own personal believe and where the best interest of the business lie."

R: "Yes, and your example, these 20%. How did you kind of say, how is this as much as we can do, but there is the cut-off?"

UK-FE 3: "Well, you've got to look at the market and see how expensive it is. And of course, a market for something like green energy, responds to demand. And of course, if you wade in and start buying up green energy everywhere, the price goes up. So you've got to sort of come to a balance between what is reasonable as a business to pay for, which means that you remain competitive, and therefore remain in business, and where you, where your agenda would like to take you. Clearly, we would like to be totally green."

One manager spoke in a way, consistent with 'communicative reason', by explaining the responsibility managers have towards their children and that they might question them later about their business practices:

> "....the 'managers of the future' if you like they are going to question why businesses are polluting....."(UK-FE 2)

It is interesting to note that the last statements are all from managers working for a business with an ecological corporate identity. One could argue that the discourse in these companies goes beyond the existing business paradigm as environmental concerns are integrated in daily business practices. These companies might have been established with the aim to improve environmental conditions, a motive, which was explicitly expressed by some of the German managers, which will follow in the next section. However, it might also stem from their marketing strategy, where they need to use different arguments than price orientation to differentiate themselves from their competitors in order to establish a niche segment.

6.2 The framing of 'Economic Rationality' in Germany

In contrast to the British managers, the German managers never refer to making the business case. There is not even a translation in the German language for the term 'business case'; furthermore the German managers apparently use no other expression that would convey a similar meaning. The phrase, which is closest to the British understanding of 'business case', is that they do something 'aus Kostengruenden' (because of cost factors). Therefore the managers mention quite often that their environmental improvements save costs. However, the German managers seem to have reversed the order. While the British managers would if at all as an afterthought add that it helps the environment, the German managers would start their argument with the environment and add that it also saves costs. The following quote is typical for this approach:

> „Aber wir haben auch das Umweltbewußtsein wie hier und an anderen Standorten, sagen wir mal, sehr gefoerdert, auch aus Kostengruenden. Denn, wenn z.B. alles in einem Container entsorgt wird, Pappe, Restmuell, Glas, dann werden diese Container auf der Muelldeponie handsortiert. Und das kostet das dreifache als wenn die sortenrein abgegeben werden. Und um das Umweltbewußtsein, sagen wir mal, zu Hause muß man ja auch entsorgen. Je nach Region, hier gibt es z.B. in Hannover wenig Tonnen, viele Tueten. In anderen Landkreisen gibt es eine Restmuelltonne eine gruene Tonne, and einen gelben Sack. Und Altglas und Papier muß man selber wegbringen. Also sagen wir

mal, gewisse Vorgaben von wegen Umwelt, vom Umweltgedanken her gesehen, sollte man da nicht nur privat, sondern auch hier erfuellen. Und - sagen wir mal, Gott sei Dank, haben wir schon vor Jahren das Bewußtsein geweckt. Wir müssen aber auch immer wieder gucken, wird das auch eingehalten." (G-FC 5)

'But we have also encouraged environmental awareness here and at other sites, let's say, also because of the costs involved. Because, if for example everything is disposed in one container, cardboard, residual waste, glass, then these containers will be sorted by hand at the garbage dump. And that costs threefold as if they are handed in unmixed. And about the environmental awareness, let's say, at home you also have to recycle. Depending on the region, here in Hanover there are only few bins, many bags. In other counties there are a bin for landfill waste, a green bin, and a yellow bag. And old glass and paper you have to take away. So let's say, certain requirements because of the environment, seen from an environmental point of view, one ought to fulfill not only privately, but ought to fulfill also here. And – let's say, thank God, we have already years ago woken up that consciousness. But we must check again and again, whether it is also kept.'

The managers will often explain environmental improvements in detail using arguments borrowed from the environmental discourse like saving resources or avoiding waste; sometimes one can only assume that they are saving costs. In the next quote for example it is not clear whether the reuse of material such as plates during a food tasting or the separation of material for the waste collection actually saves money; the manager only refers explicitly to costs when she talks about the saving of energy:

G-FE 5: „ Indem wir - eigentlich die Angestellten und Mitarbeiter anhalten, also auch in allem etc. haengt vom Verpackungsmaterial ab, daß man da also nicht so verschwenderisch mit umgeht. Auch gezielt dann, jetzt nicht nur mit Plastik arbeitet, sondern auch bei Verkostungen oder so natuerlich dann solche Sachen hernimmt, wo man wieder verwenden kann. Wo wir nicht gleich wieder in den Muell schmeissen. Dann auch die gesonderte Muelltrennung ist ja auch wichtig.

R: Ja,

G-FE 5: „Das gehoert ja auch zur Umwelt. Und natuerlich auch mit Strom ein bisschen sparsamer umgehen. Das ist eine Geldfrage."

G-FE 5: " While we – actually urge the staff and colleagues, so also in everything etc.. It depends on the packaging material, that one does not handle it lavishly. And doing it not only when using plastics, but also during food tasting, where one should use such things, which can be reused- in other words that we don't throw it in the bin straight away. Then also the waste separation is, yes, also important.

R: Yes.

G-FE 5: That is also an environmental issue. And the same applies to electricity, economizing electricity. That's a question of money."

An important environmental issue for the German manager was the packaging. They especially criticized the disproportion between small content and huge packaging. Here they also stressed the relationship between the better use of material and the inherent cost saving potential as the next two quotes illustrate:

"Wussten Sie, dass die hoesten Materialkosten bei der Verpackung anfallen, nicht beim Inhalt? Dat hat man hohe Einsparpotentaile, wenn die Verpackung kleiner ausfaellt." (G-FC 1)

"Did you know that the highest material expenditures are caused by the packaging, not spent on the content? There one has high saving potential, if the packaging is reduced."

‚Also das war, auch ein Umdenken vor Jahren, daß die Verpackungseinheiten geändert wurden, und auf viel Schnickschnack verzichtet wurde. Und nun genauso versucht man nach wie vor, auch Umweltgedanke, sagen wir mal, die Verpackungen so zu halten, daß die nicht etwas Großes widerspiegeln und geringen Inhalt haben, weil das auch mehr Material bedeutet. Und, sagen wir mal, das sind dann nach wie vor Aspekte, die auch mit den Lieferanten so verhandelt werden.' (G-FC 5)

‚So that was, also a rethinking years ago, that the packaging units were changed, and a lot of fancy stuff was abandoned. And now in the same way one attempts as before, also an environmental thought, let's say, to keep the packaging, that they do not reflect something big and have only little content, because that also means more material. And let's say, that are still aspects, which are negotiated in this way with the suppliers." (G-FC 5)

With regard to some other examples given by managers it is debatable whether these initiative save money, are cost-neutral or cost even more. For example, several managers highlighted that they prefer to get fruits and vegetable from regional suppliers. The arguments for this approach differed. It could be either customer orientation:

„Der Kunde moechte gern regionale Sachen" (GFC4)

"The customer wants local products" (GFC4)

Or it could be just a statement that they just do it this way without any reasoning maybe on the assumption that it is clear why they do it:

„Hauptsaechlich in Obst und Gemuese, bemuehen wir uns, hauptsaechlich regionales angebautes Gemuese zu nehmen, soweit das natuerlich, das Angebot da ist."(G-FE 5)

"Mainly with regard to fruits and vegetables, we try to get mainly locally grown vegetables, as far as the offer is there naturally." (G-FE 5)

Or they might add a short reference to an environmental argument:

„...da ist direkt eine Erdbeerplantage nebenan. Und ueber diesen Landwirt wo das 1A Qualitaet ist und der Preis unserem Preis entspricht, die lassen wir uns in der Saison mehrfach am Tag direkt anliefern – vom Feld. Das ist natuerlich besser, als wenn das ueber weite Strecken transportiert wird, nicht?" (G-FC 5)

"...there's a strawberry farm next door. And from this farmer, where it is the best quality and the price is in line with our price, we get in season direct delivery several times per day - from the field. That's naturally better, as if it is transported over long distances, isn't it?" (G-FC 5)

In the last quote a short reference to the costs is made but it only says that the price is in line with their price, whatever this might mean. By the way 'regional' in the German context referred to the landscape around the city, while in the UK there is an emphasis that something should be British but for example in London it can be from as far away as Scotland. All British managers reported that their supermarkets do not supply fruit and vegetables from the immediate surroundings, as this would be too cost-expensive. They argued that it is cheaper for the supermarkets due to economy of scale to get big quantities of fruits and vegetables. In addition, they argued that only then the quality of the fruits such as the size of the apple would be the same in all the retail outlets.

Instead of the British 'Business case' the reference most frequently made by the German managers was that of survival in the competition. It has to be noted that the English word 'competition' is used as a translation for two German words 'Wettbewerb' and 'Wettkampf'. While 'Wettkampf' is strongly associated with war and fighting, the word 'Wettbewerb' has a friendlier connotation. It is more about two people competing for a price, but in a sporting way. The latter meaning is the one preferred by all German managers. Interestingly, when I used in one interview the German translation for competitor as 'Wettkaempfer' (the more aggressive meaning), I was corrected by my interview partner, that they prefer to talk about 'Mitbewerber' (which could be translated as 'Co-Applicant' to express the friendlier attitude). He then goes on to explain their relationship to the 'Co-Applicant', which seems to be more of a cooperative nature. The 'Co-applicant', the German version of the competitor, is described as someone who also wants to live and survive.

> G- FC 5: „Sagen wir mal, gut, wir definieren im Handel den anderen als Mitbewerber."
>
> R: „Ja, genau. Entschuldigung (lacht)"
>
> G- FC 5: „ Ja, wir sehen das positiv als Mitbewerber. (...)Aber die Mitbewerber sind also nicht zu unterschätzen. Die wollen ja auch weiterkommen, wollen ja auch was tun. (...)
>
> Sagen wir mal, im Handel kennt man sich. Der bei der XX, der ist ein Kollege von mir, den ich schon 16 Jahre kenne (...)"

> G- FC 5: "Let's say, good, we define in commerce the other as 'co-applicant'."
>
> R: "Yes, exactly. Sorry (laughs)."
>
> G- FC 5: „Yes, we see this positive as 'co-applicant'. (...) But the 'co-applicants' shouldn't be underestimated. They also want to get on; they also want to do something. (...) Let's say, in commerce one knows each other. The A at the XX, he is a colleague of myself, who I know already for 16 years (...)"

The manager then explains in detail the problems of his competitors expressing his appreciation of their struggles. While they show sympathy and understanding for their 'Co-Applicants', German managers highlight that it is not easy to survive in the competition and that they have to make concessions under the pressures of competition:

> „(...)Der Bioladen, der macht das natürlich viel konsequenter mit Arbeiten mit Holz und solchen Sachen. Also, da sind eben immer so ein paar Fragen, die sich da drumrum stellen. Wie lasiert man die Hoelzer? Oder (...)Aber wenn man am Ende des Tages entscheidet, natuerlich die Wirtschaftlichkeit, und wir muessen natuerlich genauso im Wettbewerb uns behaupten wie alle andern auch. Deswegen koennen wir nicht unsere Boeden in reiner Eiche machen, was wir natuerlich am liebsten machen wuerden, nicht!" (G-FE 2)

> "(...) the organic food shop, they are a lot more consistent with wood work and such things. So, there are now always a few questions in this direction, which have to be asked: How do you varnish wood? Or (...) but if one decides at the end of the day, naturally economic efficiency prevails, and we must way hold our ground in the competition like everybody else. That's why we cannot make our floors out of pure oak, as we would like to do!" (G-FE 2)

However, in contrast to their British colleagues, German managers differentiate between times when you have to focus on price in order to survive, and other times, when you can concentrate on quality and other issues, which include environmental initiatives. The following energy provider, for example had, to concentrate on survival after the privatisation, but the company has not only managed to survive but to be profitable and is now spending five millions Euro of their profits for 'Pro-Klima' (Pro-Climate), an initiative, which promotes the usage of renewable energies and energy saving appliances in the private and business sector. For example 'Pro-Klima' would inform interested citizens about energy saving refrigerators and would contribute 50 Euro towards the cost of a highly energy-efficient (A rated) model if bought by the customer.

> "Letztes Jahr mehr Konzentration auf Wettbewerb, auf Preise etc. ….Umweltschutz wurde nicht vernachlaessigt, aber nicht darueber gesprochen….wir sind nicht unter die Raeder gekommen, im Gegenteil wir sind recht erfolgreich, foerdern 'Pro-Klima' mit unseren Gewinnen, mehr als 5 Millionen Euro pro Jahr…Preiswettbewerb jetzt vorbei, jetzt geht es mehr um Qualitaet und da tun wir den Umweltschutz hinein…"(G-E5)

> "Last year more concentration on competition, on prices etc.. ….environmental protection has not been neglected, but we did not talk about it ….we haven't gone to the dogs, on the contrary we are rather successful, funding 'Per-climate' with our gains, more than 5 million Euros per annum…price competition is now over, now it is more about quality and there we put the environmental protection in…" (G-E5)

One could argue that some German managers see the focus solely on price as something that is temporary, while for most British managers the price orientation is the

foundation of business. Some German managers would argue that it is a choice made by the management:

> „Edler Wettstreit, wenn man so will, jeder gegen jeden. Das soll es ganz klar sein(lacht). Wir sind ja auch im Wettstreit mit unseren Mitbewerbern also ... ja? Aber wir machen keinen Verdraengungswettbewerb, im Moment, jetzt so, - nicht so weit, daß wir sagen, wir muessen unbedingt dies und dies bestellen, einnehmen, damit andere uns nicht zuvorkommen, und den Markt besetzen. Solche Sachen. Aber das wird kommen, auch bei uns. Aber Wert, Wert, das - es gibt ein paar kleine unter denen, die haben durchaus, auch wenn sie nicht Bio sind, - versuchen eine bestimmte Qualitaet zu halten – das gibt es, ja! wie A und B oder solche Leute, regionale Haendler hier. Wo da noch der Chef dahintersteht, aber die großen Kapitalgesellschaften, und also im Lebensmittelbereich, die vom vom Shareholdervalue getrieben werden, oder auch die, so unter denen, wie wie die XX" (G-FE 1)

> "Noble contest, one would say, everybody against everybody. That should it clearly be (laughs). We are, yes, also in contest with our 'Co-applicants' so ... yes? But we don't make a cut-throat competition, at the moment, now as, - not thus far, that we say, we have to commission unconditionally this and this, capture it, so that no one else can get it, and dominate the market. Such things. But this will come, also for us. But value, value, that - there are a few small players under them, they have absolutely, even if they are not into organics - attempt to hold a certain quality – they exist, yes! as A and B or such people, regional merchants here. Where the boss is behind it all, but the big corporations, and so in food retail, who are driven by shareholder value, or also them, as under which, as as this XX". (G-FE 1)

As in this quote managers tend to distance themselves from the philosophy that they have to gain market share by beating the competition. If at all, they tend to identify other players who follow this approach:

> „Das sind keine stark ausgepraegten Werte, sondern da geht es rein darum, wie kann ich ...eh... moeglichst meine Spannen verbessern, indem ich Produkte reinhole, die die mit moeglichst .. mit wenig Aufwand zum hohen Preis, erklecklichen Preis, verkauft werden koennen. Da geht es nicht um die Qualitaet, sondern um die Akzeptanz beim Kunden. Das geht voll ueber den Preis, bei den allergroessten." (G-FE 1)

> "There are no distinct values, but there the aim is…how can I ...eh... as much as possible improve my margins by offering products, which with as much as possible .. can with little expense be sold for a high price, a considerable price. It is not about the quality, but about the market acceptance of the customers. That is reflected in the price price at the very largest [companies]." (G-FE 1)

> „Der will den Markt beherrschen. Da haben wir mal einen ganzen Abend mit ihm verbracht. Das ist schon lange her. War auch eine richtige Begegnung. Zu kapieren, wie ticken die eigentlich, ja?" (G-FE 2)

> "He wants to dominate the market. Once we have spent a whole evening with him. That was a long time ago. Was also quite an encounter. To understand, how do they actually tick, right?" (G-FE 2)

Consequently, none of the managers mentioned that they have to increase shareholder value, not even the ones working for shareholder owned companies. They never mentioned the shareholder at all. Only two managers talked about the shareholder

concept, both in a negative way. One suggested that the shareholder orientation is responsible for the short term thinking in business: Most managers would see it as a game, would focus on the twelve-month period and would not be able to develop anything with more substance, as this would need a long-term perspective. As described above, some British managers expressed a similar critique, although none of them made explicitly the connection to the shareholder concept as in the following German quote:

> „Und die Manager von heute sind eigentlich Teilnehmer an einem großen Spiel, wie die Boersianer auch, die springen auf den Zug, und dann im ... wie in der ... im Spielkasino halt, so agieren, Ja? Sind das letzten Endes heute auch Leute, die versuchen, wo sie sozusagen ihre materiellen Schwerpunkte befriedigen koennen. Ja, und, wenn das halt vorbei ist, dann gehen sie halt wieder und werden dann, das ist ja meistens, weil die ja dann nicht mehr die Zeit haben, was Vernuenftiges zu entwickeln, ja? Man muß ja immer heute, wenn man Manager ist – bei der Telekom oder sonst irgendwo, muß man ja in seinem großen oder kleinen Geschaeftsbereich, je nachdem,wo man arbeitet, muß man binnen 12 Monaten erste Erfolge vorweisen, sonst wackelt ja der Stuhl, ja? Aber ... da kann ja auch eigentlich nichts Substanzielles wo man vier, fuenf – wo man auch zehn Jahre braucht, um zu entstehen. Da kann nichts Substanzielles mehr wachsen. Ja." (G-FE 1)

> "And the manager of today is a participant in a big game, as also those stock exchange operators, they jump on the bandwagon, and then in ... as in ...they act as if they were in the casino, right? At the end these are people today, who attempt to satisfy their material needs so to speak. Yes, and when this is over, then they go again and will be, that's mostly the case, because they don't have the time to develop something sensible, yes? One has to, today, if one is a manager – for the Telekom or anywhere, one has to in one's great or little operation, depending on where one works, one has to show first results within 12 months, otherwise the 'chair is rocking' [A German expression for the risk of loosing the job], yes? But ... as there can't be any substantial, where one four, five - where one needs also ten years to come into being. There can't grow anything substantial. Yes." (G-FE 1)

This manager would prefer to replace the existing shareholder system with the ‚klassische Unternehmertum', which could be translated as the ‚classical entrepreneurism'. He describes the classical entrepreneur as follows:

> „Also wenn ein Unternehmer – da einfach auch ein Unternehmer dahinter steht, der einfach ein gewisses Ethos auch hat, und der zumindest versucht, mit seinen Mitarbeitern anstaendig umzugehen und, wo eben, sozusagen das Soziale und Geistige miteinander eben irgendwo auch noch eine Rolle spielt, trotz aller tagesgeschaeftlichen Ausrichtungen. Und das Beispiel zeigt, daß man mit so einer Einstellung, so einer Herangehensweise, unternehmerisch sogar Marktfuehrer sein kann. Es gibt ein paar Beispiele noch dafür. Ich würde mir wuenschen, daß es mehr davon gibt." (G-FE 1)

> "So if an entrepreneur – an entrepreneur, who is behind his business, who has a certain ethos, and at least attempts to treat his employees decently, and, where still, so to speak, the social and spiritual interact with each other, despite all daily business activities. And there are examples, that someone with such an attitude can even be market leader. A few examples do exist. I would wish for myself, that there would be more people like this." (G-FE 1)

As was said before the most common notion used by the German managers is that of survival in a competition. Environmental improvements as a mean to save cost are one strategy used to guarantee survival. However, most managers employed the picture of survival also in another connotation: They argued that even cost-intensive environmental improvements should be made as long as the survival of the company is not jeopardized. Some as the manager in the following quote claimed that each year they would spend as much as possible on environmental issues without risking their own survival. Some investments are made, because a law will be put in force in the near future. But even without regulation or anticipated legal requirements he claimed that they will invest for example in new refrigeration, although the new cooling gas is more expensive for them, but they hope that many will install the same new system so that the gas becomes cheaper due to economy of scale:

> "Wir investieren in Umweltmassnahmen, bevor das Gesetz in Kraft tritt. Oft ruesten wir auch um, obwohl wir nicht wissen, ob da ein Gesetz geplant ist. Das kostet zwar mehr, aber hoffentlich ruesten alle um und dann wird es auch wieder guenstiger fuer uns wie bei den Kuehltruhen. Wir machen halt jedes Jahr, so viel wir koennen, man muss ja ueberleben(…)Muelltrennung ganz wichtig, ich mache es einfach, nicht aus Kostengruenden, waere wohl billiger alles in eine Tonne zu werfen." (G-FC 2)

> "We invest into environmental improvements, before the law comes into action. Often we also make the changes, although we don't know whether a law is planned there or not. That costs indeed more, but hopefully all will convert and then it will get cheaper again for us as in case of the refrigerators. We do every year as much as we can, one has to survive (…) Waste separation very important, I just do it, not because of the costs involved, it surely would be cheaper to throw everything into one bin." (G-FC 2)

Other managers stressed that in addition to being able to afford it, the investment has to make sense for the environment. In the time of this interview the German government was planning to introduce a deposit on cans; some of the manager were against this law as it was very expensive to implement but was not really improving the environment so much in their eyes.

> "Wir machen das, sobald es fuer uns finanzierbar ist, aber es muss auch einsichtig sein und wirklich was bringen, nicht so wie beim Dosenpfand." (G-FC 1)

> "We do that, as soon as it is for us affordable, but it must also be sensible and actually show results, not like the can deposit." (G-FC 1)

Two managers who complained strongly about this new law reported on the other hand projects they had initiated to improve the environment. One manager would have liked to introduce organic vegetables in his shop; he tried it for three weeks but customers were not interested. Despite the financial loss experienced during these three weeks he tried it two more times within the next year before he gave up. Another manager created

his own customer information showing how much waste is created when they buy a certain product. In both cases the managers declared that they belied these projects would considerably improve the environment and therefore they were prepared to accept a certain financial loss as long as they could afford it.

Managers working for companies with an ecological corporate identity used a similar argument. In their case they admitted that the material used in their shops or the processes employed could be environmental friendlier, but that at the moment they would risk their own survival if they spend more on improving these aspects. And they argued that it is more important for the environment to concentrate all their (financial) efforts in gaining market share for organic products as this improves the environment more than trying to do everything at the same time with a much higher risk to loose out. Similar to the 'conventional managers' they anticipated improving the other aspects when they would be able to afford it:

> "Und wobei es um Expansion geht, um weitere Standorte. Es geht um mehr Produkte, es geht um bessere Produkte. Und ich muß sagen, in dieser Stufe des Unternehmens interessieren mich Fragen wie Verpackung, (...) ... die interessieren mich im Moment nicht sehr. D.h. nicht, daß sie mich nicht doch sehr interessieren, aber im Moment sehe ich das als nachranging, ja?

> Sofern wir Kapazitaeten haben, darüber nachzudenken, sozusagen in einem Stadium des Prozesses des Ladens, wo man ohnehin immer wieder an Entscheidungsfragen kommt, finde ich es richtig und sinnvoll, sich diese Frage zu stellen. Aber wenn es darum geht, den Markt schnell zu entwickeln, und eben diese Biolebensmittel in die Welt zu bringen, anstatt einen hoeheren Marktanteil zu verschaffen, da sehe ich dann eine viel viel groeßere Sicht auf die Foerderung einer sozusagen geschuetzteren und geschonteren, menschenwuerdigeren Umwelt. Und deshalb, glaube ich, werden uns diese Fragen einholen. Aber zunaechst muß man einfach ..."(G-FE 2)

> "And whereas it is about expansion, about further sites. It is about more products, it is about better products. And I have to say, in this stage of business I am not so much interested in questions such as packaging, (…..) I am not so interested in them at the moment. That does not mean that I am not very interested in them, but at the moment I see them as subordinated, yes?

> If we have capacities to think about it, so to speak in a stage of the process of the business, where one is confronted with new decisions anyway, I find I it right and sensible to ask one these questions. But if the point is to develop the market fast, and to bring these organic products into the world, instead of getting a higher market share, there I see then a better perspective on promoting a protected and prevented from damage, humane environment. And therefore, I believe, these questions will catch up with us. But first of all one simple has to ..."(G-FE 2)

One manager explained that his company has three different strategies with regard to environmental issues. The first is to be more efficient with the resources to save costs. The second one is to develop environmental friendly products to earn money. And the

third one is again to sacrifice some parts of the profit for a good cause, in their case to promote the already mentioned ‚Pro-Klima'-Initiative.

> „Gewinnmaximierung ist Hauptziel jedes Unternehmens. Umweltschutz immer mit dabei, wenn man keine Gewinne ausschuettet. Wir fragen uns: Wo kann man mit Umweltschutz Geld verdienen wie z.B. mit dem Erdgasauto, wo wir dann Erdgas verkaufen koennen. Geld fuer ‚Pro-Klima' auszugeben, da verzichten wir schon auf Anteil zum Unternehmensgewinn. Und Umweltschutzmassnehmen effizient einzusetzen, moeglichst viel einzusparen." (G-E5)

> "Profit maximization is the main objective of every business. Environmental protection always there when one distributes no profits. We ask us: Where can one make money with environmental protection as for example with the natural gas car, where we then can sale natural gas. Money spent for 'Pro-Klima', there we waive already a share of the business profit. And to use efficiently environmental measures, to save as much money as possible." (G-E5)

His colleague in the same company also argues that they go beyond legal requirements with this investment into renewable energies via the ‚Pro-Klima'-Iniative, but the main reason he cited is to improve their image as an environmental friendly company.

> "Wir gehen ueber gesetzliche Vorschriften hinaus so dass wir unser Image verbessern konnten, haben 5 Millionen Euro in Klimaschutzfonds gesteckt, jetzt wird Solarenergie gefoerdert." (G-E 4)

> "We go beyond regulations so that we have been able to improve our image, have put 5 millions Euro in climate protection fond, now we promote solar energy." (G-E 4)

However, more often managers would argue from an environmental point of view and then, apparently with reluctance, admit that it also serves their own business interest:

> „In vielem sind wir da wirklich ein Vorreiter, eine Vorbildfunktion. (...)Die Kunden sind ja auf uns zugekommen, an uns herangetreten, und haben gefragt: „Wie soll das eigentlich funktionieren? Wir lesen was, wir hoeren was, in den Nachrichten sieht man was. Wir wissen gar nicht wie das noch laufen soll." So daß es nicht nur einige Kunden waren, sondern viele. Wie gesagt, wir wollten ihnen irgendwie helfen. So haben wir hier ein Projekt auf die Beine gestellt, (...) Also diese Gelegenheit haben wir genutzt, a) ist das ja wichtig, daß wir unsere Kunden halten, die Kundenbindung noch vertiefen, damit die weiterhin bei uns kaufen, und dadurch, sagen wir mal, unser Image noch mehr aufpoliert wird, den Kunden als Menschen dabei auch noch geholfen, und geht im Einkauf so weiter. Natürlich auch ein bisschen Eigennutz. Da muß man ja so was bieten, und was uns dabei sehr geholfen hat, man hat ja selber durch die vielen Gespraeche - wenn ich da drueben war, habe ich genauso mit den Kunden gesprochen, wie auch die Mitarbeiter, sehr viel gelernt...".(G-FC 5)

> "In many aspects we are really role models, a role model function. (...) The customers came up to us, approached us, and have asked: 'How should this actually work? We read something, we hear something, in the news one sees something.. We don't' know how this should go.' So that it was not only a few customers, but many. As said, we wanted to help them. Therefore we have got a project going, (…), So this opportunity we have used, a) it is indeed important, that we keep our customers, deepen the customer loyalty, so that they buy further from us, and thereby, say, polish our image, the customers as human beings also get help, and goes on in purchase. Naturally there

is also bit self-interest. One has to offer this, and what has helped us very much, one has through all the talks - when I was over there, I have spoken in the same way with the customers, as also the employees, learned lots...." (G-FC 5)

The German managers are quite vocal about their environmental achievements and are quite familiar with the environmental discourse as presented in the media. While the British manager would argue from the business case, why they have invested in environmental measures, most German managers would quote environmental considerations as reasons for their business decisions. They would dwell considerately on these arguments and only add shortly, if at all, that these measures also help to save costs or improve the image of their company. One could even get the impression that German managers find it inappropriate, maybe even morally wrong to put their own interest or the interest of the company first. In the last quote the manager used for example the diminutive 'ein bisschen Eigennutz' (a bit self-interest) as if self-interest was not really suitable. The German discourse seems to mix financial considerations with environmental arguments. Utilizing Habermas' concept of the instrumental reason, 'economic rationality' in the German context seems to be based on the principle that a company has to make money in order to survive. If a company fulfils this basic principle then they can afford to integrate other considerations into their business decisions. With regard to environmental issues, certain arguments seem to form part of the instrumental reasoning: The reduction of costs through the efficient use of resources and the investment into environmental improvements as long as the survival of the company is not at risk. However, it would seem that the use of 'instrumental reason' and 'communicative reason' are constantly intertwined in the German business discourse, at least with regard to environmental issues. Sometimes the business considerations would for example override the environmental arguments, but the managers would still discuss the environmental implications. The latter might even suggest that the managers use communicative reason to challenge and maybe change their instrumental reasoning.

While the arguments presented so far might be connected to 'instrumental reasoning', the following quotes illustrate how German managers integrate 'communicative reasoning' into their opinions. Similarly as in the British case studies the managers from companies with an ecological corporate image are more vocal about it, but also some managers from shareholder owned companies use 'communicative reasoning'. The manager in the following quote for example stated that they are regularly controlled with regard to their environmental improvements (and cost-savings), but he stressed that

for him it is not enforcement. Instead he sees it as a necessity to consider the environment as it is connected to so many important issues; furthermore the topics such as climate change should make us muse about it on a daily basis:

> „Also Umwelt ist schon ein wichtiger Aspekt bei uns, und unterliegt auch regelmaessigen Pruefungen, so daß ich automatisch gezwungen bin, diese Bereiche mit zu bearbeiten. Aber ich sehe das nicht als Zwang, sondern es gehoert dazu. Und Umwelt ist für mich ein wichtiger Aspekt, denn denken Sie nur an die Sache Abholzung der Regenwaelder da, Veraenderung des Klimas. Das sind ja nur zwei Schlagworte, worauf wir, wenn man mal drueber mal nachdenkt, taeglich ins Gruebeln kommen sollten, wie das so weitergeht. Also das beeintraechtigt die Arbeitswelt immer mehr." (G-FC 5)

> „So environment is already an important aspect for us, and is also subject to regular controls, so that I am automatically forced to attend to these areas. But I see that not as enforcement, but it is part of the overall process. And environment is for myself an important aspect, because think about the matter destruction of the rainforest or the climate change. That are only two buzzwords, about which we, should be worring more and more, how this can go on. So that impairs the working world more and more." (G-FC 5)

Even when discussing costs this manager made the connection to the Habermasian 'lifeworld' that for example when all companies save energy, they save costs but then there is also no need to produce so much energy and the environment is less 'used up':

> „Aber, sagen wir mal, das Thema ‚Energiesparen', spart ja nicht nur dem Unternehmen Kosten, sondern wenn weniger Energie verwendet wird, wie z.B. durch andere Leuchtstoffe, die weniger Energie verbrauchen, aber die von der Helligkeit her der anderen nicht nachstehen, kann man da Energie sparen und wenn jeder dazu beitragen wuerde, mueßte ja in Anfuehrungsstriche ‚weniger Energie produziert werden'. Die Umwelt wird auch nicht so stark abgenutzt." (G-FC 5)

> "But, say, that theme 'energy saving', saves yes not only the company costs, but if fewer energy is being used, as e.g. through other luminescent materials, that consume fewer energy, but are not inferior in brightness, one can save energy and if everybody would contribute than so to say 'fewer energy will be produced'. The environment is also not as strongly used up." (G-FC 5)

One manager argued that you have to look beyond your own company to see the bigger picture, which includes the national economy. For him environmental initiatives create additional employment, which he regards as good for the economy and society in general in addition to the positive impact on the environment.

> „Ein Beratungsunternehmen schlug uns vor, dass wir ein paar Millionen einsparen, wenn wir Pro-Klima streichen. Personalabbau schon im Vorfeld, das ist natuerlich volkswirtschaftlich nicht so schoen.(...) aber mit den Millionen foerdern wir zehn direkte Arbeitsplaetze. Pro-Klima foerdert auch Arbeitsplaetze in der Region, wenn Kredite fuer Solarprojekte gegeben werden.So wir tun nicht nur etwas fuer die Umwelt, sondern auch fuer die Gesellschaft." (G-E 5)

> "A consulting firm recommended that we save a few millions, if we discard 'Pro-Klima'. Staff reduction already in the run-up, that's naturally economically not very nice (...) but

with the millions we fund ten direct jobs. 'Pro-Klima' also funds work in the region, when credits are given for solar projects. So we do not only do something for the environment, but also for the society." (G-E 5)

Another manager also stressed that consulting firms often only look at the costs involved, but miss the bigger picutre. This myopic view could even risk the survival of the firm, which he illustrates with the following story about the fish retailer ‚Nordsee':

G-FE 2: (lacht schallend) „Es hat ja, ‚Nordsee' hat ja einen katastrophalen Fehler gemacht."

R: „Ja"

G-FE 2: „Die haben,... da haben irgendwelche McKinseys oder Arthurs, ja? Yes, Arthur Andersons haben ihnen weis gemacht, daß sie sich in den unrentablen Geschaeftszweig verabschieden muessen. In den Laeden, ja?"

R: „mhm"

G-FE 2:" haben festgestellt, daß der Frischfischverkauf eigentlich überhaupt keine Kohle bringt."

R:" So? ach so, mhm"

G-FE 2: „und haben da sich eigentlich mehr auf den wirklich eintraeglichen Bereich, nämlich Food Service sozusagen Fast Food ja! Fish Fast Food, nicht! (...) Auf dem Grundeis gelandet ... also auf Grundeis gegangen – -eis gegangen, nicht? Weil – ploetzlich haben die Leute die Fischbuletten nicht mehr haben wollen. Und die Boxes da, die Lunchboxes mit den Frittierten, nicht, warum wohl?"

R: „ Ja, ich denke weil frisch also nicht mehr von da kamen, von der Seite (lacht)"

G-FE 2: „JA, ja - Das Feeling war weg. Das Feeling, was frisches zu essen, was da gerade noch gezappelt hat. Als die Bestecke noch da waren, mit dem Eis und den ganzen Bergen von Fisch, und den Geruch – (...)Da hat es also ... dreißig Nordseestandorte uebernehmen."

R: „Ach so"

G-FE 2: „Die schaffen es nicht mehr."

R: „Ah, das ist natuerlich ..".

G-FE 2: „Tatataaa – viel gelernt. Tatatataaa – wir lernen jede Woche wieder neue Sachen dazu."

G-FE 2: (Laughs sounding)".. it has, 'Nordsee has made a disastrous mistake."

R: "Yes"

G-FE 2:"They have,... there have any McKinseys or Arthurs, yes? Yes, Arthur Andersons have convinced them that they have to get rid of the unprofitable branch of business. In the shops, yes?"

R: "Mhm"

G-FE 2:"They have noticed, that the sale of fresh fish is actually not profitable. "

R: "so? I see, mhm"

G-FE 2:"And so they concentrated on the more profitable range, namely Food Service so to speak Fast Food, yes! Fish Fast Food! (…) They have landed on ground ice ... walked on ground ice, didn't they? Because - suddenly people didn't want the fish burger anymore. And not the boxes, the Lunchboxes with the deep-fried, why?"

R: "Yes, I think because fresh didn't come from over there, from the other side (laughs)"

G-FE 2:"YES, yes - that feeling was gone. That feeling to eat something fresh, which was still alive a short while ago. As the sets of cutlery were still there, with the ice and the whole mountains of fish, and the smell - (...)As it has so ... thirty 'Nordsee' sites were taken over."

R: "I see"

G-FE 2:"They are going under."

R: "Ah, that's naturally ..."

G-FE 2:"Tatataaa - a lot of learnt. Tatatataaa - we learn every week new things."

The following manager also makes a connection between environmental issues and many other aspects such as the struggle of conventional farmers to survive under the existing system and other companies who have to give up due to the competition. In her opinion she can help to overcome these additional problems when she is promoting environmental products.

„Die Krisen, die Menschen immer wieder die Existenz kosten…auch die Farmer, dass es keinen Spass macht, konventionell mehr zu produzieren (...) dass auch viele Firmen kaputtgehen....ich moechte etwas dagegen tun....die Kunden, die haben das drei Wochen spaeter wieder vergessen. (..)Aber ich kann etwas tun, indem ich im oekologischen Bereich arbeite und versuche Dinge, die der Umwelt schaden, zu veraendern."(G-FE 3)

"The crises, which cost human beings over and over again the existence …also the farmer, that it is no fun anymore to produce conventionally (...) that also many firms go bankrupt....I want to do something against it....the customers, they have forgotten it three weeks later. (..) But I can do something by working in the ecological sector and by trying to change things that harm the environment." (G-FE 3)

Some managers admit that business considerations can become quite powerful, but that they have to remind themselves not to compromise on certain environmental aspects that they consider important. Here they argue strongly from the lifeworld and how this shapes how they do business:

‚Also d.h., welche Lieferanten duerfen uns beliefern. Ah ... denn, es gibt da eben solche, die sozusagen in ihrem Tun aus vielerlei Gruenden untadelig sind, und die das auch nachpruefbar machen; und es gibt andere, da ist es eher neutral. (...)Und es gibt wieder andere, da gibt es berechtigte Zweifel. Insofern ist es natuerlich auch all das, was wir tun - jede Einkaufsentscheidung, jede Lieferantenentscheidung, eine Entscheidung, die sehr sehr stark darueber entscheidet, ob umweltorientierte Unternehmen in den Markt kommen oder ob es solche sind, die eher Kompromisse machen, oder ob es solchen sind, die eher schlecht sind. Und da sind wir schon sehr sorgfaeltig. Also wir schauen uns schon unsere Lieferanten an. Ich lege z.B. großen Wert darauf, jeden Lieferanten persoenlich kennenzulernen, auch seine Fertigung zu sehen, seinen Huehnerstall zu sehen, seine Viehhaltung usw. Das sind einfach ganz deutliche Entscheidungskriterien.

Da stehen wir natuerlich auch im Moment immer staerker bei der Diskussion Preis versus Qualitaet oder Preis versus Lieferantenqualitaet oder Preis versus Glaubwuerdigkeit auch des Lieferanten. Bisher schaffen wir das, glaube ich, ganz gut, im Zweifelsfall dann doch den etwas teureren bei jedem Zweifel Lieferanten den Vorzug zu geben. (...) Unsere Organisation muß so effizient sein, daß wir uns weiterhin erlauben können, die Lebensmittel mit der hoechsten Qualitaet bei den Lieferanten mit der hoechsten Glaubwuerdigkeit, der fundamentalsten Arbeit einzukaufen." (G-FE 2)

"So that is to say, which suppliers are allowed to supply us. Ah ... because, there are now some, who so to speak are irreproachable in their doings, and they also make it verifiable; and there are others, there it is neutral. (…) And there are again other, there are entitled doubts. In so far it is naturally also all that, what we do - any of the purchase decision, any decision about suppliers, a decision, which decides strongly whether environmental oriented companies enter the market or whether such [companies] that make compromises, or whether such that are rather bad. And there we are already very careful. So we have a good look at our suppliers. I e.g. make a point of getting to know every supplier in person, also to see his manufacturing, to see his hen house, his livestock farming etc. That are simple distinct decision criteria. There we get at the moment always more into the discussion price versus quality or price versus quality of suppliers or price versus credibility of supplier. (…)Our organization has to be so efficient that we can allow ourselves to buy the food with the highest quality from the suppliers with the highest credibility, with the most fundamental work." (G-FE 2)

One manager went beyond his immediate business environment and questioned the current dominating business system in general. He argued that the economic liberalism is responsible for many problems including the destruction of the environment, furthermore he offered an analysis how the underlying principle of materialism contradicts other important values such as quality, zest for life and sustainability:

„Also für mich ist das groeßte oekologische Problem der immer mehr um sich greifende Wirtschaftsliberalismus. (...) Also der Wirtschaftsliberalismus, glaube ich, also unsere Art, oekonomisch zu denken, die Überhoehung des oekonomischen Prinzips, ja?, oder oeknomischer Prinzipien – Gewinn, Sharholdervalue über alles – zum Teufel mit Qualitaet, mit Lebensfreude, mit Gemeinschaft usw., Nachhaltigkeit, Verantwortung usw. Und ganz am Ende, wenn man noch weiter denkt, dann ist da eine noch viel tiefer liegende Grundlage, der im westlichen Kulturmodell verankerte Materialismus. (...) weil all diese Leute sagen, daß sozusagen der Materialismus – und das Immer-mehr-haben-wollen – und zu glauben, daraus erwaechst unser Glueck. Daß das eben ... nicht... zur, nicht zum Guten fuehrt; nicht zum seelischen Guten, nicht zur Erhaltung der Lebensgrundlagen und insgesamt auch nicht zum Glueck der Menschen.

Das Geistige, das uns fehlt. Die Menschen entgeisten sich immer mehr und vermaterialisieren sich immer mehr." (G-FE 1)

"I think the biggest ecological problem the ever increasing economic liberalism (..) So the economic liberalism, I believe, so our way, to think economical, the overvaluation of the economical principle, yes?, or the economical principles - profit, shareholder value over all - confound it with quality, with zest for life, with community etc, sustainability, responsibility etc. And at the very end, if one still thinks further, then there is as an even deeper layer, the in the Western culture model anchored materialism. (...) because all these people say, that so to speak the materialism - and that always-want-to have-more- and to believe, that out of this grows our happiness. That now ... does it.. to, not leads to the good; not to the psychological good, not to the conservation of the life conditions and altogether not to the happiness of human beings. The spiritual that we

miss. The human beings loose the spiritual and are more and more into materialism."
(G-FE 1)

On this background he sees the purpose of his company to bring "anstaendige Produkte" (decent products) into the market, as it is not in their power to stop liberalism.

> „Na, ja, wenn - ich glaube, unsere Rolle kann nicht sein, den Wirtschaftsliberalismus zu stoppen, weil dazu sind wir einfach Staubkorn in dem Meer des Wahnsinns, glaube ich. Nee, das die Aufgabe des Unternehmens ist, anstaendige Produkte in die Welt zu bringen, ja? Unseren Marktanteil zu vergroessern und damit auch noch Geld zu verdienen. Punkt. So sehe ich das." (G- FE 1)

> "Na, yes, if – I believe, our role cannot be to stop the economic liberalism, because to it we are simple dust particle in the sea of madness, I fancy. No, that is the task of the company to bring decent products into the world, isn't it? To enhance our market share and to earn with it also still money. Point. This is how I see that." (G- FE 1)

6.3   The role of the stakeholders

The review of the German literature has shown that the role and importance of different stakeholders has not been fully explored yet. As there is no direct translation for the word 'stakeholder' (the closest would be 'Interessenvertreter', which is the one representing interests), the researcher first used the English term 'stakeholder', which is now used as a technical expression among some managers; during the course of the interviews however the researcher realized that the concept of stakeholders was not well known by the German managers; only a few younger managers were familiar with it. Encountering these difficulties the question 'Who is the most important stakeholder for you?' was replaced with the more familiar notion of 'Interessengruppen' (interest groups), so the question was: 'Welche Interessengruppen haben fuer Sie die hoechste Bedeutung?' ('Which interest groups are the most important for you?')

It might be due to these difficulties that German managers did not ponder so much about who is the most important stakeholder as the British managers, however the Germans were also quite selective insofar as they only discussed three 'Intessengruppen': Regulation/law, suppliers and customers; the latter was seen as the most important.

For British managers, investors seemed to have gained in importance. This was a trend already observed in Fineman's studies (1996,1997,1998), which suggested that with regard to environmental issues managers mainly react to the demand of campaigners and regulators and lately to investors and the media. British managers in the present

study highlighted also the importance of the regulation in force; managers in the energy sector in particular emphasized the importance of a good reputation. One manager rated customers as the most important stakeholder, but then again he was not sure whether the investors are indeed more influential or not:

> "Ahm, I think it's, I think it's, I think in order probably it is probably customer, investor and then employee, if I were to be honest with you. I'd like to think that we are all equal, but, and - our strategy says, that we do, we have a quality service and cost agenda, which drives shareholder values. What we are doing is we drive value for our shareholders. Our business strategy says that our shareholder is the most important stakeholder. Ahm, but I think in reality the customer is, is our focus. Ahm – but increasingly investors have quite an impact on, on how we, how we manage our business. (UK-FC 1)

Later during the interview, this manager explained how investors are now pushing for more environmental policies. In his opinion, the investors are as interested in environmental changes as the customers are and they have more power to actually influence their business practice.

> "And I think it is the last one that would, it's, it's the pressure from investors more than the pressure from the customers that will make us change our ways in environment issues. I mean certainly, I mean, I've just been doing, I do a lot of work in investor relations on our environmental policies, our people policies. We are doing one for the Dow Jones Sustainable Index, so therefore, there seems to be a lot more pressure for where people invest money. So to understand what a portfolio of an investment house might look like, they then ask the companies the questions and this works its way back. So I think, I think, I think, it just, it just feels to me as if there's as much pressure from investors as there is from customers, in terms of changing our environment policies, and certainly, rather than the company being top in any customer league, it is equally important for us to be top in the environmental leagues of investors. Dow Jones, the FTSE For Good, all those league tables are very important to us. That will probably shape some of our policies and investments more than necessary just the customers." (UK-FC 1)

The significance of shareholders is in line with the importance British managers attach to the business case. For British managers the purpose of a company is mainly rewarding the financial contributor:

> "…,again in my opinion, there has to be, if somebody is spending money…then there has to be a benefit particularly in the company because it has to be, …we are all judged – aren't we? And the company is judged by the shareholders and how much profit. So, yes we are and have to look after all issues legal and environment but ultimately there will be a benefit to what we do." (UK-FC4)

However managers in the energy sector seemed to be less concerned about the investors; they emphasized the importance of a good reputation along with the avoidance of prosecution. This might reflect negative experiences they have had in the past as the following quote indicates:

> "We get prosecuted…very bad couple of years with prosecution, prosecution focus of attention, therefore two roles created: (…)who gets money to fix fast problems, team of compliance managers, who are focusing on compliance issues, they have put money aside, when compliance is at risk, employees can call an emergency phone (…) Drivers prosecution and reputation damage…"(UK-E 1)

More often they stress the point how easily a good reputation can be lost due to the influence of the media. Therefore as one manager puts it they have to be 'sweet' to the media:

> "Business as a whole is quite well regulated…big environmental impacts are legislation…the real reason because of its reputation…you don't need many incidents to get a bad reputation….most of the time you try to stay out of the newspapers (…)the bottom line comes what the government wants to do and they do what the public wants and they follow the media…so you have to be sweet to the media." (UK-E 6)

Avoiding bad news was one strategy, but they also actively tried to produce good news:

> "Media is very pro-environmental as well and the newspapers like good news…my department, we generate 11% of the good news coverage for the whole company…." (UK-E 1)

As Fineman and Clarke (1996) already pointed out the moral (green) influence of stakeholders like the media can be exercised when other interests of managers are challenged such as reputation. Because of the latter, the media was also seen by managers in the food retail sector as highly influential; some managers explained in detail how their companies spent financial and human resources to actively engage with the media:

> "Yes, - we have a lot of people in this building, that manage government affairs and media affairs in internal communications, and we spend a lot of time reacting to things in the press, but also to make, to, to get things in the press. Ahm – and I say, I would say, in a brand that is as big as ours the media is a very big stakeholder, I guess. Ahm – and for example, we would, we would be very sensitive if we, if we, if we thought we were doing something that is wrong, and it was going to get us in the press, then we would probably change that practice, definitely. So, yes, I guess it is a good challenge. The media and television are a big influence in some of the things that we do." (UK-FC 1)

Similar as in the study of Schaefer and Harvey (2000), managers rated external stakeholders as more important but also identified individuals within the organisations as change agents, mainly the senior management. No one referred to an 'environmental champion'; although this might be due to the design of the survey in the present study as managers were not specifically questioned about it, but would have had to volunteer this topic. In addition to Schaefer and Harvey's findings, managers in the present study also considered the positive buy-in of top managers as very important:

> "I can have some impact not as much impact as I would like. For example I went to every director personally to make sure it went through. The CEO is very serious about it, so you can have some influence, quite keen to promote Renewable Energies. Influencing the action or the sites, harder to influence… wish I would have more influence." (UK-E 1)

> "Yes, I think so…because I know the CEO ..I don't know him well but I see him often enough to understand I think his motivation…so I understand what he is trying to do with the company and I understand the logic of that…he is a member of the XXX ….so he is fairly committed to the company being seen as a good corporate citizen not at the expense of shareholder value but being a corporate citizenship has some reputational value." (UK-E 3)

But as the managers in Schaefer and Harvey's study, managers in the present study regarded a negative attitude of top managers as a much bigger challenge:

> "When I go on conferences the main things that come out is… say you have a company X, what you need, you need to have senior management buy-in – for example we have got CCC in our board who is chairing the environmental steering group (….).but when you go to conferences you talk to people from other companies if they do not have their senior management buy-in then it is much harder for them…their problems are practically I wouldn't say insurmountable but they have a lot more issues." (UK-FE2)

However, not only the attitude but also the practice of the top and senior managers was mentioned as a hindrance to environmental improvements:

> "There is not enough support…one of our targets is to reduce 5% in traffic, video-conferencing, individuals decide, not the environmental policy…push from senior management but when you do your daily job you just want to get on with it…senior management what they say and what they actually do – there should be a better alignment – it' s all about time and money at the end of the day…giving best value to your shareholder." (UK-E 6)

German managers were not referring to top or senior managers as an important stakeholder, but this might be more due to the use of the word "Interessengruppen" in the German context, which mainly describes external stakeholders. Additional research needs to be undertaken to understand the influence of top and senior management on environmental behaviour and the role of 'environmental champions' in Germany.

British and German managers both rated regulations as highly important; they expressed very similar attitudes and opinions towards the government. Obviously, they all presented themselves as law-abiding citizens. In line with the importance, British managers attribute to the 'business case' they would often refer to costs as the main driver along with legislation:

> "…costs and obviously legislation I mean legislation drives everything."(UK-FE 2)

Interestingly the regulator was seen as an 'economic regulator' and seems to exercise a certain power independently from the government:

> "And of course we have the policy debate with the regulator every review period what is the appropriate amount of circuitry that should go underground. The regulator being an economic regulator says' Oh that is not an issue for him, that is government policy.' He will give us an amount of money based on his view what the typical underground rates would be so that constrains our possibilities what we would wish to do- we would like to put more underground – because the regulator is a proxy for customers those who pay electricity bills paying us for the service. (…) He make a clear distinction between looking after consumers i.e. after those who pay…he does not look after - in his words-look after the interest of citizens which is a matter for government."(UK-E 3)

Only one manager expressed this view; future research could investigate in more detail the relationships between companies, regulators and the government.

Most British managers were convinced that the government has to step in to improve environmental behaviour of all people involved even the behaviour of employees within the company as the next quote illustrates:

> We have this coffee machine…you know with plastic cups…I have brought mugs in, because you can press the button and then you can use your own cup…but I don't think many person in this company do this …you have to have legislation (UK-E 1)

Even though managers often made the government responsible for major changes, some were also admitting that their companies could and actually do actively influence governmental policies through lobbying. The following narrative shows typically how managers perceive the relationship between their company and the government:

> UK-FC 1 : I've noticed a change since they've changed the tax. You know, if you look at people in this organisation. There aren't many people now with big gas-guzzling cars. Ahm – and, and, we've got probably more people without company cars than with company cars. So therefore, I think they've got a responsibility to train people's behaviours through taxation and things like that. And if, and if - ahm – you know, if it is cars, if it is aerosols, they need to legislate and tax to change people's behaviour so they don't produce all this gas; and similarly, you know, companies listen to the taxman, as well. So if you are taxed on a particular refrigerator, but you are not taxed on that refrigerator, I mean, we produce hundreds and thousands of litres of refrigerator in our stores every day. So therefore, you know, I think they've got a job to get experts in and to legislate and tax to change people's behaviour because I don't think actually they are presenting the facts and expect people to change is necessarily. I mean the government have got the responsibility; and then I think increasingly companies have got corporate responsibility to change as well. (…)
>
> R: So what do you think should companies do to change, also to do their bit?
>
> UK-FC 1: Ahm, well I think that you, you know, if you are a consumer producing company like us then you have a responsibility to give people choices, and, you know, produce, produce things in less packaging and all sorts of stuff. (…)Yes, and - in Ireland now, it's 10 cents, isn't it, for a carrier bag. And the government are talking about doing that over here. And I know that us and XX would very much welcome it.

> You know, we'd love it, because, I mean, they are very, very expensive for us to keep producing bags for people to throw away anyway. So if the government would say it's not, it's - us or XX or YY are going to say, start saying we've got to give carrier bags, because it would be too much of an impact on our business. But I know, by talking to the boards, ahm – that if the government were to say, 'OK there is now a tax in England on carrier bags, 10 p a bag, I think it would just change over night. (…) They've only got to say, and they would say to us, 'what do you think?' We would say, 'it's a fantastical idea, and we would work very well with you.' There are lots of things the government says to us, 'what do you think?' And we say, 'it's a terrible idea, don't do it', so whether or not we'd actually, you know, when the Sunday trading laws were coming in it was important to our business, we lobbied and we had people working exclusively on it, and all people were asked to tell how regularly etc. etc. etc. That's lobbying, and we've got a government affairs department upstairs that lobbies on lots of things. And I am not sure whether they are actually lobbying, but I know we are very positive and we would support it, ahm --- if it came in. (…) I don't, I don't, I don't see the situation where we get together with XX and YY and ZZ and say, let's all now charge 10 p per carrier bag. I think we are too fierce a competition to actually do that. But I think if the government were to say, 'we've got to now tax carrier bags' then we would all go, 'hm, OK'. I don't foresee that there would be, there would be a big objection. And I think our customers would therefore not blame us. That's the thing."

Again, it is noteworthy how important the financial aspects seem to be: In the first case, the increased tax is seen as a trigger for the changed behaviour; in the last example, the company would actually save money if they could charge a fee on carrier bags.

The German managers also highlighted that they have to follow the law, but most of them were quite proud that their companies went beyond the regulation. Regulation was seen as important for <u>other</u> companies, especially big companies as they need to be forced to do certain environmental improvements:

> „Gerade groeßere Firmen machen nur was, wenn es Gesetz ist, gell. Vorher machen die da nichts. Also aus Ueberzeugung, denke ich, ist das ganz selten, daß da was gemacht wird. Dann muß das Gesetz her.. Eher kleine Unternehmen da bewusster, verantwortlicher…"(G-FE 5)

> "Larger firms in particular only act, if it is prescribed by the law, don't they. Before that they do there nothing. So out of conviction, I think, it is rather rare, that something is done. Then we have to have the law…Small companies are more conscious, more responsible…"(G-FE 5)

However, managers from these big companies also expressed that their companies do more than required by law:

> „Und da ist damals dieses Unternehmen einen großen Schritt nach vorne gegangen. A) weil gesetzlich Veraenderungen kamen, und b) weil man die nicht nur richtig umsetzen, sondern mehr machen wollte. Das ist, Gott sei Dank, laeuft das sehr gut."(G-FC 5)

> "And there's at that time this company has made a big step ahead. A) because legal requirements came into force, and b) because one did not only want to implement them properly but to do more. That's, thank God, is going very well."(G-FC 5)

The difference to the British argumentation was also apparent in the sugestion one German manager made, when asked what his company would have to change if they would work in the UK. He refered to the issue with the free bags in the UK and that his company should print on their bags: „You can use me twice!“ (G-FC1) Neither he nor other managers suggested that the government should step in and increase the tax. Other than their British counterparts some managers also gave examples where the law actually prohibits the more environmental friendly behaviour:

> „…oft geht das aber wegen Vorschriften nicht, z.B. moechten sie etwas in Tuppa-Dose hineingefuellt haben, aber da gibt es Hygienevorschriften.” (G-FE 3)

> "…often that is not possible because of regulations, e.g. they want to have something filled in a plastic box, but as there are hygiene regulations." (G-FE 3)

But as mentioned before, overall German and British managers expressed very similar views about the government as a stakeholder. The major stakeholder, who was regarded very differently between the two nations, was the customer. They also differed slightly in their perspective of the supplier. Here British and German managers reported how they put pressure on suppliers to change the packaging both with references to the previous described prevalent 'economic rationality': The British managers would argue with the cost-saving potential of reduced packaging, the German managers would highlight the environmental benefit and how the customer was forcing them to do this.

6.3.1 Customer

All British managers said that they perceived the majority of customers as very price sensitive; only a minority had according to their impressions other priorities such as environmental friendliness. Some of them would be willing to buy organic if there is only a small additional charge as this manager observed:

> "… environmental friendly yes, but most important the price and whether you can sell…they are price sensitive…organic jam and ordinary jam if there is 10 p in it they buy organic…50 p no one…. I assume that 10 –15% environmental friendly, but most of them are health conscious (…) it is the price that determines whether people buy it who are unsure." (UK-FE 4)

Not every manager though was as emphatic as the following manager who defined the price-sensitive behavior as the 'economic-rational' one and the 'green' behavior as to one end of the distribution of normality:

> "If you are assume that customers are economically rational, what I assume they are on average…then on average customers will not move to green tariffs which are more expensive (…)people who have taken up green tariffs are on one hand of the

distribution of normality and who are interested in environmental reasons and who have other drivers of motivation than the simply economic rationality as we all do."(UK-E 3)

However his definition of economic rationality is in line with the one given by managers earlier in this study in how they perceive it as the rational behavior to make and follow the business case for every decision.

Some managers talked about their observation that more customers are interested in organic foods or that there are more 'mildly green':

> "I think there is a growing proportion in mildly greens. And the way that we are trying to approach this is, that - avoiding any sort of cost implications, we will always try and provide a product that delivers a lot of these things, which is no animal testing, which is no GM, such as fair trade now to a grade extent. As long as it, you know, we provide that as the mainstream option. We try, you know, we try to make sure that it's not just a niche market, you know. If we can provide it without any cost to that product, we'll do it."(UK-FE 3)

Here again the manager is worried about the cost implications and the environmental improvements are provided as an add-on if they do not occur any additional costs. One manager labeled this as the strategy of the big brands:

> "Organic lines and environmental care products are not sustainable, I mean in financial terms, because big brand products became a touch greener, they got the customers back and environmental products with additional costs didn't take off. But now things like recycling will put it back into minds of people." (UK-FE1)

When asked whether 'green products' should be marketed or not, British managers were either convinced that customers' preference for ecological products is a given, something like a personal interest, or they were reluctant to influence them. As discussed in the previous chapter in relation to family members and friends, managers stressed the point that each person is entitled to their own views and values and that they don't want to impose their values on them. Customers should therefore have their choice.

> "Why do some people drink beer, some people drink wine? It is a natural variation in people's interests and outlook. Some people vote communism, some people don't…I think it is an expression of their belief system…in reality energy costs are small in this country for most of the population, so paying ten percent more is probably most people wouldn't note the difference but most people don't have the motivation to do it. It is not that they cannot afford but just that they don't get any reinforcement or positive feedback." (UK-E 3)

> "Customers have different views…Mrs Smith different views from Mrs Jones…..I don't want to get involved in that, but I only want us to be responsible… (UK-FC 3)

> "…, it's much more about responding and it is delivering what our customers want –

rather than just sort of saying, you know, this is really good for your environment so you should.(….) I wouldn't go out preaching what people should do and shouldn't because unfortunately it is their choice isn't if they don't want to do it they don't want to do it and if they don't want to participate, they don't want to participate. But I would like to participate where I can. (UK-FC4)

One could argue that this perspective contradicts any marketing efforts at all; indeed managers seemed to be very reluctant to admit that they influence their customer in any way. This was already highlighted in Fineman's (1998) study where managers claimed that they were simply supplying what the market wanted but "silent…on the way corporations engineer their customers' 'wants' through marketing and advertising" (Fineman 1998, 243). In the present study, managers presented the rising demand for organically produced goods as predominantly customer driven:

> R: "How do you explain that this movement has taken off without marketing?"
>
> UK-FC 4: Consumers came into the store and said why is your range of organic products not as big as X and that was reported back and we had to introduce an organic range, we were very slow in the uptake."
>
> "Customers? Educate our customers? Ahm – Yes, to a certain extent, but -- if you, if you look at organic food, as an example – ahm - it's chicken and egg really. We've introduced organic food and, and it's getting bigger and bigger and bigger, but it is led by customer demand. So I would not say that we would, our organic food strategy is, is led by a desire to educate customers, this is better for them and it's going to be healthier, even though we may market it in that way. It's led really by customers' demanding more organic food. (…) And in terms of the food that we produce, we are able to say, you know, 'this is organic, and we produced this with less packaging' and all those sort of things. And we put that in our environmental report. Whether or not we are doing it as an educational process or as a response, I think it is more as a response to a demand rather than any educational piece. (UK-FC 1)
>
> "Something like GM (…), I am not that worried about it, personally. But our consumers say that they don't want GM. So, it does not matter what my opinion is. For the benefit of our business GM is out, which is fine. And that's the way it should be." (UK-FE 3)

They argued that they have no influence on the uptake of organically produced products and would not question their own input. The following manager described for example how difficult it is to offer organic products, as you have to take other products from the shelves. In this context, he mentioned that they offer around 500 organic products within their range of approximate 10.000 'conventional' products without reflecting that this limited choice might have an impact on customers' behaviour and that by offering such a limited choice the company has implicitly made a decision. Instead, he relied on the initiative of customers to get more products in the store.

> "Because they were getting it, weren't they? From independent food outlets and necessarily not in large supermarkets…. And you know because certainly the range of

new products that we sell in our store, we sell over ten thousand lines in our store, which they appreciate and the space that we have within our stores you know is limited in as much as, you know, if our maximum range in our stores is ten thousand, then we can't have ten thousand five hundred because if you bring five hundred organic products in the store, then you have to take five hundred non organic products out (….) It was corporately decided that we would sell an organic range of products and they then decided how many products of each range went in each store and then ok within that let's say that we've got five hundred organic products. I may get in this store a hundred but I know what the other four hundred are and if for example somebody asked for, I don't know …organic pizzas and it was a line that we stocked as a company, then I could get that in."(UK-FC 4)

Only two managers of ecological oriented companies were in favour of using environmental friendliness or social issues as marketing tool. One manager for example reported how their fair trade tea sale has rocketed after four years of marketing efforts from 100.000 pounds to 7.500.000 pounds. He claimed that their motivation for this campaign was "to increase sales as ultimate goal, but two subordinate goals: Fulfil consumer demands and increase public awareness of issues" (UK-FE 1)

The other manager explained that ethics is part of their marketing mix in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors:

> "We started to think, how do we differentiate ourselves in a relatively undifferentiated market? And we started to think about what we were as an organisation, and started to think about strategy and aims (…) and, what we came up with was this idea of responsible retailing. So it was partly driven, I would say, by the marketing function. We want to be a responsible retailer, how do we achieve that? What sort of initiatives do we have to put in place? (…)Ethics is part of your marketing mix." (UK-FE 3)

Even though, most managers were suggesting that the uptake of organic products was consumer driven, they also claimed that consumers need incentives or penalties to be coerced into an environmental friendly behaviour:

> "Money should be put into research, and infrastructure, how to educate the consumer to appreciate what this is about…how to educate the consumer…mixture of penalties and awards/incentives…but people not willing to spend more money or more time on environment…we are not the smartest!" (UK-FC3)

> "I don't know really, I am sure, I am sure there is, I don't know enough about the detail of it, but I am sure this clever tax thing that says, if you give a penny back to charity then you can write it off against tax, or you give extra points, then that comes out of our bottom line." (UK-FC 1)

> "I guess I am sort of more in the, in the middle group of consumers and maybe need more of a kick. I need more incentives or more sticks. Ahm - because I honestly don't think that this, that the degree of change that is being described for, that is needed for, to make real changes to the effect that humans have on the environment, is going to just happen." (UK-E 5)

The latter manager was reflecting in detail about her own behaviour and used herself as an example for inconsistent environmental behaviour, which led her to the conclusion that only 'the stick' will change her and other people's habits:

> "You don't necessarily practice what you know is the right thing to do. And we have rubbish collections, from household waste paper to the bottles and stuff. But I just don't have, I just don't get myself organised enough to actually put things in separate bags, and by the time I think about it, I put the plastic bottles in the bags with the cat litter. (…) But again, it's just if you are busy, you are doing your job, you are writing all these papers about energy efficiency and environmental issues, and you think 'where is the time gone?' and you are cleaning the house and I am having a social life and then I get to Sunday and I think 'oh, I just get the rubbish together, get it done, get it out'. Because I think the environmentally, being more environmentally friendly, actually takes time. And I think you actually need to understand what that means to people who've got, this all sounds like a big excuse, but probably is a big excuse actually, who've got practically quite busy lives. But I think where it is true, in terms of what governments need to do to affect consumers' behaviour, they need to understand how consumers live more, and not just assume that logic will prevail. Because it does not always prevail, even with people, who, like me, who have really no excuse. I can't say, 'I did not know, I did not know that I should not do that.' (…) I have to say, I was going to sound really depressive, I think that most people need the stick or they need a different approach, because I think the approach that's being adopted so far is only really affecting the margins of behaviour."(UK-E 5)

In the context of this quote, the manager referred frequently to additional charges as the appropriate 'stick'.

The only exception to the described fixation on price (and financial incentives or penalties) was made by one manager. He claimed that customers are willing to include other considerations into their buying decision when it comes to their children:

> " Ahm – I think a lot of our customers are increasingly worried about their children, and therefore we've just started a new brand called the XXX which is, which is environmentally friendly food, but targeted towards children. That seems to be a brand, that people very much trust, and therefore that's one technique we could us in terms of shaping environments."(UK-FC 1)

While British managers mainly suggested awards and penalties to influence the customers, German managers put the emphasis on informing the customers. In fact, none of them recommended using financial incentives to change the behaviour of customers. Most of them reported that German customers were very well informed, although some regretted that customers would get the wrong information or would get only half of the story.

> „Und es wird immer schwieriger, weil die Erwartungshaltungen ja steigen und unsere Kunden – die Kunden werden eben immer aufgeklaerter – Zeitung, Verbraucherzentrale. Dann lesen sie was, dann hoeren sie irgendwas, machen sich nicht

sachkundig und glauben dann, gut informiert zu sein, was meistens nicht der Fall ist, muß ich auch ganz klar sagen." (G-FC 5)

„And it's becoming more and more difficult, because the expectations are rising and our customers – the customers become more and more aware – newspapers, customers' organizations. Then they read something, then they hear something, they don't research the matter and think they are well informed, which most of the time isn't the case, I have to say very clearly" (G-FC 5)

Another manager reported how the sale of smoked salmon (a traditional Christmas dish in North-Germany) collapsed just in the high season before Christmas because of an article published in „Stiftung Warentest" (a magazine that rates different products with regard to product specific attributes). He was still very upset about it, especially as the research, on which the article was based was done in the summer, but the article was published just before the sale of salmon would have started. He suspected the publishers to be interested only in big sales for their magazine. He was also angry that they had not issued a warning to the supermarkets, so that his company as all the others had enormous stocks of fish, which they were not able to sell. Even more he had always trusted the results in this magazine and felt personally offended:

"Ich war sehr enttaeuscht, persoenlich enttaeuscht. Es war eine der wenigen Zeitschriften, wo ich dachte, die sind ehrlich, aber jetzt weiss ich, denen kann man auch nicht glauben."(G-FC4)

"I was very disappointed, personally disappointed. This was one of the few magazines which I thought was honest, but now I know that they can't be trusted either" (G-FC4)

Most managers reported that customers would request information when they came across some topics in the news such as BSE. All managers would try to satisfy their need for information as the following manager described:

„..denn wir koennen ja diese Sache nicht weiterverkaufen, weil unser Kunde uns fragt ‚da war doch gestern eine Nachricht – BSE – wie ist das denn eigentlich?' Da koennen wir ja nicht sagen, ‚haben wir zwar rausgenommen, aber Information haben wir auch nicht.' Dann arbeiten wir auch so, daß wir einen Zettel erstellen. Das wird auch ueber unseren Einkauf gemacht. Also das auch gesteuert wird, damit jedem Markt die gleiche Information vorliegt. Und um diese Handzettel – teilweise vergroeßern wir die und haengen die in der Abteilung aus, mit dem Motto „Lieber Kunde – im Moment Großthema BSE – bei uns alles in Ordnung – wir fuehren nur - usw". (G-FC 5)

„…because we can't sell this thing any more, because our customer asks us 'but there was a piece of news yesterday – foot and mouth disease what is that actually?' There we can't just say, 'we took it out, but we don't have information either'. So we work in order to produce a note. This is also done through our purchasing department. So this is managed so that each supermarket gets the same information. And about these notes – sometimes we enlarge them and put them up in the department in the style 'Dear customer – food and mouth is a big theme at the moment – everything is alright in our shops – we only stock etc.' (G-FC 5)

Most managers also from 'conventional' companies would therefore put a high value on information. Compared to one of the British labels that this meat is 'British Beef' the German descriptions would go into much more detail:

> „Das ist ja Kundenwunsch, z.B. beim Rind: wo geboren,wo aufgewachsen, wo geschlachtet und wo zerlegt."(G-FC4)

> „This is desired by the customer, for instance for beef: where was the animal born, where was it raised, where was it slaughtered and where was it cut up."(G-FC4)

Most managers reported that customer would ask for more information and that they would expect the managers to know the answers and to be able to explain the background. But managers would not only react to customer demand they would also proactively offer information. The following manager organises for example events where they invite certain customer groups such as restaurant owners to give them additional information:

> „Wir nehmen ja viel Einfluss, sagen wir mal, über Aktionen. Wir informieren unsere Kunden. Wir laden Kunden ein, und fuehren sogenannte Kundenforen durch. Sagen wir mal, nur Restaurantbesitzer, nur Kioskbesitzer, zu bestimmten Themen, oder Karnevalsvereine. Weil wir - man muss ja immer was tun. Wir machen das ja nicht nur um etwas zu verkaufen, sondern wir versuchen dann auch, Kundengruppen zu informieren. (...)Und, ich muß ganz klar sagen, über Massnahmen, auch, sagen wir mal, Informationsschreiben oder Handzettel mit dem Hinweis auf besondere Angebote oder Aenderungen, sagen wir mal, unsere Kunden sind dafür dankbar und nehmen das auch zur Kenntnis. Es ist nicht, daß wir 100% der Leute erreichen, aber, sagen wir mal, ein Großteil der Kunden nimmt das gerne an. Auch bin ich davon ueberzeugt, daß Marketingmaßnahmen sinnvoll sind, und auch greifen." (G-FC 5)

> „We have a lot of influence , let's say, through activities. We inform our customers. We invite the customers and manage so-called customer forums. Let's say, only for restaurant owners, only for kiosk owners, about specific subjects, or carnival associations. Because we – one – always must do something. We don't do it only in order to sell, but we also try to inform customer groups. (...) And I have to say very clearly, about measures, also let's say information letters or notes with indications about special offers or changes, let's say, our customers are thankful for it and they take it into consideration. It doesn't mean that we reach 100% of the people but let's say, a large part of the customers are thankful about it. And I am also convinced that marketing initiatives are relevant, and also effective." (G-FC 5)

Managers from ecological oriented companies were even more convinced that they could influence the customer though information: He only needs more information then he will behave more environmental friendly.

> „...schon deshalb weil wir hier ... in ganz ... entschiedener Form versuchen, oekologische Produkte nicht nur in die Regale zu bringen, sondern auch in die Koepfe der Menschen. Dann sehe ich ja eine gewisse Vorbereiterrolle, die das Unternehmen einnimmt, insbesondere in Hinsicht auf die, auf den Versuch, Biolebensmittel zum taeglichen Gebrauch zum Bedarfsgegenstand zu machen." (G-FE 2)

„....and already because here we try... in a very... determined way to bring ecological products not only on the shelves but also into the heads of the people. Then I can see some preparation role taking on by the company, especially regarding trying to make organic food a required product for daily use." (G-FE 2)

Some managers reported that they actively engage with customers in their shops discussing topics with them and as in the case below providing them with additional reading material:

G-FE 5: „Ich kann argumentieren, und muß dann die Leute mit der Information, vielleicht noch unterstuetzt mit Lesematerial, wieder nach Hause gehen lassen. Und dann, das waechst dann so langsam. (...)Wir natuerlich jetzt in der Fußgängerzone haben natuerlich auch Passanten, wo mal reinkommen, gucken und dann, die erschrecken, daß das dann ein biologischer Laden ist."

R: (beide lachen)" und die gehen dann ganz schnell wieder raus?"

G-FE 5: „Nein, das nicht. ,Was, das gibt es bei Ihnen auch?"

R: „So! Ah,ja".

G-FE 5: „Und da faengt dann unsere Information an."

G-FE 5: „I can argue, and then I have to let the people go home with the information, possibly supported by reading material. And then it grows slowly. (...) Of course now in the pedestrian area we also have passer-bys who come in, look around and then they get a fright because this is an organic shop."

R: (both laugh) " and then they go out very quickly?"

G-FE 5: "No, not that. ,What, you also have this?"

R: "Right, I see..."

G-FE 5: "And this is where our information begins."

Also this manager would like to work together with certain customer groups to provide them with even more detailed and customised information:

„oder die Aerzte – wieviele Aerzte haben ernaehrungswissenschaftlich keine Ahnung. Die kennen die Zusammenhaenge leider Gottes nicht, und die Leute zu uns, haben jetzt eine Diagnose vom Arzt bekommen. ,Ja, was mach ich jetzt?' (...)Ziel ist natuerlich noch mehr, also den Informationskreis noch etwas auszuweiten, und dann gerade auch noch mehr auf Interessengruppen zusammenzuarbeiten oder auch mit Heilpraktikern, Aerzten im Informationsbereich noch etwas auszuweiten. (G-FE 5)

„or medical doctors – how many doctors don't have the slightest idea about nutrition. Unfortunately they don't know the interrelations, and the people who come to us have received a diagnosis from the doctor. 'Well, what do I do now?' (...) The aim of course is to broaden the circle of information, and therefore collaborate even more with interest groups or also expand a bit the area of information with alternative health practitioners, doctors. (G-FE 5)

Managers from ecological oriented companies also promoted creative marketing actions besides distributing information. The following manager for example had already

offered a ‚Taste the difference'-Event and was now asked by an academic institutions to do it in a more professional way and also to invite journalists to this event. For him this approach has much more potential than a ‚bloeder Vortrag' (stupid presentation):

> „Mal nicht nur einfach einen bloeden Vortrag, sondern... sondern einfach mal den Leuten wirklich auf der Zunge zeigen, was der Unterschied zwischen Biofleisch und richtigem und fabritionellen Fleisch und Oekogemüse und konventionellem Gemuese ist. Das soll man mal probieren, ja? Was ist denn der Unterschied im Geschmack und warum? Das haben wir mal gemacht, da mal. Und das war super. Und deshalb habe ich gedacht, da muesste mal eine richtige professionelle Veranstaltung mal rauskommen." (G-FE 1)

> „For once not just a stupid presentation but… but simply show the people on their tongue what the difference is between organic meat and standard industrial processed meat, or organic vegetables and conventional vegetables. One should try this, shouldn't one? What is the difference in taste and why? We tried this, there. And that was super. And therefore I thought a really professional event should come out of it." (G-FE 1)

Besides the offer to taste certain products in the shop, which is also sometimes done in smaller shops in the UK, the manager of one biological shop even offered barbecues outside her shop in the pedestrian street:

> „Ja, ja. Da haben wir jetzt im Sommer so Grillaktionen draußen vor dem Laden. Solche Sachen gab es – wie man vielleicht mal anders beim Grillen, was man da so nehmen kann und so zu ging. (Beide lachen) Auch Anregungen geben, oder wie ich ein Produkt verarbeite." (G-FE 5)

> „Yes, yes. Now we have barbecue activities in the summer outside in front of the shop. There are such things – how you can have a different barbecue, what you can get and so. (both laugh) Also give suggestions, or how I use a product." (G-FE 5)

Even some managers of 'conventional' companies were trying to influence their customers; one was making three attempts to sell to his customers organically grown vegetable but had to stop it each time after two weeks, because people were not buying in. When asked why he thinks that his initiative was not successful, he assumed that on one hand customers might get their vegetable somewhere else like the weekly farmers market or that the vegetable just looked too bad.

> "Die kaufen nach Aesthetik, das sind ja gut geschulte Geniesser, oder die kriegen das vom Markt, der hier ja jede Woche vor unserer Tuer stattfindet." (G-FC 1)

> "Well they buy the aesthetics, as they are well trained bon vivants, or they get it from the farmers market which takes place every week just outside our door"(G-FC 1)

Another manager was also involved in a project that makes the marketing decisions for the whole company. When asked whether he believes that they could influence customers' environmental behaviour through marketing techniques, he claimed that either a customer has this environmental orientation or not. His view was reinforced

through the waste project he started in his store, where he made his own information cards for some products explaining how much waste is generated by buying this product. However, this project did not change the buying behaviour of his customers. The researcher wondered whether there is not a big difference between professional marketing and some self painted cardboards but was not following it up as this might have insulted the manager.

> „Ich kann es nicht beeinflussen, Oeko wird vom Kunden mitgebracht.“ (G-FC 2)
>
> „I can't influence it, ecology comes from the customer.“ (G-FC 2)

This manager was not the only German manager, who expressed the same opinion as most British managers that customers either have an environmental interest or not. German managers also reported like British managers that the whole movement was very consumer-driven. However, different to British customers, German customers seemed to have been more proactive in their actions. Several managers reported that customers left what they thought were excessive packaging in the shops.

> "Kaeufer lassen einfach die Verpackung im Geschaeft" (G-FC 1)
>
> "The buyers simply leave the packaging in the shop" (G-FC 1)
>
> ---
>
> „Das Verpackungsbewusstsein sehr gross, die Kunden lassen Papierverpackung der Pizza im Laden und wir muessen das dann entsorgen….“(G-FC 2)
>
> „The awareness about packaging is very high, the customers leave the pizza's paper packaging in the shop and then we must dispose of it ….“(G-FC 2)
>
> ---
>
> "Kunden bringen Verpackung wieder" (G-FC 5)
>
> "The customers bring the packaging back." (G-FC 5)

6.3.2 Suppliers

These actions of customers had according to the managers an input on how and that they put pressure on suppliers to change the packaging. But again the German managers would highlight the environmental benefit and would present the cost-saving as an add-on:

> G-FC 5: „Wir haben ja auch mit den Lieferanten, wenn ich jetzt ‚wir' sage, meine ich unsere Zentrale in XX, mit den Lieferanten so nach und nach an einem Tisch gesessen und gesagt, die Verpackung – da duerfen dann nur Pappkartons genommen werden, das sollte nicht mehr in Folie eingeschweißt werden. So dann, so, wir erwarten weniger Verpackung.“
>
> R: „Aus Kostengruenden jetzt?“

> G-FC 5: „a) Umweltgruende und auch Kostengruende. So, unsere Kunden bringen uns den Abfall wieder. Das kostet uns viel Geld. Wie koennen wir jetzt den Umweltgedanken foerdern und zusaetzlich Kosten sparen. Da ist die Industrie gefordert. So. Und dann wurde, also sagen wir mal, wo frueher alles in Folie eingeschweißt wurde, das wurde alles weggelassen."
>
> G-FC 5: „Well we, when I say 'we' I mean our central offices in XX, also have sat down from time to time with the suppliers at a table and said, packaging - only cardboard packaging should be used, it shouldn't be wrapped in plastic film any more. So then we expect less packaging."
>
> R: "Because of the cost involved now?"
>
> G-FC 5: „a) Environmental reasons and also cost reasons. So, our customers bring us the rubbish back. This costs us a lot of money. Now we can at the same time support environmental awareness and in addition save money. The industry has to react. So. And then, let's say, where beforehand everything was wrapped in plastic, this has stopped."

The British managers on the other hand would argue with the cost-saving potential of reduced packaging, but they would focus on the packaging used for transport. Only one manager was reflecting whether the actual product packaging could be reduced or not. He was suggesting a typical 'British' solution as mentioned before, to put a tax on the manufacturer:

> "And in business? I think there is not so many things we can do…packaging? If one supplier does it, everybody has to do it…if others keep the big boxes… We just said the other day…like with cereal big boxes the cereal is half of the packaging...the big ones on the shelf…there has to be an agreement…we recycle packaging, the packaging from transport…if you could encourage the manufacturers…putting a tax either on the manufacturer and they would put it on the products (UK-FE 4)

6.4 Economic rationality and its cultural context - doing business abroad

When asked about how they would do business in the other country of the investigation, managers from both countries focused on the customers. The German managers said that British customers are less environmentally concerned and therefore using their own cultural approach they need to be educated more. The British managers on the other hand expected the German customers to be more environmentally interested and therefore they would have to react to this demand.

As mentioned before German managers tend to assume that they can influence the customer: He only needs more information then he will behave more environmental friendly. Therefore, they would try to educate the British customer. One manager was for example discussing the excessive usage of bags in the UK. He argued that you would have to offer bags as the checkout as otherwise customers would leave with a bad

impression of the shop. His suggestion was to print a logo on the bags: "Mich kann man zweimal verwenden! (I can be reused twice!)" (G-FC 1)

Another manager expressed the opinion that customers in the UK tend to take tablets or vitamin pills and then they think they live healthily. If her company would operate in the UK, she would put an empasis on educating the customers about healthy eating instead of taking pills:

> „Ich glaube, das muesste viel über Informationen auch geschehen. Ueberhaupt durch die Zusammenhaenge, warum man das jetzt gerade jetzt so macht, und keine Pille schluckt. Das muesste dann so auf - aufgebaut werden. Das muesste – es waere eine Ueberzeugungsleistung, die ich da machen muesste. Das ist doch viel einfacher, ich schlucke eine Pille und habe dann genau das gleiche. Man muesste doch mit Argumenten jetzt die Leute ueberzeugen, daß es vielleicht anders geht." (G-FE 5)

> "I believe that will also work with lot of information. Generally by showing the connections, whatt are the alternatives to swallowing a pill. That would have to sink in slowly. That will be - it would be a persuasion effort that I would have to do. Because it seems so much easier. I take a pill and have then exactly the same. One will however convince the people with arguments now that there is an alternative." (G-FE 5)

Most managers were stressing the point that you have to make compromises in order to survive in the British market, but they would try to raise the environmental standard if possible:

> „(...) so was wuerde ich mit dem Einkauf, mit der Einkaufsorganisation besprechen. Der damit die das pruefen über Marktanalysen, wuerde das der Kunde überhaupt annehmen? Natuerlich will man was verkaufen. Da kann ich nicht nur sagen ‚das ist zu groß und die Verpackung zu viel'. Wenn die Nachfrage da ist, kann man auch als Haendler an solchen Sachen nicht vorbeigehen. Aber ich wuerde trotzdem versuchen, gerade, wenn ich das hier aus Deutschland so kenne, daß daran gearbeitet wird, solche Dinge anzureden, und vielleicht dann eine Aenderung mitbewirken, wuerde ich auf jeden Fall machen." (G-FC 5)

> "(...) this I would discuss with the purchasing department, with the purchase organization. That they examine with market analyses, would the customer generally accept that? Naturally one wishes to sell. So I just can't say ‚that's oversized and the packaging is too much'. If the demand is there, one cannot also as a dealer pass such things. But I would attempt all the same, just, how I know it from Germany, that this would be worked on to talk about such things, and maybe to contribute to a change, this I would do at any rate." (G-FC 5)

The British managers expected the German customers to be more interested in environmental issues and that accordingly the demand for environmental sound products would be higher. Hence, they would consider it as a ‚economic rational' decision to satisfy this higher demand. The following quote is a typical example of their arguments:

"I think, the difference would be, given the list that I just given you, that customers would probably much closer to the top of the list. So therefore the pressure from our customers to be more environmentally friendly, would be greater, and therefore, given that, as I said our customers are probably our most important stakeholders, if they were screaming at us and say, we are going off to your competitors because you are not environmentally friendly enough, then the change would be bigger, I guess. (…) so I guess there would be more pressure from customers to have our environmental policies better rather than straight forward from investors. Ahm – I don't know really. It's a good question. What would we do differently here?- probably would have more bicycles, everybody cycles in Germany, I mean in Denmark, I don't know about Germany". (UK-FC 1)

As was the case with this manager, a few managers were pondering the question why there is such a difference between the two countries. In the above case the manager discussed the different mindsets of people when it comes to cycling and gave the researcher some life-saving information about cycling in the UK!

UK-FC 1: ".. you know, if you think about in England, cycle in London, you take your life into your own hands. Whereas in Denmark, you know, if I am driving in Denmark, turning left, I have to stop and see if there is a cyclist. It is a totally different mindset, but, you know, if you understand it, cyclist has the priority over the motorcar, it says how the way that people live."

R: "I did not know it was this way here (laughs) I am lucky I am still alive, when I am cycling. I really did not know, I've learned something very important (laughs). Cars have the priority?"

UK-FC 1: "Yes"

R: "Because I always drive, if there is a car coming, I have, I am the one who has…"

UK-FC 1: "No, not in this country."

R: "Ah, ja, OK. That is interesting. And now, how do you explain, I mean, there was 130 years ago, there were bicycles and horse carriages here, in Germany and Denmark, how do you explain that the car became such a priority? Can you think of any cultural reasons for it, that it is the way it is now?"

UK-FC 1: "No, not really, I think, I think - I don't know. The cultural thing for me really is, cycling invariably is something that children do. And then when you are old enough you get a car. So I cycled and cycled for ever, I cycled to school, I was always, my aspirations was to get a car, to get a car was what me and my mates did - and ah, and, whereas my mother-in-law is 74 and still cycles every morning to the shops, and so on. I think it's just that, you know, they've got a car, but she has no desire to get a new one, whereas in this country, you know, you get a car, you get a bigger car, you get a nicer car, you get, you know, a different colored car. People just love owning cars in this country."

By using the cycling example, this manager was referring to what Habermas termed the 'lifeworld'. In addition, most of the other managers used 'communicative reason' to explain the differences. One manager for example was convinced that British customers buy less fresh and seasonal products (which he regarded as the more environmental friendly products), because they are more time pressured than German customers and less 'foody as a nation':

"Germans have more time, they shop 5 times per week; UK customer are time pressured and cash pressured, they shop once every 8 days…money gives you choice but you need time to exercise this choice (…) the British are leading in ready-made products, we are less foody as a nation…and British consumers are so time pressured…."(UK-FC3)

Another manager blamed the Victorians, the UK being an Island and the 'Thatcher years' for the differences:

UK-FE 3: "We are --- I do see it in some ways as the bridge between Europe with its strong social background and agenda and America's more laissez faire market driven economy. And we sit somewhere in between, where --- we have a social conscience, and we have, you know, a lot of state apparatus, national health and things like that. But we have in many ways a very different idea of the market economy. So --- I know, and I think that is born out by where the UK in total is in terms of the environment compared to some of the European countries. You know, we are not so much into domestic recycling, a long way behind Germany. Ahm --- I think partly it is because we are an island and we manage to get away with just throwing things over the side for so long. It is a lot easier, isn't it? I know, all that will have to change, obviously. You know, the psychology, the country has got to catch up with that, as well. I blame the Victorians."

R: "You blame the Victorians? Why (laughs) do you blame the Victorians? "

UK-FE 3: "Because they pumped everything into the sea (R laughs), well they do!

This is one of the things, as an island, for a long, long time we thought we could just get rid of the stuff by pouring it into the sea, didn't we?(...) I think our perspective is far more sort of market driven. From the Thatcher years, I think that is where the real departure came from. I think after, in the 50s and 60s, we probably had a similar perspective, but I think we've sort of diverged slightly. And you can see that in terms of our economies. You can see that, that, you know, in terms of pension provision…."

However, some managers would also note the differences and judge it within their own frame of reference, their economic rationality:

UK-E 3: "Where we are now - to achieve the government's target is going to be very hard. We are not going fast enough. Which again is as much the government's fault as anybody's else because they haven't thought through the policy issues how they are trying to achieve their targets. The overall objective of using the market to deliver the solution I clearly support that but what I wouldn't support is the approach that has been used in Europe particularly in Germany and Denmark where there have been so-called feeding tariffs because this is not economically efficient I guess. Although it has generated a large, this the wrong word, a lot more wind generation."

R: "But you think it is not an economically sound decision?"

UK-E 3: "No, I think it is a very expensive way of doing it but they achieve a large penetration. But the government in this country hasn't really thought about who is paying."

6.5   Transform the instrumental reason in the business world

In both countries a few managers claimed that they went into business to solve environmental problems. These managers all reported how they had realized that major

environmental changes could only be achieved when business practices are altered. They all saw it therefore as their best move to actually work in business and implement changes themselves.

> „Ich habe eigentlich mit 14 gewußt, daß es irgendwie an der Wirtschaft liegt, und daß ich irgendwie in der Wirtschaft was machen will." (G-FE 1)
>
> "I have actually known with 14, that it has something to do with business, and that I somehow want to do something in business." (G-FE 1)

> "..but what has happened between 23 and 26 what fundamentally has happened is that I have realized that I have more of a direct impact if you like working in business as opposed to working for government because working in government is so so so slow (…)it really frustrated me because I want to affect change, I want to make a difference and it was not really happening in government" (UK-FE 2)

Another manager started his own business, not as he pointed out to make profit but to do something for 'Bioverarbeiter' (processors of organic food). Later he realised that he would like to increase the marketing for these products and started a shareholder owned company that runs supermarkets exclusively with organically and environmentally sound products.

> „Und aus dieser Arbeit heraus, die wir – ja, da haben wir eine kleine Firma gegruendet. Die war eigentlich nicht, sagen wir mal - die war nicht mit Gewinnerzielungsabsichten gegruendet worden, sondern einfach aus der Notwendigkeit heraus, was für die Bioverarbeier zu tun. (...)und wir haben irgendwann in unseren Sitzungen gesagt, wir muessen noch etwas machen für die Vermarktung der Lebensmittel ...und haben dann XX gegruendet." (G-FE 2)
>
> "And out of this work, that we - yes, there we have founded a little company. It was actually not for, let's say - it was not founded with the aim to make profits, but simple out of the necessity to do something for the processor of organic food. (...) and we have said in our meetings that, we have to do something else for the marketing of these products ...and have then established company XX." (G-FE 2)

Similarly to this manager, the other two managers, who went into business to solve environmental problems, presented their career decisions as either motivated by being able to do something for the environment or as preparations for this task. One manager got for example a job with one of the big consulting companies, as he wanted to learn how businesses are conventionally run and learn the traditional business language. He wanted to use these tools later to gain market share for ecological products. All their career decisions could be interpreted with Habermas (1984) as a move from the 'lifeworld' to the 'business world' in order to introduce 'communicative reason' and transform the 'instrumental reason'. The following quote shows how these managers

argue. They start with arguments that could be termed as 'communicative reason' and then translate them into the 'instrumental reason', the business language.

> "I think you can have a two-front-attack…you have got your house where you wake up in the morning and then you go to work in the factory or shop or whatever….and the two you are interrelating your life now….in business for example one of the first things I did when I came here I had an energy efficiency day where we were giving out a free energy-light-bulb in return for filling out a questionnaire about you house(…)it was through XX…so they came in and had a little stall and 380 people filled in their questionnaire and they gave out 380 light bulbs so the people went home and hopefully put the energy light bulb into the house…but as a result they would also get some feedback from the questionnaire telling them: Okay, Bob, you spent 600 pounds on your electricity bill, that is a bit high, have you thought about putting some curtains up and some carpets down …you know simple things you can do to reduce your bills and with the focus being on money in the pocket because people respond to that…but then the education comes in because they put an energy light bulb in why did I put this light bulb in because a) it is going to save money.. but also it helps the environment - ping!!!- you know...You got the connection…so if people are coming to work and they take something home then they are much more likely to go back to work thinking about it… so it is about education, training, and I think the two, the work life and home life, they are in parallel really." (UK-FE 2)

6.6 Summary

Overall, British manager argued along similar lines to the managers in Fineman'study (1998): They evaluated environmental activities and issues using business criteria. The metaphor mostly used by the British managers in the present study was 'the business case'. Hence all but one manager expressed the same opinion that you have to establish a 'business case' in order to implement environmental improvements, so that the environmental improvements would save costs. The only criticism of the existing business system was the orientation towards short-term profit maximization. The business system in its current form was not only described as unchangeable but some quotes even suggested that managers perceived it as a given and not created by man. It was argued that British managers stayed within the prevalent logic of what Habermas (1984) called the 'instrumental reasoning' of the existing business system rarely questioning its purpose or contents.

While the British manager would argue from the 'business case', why they have invested in environmental measures, most German managers would mention environmental considerations as reasons for their business decisions. They would dwell considerately on these arguments and only add shortly, if at all, that these measures also help to save costs or improve the image of their company. Applying Habermas'

distinctions (1984) it was suggested that the use of 'instrumental reason' and 'communicative reason' are constantly intertwined in the German business discourse, at least with regard to environmental issues. 'Economic rationality' in the German context seemed to be based on the principle that a company has to make money in order to survive. If a company fulfils this basic principle then they can afford to integrate other considerations into their business decisions. With regard to environmental issues, certain arguments seem to form part of the 'instrumental reasoning': The reduction of costs through the efficient use of resources and the investment into environmental improvements as long as the survival of the company is not at risk.

It was shown that German and British managers expressed a different understanding of the importance and role of certain stakeholders. Similar as in the study of Schaefer and Harvey (2000) managers rated external stakeholders as more important but also identified individuals within the organisations as change agents, mainly the senior management. Both groups rated regulation as highly influential; they expressed very similar attitudes and opinions towards the government. For British managers, investors seemed to have gained in importance, a trend already observed in Fineman's studies (1996,1997,1998). In line with the significance attached to the 'business case', British managers described the purpose of the company as mainly rewarding the financial contributor. German managers however spoke rarely of the shareholder, but placed their emphasis on the customer. While British managers portrayed their customers as uninterested, price sensitive and in need of ,carrot and sticks', the German managers described the customers as very informed and influential, who exercised their own opinions even in drastical measures like leaving the packaging behind them in the store. On the other hand German managers seemed to be also convinced that they can and should influence customer's wants and that through more information people will change their buying behaviour. In contrast, British managers were pointing out that each customer is entitled to their own views and values and that they didn't want to impose their values on them.

When asked about how they would do business in the other country of the investigation, managers in both countries spoke in a way, which suggests that the business system in the other country will follow the same 'economic rationality' they perceive as the 'universal one'.

In both countries a few managers claimed that they went into business to solve environmental problems. These managers all reported how they had realized that major environmental changes could only be achieved when business practices are altered. In their argumentation they would therefore start with arguments that could be termed following Habermas (1984) as 'communicative reason' and then translate them into the 'instrumental reason', the business language.

7 Conclusion

This chapter summarises the key features of the study undertaken, highlights the most important insights and discusses the implications this has for future research and teaching. The limitations of this study are also considered.

7.1 Research aim, objectives, methodology and design revisited

The aim of the study has been to understand how managers in the UK and Germany make sense of and act with regard to environmental issues. More specifically, the main objectives were to find out how managers describe their past and present position(s) in thoughts and actions towards the environment and to ascertain the extent of cultural variations in managerial orientation towards environmental issues.

The research questions were addressed by adopting a social constructionist approach to environmental issues as developed by Hannigan (1995), which focused on how "environmental knowledge, risks and problems are socially assembled" (31). This approach has been applied to the societal group of managers.

Following a qualitative case study approach, an embedded multiple-case design (Yin 1994), the study was carried out between 2002 and 2004 in two different countries, UK and Germany, with managers in the Food Retail and Energy Sector. The companies in the food retail sector were further divided into two different groups, one exhibiting a what the researcher termed an 'ecological corporate identity', i.e. companies selling exclusively or predominantly organic products and the other one selling conventional products.

Overall, research found evidence for strong differences in the environmental approach of managers in both cultures. There seemed to be a common cultural understanding in each country of how a manager should relate to environmental issues, how he should argue in his role as manager and how he should present himself. More specifically, the analysis of the interviews revealed a number of themes that were discussed in the previous chapters and are summarized and discussed below.

Cultural differences were strongly overriding any other differences, which could be attributed to the two industries studied, age, gender or level of education. In any case,

these differences were so minor in this study that only a few were mentioned throughout the analysis of the accounts studied and only two, one attributed to age, one attributed to level of education are seen as important enough to be mentioned in this conclusion, in section 7.5. However, these areas would benefit from further research. It would be for example interesting to build on earlier research about gender differences in the perception of ethical beliefs (Peterson, Rhoads and Vaught 2001; Deshpande 1997) and to combine this aspect with a cultural comparison. Due to the access problems faced in this research project, only a small number of female managers were interviewed. A close examination of the transcripts found no gender differences in the German sample. In the British sample two out of the three women studied claimed to be environmentalists along with only one man out of eleven male managers. With this in mind, a future research project could investigate the proposition that female managers in a British context express a stronger concern for environmental problems than their male counterparts comparing this to possible or not existing gender differences in Germany.

7.2 'Ecological' identity construction

The first topic identified was the 'ecological' aspect of identity construction of managers; here the question was, how managers in both countries present their identity with regard to environmental issues. It was argued in chapter 3 that any sensemaking is grounded in identity construction (Weick 1995). Therefore any sensemaking of ecological issues in business will be related to how a manager perceives himself: Who am I as a manager that I am responsible for the environment or that I am not responsible? Does it fit into my role as a manager to be environmentally aware or even an environmentalist?

In answering these questions a shift was identified in both countries how managers present themselves with regard to the ecological element of their identity. At the same time the research revealed pronouced differences between the managers of the two countries. In fact they were more pronounced than suggested through the comparison of previous studies undertaken in only one of the two countries of the investigation.

While British managers would express more environmental concern and awareness than in earlier studies, they were still very keen to distance themselves from environmentalists. They expressed the belief that 'being an environmentalist' would not

be socially acceptable among their colleagues. Even talking about environmental issues was regarded as 'showing emotions' something best to be avoided in what can be referred to as the British Business discourse. For the British managers it seemed important to appear rational and value neutral in business encounters. Therefore they were stressing the point that their opinions were based on a 'scientific' analysis and often used the phrase 'as a scientist' to underline their credibility. Most managers perceived environmentalists, especially from environmental pressure groups, as outside the scientific discourse by giving biased arguments; however the few managers who presented themselves as environmentalists highlighted that one can only make an informed decision by getting the facts from all societal groups.

In the earlier German studies, managers had also used the attributes 'emotional' and 'rational' to distance themselves from environmentalists. However even in these earlier studies this differentiation had another connotation: The German managers claimed that their rationality was morally superior as they tried to analyse the problems in all its dimensions. The managers saw themselves as the only ones who assessed the environmental problems based on scientific knowledge and without being influenced by emotions, fear and prejudices. This approach allowed them to determine the environmental problem correctly and to solve it. So in these earlier studies not the environmental topic per se was seen as an emotional topic, but the way environmentalists were dealing with it was seen as too emotional.

In the present study German managers were not referring to these earlier arguments anymore; categories like 'emotional', 'rational' and 'scientific' did not feature in the present German discourse about environmental issues. Instead, German managers either claimed to be environmentalist or described themselves as environmentally conscious. Their accounts suggested that for them a sound knowledge in environmental issues was part of being a good manager. This also became obvious when asked about environmentalists. Although many of them claimed that they were not environmentalists, they would describe environmentalists in a very positive light as more dedicated to environmental issues than they were: Environmentalists spend more time on it, were seen as more consistent and expressed their concerns in public. The latter often voiced as 'auf die Strasse gehen' ('going on the street' - a slang word with the meaning of 'to protest against something') was used by the German managers to define the ecological element of their own identity.

The German word for 'environmentalist' is 'Umweltschuetzer', which would be better translated into 'protector of the environment'. Therefore it has a very positive undertone, which might explain, why German managers were more inclined to describe themselves as 'protector of the environment'. Even managers who criticised environmentalists made an effort to show that they still cared about the environment. Due to this positive image of environmentalism, German managers who considered themselves environmentalists had no problems in stating this, other than their British counterparts, who would never mention this in a business environment.

Therefore the present study suggests that for German managers an active engagement for environmental issues is part of their role description as managers. In contrast, British managers define their role as manager to work solely in the interest of the business and to exclude anything they regard as emotional topics such as environmental issues.

Their understanding of the managerial role might also explain, why British managers tended to use examples from their private life when discussing environmental issues. It seemed to be socially acceptable to show a certain environmental engagement in their home role but not in their business role. The usage of private examples might be further related to the reluctance of British managers to let what they consider as personal views – and this includes environmental protection- influence business decisions.

The strong emphasis British managers placed on their moral neutrality are in line with the earlier studies about managers and the environment but also with some other analytic studies described in chapter 2.6. MacIntyre (1981) had observed that "managers themselves and most writers about management conceive of themselves as morally neutral characters whose skills enable them to devise the most efficient means of achieving whatever end is proposed."(71) But it was argued that not only the means but also the ends are moral concepts. This was strikingly illustrated in a quote Watson (1998) included in his ethnographic study: "You could have a death camp operating with a clear morality where all the guards trusted each other, were open and honest with each other, treated each other fairly and, well, would that be moral?" (265) In the Anglo-American context the assumed moral end of a company is often survival and growth. It was suggested before that this end is taken as a given, a goal that is regarded as morally neutral and justifies the means employed such as profit maximisation, managing human resources and increasing shareholder value. The term 'economic rational' behaviour is then often conceptualised in this Anglo-American context as

solely pursuing profit maximization. However, as mentioned before, this is only one of many possible definitions for economic rationality. Other options would be to name just a few:

- To provide in a given economy as many individuals as possible with work and a decent salary

- To distribute efficiently scarce (renewable and finite) resources (Wollenberg, 2000)

- To fulfill the basic needs of as many individuals as possible

The present study has also shown that German managers tend to use moral arguments when discussing corporate greening, often giving them preference over financial arguments. Therefore the question asked in the literature review in 2.5.3 whether the moral muteness of managers (Bird and Waters 1989; Crane 2000), or in other words the proposition that "there is a tendency in corporations for greening to be accompanied by a process of *amoralization*" (2000:673) is only observable in an Anglo-American context or whether it is an international phenomenon has to be answered in favour of the first option. Further cross-cultural studies could build on these differences in trying to understand the cultural impact on corporate greening in relation to moral arguments.

7.3   *The existing business system - a human creation?*

Furthermore, it was argued in chapter 6 that managers do not perceive the existing business system as a human creation. Its mechanisms and rules are referred to as objective reality and therefore not questioned. Habermas (1984) pointed out in his "Theory of Communicative Action" that the business system can be framed as a social system with its own inherent logic. Actors in this system perceive their way of thinking and acting as morally neutral, they just apply what Habermas termed 'instrumental reasoning'. Habermas distinguished between this system-immanent 'instrumental reason' and the 'communicative reason'. "This communicative reason does not simply encounter ready-made subjects and systems; rather, it takes part in structuring what is to be preserved." (Habermas1984:398) These devices designed by Habermas were applied in this study to analyse how managers in the UK and Germany explain their environmental reasoning in relation to business activities.

Overall, one could argue that British managers stayed within the prevalent logic of what Habermas (1984) called the 'instrumental reasoning' of the existing business system, rarely questioning its purpose or contents. The business system in its current form was not only described as unchangeable but some quotes even suggested that managers perceived it as a given and not created by man. They would refer to it 'as the real world' or as 'the market', which was often personalised and treated as the driving force behind many decisions.

British managers defined their 'instrumental reason' in similar ways as the managers in Fineman's study (1998): They evaluated environmental activities and issues using business criteria. The metaphor mostly used for this purpose by the British managers in the present study was 'the business case'. They seemed to assume that everybody has a shared understanding of what the metaphor entails and that there was therefore no need to explain what they meant by making 'the business case'.All but one manager expressed the same opinion that you have to establish a 'business case' in order to implement environmental improvements, so that the environmental improvements would save costs. Most of them would not opt for the environmental sounder solution if it would cost money, not even when it would be cost-neutral.

Although some British managers expressed a strong concern about certain environmental issues, which were particular to their personal circumstances, they see the business decision with its focus on costs and price as inevitable and would not question it. The only criticism of the existing business system was the orientation towards short-term profit maximisation. This was seen as problematic as many environmental improvements have a longer pay-back-period. However, even when managers promoted a long-term perspective on environmental investments, they stayed within the overriding paradigm that there had to be a 'business case' for it saving money in the long run.

A few British managers employed what Habermas (1984) termed 'communicative reason'. However, these comments were often brief and unelaborated. If at all, they made a connection between their business decisions and the impact these had on the environment; only a few managers used some additional arguments, consistent with 'communicative reason', without using 'instrumental reason' such as cost savings at the same time.

In contrast to the British managers, the German managers never referred to 'making a business case'. There is not even a translation in the German language for the term 'business case'; furthermore the German managers apparently used no other expression that would convey a similar meaning. The phrase, which is closest to the British understanding of 'business case', is that they do something 'aus Kostengruenden' (because of the costs involved). Indeed, the managers mentioned quite often that their environmental improvements would save costs. However, the German managers seemed to have reversed the order. While the British managers would if at all as an afterthought add that it helps the environment, the German managers would argue from the environment and add that it also saves costs.

Instead of the 'business case', the reference most frequently made by the German managers was that of survival in a competitive environment. In addition to environmental improvements that would save costs in order to survive, most managers would also argue that even cost-intensive environmental improvements should be made as long as the survival of the company is not jeopardised. They claimed that they would invest in these improvements even if it would cost the company more in the long run and even independent of whether regulation will come into force or not. In contrast to their British colleagues, German manages would also differentiate between times, where you have to focus on price and times, where you can afford to invest into environmental improvements as your survival is not at risk.

The German managers were quite vocal about their environmental achievements and were quite familiar with the environmental discourse as presented in the media. While the British manager would refer to 'business case', to justify investment into environmental measures, most German managers would cite environmental considerations as reasons for their business decisions. They would dwell on these arguments and only add shortly, if at all, that these measures also help to save costs or improve the image of their company. One could even get the impression that German managers found it inappropriate, maybe even morally wrong to put their own interest or the interest of the company first. Overall, in the German discourse there was a strong tendency to mix financial considerations with environmental arguments.

Applying Habermas' concept (1984) of the 'instrumental reason' to the German discourse, 'economic rationality' in the German context seemed to be therefore based on the principle that a company has to make money in order to survive. If a company

fulfils this basic principle then they can afford to integrate other considerations into their business decisions. With regard to environmental issues, certain arguments seem to form part of the instrumental reasoning: The reduction of costs through the efficient use of resources and the investment into environmental improvements as long as the survival of the company is not at risk. However, it would seem that the use of 'instrumental reason' and 'communicative reason' are constantly intertwined in the German business discourse, at least with regard to environmental issues. Sometimes the business considerations would for example override the environmental arguments, but the managers would still discuss the environmental implications. The latter might even suggest that the managers use 'communicative reason' to challenge and maybe change their instrumental reasoning.

While the arguments presented so far might be connected to 'instrumental reasoning', the German managers also integrated 'communicative reasoning' into their opinions. Similar to the British case studies, the managers from companies with an ecological corporate image were more vocal about it, but also some managers from shareholder owned companies used 'communicative reasoning'. They argued especially strongly from what Habermas called the 'lifeworld', when they were faced with the risk that business considerations might override environmental aspects they considered to be important.

When asked about how they would do business in the other country, managers from both countries focused on the customers. The German managers said that British customers are less environmentally concerned and therefore using their own cultural approach, they would try to educate the British customer. The British managers on the other hand expected the German customers to be more environmentally interested and therefore an 'economic rational' response would be to satisfy this higher demand. Managers in both countries spoke in a way which suggests that they expect the business system in the other country to follow the same 'economic rationality' they perceive as the 'universal one'; however some managers used what Habermas (1984) termed 'communicative reason' to explain the differences.

Three managers (one British, two Germans) claimed that they went into business to solve environmental problems. Their career decisions could be interpreted with Habermas (1984) as a move from the 'lifeworld' to the 'business world' in order to introduce 'communicative reason' and transform the 'instrumental reason'. These

managers all reported how they had realised that major environmental changes could only be achieved when business practices are altered. In their argumentation they would therefore start with arguments that could be termed as 'communicative reason' and then translate them into the 'instrumental reason', the business language.

The perceived objectiveness of the 'business case', its conceptualisation and its implications for the theoretical and practical application of business administration in the British context and the different perspective on the same topics by the German managers are considered to be the major contributions to knowledge of the present study. Most theoretical models in strategy, financial accounting and corporate finance rest on the assumption that the purpose of business is to increase its profits. Even popular approaches to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) such as Carroll's (1991) pyramid of CSR argue that economic and legal responsibilities are required by society; ethical responsibilities - which would include environmental considerations – are only 'expected' by society. However, these assumptions are not seen as a human construction or agreement, they are treated as if they are a given, a prerequisite to a business system. One could argue that this thinking is ingrained in the study of business in the Anglo-American context. Apart from carrying out further research into the framing of business systems in relation to cultural differences, theoretical research should focus on the philosophical underpinnings of existing and potential business systems. This would contribute to brighten the narrow understanding of business in the current academic and practical discourse, but would also allow the business world to better address challenges faced by humanity such as climate change, overpopulation and loss of food supply.

Furthermore, as highlighted before in chapter 3.4.1., the UK and Germany represent very different forms of present-day-capitalism. The individual responses will be to a certain extent a reflection of the national business system and might have changed for example in the UK during its development to a 'financialized economy' (Williams 2000). A longitudinal study in a country like the UK might give more insight into how managers frame the 'business case' in response to changes in the national business system. However, this study has investigated how managers in the UK and Germany respond to the different challenges posed by their version of present-day-capitalism and assessed the cultural variations. More research needs to be undertaken into the relationship between forms of present-day-capitalisms and managerial sensemaking regarding environmental issues as well as the cultural influences shaping this

relationship. Here it is difficult to find a starting point as the cultural differences will influence which form of present-day-capitalism will be established in a country. The form it takes will then shape again new patterned ways, which is the definition given in this study for culture in dealing with the challenges posed, in other words change the culture.

The insight of the present study how British managers perceive the 'business case' as an 'objective reality' also has an impact on the teaching of sustainability undertaken by the researcher in her daily work, which will be discussed further in section 7.7.

7.4   The role and importance of stakeholders

The present study put an emphasis on the role and importance of stakeholders, which were especially under-investigated in the previous German literature. As there is no direct translation for the term 'stakeholder' the researcher used the word 'Interessengruppen', which could be translated as 'interest groups' offering a slightly different connotation. Maybe due to this wording German managers did not ponder so much about who is the most important stakeholder as the British managers, however the Germans were also quite selective insofar as discussion was limited to three 'interest groups': The state (regulation/law), suppliers and customers; the latter was seen as the most important. For British managers, investors seemed to have gained in importance. This was a trend already observed in Fineman's studies (1996,1997,1998), which suggested that with regard to environmental issues managers mainly react to the demand of stakeholders, first of all campaigners and regulators and more recently investors and the media. British managers in the present study highlighted also the importance of the regulation in force; managers in the energy sector in particular, emphasised the importance of a good reputation. The significance of the shareholders is in line with the importance British managers attach to the 'business case': this illustrates that for British managers the purpose of a company is mainly rewarding the financial contributor.

In line with the study by Schaefer and Harvey (2000), managers rated external stakeholders as more important but also identified individuals within the organisations as change agents, mainly the senior management. No one referred to an 'environmental champion'; although this might be due to the design of the survey in the present study

as managers were not specifically questioned about it.. In variation to Schaefer and Harvey's findings, British managers in the present study also considered the positive 'buy-in' of top managers as very important. German managers were not referring to top or senior managers as an important stakeholder, but this might be more due to the use of the word 'Interessengruppen' in the German context, which mainly describes external stakeholders. Additional research needs to be undertaken to understand the influence of top and senior management on environmental behaviour and the role of 'environmental champions' in Germany.

British and German managers both rated regulations as highly important; they expressed very similar attitudes and opinions towards the government. Obviously they all presented themselves as law-abiding citizens. Many German managers, however stressed the point that their companies went even further than required by regulation. They would also sometimes complain that in some cases the law actually prohibits the more environmentally friendly solution, while British managers would expect the government to solve environmental problems and initiate major changes.

Managers in both countries also differed slightly in their attitudes towards suppliers. British and German managers reported how they put pressure on suppliers to change the packaging both with references to the previous described prevalent 'economic rationality': The British managers would argue with the cost-saving potential of reduced packaging, the German managers would highlight the environmental benefit and how the customer was forcing them to do this.

The one stakeholder, who was regarded very differently between the two nations, was the customer. While the British customer is mainly seen as uninterested, price sensitive and in need of ,carrot and sticks', the German managers described the customer as very informed and influential, who would show their preferences sometimes in quite drastical ways, such as leaving the packaging behind them in the store. On the other hand, German managers also seemed to be convinced that they can and should influence customer's wants and that through more information people will change their buying behaviour. This is particularly true for managers in ecological oriented companies but was reported by other managers as well. However, some believe as their British colleagues that an ecological oriented lifestyle is a given and cannot be engineered by marketing efforts. Furthermore, British managers were also pointing out that each customer is entitled to their own views and values and that they didn't want to impose

their values on them. One could argue that this perspective contradicts any marketing efforts at all; indeed managers seemed to be very reluctant to admit that they influence their customer in any way. This was also commented by Fox (2004), an anthropologist, who has specialised in observing the behaviour of her own 'tribe', the English: "Advertising, and by extension all forms of marketing and selling, is almost by definition boastful – and therefore fundamentally at odds with one of the guiding principles of English culture." (184)

British managers would also argue that they have no influence on the uptake of organically produced products, thereby downplaying their own decision-making power such as strategic decisions on the range of organic products on offer.

7.5   Cultural influences on environmental sensemaking

As argued above, the differences in both countries are pronounced when it comes to the way in which managers deal with environmental issues in business. But why are these differences so pronounced? It was argued before that each nation has to deal with environmental problems; each society for example produces waste even if they do not classify it as waste. Culture in this context was defined in chapter 3 as the patterned way of expressing one's ideas and opinions that exists within a society or a nation as well as a certain form of behaviour considered to be appropriate within this group. These patterns on how to deal with environmental problems in business seem to have developed very differently in the two cultures under investigation. How do managers themselves explain these differences? Which cultural influences do they see as crucial for developing environmental awareness and for informing them further in their environmental sensemaking?

Earlier research (Thomashow 1995, Degenhardt 2002) had suggested that most environmentalists have very positive memories of their childhood places, a landscape or garden they cherished. From the interviews of the present study, one could argue that all the managers from both countries who claimed to be environmentalist talked about these fond memories, Surprisingly, managers who grew up in a polluted environment had a longing for nature but without reporting an environmental engagement. The latter also seems to contradict the Reflection Hypothesis ([Hannigan 1995) whereas the rise of the environmental awareness is understood as a direct reaction to the observed

increasing deterioration of the environment in the industrialised world. Further research is necessary why managers seem to express an individual longing for a better place to live after experiencing environmental deterioration, but do not express a need to become environmentally engaged to work towards these improvements.

Thomashow (1995) had also observed that many environmentalists talked about experiencing an irrevocable change of their loved childhood places through destruction or pollution fuelling their environmental engagement. In this study however, only two managers reported such a loss and only one of them made a connection between his first experiences of environmental destruction and his environmental engagement.

From previous studies it was also anticipated that managers might report an environmental dilemma as a starting point for their environmental concern, which is according to Kohlberg (1969) the major incentive to develop 'higher' moral reasoning. The interviews showed that even though some managers claimed that an environmental incident in their childhood or as an adult made them think about environmental problems, most of them seemed to put a higher emphasis on the positive childhood places mentioned above or in case of the German managers on cultural institutions such as the school. With regard to the latter the differences were very pronounced between the two cultures:

All German managers reported that they discuss environmental issues frequently with their friends and families. While in earlier German studies managers reported that their economic-technological worldview was challenged by family members or friends, the managers in the present study described the discussions with friends and families more as an exchange of ideas. By contrast, in the British context environmental issues were not seen as an important topic for private encounters. If they would discuss environmental issues with their partners, families or friends at all it would be related to buying decisions or to other topics such as a holiday. Only their children would sometimes raise environmental topics or make them think about these issues. This 'nagging by the kids' was not mentioned in Fineman's studies before, so one could argue that recently more managers in the UK have been presented with similar challenges by their children as German managers reported for the early Nineties. This might also reflect that environmental education now features higher in the curriculum of British schools.

The British managers themselves said that they could not remember any environmental education in school. Only one manager talked about environmental education in primary school. She was the youngest interviewee of the sample, born around 1975. Interestingly, she considered herself an environmentalist and argued in many ways similar to environmentally conscious managers in Germany. All German managers born after approximately 1963 said that they learned a lot about environmental problems and protection in school. Many managers would refer to experiences they had in secondary school, some would give examples from their primary school. The study therefore identifies a positive correlation between the inclusion of environmental issues in the core curriculum of primary and secondary schools and attitudes towards environmental issues, their centrality in normal discourse and environmental considerations in business decision-making.

The majority of British managers were reluctant to talk about their beliefs and claimed mostly that they had no role models. If at all they would name someone from the business community. German managers on the other hand were very outspoken about their religious beliefs and their role models, which were chosen from outside the business community and could be theologians, philosophers, politicians, teachers or friends. Without further prompting by the researcher, they would explain in detail why this person is their role model and what they have learned from them. Often they would also express some emotional statement, how they were fascinated by their speech, approach or book.

Two German managers without 'Abitur' (The German equivalent to A-Levels) both chose a role model from the business community, similar to the British interviewees. It could be argued that leaving school with 16 as in the case of the two Germans might have the same impact as concentrating on one subject (area) at the age of 16 for the A-Levels. Both groups were then not exposed to a wide area of subjects in school anymore. The German students with 'Abitur' on the other hand had to take until the age of 19 German, one foreign language, History, Politics, Religion or Philosophy along with Mathematics and Natural Sciences. This might broaden their understanding, so that later in life they draw on different tools even when they are working in one specific area like business.

Overall the British managers presented themselves as distinguishing between and separating the private world from the business world. There were two very different

spheres, each of them with different discursive resources. So the 'outside world' did not mix with the business world and therefore philosophy, religion, family, friends would be left 'outside'. The German discourse seemed to be more intertwined; ideas were flowing between the two worlds. The following figure illustrates the differences:
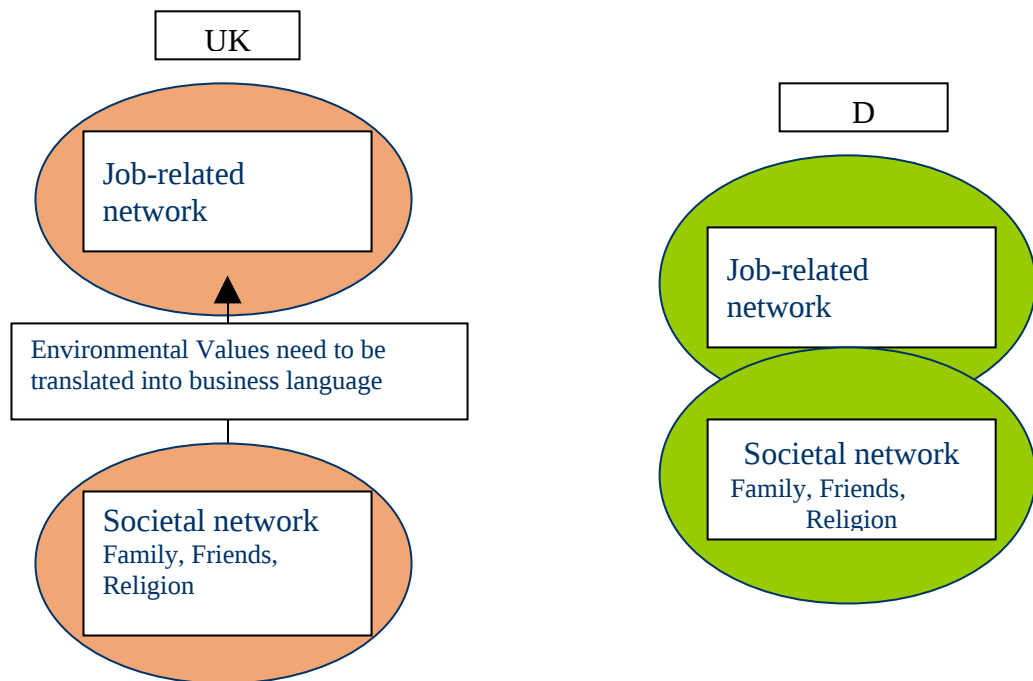

Figure 4: The business world and the private world

However it has to be noted that the managers were interviewed in a business setting. It might be that British managers would be more outspoken about their religious beliefs and their private views in a private encounter. Or it might be that these topics are of such a private nature that British managers would never discuss them at all. This is beyond the scope of this research; however one could argue that it is socially acceptable for German managers to discuss their private views and philosophical insights in business and also to raise business related issues in private meetings. Furthermore, by employing Habermas' framework (1984) once more, the responses of the British managers suggested that they clearly separated the 'lifeworld' from the 'business world' while the German managers transferred ideas between both worlds.

7.6 Summary of contribution to knowledge

The researcher argues that her contribution to knowledge in the field is:

- Cultural differences have a stronger impact than any other differences e.g. age, gender, education on how a manager presents himself with regard to environmental issues and how he talks about environmental problems in relation to business activities.

- A shift was identified in both countries under investigation how managers present themselves with regard to the ecological element of their identity compared to previous studies. The differences between the managers in Germany and the UK were in addition more pronounced than suggested through the comparison of previous studies undertaken in either Germany or the UK.

- In line with other Anglo-American studies British managers in this study placed a strong emphasis on their moral neutrality. In contrast, German managers tend to use moral arguments when discussing corporate greening, often giving them preference over financial arguments. The study therefore suggests that the 'moral muteness' of managers is an Anglo-American phenomenon.

- 'Economic rationality' was differently conceptualised in each of the two countries under investigation. While managers in the UK would refer to the 'business case', German managers would use the metaphor of survival in a competitive environment. Using the concept of 'instrumental reason' and 'communicative reason' by Habermas (1984) it was argued that British managers stayed within the prevalent logic of the existing business system (instrumental reasoning) rarely questioning its purpose or contents (communicative reasoning). The business system in its current form was not only described as unchangeable but some quotes even suggested that managers perceived it as a given and not created by man. This perceived objectiveness of the 'business case' has strong implications for the theoretical and practical application of business administration in the British context. This study challenges this understanding as it questions its objectiveness, which in turn could challenge the way business management is taught (see 7.8.).

- German and British managers differed in their evaluation of the role and importance of stakeholders; especially customers were very differently perceived.

- An interesting little contribution of this study was the observation that managers who grew up in a polluted environment talked about a longing for nature but without reporting an environmental engagement; a contradiction to the Reflection Hypothesis by Hannigan (1995).

- The study also pointed out some major differences between the German and British discourse. Especially pronounced was the separation of the private world from the business world by British managers, while the German managers reported that they mix private and business topics in each setting.

7.7 Future research

Different research projects that could follow up on the present study are outlined throughout this chapter. Not mentioned yet were the differences between East German

and West German managers, which would need further investigation. Both managers, who originally came from East Germany, had very different responses from the other German managers, for example they did not classify recycling activities, in which they had to take part as students, as environmental protection. Even during the interview, one of the two managers claimed that he was not doing anything for the environment, but later in the interview he referred to all the recycling he is doing and only when the researcher made the connection, he agreed that this could be classified as an environmental activity. It was also very interesting how he referred to the nuclear accident in Tschernobyl. He seemed to believe the East German news that radioactivity from Tschernobyl could only be measured in West Germany and that East Germany had no radioactive discharge. Even more surprisingly he still did not show any sign of surprise or irony when he talked about it. The researcher could better relate to the English experiences than that of the East Germans despite the fact that they spoke her mother tongue. However, this might be due to personal characteristics and not necessarily the East German background, but there is definitely scope for future research about how the socialist system has influenced and still has an impact on environmental sensemaking of East German, East European or even Chinese managers.

It would be also very interesting to concentrate in a future research project on one environmental problem such as 'climate change' and how managers and other societal actors participate in and shape the discourse. Here the construct of the 'business case' could be further investigated, how managers employ it in the context of an actual environmental problem and an ongoing societal debate. Methodologically the focus could be on the idea of understanding managers' 'story-line', a device developed and used by Hajer (1995) in his analysis of the acid rain controversies in Great Britain and the Netherlands (see chapter 2.3.20). Furthermore, 'story-lines' of managers in different countries could be compared.

As described above, the present study identified childhood places and cultural factors associated with school, philosophy and religion, family and friends being reported as influential. The relationships between these factors and how they are related to other geographical, political and historical factors have not been investigated. These links were made in the model by Carroll and Gannon (1997), described in chapter 2.2.3, who had identified primary and secondary mechanisms of cultural transmission such as parenting, education, religion, laws, and organisational culture. The present study suggests that primary mechanisms of cultural transmission have a higher impact on

developing environmental awareness than organisational culture. However, more research is needed to understand the interchanges and especially to test the proposition that these primary mechanisms of cultural transmission as well as the private influences of family and friends shape the environmental sensemaking of managers more than anything related to the business or organisational culture. This also raises questions of how much companies can influence the environmental behaviour of their employees through environmental training and furthermore what should form part of this training. Would an exposure to philosophical insights for example improve the environmental behaviour?

7.8   Teaching sustainability

The analysis of the accounts suggests two possible paths for the teaching of how to introduce environmental protection into business activities. One would be to include environmental considerations into what Habermas (1984) termed 'instrumental reason'. The other would be to challenge this 'instrumental reason' by using 'communicative reason'.

The research has shown that British managers tended to include environmental issues only into their 'technical reasoning' when they could make the business case for it. In other words, the environmental sounder solution had to save costs. In teaching sustainability, this approach can be taken. Lectures and seminar material can highlight that there are good business reasons to include environmental issues, making the business case for them. Managers in the present study chose this approach when they wanted to convince their colleagues. It might be further possible to include cost-neutral environmental improvements or even investments into the environment, when an 'indirect' business case can be made for these activities such as increasing the reputation of the company or using these improvements as marketing tools.

The research has also shown that the 'instrumental reason' in business is differentially conceptualised in the German context. Highlighting these differences in lessons might challenge students in reconsidering what 'economic rationality' entails. Furthermore, it seemed to the researcher most important to raise awareness among British students and managers that the 'business case' is not an objective reality but a a human creation.

Only when they realise that there is scope for defining the 'rules of the game', can these be changed.

An interesting research project or/and teaching exercise would be comparing main textbooks used in different cultures or even in different political systems. The researcher remembers vividly an exercise undertaken in her first years of study, where an East German introduction into Business Administration was compared with a West German introduction (The GDR still existed then.). Even basic concepts as 'supply and demand' were differently conceptualised and opened the eyes of the researcher for the underlying values implemented into the specific business system.

In the opinion of the researcher such a module about the philosophical underpinnings of a business system should be part of each business degree. It would offer a base on which to discuss the pros and cons of the existing business system, the scope for action within the business system and the possibilities to reframe parameters of the existing system. Here the 'communicative reason' as defined by Habermas (1984) could be employed in "structuring what is to be preserved" (398). With regard to environmental issues it would also allow room for discussions on how environmental issues could become part of the 'instrumental reason'.

Reich (2000) had criticised the fact that social scientists are solely concentrating on reconstruction or deconstruction, which he described as understanding what has been going on in the world. He was suggesting that social scientists should in addition 'construct' reality in the sense that they create concepts to change existing practices. Applied to the 'business case' discussed in this study, social scientists should try to understand the existing definitions and practices but they could also try to define a new 'business system', write new 'rules of the game' and put them into practice. So teaching could involve creating these new constructs.

Looking at the present study, it could be further argued that judging from the answers of the German managers, environmental reasoning has gained access into the business system. How did this happen? It was suggested that a broader education in school may keep the boundaries open between different subjects so that managers would refer to other subjects later in life even when working on one specific area such as business. This might also facilitate the access of German managers to what Habermas called the 'lifeworld'. The discussion of the British curriculum in secondary school is beyond the scope of this study, but it might be possible to introduce some of these other topics in

Undergraduate studies. However, it needs to be investigated whether the age between 16 and 19 is crucial for developing this broader view or whether is possible to broaden the horizon beyond the age of 19. Here some additional psychological studies are necessary. More studies should also be undertaken to explore which impact environmental training in business has on the sensemaking of managers and other employees.

Based on the present study, a few years ago the researcher herself started to include these other subjects in her seminars and lectures. The students are for example asked to read philosophical texts. The students also have to familiarise themselves with natural science to understand the causes and effects of climate change known to date. They are asked to collect the 'facts' from different sources, to understand the politics in producing these 'facts' and to make up their mind which researcher they trust to produce the 'right' results and why. Furthermore students have to read one novel during the module, which is centred on ethical dilemma, such as 'How to be good' by Hornby (2002). They have to put themselves in the shoes of the main character and explain how they would with the ethical dilemma based on their own values.

It is difficult to say without further research whether these methods are having an impact on the environmental sensemaking of students. It would be necessary to interview students before and after taking this module to note any differences in their environmental sensemaking. So far only the examination papers can be analysed to explore how students make sense of environmental issues after being exposed to these teaching methods. In this context the exam papers have offered a wide range of applications; in a few cases the researcher was impressed how students intertwined personal values and business considerations, letting her hope that these methods might have raised higher environmental awareness and action.

7.9   Limitations

The interviews were undertaken in two different sectors in order to explore whether the industrial background had an impact on the responses. However the research could not identify many differences; this might be due to the strong impact the national culture had on the environmental sensemaking of managers, which might have overwritten the finer nuances stemming from the industrial background. Maybe the study should have

only distinguished between German and British managers as the analysis of these dimensions offered already more than can be presented in this study. At least the analysis of the different industrial backgrounds as well as other characteristics such as gender and age could have been more detailed. There is definitely scope for further comparisons within the existing research material. Future research might also be undertaken to look at environmental sensemaking and industrial background, gender, age and/or level of education.

Other limitations were the context and time constraints of this study. The interviews were taken between 2002 and 2004. Since then public attention regarding certain environmental issues such as climate change has risen considerably. This might have had an impact on the environmental sensemaking of managers. It would be interesting to make a longitudinal study stretching over a decade to investigate the changes in environmental sensemaking over time.

Finally, the research was undertaken by a single researcher and was therefore based on a small number of individual cases. However, it was noted in chapter 3 that case studies are especially useful in generating new ideas and theories (Feagin et al 1991), which is sometimes termed analytical generalisation (generalising to theory) and differentiated from statistical generalisation (generalising to populations) (Amaratunga and Baldry 2001). These analytical generalisations are suggestions on how to explain certain phenomena. If they are able to give a more valid explanation than other theories before, then they follow as expressed in the same chapter the logic of pragmatist theories of truth in helping us to improve our understanding of ourselves and the world.

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Appendix 1: English Interview Schedule

General:
Aim for narratives, stories, examples, and illustrations – concrete: Can you give me an example? Can you illustrate this? When did it first occur to you?
Pick up things with free questions; this interview schedule as guidance what should be covered…ask them if not covered yet, go back to the examples they provided!

Start:
Thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk to you! Your experiences are especially helpful because…..(do some homework, find something that make them a special centre of interest!)
This interview is about your personal opinions; I am in no way asking you as a representative of this company. Your answers will be treated in confidence. If you illustrate your experiences with examples of your company, we will make sure that nothing can be traced back!
I would like to use this Mini-Disk-Player, it is only for my personal use so that I can better repeat what you have said, is this okay for you?

To be filled out by me:

Job (title)

Job level (if evident)

Sex

Age (in ranges: 20-30; 30-40; 40-50; 50-60; over 60)

First questions to interviewee:

Please tell me a little bit about yourself first:

Did you move straight into employment upon leaving school?

Previous Jobs

What sort of work (paid or unpaid) did your parents do when you were growing up?

A) Current position

1. How would you describe your own role within the company?

2. To what extent do environmental issues (as you would define them) arise for you in your work? (If this is not clear, ask them to define an environmental issue)

3. How would you describe your point of view in regards to environmental issues?

4. Do you think you can influence the environmental policy and actions of your company?

5. (*If they show passion or other indications of own involvement, pick up with this question:* Are you driven in your daily work by the chance to act upon your own ecological values in shaping the demand?)

B) Past Influences

1. When you think back, when do you think you first came into contact with environmental concerns?

2. How did this influence your approach to environmental issues?

3. Tell me about your childhood – is there anything that you think is related to your current opinion?

4. To what extent did experiences of the countryside influence your feelings about these matters?

5. How would you describe your approach to environmental problems in the past? Today? In the future?

6. How did it change and why?

7. Is there someone you would view as a role model with regards to environmental issues?

8. What people, writers, friends, ideas or movements have influenced you? (*then quote churches, philosophers etc.!)*

9. If I would use the term "environmentalists" – what would it mean to you?
a) So to what extent do you consider yourself an environmentalist?

   b) If negative, what characterise a typical environmentalist for you?

10. How does your experience compare to those of other managers?

11. What are the most important values in being in managerial work?
a) In general
b) in this company

12. Where do you inform yourself about environmental related issues? What is the most reliable source for you?

13. Do you talk about environmental problems within your family and/or friends? Does this have an influence on your perspective?

14. Do you think that England has special environmental challenges now? And in the future?

15. If thinking of one image that encapsulates the whole country with regards to environmental issues which picture or image would you use?

16. If your company were based in Germany – would it change the environmental positioning of your company? How would you operate there?

C. Risk Assessment/Responsibility

1. Tell me what you think about the way the media report about environmental issues? How does the media talk about the future?

2. What are examples for you of major environmental issues at the present time?

    a) for you personally
    b) at the level of your company
    c) at the level of your town
    d) at the level of your country
    e) at the level of the world

3. What do you consider can be done (and then) should be done to address these issues? What sort of solutions do you think are possible?

4. Who do you think should do this?

5. Do you think of yourself as someone who can influence ecological problems? (Why not?)

6. Do you think that major environmental changes can be achieved?

    a) How?

    b) Why not?

D. Stakeholders

1. Who is the most important stakeholder for you? (*Depending on answer:* Do you think the company has stakeholders beyond the shareholders?)

2. How do you incorporate their views with regards to some specific environmental issues?

3. Do you anticipate changes with respect to stakeholder perspectives? If so, what do you see as the driving forces behind change? If not, what do you regard as significant forces of resistance?

4. *Back to the given examples:* Who was involved? How did they react?

5. Environmental champion?

6. Do you get a lot of customer feedback related to the environment?

Last questions always:

What is the major problem for your country that needs to be solved in the next ten years?

What do you want to achieve environmentally within your company in the next ten years?

What do you want to achieve personally in the next ten years in regards to environmental issues?

Appendix 2: German Interview Schedule

General:
Aim for narratives, stories, examples, and illustrations – concrete: Can you give me an example? Can you illustrate this? When did it first occur to you?
Pick up things with free questions; this interview schedule as guidance what should be covered…ask them if not covered yet, go back to the examples they provided!

Anfang:
Ich danke Ihnen, daß Sie mir dieses Gespräch ermöglichen! Ihre Erfahrungen, sind mir besonders wertvoll, weil….(etwas vorab ueber sie herausfinden)
Es geht mir in diesem Interview um Ihre persönlichen Ansichten. Ich werde in keiner Weise annehmen, daß Sie für Ihre Firma sprechen. Auch werden Ihre Antworten vertraulich behandelt. Wenn Sie in irgendeinerweise Weise Ihre Firma oder Vorgaenge in Ihrer Firma erwaehnen, werden wir diese so verschluesseln, dass sie nicht zurueckverfolgt werden koennen.
Kann ich unser Gespraech aufnehmen mit diesem Mini-Disk-Player, es wird nur von mir abgehoert werden und hilft mir Ihre Aussagen genauer wiederzugeben….?

Von mir auszufuellen:

Position

Fuehrungsebene

Geschlecht

Alter 20-30; 30-40; 40-50; 50-60; over 60

Erste Fragen an den Gespraechsteilnehmer:

Darf ich Ihnen zunaechst ein paar Fragen zu Ihrem persoenlichen Hintergrund stellen:

Wie lange sind Sie bei dieser Firma? Haben Sie sofort nach dem Schulabschluss hier angefangen?

Koennten Sie kurz Ihren Berufsweg skizzieren?

Ueben Sie daneben ehrenamtliche Taetigkeiten aus?

Waren Ihre Eltern im gleichen Bereich taetig oder welche bezahlte oder unbezahlte Taetigkeit uebten sie waehrend Ihrer Kindheit aus?

A) Current position/ Status Quo

1. Wie wuerden Sie Ihren Aufgabenbereich hier in der Firma/ im Geschaeft beschreiben?

2. In welchem Umfang spielen umweltbezogene Themen in Ihrem Berufsalltag eine Rolle? Was sind fuer Sie umweltbezogene Themen?

3. Wie wuerden Sie Ihre eigene Position hinsichtlich des Umweltschutzes beschreiben?

4. Haben Sie das Gefuehl, dass Sie die umweltpolitischen Entscheidungen und Handlungen in Ihrer Firma beeinflussen koennen?

5. (*Falls Sie ein deutliches auf Ihre eigenen Werte bezogenes Engagement zeigen:* Haben Sie das Gefuehl, dass Sie Ihre eigenen Werte hier in Ihrem Berufsalltag umsetzen koennen?)

B) Past Influences/Praegende Erlebnisse und Einfluesse

1. Koennen Sie sich erinnern, wann sie zum ersten Mal mit dem Thema "Umweltschutz" in Beruehrung kamen?

2. Wie hat das Ihre weitere Herangehensweise beeinflusst?

3. Koennten Sie sich vorstellen, dass bestimmte Erfahrungen in Ihrer Kindheit einen Einfluss auf Ihre heutige Herangehensweise haben?

4. Sind Sie gern im Gruenen? Gehen Sie gern wandern, radfahren oder…?

5. Wie wuerden Sie Ihren Umgang mit Umweltproblemen in der Vergangenheit beschreiben? Heutzutage? In der Zukunft?

6. Wie hat sich Ihre Herangehensweise veraendert und warum?

7. Gibt es fuer Sie Vorbilder im Bezug auf den Umweltschutz?

8. Welche Menschen, Autoren, Freunde, Ideen oder Bewegungen haben Sie beeinflusst? (dann Kirche, Philosophie etc. gezielt ansprechen)

9. Wenn ich Ihnen das Stichwort "Umweltschuetzer" nenne, was wuerden Sie darunter   verstehen?
   a) Inwiefern wuerden Sie sich selbst als "Umweltschuetzer" bezeichnen?

   b) wenn negativ: Wie wuerden Sie einen "Umweltschuetzer" charakterisieren?

10. Wie sehen Sie Ihre eigenen Erfahrungen in Vergleich zu denen anderer Fuehrungskraefte?

11. Was sind fuer Sie die wichtigsten Werte im Geschaeftsleben?
    a) Allgemein
    b) In Ihrem Geschaeft

12. Wo informieren Sie sich ueber Umweltthemen? Welches ist die zuverlaessigste Quelle fuer Sie?

13. Sprechen Sie in Ihrer Familie oder/und mit Freunden ueber Umweltthemen? Wuerden Sie sagen, dass Sie diese Gespraeche in Ihrer eigenen Meinungsbildung beeinflussen?

14. Glauben Sie, dass auf Deutschland besondere Umweltprobleme zukommen oder bereits da sind?

15. Wenn Sie die Umweltsituation in Deutschland in einem Bild beschreiben wuerden, welches Bild oder Image kaeme Ihnen da in den Sinn?

16. Wenn Ihre Firma in England taetig waere, wuerde das Ihre Einstellung veraendern?

C. Risk Assessment/Responsibility – Einschaetzung von Risiken and Verantwortlichkeiten

1. Wie werden Ihrer Meinung nach Umweltprobleme in den Medien dargestellt? Wie die zukuenftige Entwicklung?

2. Koennen Sie mir Beispiele fuer draengende Umweltprobleme nennen?

   a) In Ihrem persoenlichen Umfeld

b) In Ihrem Geschaeft/Firma

c) In Ihrem Wohnort

d) In Ihrem Land

e) In der Welt

3   Was koennte Ihrer Meinung nach getan werden, um diese Probleme anzugehen? Welche Loesungsansaetze sehen Sie?

4   Wer ist Ihrer Meinung nach fuer die Umsetzung verantwortlich?

5   Wie schaetzen Sie Ihre eigenen Einflussmoeglichkeiten ein?

6   Glauben Sie, dass sich die oekologische Situation grundlegend veraendern wird?

   a) Wie?

   b) Warum nicht?

D. Stakeholders

1. Was halten Sie von dem Konzept der "Stakeholder"? Welche Interessengruppen haben fuer Sie die hoechste Bedeutung? (wenn nicht erwaehnt, Aktionaere nachhaken!)

2. Wie beruecksichtigen Sie deren Interessen?

3. Erwarten Sie, dass bestimmte Interessensgruppen an Einfluss gewinnen oder Ihre Position veraendern? Was ist fuer Sie die treibende Kraft hinter diesen Veraenderungen?

4. *Zurueck zu den angefuehrten Beispielen:* Wer war beteiligt? Wie haben sie reagiert?

5. Gibt es eine treibende Kraft fuer Umweltschutzfragen in Ihrem Betrieb?

6. Sprechen Ihre Kunden oft das Thema "Umweltschutz" an?

Immer als letzte Fragen:

Was ist fuer Sie das wichtigste Umweltproblem, das in den naechsten zehn Jahren geloest werden muss?

Was moechten Sie im Hinblick auf die Umwelt in den naechsten zehn Jahren in Ihrer Firma erreichen?

Was moechten Sie in den naechsten zehn Jahren persoenlich in Bezug auf die Umwelt erreichen?

Appendix 3: British Letter/Email

Dear….,

(Some personal comments such as 'Thanks a lot for your email - it was very nice and interesting talking to you the other day! It will be extremely helpful if you are able to put me in contact with some interviewees, and I am very appreciative of your interest in my research study.')

Please find below some additional information about the project.

The working title of my project is:

Managerial orientations and environmental issues – A UK/Germany Comparative Study

Aims of the investigation:

- to understand how managers in Germany and the UK make sense of and act with regard to environmental issues

- to study possible cultural variations in managerial orientation to environmental issues

The interviews will be semi-structured to allow managers time to discuss their experiences and ideas. The interviews will take approx. 60 minutes and cover broadly the following four areas:

A) Past Influences e.g. when you think back when did you first came into contact with environmental concerns?

B) Current position e.g. to what extent do environmental issues (as you would define them) arise for you in your work?

C) Risk assessment e.g. what are examples for you of major environmental issues at the present time? What do you consider can be done (and then) should be done to address these issues?

D) Stakeholders e.g. do you anticipate changes with respect to stakeholder perspectives? If so, what do you see as the driving forces behind change?

The interview is about the personal opinions and challenges for managers. They are not asked to represent their company. All answers will be treated confidentially.

All participants will receive a copy of the research findings, which will give them insights in how other managers deal with environmental challenges.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information – either under **petra.molthan@ntu.ac.uk** or 01933 –38 4987.

Thanks again for your help!

Kind regards,

Petra Molthan-Hill

Appendix 4: German Letter/ Email

Sehr geehrte(r) Frau/Herr…,

(Individuelle Einleitung z.B. "Wie Sie mir gestern im Gespraech mitteilten,…)

Arbeitstitel unserer Studie:

Managerial orientations and environmental issues – A UK/Germany Comparative Study

Ziele der Untersuchung:

- Wie bewerten Fuehrungskraefte die gegenwaertigen Umweltprobleme und welche Loesungsansaetze sehen sie?

- Inwiefern unterscheiden sich britische und deutsche Fuehrungskraefte in ihren Einschaetzungen umweltrelevanter Themen und Verhaltensweisen?

Die Gespraeche werden ca. 90 Minuten dauern und koennen am Arbeitsplatz gefuehrt werden (in deutscher Sprache). Anhand eines Gespraechsleitfadens werden folgende Themenbereiche behandelt:

A. Einschaetzung der gegenwaertigen Lage z.B.: In welchem Umfang spielen umweltbezogene Themen in Ihrem Berufsalltag eine Rolle?

B. Praegende Erlebnisse und Einfluesse z.B.: Koennen Sie sich erinnern, wann sie zum ersten Mal mit dem Thema "Umweltschutz" in Beruehrung kamen?

C. Einschaetzung von Risiken z.B.: Koennen Sie mir Beispiele fuer draengende Umweltprobleme nennen? Was koennte Ihrer Meinung nach getan werden, um diese Probleme anzugehen? Welche Loesungsansaetze sehen Sie?

D. Stakeholders z.B.: Erwarten Sie, dass bestimmte Interessensgruppen an Einfluss gewinnen oder Ihre Position veraendern?

Die Antworten werden selbstverstaendlich vertraulich behandelt. Die Gespraechsteilnehmenden werden gebeten, uns ihre persoenliche Meinung mitzuteilen. Sie werden nicht als Repraesentanten ihrer Firma befragt.

Allen Teilnehmenden werden die Forschungsergebnisse nach Ablauf der Studie zugesandt. Verschiedene Loesungsstrategien im Umweltbereich werden vorgestellt sowie die kulturspezifischen Unterschiede herausgearbeitet und kommentiert.

Ueber Ihre Teilnahme an unserer Studie wuerden wir uns freuen! Sollten Sie noch weitere Fragen haben, koennen Sie mich unter **petra.molthan@ntu.ac.uk** oder 0044-1933 –38 4987 erreichen.

Vielen Dank fuer Ihre Zeit!

Mit freundlichen Gruessen,

Petra Molthan-Hill

Nottingham Business School

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