UNIVERSITÄT BERN

CDE
CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Studentische Arbeiten in Nachhaltiger Entwicklung

Studentische Arbeiten aus den Studienprogrammen Bachelor Minor und Master Minor Nachhaltige Entwicklung an der Universität Bern

FAST VS. SLOW FASHION: THE DISCURSIVE FRAMING OF 'GREEN' GARMENTS AND 'GREENWASHING' IN ADVERTISEMENT: A MULTIMODAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

K6 Individual Research Project
Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts

BA Minor
Sustainable Development
Centre for Development and Environment

University of Bern
January 2023

Yaiza Best

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.8268869

“Advertising discourses and capitalist ideology play a major role in shaping the attitudes and behaviour of society; through the encouragement to endlessly consume products, they are leading the human race down a road that may eventually lead to catastrophic consequences.”
(Budinsky & Bryant, 2013, p. 208)

ABSTRACT

The (fast) fashion industry is responsible for up to ten percent of global greenhouse gas emissions and substantial environmental pollution (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Besides environmental concerns, social issues such as cheap labour and poor working conditions are also found to surface along garments' supply chains (Public Eye, 2020). Together, the urgency of these issues calls for a transition towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns in the fashion industry, marking it as an important area of action for sustainable development (cf. United Nations [UN], n.d.-a). However, with the increasing popularity of green marketing strategies, greenwashing has been observed to negatively influence consumers' trust in green claims, unfairly impeding the expansion of sustainable brands (TerraChoice, 2007). This research project has set out to study the advertising practices of two fast and two slow fashion brands. Its aim was to better our understanding of the discursive framing of green garments, identify potential ideological implications, and greenwashing practices. The methodology adopted for analysis was that of a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The analysis of the four sites has shown that the communicative practices of fashion brands are diverse. Three discursive themes were identified: 'erasure' (cf. Gal & Irvine, 2019) and 'visible-invisible labour' (cf. Thurlow & Jaworski, 2014), (un)equal power relations between brand and consumers, and lastly 'Footprint ideologies' (cf. Huber, 2019) and environmental responsibility. In addition, the discursive framing of the green garments was found to align with the principles of three different sins of greenwashing (cf. TerraChoice, 2007): the Sin of Hidden Trade-Off, the Sin of Vagueness, and the Sin of 'Lesser of Two Evils'.

Keywords: Sustainability, Fast vs. Slow Fashion, Advertising, Greenwashing, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

TABLE OF EXTRACTS

1 INTRODUCTION

As the negative effects of climate change become increasingly noticeable, sustainability is a central concern of our time.[1] The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the centre piece of the Agenda 2030, articulate a concrete framework to strive for a more sustainable future (UN, n.d.-b). While the current challenges concerning sustainability are diverse, SDG 12 identifies production and consumption patterns as a central area of action (UN, n.d.-a). According to this SDG's website, unsustainable consumption and production patterns are responsible for three key challenges: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution (UN, n.d.-a). As production and consumption patterns in general represent a broad field, this project focusses on one particular sector: the fashion industry.

Along the supply chain of textile production and consumption, substantial environmental and social issues arise. The supply chain of garment manufacturing is highly complex, often requiring of the materials to travel long distances between the cultivation of fibres and consumers' purchase at the stores, involving numerous different actors (Niinimäki et al., 2020). According to Niinimäki et al. (2020) the "fashion industry is the second largest industrial polluter after aviation, accounting for up to 10% of global pollution" (p. 189). Besides the significant CO_2 emissions, other environmental issues linked to the fashion industry are water use and its chemical pollution caused by dyeing processes, and microplastic pollution in oceans (Niinimäki et al., 2020, p. 189). Textile production is also responsible for the generation of large amounts of textile waste, before and after consumer purchase, surpassing 92 million tonnes annually (Niinimäki et al., 2020, p. 189).

Social issues that surface along supply chains are poor working conditions of the social actors involved in production processes (including long working hours, low pay, health threats) and the consequences of the pollution for local communities (Public Eye, 2020). Predominantly, garments are being produced in regions of the Global South to lower costs, while they are then distributed and consumed in western countries (Niinimäki et al., 2020). This division contributes to the exploitation of the Global South as labour is cheaper in these regions (Niinimäki et al., 2020, p. 191), this adds to the complexity of supply chains, ultimately bringing forward essential questions of social injustice on a global scale.

[1] Defining sustainability universally has proven itself difficult. One of the most well-known definitions was proposed by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, this research project accepts the Brundtland-definition which postulates the satisfaction of needs of current and future generations, focussing on the trinity of economic, social, and environmental concerns.

While the fashion industry can be characterised as unsustainable in general, the fast fashion business model has been a driving force to the issues discussed above (cf. Niinimäki et al., 2020). The fast fashion industry relies on the distribution of low-cost garments, with new collections being frequently introduced (up to 24 collections annually in the case of Zara) (Loetscher, Starmanns & Petrie, 2017, p. 16). Fast fashion accelerates production along the supply chain and increases the desire of people to consume garments by constantly introducing new trends (Joy, Sherry Jr, Venkatesh, Wang & Chan, 2012).

The solutions proposed to counteract the negative impacts of the (fast) fashion industry and transition towards more sustainable practices are diverse (cf. Loetscher et al., 2017). However, as the industry is expected to grow in the coming years (Niinimäki et al., 2020), the urgency of tackling unsustainable production and consumption patterns becomes indisputable. Niinimäki et al. (2020) identify three key areas of potential action: limiting growth, closing loops, and focussing on waste (pp. 196-197). Here, both production practices as well as consumers' habits and attitudes are essential to motivate positive change (Niinimäki et al., 2020).

As a result of growing awareness about the current global ecological and social crisis, consumer demand for sustainable products has been growing in recent years (cf. Fletcher, 2010; Joy et al., 2012). A well-known countermovement to the "mass produced and standardized" (Fletcher, 2010, p. 260) fast fashion industry is the so-called 'slow fashion' movement. Slow fashion is characterized by values questioning the growth-driven fast fashion industry, promoting a vision of positive system change, often entailing smaller-scale production, and focussing on more localized and traditional practices (Fletcher, 2010, pp. 263-264).[2] In other words, slow fashion sees concerns of sustainability as its very core.

Global (fast) fashion retailers, and big corporations in general, have been striving to embrace more sustainable practices as a reaction to the issues discussed above (cf. de Freitas Netto, Sobral, Ribeiro & Soares, 2020). While in theory these efforts can be seen as having a positive impact on people and the environment, often companies are found to be engaging in so-called "greenwashing" practices (e.g., Budinsky & Bryant, 2013; Majláth, 2017; Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

'Greenwashing' refers to the selective communicative practices of companies who emphasize or exaggerate their sustainability efforts while simultaneously obscuring the

[2] The term slow fashion is used predominantly in this research paper; however, it can be understood as synonymous with 'sustainable' or 'green' fashion for the purpose of this project.

negative (ecological) impact of products and services (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020).[3] Greenwashing results in partial or false ideas being communicated to consumers or clients about the sustainable qualities of products or services (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020), which is an essential concern for sustainability. When studying consumer perception, it has been empirically shown that the inclusion of apparently negligible nature-evoking elements in advertising suffice to green the entire corporate image of a company (Parguel, Benoit-Moreau & Russell, 2015). Parguel et al.'s (2015) findings have far-reaching implications as nowadays many companies seem to make use of 'green' communicative practices. A striking example of green communication would be the oil and gas industry, whose practices are knowingly unsustainable (Scanlan, 2017).

Focussing on the oil and gas industry and how they advertise fracking, Scanlan (2017) has shown how a misleading rhetoric is employed to communicate an idea of false security. In his case study the greenwashing manifests as claims made by the oil and gas industry communicating their positive sustainability impact, transparency, and environmental protection amongst other (Scanlan, 2017, p. 1). Similarly, Budinsky and Bryant's (2013) critical discourse analysis of greenwashing and environmental discourses found in advertising, debunks the discursive strategies employed by two companies to promote their 'green' products. These two studies highlight how important it is to pay close attention to the advertisements of supposedly sustainable products.

Furthermore, greenwashing can be seen as a challenge when promoting actual sustainable business models because consumers no longer trust green claims made by companies and green skepticism increases (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020, p. 2; TerraChoice, 2007). Green skepticism, or what Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla and Paladino (2014) call "perceived greenwashing effect" (p. 694), can have a negative effect on consumers' attitudes. Thus, companies making green claims can experience disadvantages. This also affects companies which are setting exemplary sustainability standards.

As established in the previous paragraph, communicative practices stand at the core of greenwashing issues. This makes (green) corporate communication a prime site for discourse analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in particular, aims to "describe the practices and conventions in and behind texts that reveal political and ideological investment" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 4). As environmental discourses can be understood as shaping the relationship

[3] Greenwashing is mostly thought to refer to ecological concerns and environmental communication, however, social aspects can also be understood as being entailed in broader definitions of the concept (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020).

between people and their environment (Stibbe, 2021), the study of such communicative practices becomes central in the light of greenwashing issues and the general effort of striving towards a more sustainable society.

When introducing the field of ecolinguistic research, Stibbe (2021) identifies three different kinds of discourses: destructive, ambivalent, and beneficial (pp. 22-30). Stibbe (2021) situates advertising within the field of ambivalent discourse by listing these examples of *ambivalent* discourses: "discourses of environmentalism, ecology, conservation, sustainability, and *green advertising*" (emphasis mine, p. 25). While these communicative practices propagate positive values in theory, they are often motivated by economic or political interests (Stibbe, 2021, p. 25). When linking such ambivalent discourses to questions of greenwashing, it can be noted how discourses are strategically employed to signal positive ideas of sustainability while still being motivated by commercial interest in the case of advertising, often obscuring ecologically harmful behaviour. As the fast fashion industry has been characterized as inherently unsustainable, being an industry driven by mass-production and the promotion of consumerism (Fletcher, 2010), it represents a particularly intriguing site to study discourses of 'green' advertising.

Derived from the discussion above, fashion brands' advertising can be seen as reflecting production processes and influencing consumers' choices, making it a prime site for analysis. While, in the context of this research project, slow fashion brands represent the ideal worth striving for, they promote consumption of garments as well, which is why they also deserve critical attention. The objective of this project is to qualitatively compare the websites of four fashion brands to better our understanding of their communicative practices. The methodology adopted for the analysis is a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) (cf. Machin & Mayr, 2012). The focus lies on identifying potential greenwashing strategies found in the texts as well as other potentially problematic ideologies about the environment, sustainability, or social relations which manifest in advertising.

Greenwashing practices and environmental/sustainability discourses have been studied with similar methodologies in other contexts (for example): Scanlan (2017), as introduced above, studied the oil and gas industry and how they frame fracking; Budinsky & Bryant (2013) analysed the ads of one 'green' cleaning product and two motor vehicles showing how environmental discourses are exploited to communicate ideas of the products' 'green' attributes; and Haudenschild (2021) debunks the rhetorics of "Zero-Waste" which fail to adequately address the social and environmental issues at the heart of waste problems. However, to my knowledge, none of these studies focusses exclusively on the (fast/slow)

fashion industry as a site of interest, marking this as an intriguing research gap. This research project wishes to contribute to that body of research in studying the websites of four fashion brands and comparing them against the theoretical backdrop of greenwashing. This paper sets out to answer the following research questions:

1. How are 'green' products framed discursively on websites of fast and slow fashion brands?
2. What are the similarities or differences of the discursive strategies employed to advertise the garments, and to what extent can links be made to possible greenwashing agendas?
3. How can the identified communicative practices be understood as enhancing problematic ideologies about sustainability issues, such as (for example) so-called 'footprint ideologies' (Huber, 2019) or 'visible-invisible labour' (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2014)?

2 THEORETICAL FOCUS

This section intends to outline the theoretical framework within which this research project is situated. Notably, these theories draw from a set of various disciplines, which allows for a particularly rich exploration of the topics in question. A short introduction to green marketing and consumption behaviour will be rendered in the first subsection (2.1). It serves as an important basis, as the promotion of sustainable fashion can be situated within the framework of green marketing strategies and as consumption behaviour plays a vital role in this context. The second subsection (2.2) is concerned with the theory of greenwashing. While greenwashing can manifest in many ways, and an extensive body of literature (coming from numerous disciplines) is concerned with this phenomenon, this subsection intends to provide the reader with the necessary understanding of the concept for the subsequent analysis and discussion sections. The next two subsections (2.3 & 2.4) intend to lay out the relevant theoretical conceptualizations to allow a meaningful comparison of the sites and their different approaches to fashion, i.e., fast and slow fashion. The last subsection (2.5) focusses on the theory of a (M)CDA. However, to lay out a broader framework and touch upon the fields of study introduced in the introductory section of this paper, the following ideas are elaborated briefly as well: ecolinguistics, the challenge of framing sustainable consumption, and advertising discourse.

2.1 *Green Marketing & Consumption behaviour*

In recent years, green marketing has become increasingly popular (Mukonza et al., 2021), as "[t]he consumer and capital markets for green products, services, and firms have been expanding rapidly" (Delmas & Burbano, 2011, p. 64). Consumer demand for sustainable products has also been on the rise (Fair Trade Certified, 2022). The term 'green marketing' refers to business activities which are environmentally and socially responsible, promoting sustainability in the marketplace (Mukonza et al., 2021). Some motivations for the promotion of green marketing are reducing waste, being more eco-friendly and spreading awareness amongst consumers (Mukonza et al., 2021, p. 4). While there are critical voices doubting the feasibility of implementing green marketing practices while remaining profitable, studies have suggested otherwise (Mukonza et al., 2021, p. 6). Yalley and Twum (2021) note how a shift from a "self-centered" consumerist culture towards a more "altruistic, responsible, […] and green buying and consumption culture" (pp. 61-62) can be observed in contemporary society.[4] Thus, both businesses as well as consumer behaviour lean towards more environmentally and socially responsible products and services.

Supporting this idea are studies concerned with consumer attitudes, especially towards sustainable brands (e.g., Neumann, Martinez & Martinez, 2020; Olsen, Slotegraaf & Chandukala 2014). In their article, Olsen et al. (2014) bring forward how consumers' attitudes can change positively towards brands when they introduce new green products. They also articulate managerial suggestions by which green innovations can polish up a brand's green image (Olsen et al., 2014). However, as already implied in the introduction, brands must remain cautious when making and advertising green claims, as too many green claims may result in consumer skepticism rather than in gaining their trust (Olsen et al., 2014, p. 134).

An interesting study of gaining consumer trust through the introduction of greener products is Ehrsam's (2016) Master thesis. Ehrsam's (2016) findings, focusing specifically on the fashion retailer H&M, suggest that the introduction of the sustainable *Conscious* line has affected consumers' attitude towards the brand positively. Moreover, Ehrsam (2016) found that the display of information about garments' sustainable qualities can have a "spill over effect to unrelated areas" (p. ii). While their thesis frames H&M's sustainability potential somewhat

[4] Differentiating consumption and consumerism can be challenging, however, while consumption can well be sustainable (e.g., by buying less or eco-friendly products to meet individual needs), consumerism cannot be sustainable to the same degree (Evans & Jackson, 2008). According to Evans and Jackson (2008) *consumerism* is characterized by excessive economic consumption which can be seen as a "way of life" (cf. also Miles, 1998), "result[ing] in high levels of material consumption and accelerating environmental degradation" (p. 7).

optimistically (Ehrsam, 2016), it still highlights the positive effect green products can have on the corporate image of a brand.[5]

Besides studying the consumers' attitudes, it is important to consider what marks a product or service as being 'green' and to what degree these attributes are perceived and valued by consumers. As Noppers, Keizer, Bolderdijk and Steg (2014) note, the success of "sustainable innovations largely depends on the extent to which they are accepted and adopted by consumers" (p. 52). Depending on the saliency of the attribute, Gershoff and Frels (2015) argue that "products with identical environmentally benefits will be judged more or less green depending on whether the benefit [is] a central versus a peripheral attribute" (p. 97). Hence, it makes sense for a company to focus on central attributes when promoting green innovations.

Differentiating between instrumental, environmental, and symbolic attributes of a green innovation (or product), Noppers et al. (2014) found that while instrumental attributes are certainly important, consumers may also adopt sustainable innovations because of their positive environmental impact or their symbolic value (p. 52).[6] Sustainable innovations often have "less favorable instrumental attributes" (e.g., being more expensive than the conventional alternative) (Noppers et al., 2014, p. 53), this can influence their adoption negatively. Despite the lack of such beneficial instrumental attributes, however, Noppers et al.'s (2014) findings suggest that environmental and symbolic attributes of sustainable innovations can counteract this shortcoming and support their adoption.

Another noteworthy aspect of consumption is its symbolic value, and the role consumption behaviour plays in defining oneself and constructing one's identity (cf. Miles, Cliff & Burr, 1998). Looking at the industry this papers studies, it can be noted that fashion certainly plays a vital role in defining oneself (cf. Neumann et al., 2020). Especially young consumers are appealed to by the fast fashion industry (Joy et al., 2012). For younger audiences, consumption constitutes an important part in their identity formation (Gaiser, Krug & de Rijke, 2012), allowing them to feel as though they belong somewhere while also appealing to their sense of individuality (Miles et al., 1998, p. 81).

On the topic of identity formation through consumption of fashion, in more general terms, Joy et al. (2012) point out that "[w]ith fast fashion, new styles swiftly supersede the old,

[5] The Cambridge dictionary defines 'corporate image' as "the way in which a company is seen and understood by people" ("Corporate image", n.d.).

[6] Instrumental attributes refer to functional results of an innovation's purchase or consumption, environmental attributes reflect its effects on the environment, and symbolic attributes "reflect the (positive or negative) outcomes of the ownership and use of the sustainable innovation for one's (self-)identity and social status" (Noppers et al., 2014, pp. 52-53).

defining and sustaining constantly emerging desires and notions of self" (p. 276), which ultimately motivate consumerism. Supporting this idea, Neumann et al. (2020; based on Valor, 2007) note how fashion has a highly symbolic character "allowing its owner to express self-identity, not only about the current self, but also about the aspirational or ideal self" (p. 6). Therefore, symbolic values and identity formation constitute an important aspect of fashion and the consumption of garments. As Loetscher et al. (2017) claim accordingly: the fashion industry "sells dreams and provides a stage for self-expression" (p. 3). While the concept of self and identity is an essential motivation for the consumption of fashion, it is also an important aspect when it comes to the consumption of greener garments; as consumers' values are a driving force in the decision-making process of buying sustainable products (cf. Neumann et al., 2020).

2.2 *Greenwashing*

As green markets are continuously expanding, the phenomenon of greenwashing continues to be an issue (cf. Majláth, 2017; TerraChoice, 2007). Motivated by the increasing demand for greener products and services, oftentimes "lax or uncertain regulation [is a] key driver of greenwashing" in the marketplace (Delmas & Burbano, 2011, p. 65).

There is not one universally accepted definition of greenwashing as it is a phenomenon which can manifest in diverse ways and has been studied from numerous perspectives (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020). However, as already indicated in the introduction, there are certain characteristics which repeatedly define greenwashing practices in literature, according to de Freitas Netto et al. (2020) the two most prevalent qualities of greenwashing are to:

> [R]etain the disclosure of negative information related to the company's environmental performance and expose positive information regarding its environmental performance. This two-folded behavior can be named as selective disclosure. (p. 6)

While their definition allows for a broad understanding of the concept of greenwashing, some more detailed considerations should be included to make greenwashing more graspable. An important source in the greenwashing literature are TerraChoice's (2007)

"Six Sins of Greenwashing".[7] TerraChoice's (2007) report studied over 1'018 products marked as being 'green' and found that all but one were committing at least one of the six sins (p. 1). The "Six Sins of Greenwashing" defined by TerraChoice (2007) are the following:

(1) Sin of Hidden Trade-Off: which occurs when a single attribute of a product marks the entire product as green (p. 2).
(2) Sin of No Proof: when the green claims of a product cannot be backed by easily accessible information (p. 3).
(3) Sin of Vagueness: found in broadly articulated or insufficiently defined claims (p. 3).
(4) Sin of Irrelevance: a sin characterized by claims which are not informative or helpful to the consumer (p. 4).
(5) Sin of 'Lesser of Two Evils': these are claims made about a product which deflect attention from the true impact of a product (p. 4)
(6) Sin of Fibbing: this sin is committed when claims are outright false (p. 4)

The realization that greenwashing can manifest in many, often subtle and inconspicuous ways, is important here. Most of the times the environmental claims do reflect a partial truth, but are unrightfully 'greening' the entire product or the company's image.

De Freitas Netto et al. (2020) identify two dominant classifications of greenwashing: claim greenwashing and executional greenwashing (p. 7). While claim greenwashing manifests as "textual arguments that explicitly or implicitly refer to the ecological benefits of a product or service to create a misleading environmental claim" (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020, p. 7); 'executional greenwashing' is a more sophisticated form of greenwashing, "defined as the use of nature-evoking elements in advertisements to artificially enhance a brand's ecological image" (Parguel et al., 2015, p. 1). As the analysis will show, claim greenwashing is the predominant form of greenwashing identified in the texts studied for this research project.

While greenwashing can manifest in diverse contexts, advertising is a particularly popular way of promoting green claims. Nyilasy et al. (2014) state that "[a]dvertising is one of the most commonly employed mechanisms to communicate a green message to consumers"

[7] In later reports TerraChoice defined seven sins, adding the "sin of worshipping false labels" (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020, p. 9; Delmas & Burbano, 2011). Scanlan (2017) builds upon the "Seven Sins of Greenwashing" and proposes the following additional sins: false hopes, fearmongering, broken promises, hazardous consequences, injustice, and profits over people and the environment (p. 15). To allow a focused discussion, I have limited my analysis to the six sins of greenwashing introduced in this section.

(p. 694). This claim serves as the basis to study advertising material of the selected fashion brands in the light of greenwashing practices.

An important case study for this project is Blesserholt's (2021) Master's thesis. Blesserholt (2021) closely studies greenwashing in the case of H&M as a representative brand of the fast fashion industry. They find that H&M is an interesting site as the brand promotes their commitment to sustainability while also being accused of greenwashing behaviours on numerous occasions (Blesserholt, 2021, p. 8). Studying H&M's sustainability reports against ten greenwashing sins and four levels of greenwashing, Blesserholt (2021) finds that H&M engages in nine out of ten types of greenwashing on three different levels (p. 50). While a more in-depth discussion of their thesis would surpass the scope of this paper, their results are highly relevant for my own analysis as H&M's websites serve as primary data for this research project.

Greenwashing practices mislead consumers who might have had good environmental intentions originally (TerraChoice, 2007). In addition to misled consumers, greenwashing can also have a negative effect on the competitive advantages of genuinely green brands, hindering the growth of sustainable marketing (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 1). Lastly, greenwashing can affect consumers' trust in green claims which encourages green skepticism (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 1).

Green skepticism, as implied in the introduction, poses a serious threat to green marketing campaigns, as for example Nyilasy et al.'s (2014) study has shown. Their counter-intuitive findings show that green advertising can in fact be damaging for companies, rather than have a positive impact (Nyilasy et al., 2014, p. 700). They explain this negative trend through attribution theory, suggesting that when consumers start to notice discrepancies between green claims and environmental action of a company, they form negative attributions, hindering the development of positive attitudes towards a company (Nyilasy et al., 2014, p. 701). In the quest for a more sustainable marketplace, therefore, such trends are highly unfavourable for green companies. Greenwashing can be seen as a key driver for doubting consumers (TerraChoice, 2007; Nyilasy et al., 2014).

2.3 *The (Fast) Fashion Industry*

As brought forward in the introductory section of this paper, the (fast) fashion industry is associated with numerous environmental and social sustainability issues. One reason these issues are difficult to tackle is a highly complex supply chain. The 2.4 trillion USD worth fashion industry, involves numerous actors along its supply chains, ranging from fiber producers to retailers (Loetscher et al., 2017, p. 13). Figure 1 provides an overview of the

supply chain of garment production, also identifying sustainability issues associated with the different steps/phases.

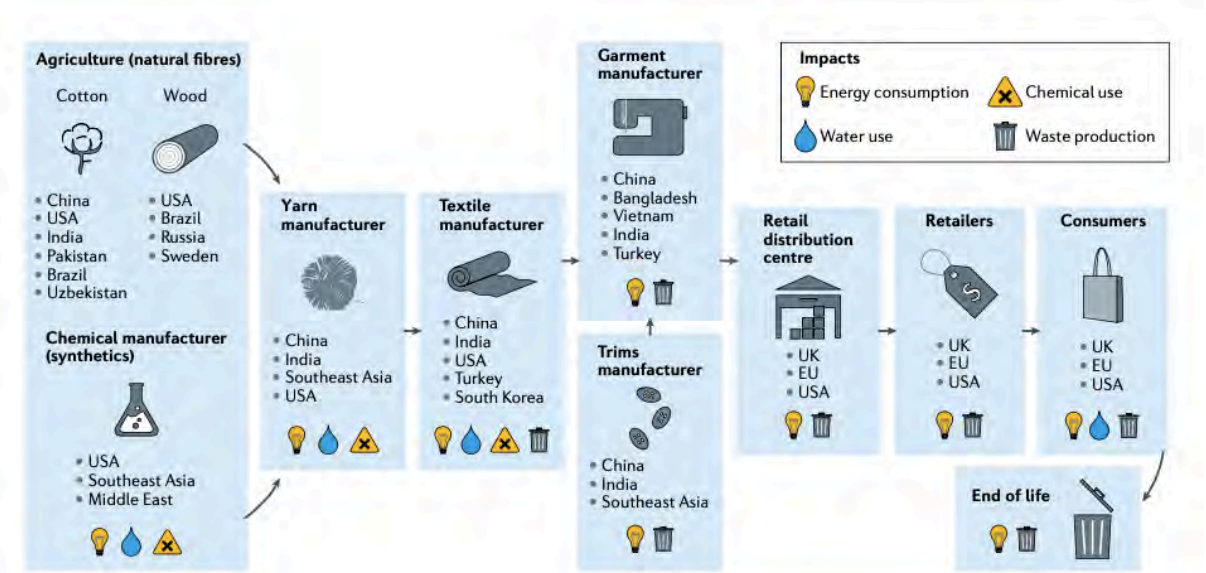


Figure 1: "Garment manufacturing supply chain" taken from Niinimäki et al. (2020, p. 191).

When paying close attention to the supply chain represented in Figure 1, there are a few aspects worth considering. First, there are two types of fibre production (agricultural and chemical), yarn can consist of either or a mix of them (Loetscher et al., 2017, p. 13; Niinimäki et al., 2020). Secondly, as indicated in the introduction, manufacturing countries often (although not exclusively) form part of the global south; while retailers and consumers are mostly western nations (Loetscher et al., 2017, p. 13; Niinimäki et al., 2020, p. 191).

> *Fast fashion* is a global trend that is characterized by the ability of fashion companies to respond quickly to fast-changing fashion trends and consumer tastes while maintaining low prices. The most recognized examples are Zara, H&M and Top Shop. (emphasis mine, Hall, 2018, p. 285)

Hall's (2018) definition of fast fashion highlights the core characteristics of this type of fashion and identifies two key brands: Zara and H&M. While the choice of sites will be elaborated on below, their article served as the basis for choosing Zara and H&M as representative brands for the fast fashion industry.

Although consumers often feel like their purchase choices have little impact (Neumann et al., 2020, p. 2) and there is a discrepancy between individual values and consumption behaviour (Joy et al., 2012), the demand for green products has been on the rise in recent years (Delmas & Burbano, 2011, p. 64). Two of the most prominent cases of fast fashion brands implementing sustainability in their supply are the sustainable clothing lines introduced by Zara

and H&M: *Join life* and *Conscious choice* respectively (cf. Neumann et al., 2020). Neumann et al. (2020) found that the percieved social responsibility of these two brands positively affected consumer attitudes towards them and boosted consumers' trust in the brands (p. 13-14). However, according to Neuman et al. (2020) some argue that sustainability values and fast fashion are irreconcilable, as the fast fashion business model relies on lowering costs and increasing garment consumption (Hall, 2018, p. 285).

The tension between sustainability and economic interests which mark the development of sustainable clothing lines in the fast fashion industry makes them a particularly interesting site for analysis in the light of greenwashing practices (cf. sections below).

2.4 *Sustainable Fashion*

Before discussing the concept of slow fashion outlined in the introduction in more detail, some generally innovative frameworks will be introduced briefly.

In the WWF report Loetscher et al. (2017) propose three main levels for sustainable transition of fashion brands: business model innovation, product innovation and process innovation (p. 26). Business model innovation requires companies to root their practices in sustainable values; while process and product innovation often target the improvement of already existing processes and products, for example by using more sustainably sourced materials (Loetscher et al., 2017, p. 26). Loetscher et al. (2017) argue that business model innovation should be aimed for by fashion brands, bringing forward the following framework:

> Sustainable business models should enable companies to operate within the ecological boundaries of our planet. The new models could follow the principles of sufficiency and/or circular economy. Sufficiency covers reductionist strategies such as consuming/producing less and slowing down. Circular economy looks at closed-loop systems, repairing and the sharing economy. (p. 26)

The quote included above exemplifies the diverse ways in which companies can strive for sustainablility. There seems to be more than one way to support positive change in the fashion industry, however, an in-depth discussion of each concept would surpass the scope of this paper. Therefore, only one case study is explained shortly.

The case study focuses on business model innovation through second-hand retailing implemented by the Swedish brand Philipa K (Hvass, 2015). Hvass (2015) found that processes of revaluation of second-hand products can facilitate sustainable transitions on the level of business model innovation (p. 29). While positive impacts of this transition can be seen as

improving the brand's overall value, there are also certain conditions the brand and its products have to meet, such as “high quality, strong brand awareness and market maturity” (Hvass, 2015, p. 29) to make it possible. Despite the challenges Philipa K encountered in their endeavours, the overall results of Hvass’ (2015) case study suggest that the brand was able to strengthen their relationship with consumers and was successful in implementing reselling and reusing practices that would prolong their garments’ life-cycle (p. 29). Both of these outcomes can be seen as incentives for other brands to start implementing similar business model innovations by focussing on second-hand retailing.

While the case study of Hvass (2015) focuses on reselling used garments, the slow fashion movement incorporates sustainability even more holistically. Slow fashion is rooted in slow culture, which developed as “a reaction to globalized, homogenized, fast food culture” (Fletcher, 2010, p. 261). Based on Fletcher’s (2010) article, Hall (2018) defines slow fashion as follows:

> In contrast to fast fashion, *slow fashion* has been defined as including the following characteristics: small scale production, the utilization of local materials and markets in production, traditional production techniques (often handcrafted) or design concepts that are season-less, slower production times to focus on quality, durable products, prices that reflect true ecological and social costs, and a focus on sustainability, in both production and consumption. (emhasis mine, p. 286)

Derived from this definition it becomes apparent that there is not one way of doing slow fashion, but multiple openings to strive to incorporate these values. Another important aspect of slow fashion is the aim of reducing both consumption and waste production (Hall, 2018, p. 186). Hall (2018) studied the Japanese fashion industry and the Kimono in particular, identifying two seemingly contradictory trends of speeding up and slowing down simultaneously. Their article highlights the complexity of the concepts of slow and fast fashion and how the lines between them are often blurry in a globalized world (Hall, 2018).

When drawing together the topics introduced above, it becomes clear that there are multiple approaches to sustainable fashion. Moreover, as found in the case study of the Kimono (Hall, 2018), slow fashion trends can also be found in settings of acceleration of the fashion industry. In summary, essential differentiations between fast and slow fashion are the core values which motivate production and consumption: the driving forces in the fast fashion

industry are economic expansion, profit-orientation, and mass production; slow fashion on the other hand is motivated by locality, sustainability, and smaller-scale production (Hall, 2018).

2.5 *Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, Ecolinguistics & Advertising Discourse*

> Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. (van Dijk, 2001, p. 352)

Van Dijk's (2001) definition gives a broad overview of what CDA can encompass. CDA as an umbrella term stems from a variety of disciplines and has developed to entail numerous different approaches (Tannen, Hamilton & Schiffrin, 2001). Wodak (2014) notes that "[w]hat unites all approaches is a shared interest in the semiotic dimensions of power, injustice, and political-economic, social, or cultural change in society" (p. 302).

'Discourse' is defined differently depending on the branch of scholars, this paper adopts the definition proposed by Machin & Mayr (2012) and Stibbe (2021). These scholars define 'discourse' as "language in real contexts of use" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 20), referring to "standardized ways that particular groups in society use language, images and other forms of representation" (Stibbe, 2021, p. 20). Discourse, Wodak (2014) points out, can be perceived as 'social practice', and as such it "is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned; it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people" (p. 303). Put differently, Machin and Mayr (2012) view both linguistic as well as visual communicative practices as shaping and being "shaped by society" (p. 10).

Two core notions for CDA are 'power' and 'ideology' (Wodak, 2014). While 'power' is concerned with relations of difference, characterized by domination or opposition between social actors (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), 'ideologies' are "representations of the world, they are worldviews, views on how socitey should be organized" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 220). While ideologies predominantly exist in people's minds, they can also be found to manifest in indicative texts of certain groups of society (Stibbe, 2021, p. 19). CDA, in other words, is concerned with exposing the ideological contentions of texts and the power relations constituted by them (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 5).

CDA is often confined to the analysis of linguistic features, however, multimodality is an essential aspect to a majority of discourses (cf. Machin & Mayr, 2012; Kress, 2011). As

advertising discourse makes use of many modes (including visual and auditory features), a multimodal approach to CDA was deemed most suitable for this paper. MCDA is rooted in Social Semiotic theory, thus it's concerned with questions of which semiotic modes are used in which contexts to what end (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 12). The terms 'multimodality' rejects the idea of linguistic elements' superiority over other semiotic modes (Kress, 2011, p. 46).

This research project also draws from the fields of environmental discourses, and ecolinguistics more specifically. In their seminal book, *Greenspeak*, Harré, Bockmeier and Mühlhäusler (1999) argue that environmental studies must take a "linguistic turn" (p. 1) by paying attention to how language is used to frame environmental issues. Rejecting a restricted view of language, they propose to view language as a culturally embedded form of communication (Harré et al., 1999). Language and ecology are interrelated, as "the world is influenced by our thoughts, concepts, ideas, ideologies and world views" (Stibbe, 2021, p. 2), which in turn are all defined by language.

Ecolinguistics is one emerging field of language and communication studies concerned with the relation between language and the (natural) environment (cf. Stibbe, 2021). Stibbe (2021), proposes the study of what they call 'stories we live by', which are "stories in minds of multiple individuals across a culture" (Stibbe, 2021, p. 6), to debunk the wider discourses shaping society. By stating that "[g]rowing inequality, climate change, biodiversity loss, the pandemic, alienation from nature and loss of community are bringing into question the fundamental stories that industrial societies are based on" (p. 3), Stibbe (2021) highlights the urgency of studying discursive practices influencing the relationship between humans and their environment. In relation to advertising discourse, where my focus lies, Stibbe (2021) notes how it can "encourage us to desire unnecessary and environmentally damaging products" (p. 1), pinpointing the importance of studying such texts.

While the literature on environmental discourses is broad (Mühlhäusler & Peace, 2006) and our society is shaped by countless 'stories we live by' (Stibbe, 2021), this research project draws from the theoretical frameworks introduced above as it explores the discourses framing 'green' garments to better our understanding of these communicative practices of fashion brands and ultimately the 'stories we live by' that are shaped by them.

Focussing on greenwashing in the context of environmental and advertising discourse, Budinsky and Bryant (2013) challenge the wide-spread positive perception of green advertising. They argue that instead of encouraging positive change these discursive practices "are deflecting our attention away from this need [for environmentalism and concrete action] and replacing it with the apparently easy solution of green consumerism" (Budinsky & Bryant,

2013, p. 208). Based on their argument, green advertising can be found to promote neoliberal ideologies in a capitalist system rather than helping the environment (Budinsky & Bryant, 2013). This point becomes relevant for the discussion of my findings, as the brands can be found to appeal to the individual consumer, communicating an idea of individual choice that obscures the "collective action needed to bring about meaningful social/environmental change" (Budinsky & Bryant, 2013, p. 208).

Another important concept concerned with individual consumer's influences are so-called "footprint ideologies" (Huber, 2019). Rooted in the theory of footprint analysis, emerging 'footprint ideologies' communicate an idea of "diffused consumer power" (Huber, 2019, pt. 1). According to Huber (2019) 'footprint ideologies' communicate a misleading idea about the impact of individual consumers, suggesting that consumers have the power over the environmental consequences of the products and services they consume. This, however, only reflects a partial truth of the complex mechanisms behind capitalist production and consumption patterns, deflecting responsibility from bigger corporations, onto less powerful consumers (Huber, 2019).

Navigating consumerism and sustainability discursively seem to be a common challenge, as there seem to be paradoxical contentions between the two ideas (e.g., Cooper, Green, Burningham, Evans & Jackson, 2012; Haudenschild, 2021). This observation is exemplified by Cooper et al.'s (2012) study of an online forum. They find that the contributors of the forum rely on a rich field of different topics, including (class) identity, politics, and technological innovations to handle the 'paradox of sustainable consumption' discursively (Cooper et al., 2012, p. 115). Their analysis brings forward the complexity of the discourse in question and how people rely on different arguments to justify consumerism. In their master thesis about the rhetorics of Zero-Waste, Haudenschild (2021) identifies a similar rhetorical theme in their data.[8] Due to the re-occurring discussions about the conflictuous relationship between sustainability and consumerism in literature, attention was paid to these aspects during the analysis.

Before turning to more detailed analytical considerations that will be discussed in the 'Analytical Toolkit' section, I wish to draw attention to advertising discourse more specifically. Advertisements have long been dismissed by discourse analysts due to their deliberate fabrication (Freitas, 2011). Nevertheless, Freitas (2011) argues, advertising discourse

[8] The theme "paradox of sustainable consumption" (Haudenschild, 2021) exemplifies how different actors rely on persuasive communication to promote zero-waste products that focus on lifestlyes of simplicity, their attractive attributes and the conscious-soothing qualities (p. 38).

represents an intriguing site for discourse analysis because of its omnipresent role in society and its ambivalent forms of communication. Often, to grasp the meaning of an ad, both visual and linguistic modes must be considered, paying attention to the "whole picture" (Freitas, 2011, p. 432). Cameron and Panovic (2014) emphasize that "[t]he goal of advertising, and more generally of consumer capitalism, is not only to sell products but also to create consumers" (p. 73), highlighting the importance of this discourse type. While advertising practices are frequently criticised for corrupting society, Frith (1997) notes that as a society "embedded in a culture of consumption" (p. 1), they must be studied carefully.

Deconstructing ads, hence, going beyond their "surface or sales message" (Firth, 1997, p. 2) requires the employment of multidisciplinary tools. Ads not only inform about a specific product or service, but also make use of cultural meaning, as the "products we consume express who we are, they are cultural signifiers" (Firth, 1997, p. 3). In other words, therefore, ads are an important way of promoting possible versions of the self, formed through consumption, baring cultural significance (cf. Firth, 1997). Cameron and Panovic' (2014) support this notion by stating that:

> In affluent societies, people do not buy only the things they really need, but also use consumption as a form of self-expression: while they do make choices partly on the basis of price and quality, they also consider what a product or brand communicates – what kind of self it expresses. (p. 73)

This ties in with the idea of identity formation discussed above, which can be achieved through the consumption of goods, or even fashion more specifically. Advertising texts appeal to these possible versions of self and therefore deserve critical attention (cf. Cameron & Panovic, 2014).

The function of ads is to "presen[t] a product or brand in a positive way" (Cameron & Panovic, 2014, p. 73), Firth (1997) defines three types of meanings that must be studied to adequately deconstruct ads: (1) the surface meaning, (2) the advertiser's intended meaning, and (3) the cultural and ideological meaning (p. 5). The three meanings align with the three step-model chosen for the analysis of this research project (cf. section 3.3). Firth's (1997) theoretical and analytical considerations served as an important basis when analysing the fashion brands' websites. While the first two meanings were addressed throughout the analysis, the third, ideological one, was the focus of the discussion section.

As established in the previous sections, advertising practices are vital for the promotion of green products and services (Nyilasy et al., 2014). Furthermore, ads can be seen as a germane

site for discourse analysis (Freitas, 2011), also playing a key role in promoting destructive environmental behaviour by encouraging consumerism (Stibbe, 2021). Put together, these observations serve as an important rationale for this project's field of interest, being concerned not only with the ways in which green garments are framed but also the ideologies brands promote, ultimately shaping our (western) societies.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This 'Research Design' section gives insight to the methodology adopted for this research project. The choice of the four sites (H&M, Zara, Reformation and Pact) is explained first. This subsection is followed by a description of the data generation process. Finally, the analytical tools used to study the data are outlined.

3.1 *Choice of Sites*

The aim of this research project was to compare the discursive strategies used to promote 'green' products by both fast and slow fashion brands to enhance our understanding advertising discourse in this context. To allow an in-depth analysis within a reasonable scope, this research project focuses on two fast fashion brands and two slow fashion brands.

Due to the large number of clothing brands, and the lack of a consistent and universal ranking, the choice of sites proved somewhat challenging. To narrow down the selection numerous websites were visited, providing lists or rankings of fast and slow/sustainable fashion brands. After a thorough search, re-occurring names were selected for further study. Table 10 included in appendix displays some of the visited websites and the brand names which influenced the choice of sites.

Derived from Table 10, two fast fashion brands selected as sites of interest are the Swedish retailer H&M and the Spanish brand Zara. Both are also mentioned and studied closely numerous times across the literature on the topic (e.g., Blesserholt, 2021; Ehrsam, 2016; Neumann et al., 2020; Hall, 2018). Furthermore, they are ranked as the top two brands in the industry by FAST RETAILING ("Industry Ranking", n.d.). Notably, these brands are characterized as both unsustainable and sustainable by different sources. While some argue that fast fashion and sustainability are incompatible (see theoretical framework section), the sustainability efforts of these brands have been substantial in recent times (e.g., Neumann et al., 2020; Blesserholt, 2021). Therefore, while forming part of an industry characterized as unsustainable (Joy et al., 2012), both Zara and H&M have launched sustainable clothing lines

(*Join Life* and *Conscious Choice* respectively) alongside conventionally produced garments (Neumann et al., 2020). This makes them particularly intriguing sites for this analysis.

Slow fashion brands are often smaller retailers, less interested in mass-production and more focused on local and sustainable practices (Hall, 2018). While the choice of the fast fashion sites was quite straight forward, the choice of slow fashion brands was more challenging, as they are diverse in how they incorporate sustainable practices. Derived from Table 10 (see appendix), I chose to study the two US-based sustainable brands Reformation and Pact, which were included in most of the lists and rankings that were considered. Table 1 provides a short overview and portrait of the four fashion brands, including a brief outline of their commitments to sustainability. Table 1 should also highlight why these four brands are interesting sites for this project.

Table 1: Overview of sites and their commitment to sustainability

Site	**H&M**
About	The H&M Group is a Swedish fast fashion design company founded in 1947 (H&M Group, 2021). Today they are represented in 57 online markets and count a total of over four thousand stores in 77 markets across the world (H&M Group, 2022a). According to WWF Switzerland, H&M introduces up to 16 new collections each year (Loetscher et al., 2017, p. 16).
Sustainability	H&M launched their code of conduct in 1997, benchmarking their ambitions to implement more sustainable practices (H&M Group, 2022b). Since then, they have started numerous initiatives to enhance their company's sustainability (for example the *Conscious Choice* clothing line or the garments collecting campaign launched in 2013) (Blesserholt, 2021). H&M is committed to reduce their CO_2 emissions 56% by 2030 and become net zero by 2040 (H&M Group, 2022c). Although they are ranked as 'ambitious' by the WWF report concerning their environmental sustainability, there is still room for improvement (Loetscher et al., 2017). Moreover, several greenwashing 'sins' can be identified in H&M's sustainability reports (Blesserholt, 2021). While H&M is certainly striving to make the fast fashion industry more sustainable, the company can still be seen as maintaining a leading role in a predominantly unsustainable fast fashion industry (Joy et al., 2012).
Site	**Zara**
About	Zara is the leading fashion company of Inditex, one of the largest distribution groups in the world ("Company", n.d.). Zara was founded in 1975 in A Coruña, Spain ("History", n.d.). Today Zara counts more than three thousand stores, their leading market is Spain with over five hundred stores ("Profile Zara", n.d.). WWF Switzerland has found that Zara introduces up to 24 collections annually (Loetscher et al., 2017, p. 16).

Sustainability	Zara, as part of Inditex, has introduced the *Join Life* label to mark their products meeting certain sustainability standards ("Inditex Memoria Anual 2017", n.d.). To be labelled as *Join Life* the garment needs to comply with at least one of three requirements focusing on different sustainability areas (water, fiber or environment); the goal is to produce at least 50% of products following *Join Life* standards by 2022 ("Inditex Memoria Anual 2017", n.d.). While Zara postulates their commitment towards more sustainable practices, they too, can be considered a key player in the global fast fashion industry (Joy et al., 2012).
Site	**Reformation**
About	Reformation defines their mission as bringing "sustainable fashion to everyone" ("Oh hi, we're Reformation", n.d.). The company was founded in 2009 in Los Angeles, US ("Ref Timeline & History: How We Got Started", n.d.). Until today Reformation has opened 31 stores, mainly located within the US ("Our Stores | Reformation," n.d.).
Sustainability	Sustainability is a core value for Reformation, as they implement sustainable practices more holistically, focussing on four key areas of concern: people, product, planet and progress ("Commitments & Certifications," n.d.). Their production has been 100% climate neutral since 2015, currently they are in the process of getting this achievement certified by the NGO 'Climate Neutral' ("Commitments & Certifications," n.d.).
Site	**Pact**
About	Pact was founded in 2011 and has the ambition to be "Earth's favorite" fashion brand ("PACT", 2021). According to the company's official website (wearpact.com) Pact currently has two open stores, one in New York and one in San Francisco.
Sustainability	For this brand too, sustainability is an essential concern. Pact garments are (often but not exclusively) certified by Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), carbon emissions along the supply chain are offset by partnering with SimpliZero, and products are produced in Fair Trade certified factories ("Pact | Sustainability, Certified," n.d.).

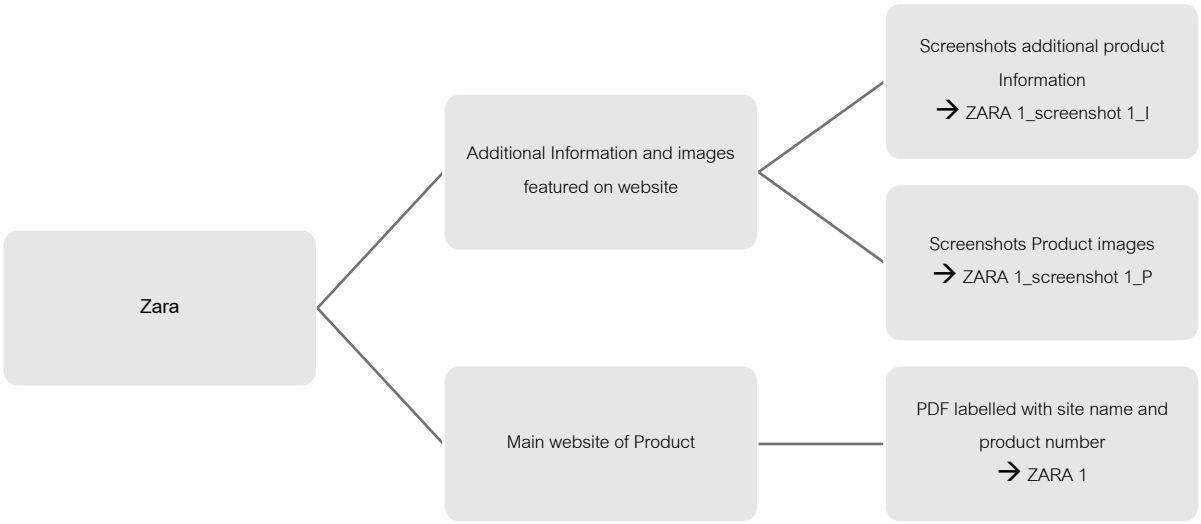
3.2 *Data Generation*

Concerning the collection of data for discourse analysis, Stibbe (2021) brings forward the need to include a sample of relevant texts which can be considered prototypical for a "certain group in society" (p. 30). In the context of this project this meant that the sample should contain advertisement material of each of the four sites. Because advertising methods are diverse, 10 product advertisements were chosen from each of the sites' official website to keep the sample graspable. Websites were considered suitable data sources, as they are used as advertising

material in the study of Parguel et al. (2015), introduced above.[9] The English versions of the websites were accessed to maintain uniformity and avoid bias through translation.

For the two fast fashion sites, H&M and Zara, only products labelled as belonging to their sustainable collections (*Conscious Choice* and *Join Life*) were considered, because these products are defined as objects of interest for this study. The products would belong to the brand's newest collection, filters were used to limit the search to these products. To minimize bias, the first ten products were chosen for analysis on each of the four websites.[10] In the case of Pact, an exception was made, as their new collection only featured three different garments. Where multiple colour versions of one same product were listed, the next product was selected.

The web pages were downloaded as PDF files and screenshots for the analysis. Each product generated one main PDF of the website and several screenshots displaying the additional imagery and/or information provided of the selected product. In total the corpus of collected data consists of 10 PDFs per site with up to an additional 11 screenshots taken from the respective websites. The data was labelled according to the conventions exemplified in Figure 2.[11] Due to the open access to the texts and the nature of this research paper no ethical concerns arose regarding the unaltered use of this data.



[9] It is important to note that the intention was to focus on the linguistic and visual modes in still texts, which are both present on all web pages. An additional detailed video analysis, including motion and auditory aspects would have surpassed the scope of this research project. In the case of the Zara data, the website featured short videos about sustainability practices concerning their *Join life* garments. These will be considered, although the focus lies on still texts.

[10] Tables 11, 12, 13 and 14 in the appendix feature all data sources containing the downloaded PDFs (screenshots are not included; whenever screenshots are used for the analysis, it is indicated to which main source it belongs to).

[11] The data will be referenced according to these conventions in the text, the sources can be found in the appendix as noted above. The short URL of the respective websites will be included in the figures' captions.

Figure 2: Labelling convention of data exemplified with the second site, Zara

During the process of choosing the sites and collecting the data, the websites were studied in-depth, paying special attention to their commitments to sustainability and their green clothing lines. In addition to this process to get familiarized with the sites, linked websites of NGOs and certifying organizations were visited as well, in order to obtain a broader understanding of each brand's commitment to sustainable practices and their communication about their objectives.

3.3 *Analytical Tools*

While the section about (M)CDA in the theoretical focus of this paper has elaborated on the wider theory behind the chosen methodology, this subsection should shed light on the more detailed aspects of how the data was analysed, building upon the considerations articulated in previous sections.

The concept of 'recontextualization' (cf. van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999) of social practice is essential to CDA, as Mayr (2016) explains, "recontextualisation means the transformation of social practices into *discourses* about social practices. And it is in this relocation of discourses that ideology operates" (emphasis in the original, p. 267). It is through recontextualization that certain aspects can be added, excluded, or altered in a text, creating space for ideologies and values to manifest (Mayr, 2016). Based on van Leeuwen & Wodak's (1999) work, Machin (2013) and Mayr (2016) highlight four processes of key interest: substitution, addition, evaluation, and deletion. *Substitution* refers to the abstraction or addition of detail; *addition* occurs when certain elements are added strategically; *evaluation* is a central aspect of recontextualization as participants or elements "are represented according to the goals, values and priorities of the presenters" (Mayr, p. 268); lastly paying attention to *deletion* means to study which elements/aspects are not included in the representation of social practice (Machin, 2013, pp. 352-353; Mayr, 2016, pp. 267-268). Careful attention was paid to these processes during the analysis.

Mapes (2018, p. 271, derived from Thurlow & Aiello, 2007) proposes a three-step model for doing a CDA: first, one should start a descriptive analysis of the sample, after a thorough reading, marking re-occurring patterns in the data; this step is followed by an interpretative and finally critical analysis of the identified discursive themes. Stibbe (2021), describing a similar approach, proposes to start with a thorough linguistic analysis that should reveal discursive patterns in the texts (p. 30). Hereby attention can be paid to the following aspects of a text (amongst others): vocabulary, relationships between words, grammar, assumptions/presuppositions articulated in the text, how events/participants are represented,

figures of speech, etc. (Stibbe, 2021, p. 30). As for multimodal data Stibbe (2021, based on Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) mentions these features of interest: vectors, shot size, perspective, camera angle, gaze, and photorealism (p. 31). Only after the initial detailed analysis of linguistic and visual features should the researcher(s) move on to the next stage, which is concerned with the exposure of covert ideologies that are communicated through them (Stibbe, 2021, p. 31). When adopting an ecolinguistic framework, the last step of analysis should consist of comparing the identified 'stories we live by' with the ecosophy framing the project (Stibbe, 2021, p. 31).[12]

While Stibbe (2021) and Mapes (2018) outline the general foci of the different stages of MCDA, Machin and Mayr's (2012) book *Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction* provided the necessary tools needed to analyse the collected texts. Based on their work, I paid attention to the different areas of the linguistic and visual representations in my data.

The linguistic analysis focused on lexical choices, word connotations, cases of overlexicalization, suppression and lexical absence, and structural opposition (when something is described/represented in implicit or explicit opposition of something else) (Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp. 32-47). When analysing the visual semiotic choices, I studied the iconography, i.e., what is denoted and connoted by the image (drawing from the semiotic theorist Barthes, e.g., 1977), attributes, setting, and salience of the visual compositions (Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp. 49-56). More specifically, when analysing represented participants, their gaze, poses, and camera angle were considered. *Gaze*, Machin and Mayr (2012, drawing on Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996) point out, is of particular interest as it determines whether an image is one of 'demand' or 'offer', characterizing the interaction between image and viewer differently (pp. 70-73).[13] *Camera angle* and *frame size* can be understood as communicating different kinds of power relations and social closeness/distance between viewer and participants (Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp. 96-99).[14]

The first stage of analysis was carried out taking systematic notes on excel, using a split screen between the data in question and an excel sheet providing an overview of the aspects I

[12] The term "Ecosophy", in short, refers to the ecological philosophy of the analyst which reflects their core values in relation to humans and the environment (Stibbe, 2021, pp. 11-14). An ecolinguistic analysis is rooted in the analyst's own ecosophy (Stibbe, 2021).

[13] According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), 'demand' images ask the viewer to interact with the image building an "imaginary relation" (p. 118). 'Offer' images on the other hand address the viewer indirectly as the "viewer's role is that of an invisible onlooker" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 119).

[14] Like the difference of social interaction obtained through 'demand' or 'offer' images, frame size and camera angle also signal "different relations between represented participants and viewers" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 124).

wished to analyse. This technique was employed to minimize bias. During this stage, striking and re-occurring features were marked (cf. Mapes, 2018). After the conclusion of this process the data was then tentatively interpreted. The results of the first two stages are described in the analysis section below. The final stage, the critical analysis, linking the findings to wider ideologies and possible greenwashing agendas, is elaborated on in the subsequent discussion section.

4 ANALYSIS

This section is structured as follows. After articulating some general observations, an analysis of each site's most striking features is given. While the focus lies on the individual site, comparisons are introduced gradually. The goal of this section is to provide the reader with a broad overview of the websites' layout and to give a detailed analysis of communicative practices employed by the brands to frame their green garments. Together with a descriptive approach, some tentative interpretations will be rendered.

Before turning to the sites individually, there are a few general similarities in the composition of the garments' web pages which are worth pointing out. The following list displays characteristics which all four websites contain in some way:

- Visual material of the garment in question, including at least one image of the garment being worn by a model
- A written description of the garment
- Additional information about the garment (size and fit, materials, care instructions, information concerning the garment's composition and sustainability aspects)
- A section promoting other garments of the same brand, labelled "Style with"/"Others also bought" (H&M), "You may also like" (Zara), "You might like" (Reformation), and "You may also like" (Pact) (cf. Tables 11, 12, 13 and 14)

Interestingly, while all four sites include these aspects, their content and how they are displayed can vary strongly, which will become more evident throughout the analysis. Focussing on similarities, it can be pointed out that in visual terms, all four websites employ a type of white or light grey/beige as background colour, using a black or dark grey font. At the same time, most of the visual material of the garments is also displayed against a white or a very light grey background. Thus, while each website has a brand-specific layout (e.g., font, logo, links), the

websites do not differ significantly at first sight. In each case, models are shown wearing the garments, but there are differences in the number of images that include models.

4.1 *H&M*

In general terms, H&M's web pages of their *Conscious choice* garments contain very little information. The garment's web page only provides the reader/viewer with a basic set of information: the garment's name, a concise description of the product, its fit, material composition, additional material information and its article number (e.g., Figure 3).[15] [16]

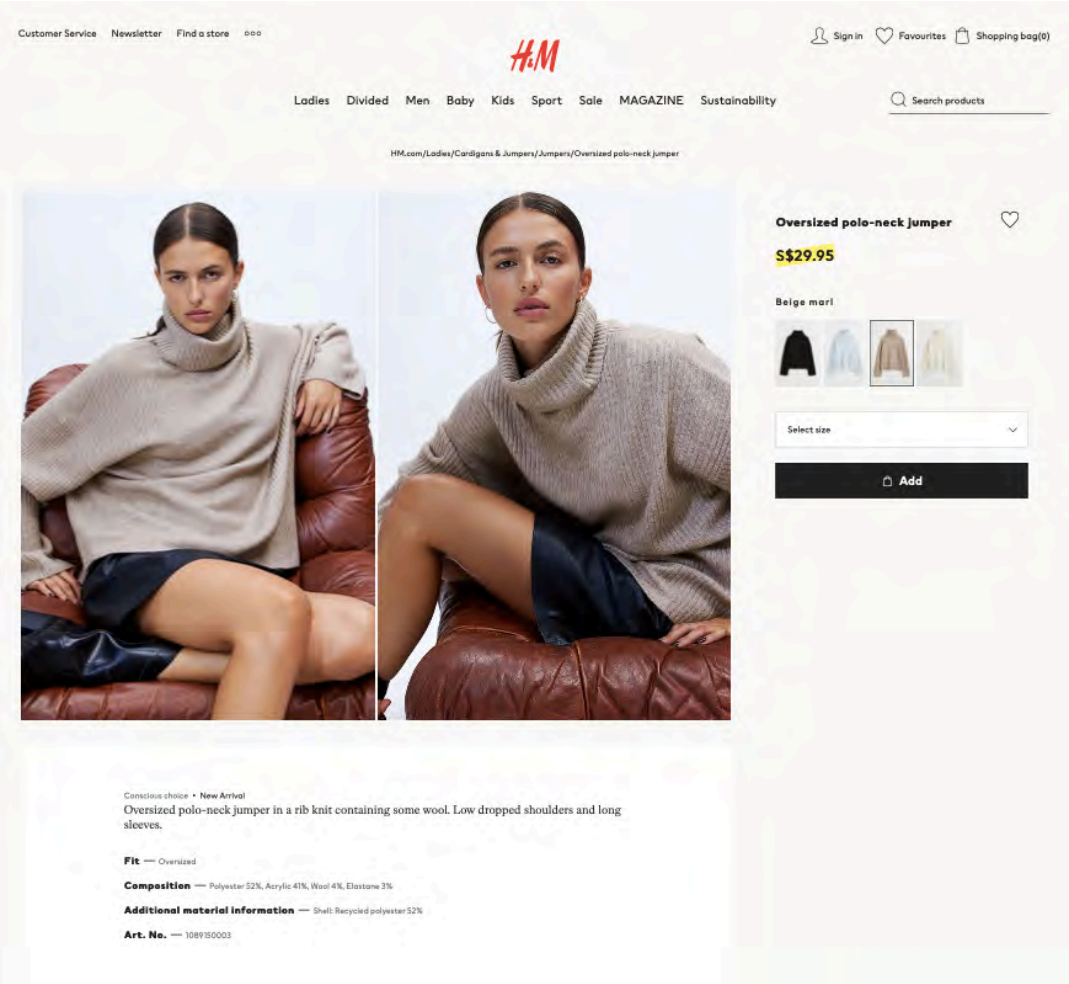


Figure 3: Web page extract of H&M 1 (www2.hm.com)

[15] It must be noted that after the analysis' conclusion the German version of H&M's website was visited, where indeed further information was given concerning the origin of the products. However, due to the advanced stage of analysis this could not be taken further into account. The original website of the materials was revisited later to make sure that no further information had been added in the meantime. The analysis and claims made throughout the discussion thus only concern the collected data and generalizations should be considered with due care.

[16] The terms "reader", "viewer", "reader/viewer" and "potential customer" are used interchangeably to reference the websites' visitors.

The window providing more details about the garment in question can be found at the bottom half of the web page, making it a not-so salient feature in its entire composition. The additional information provided by H&M is exemplified in Figure 4. Notably, the information marking the garment as a *Conscious choice* product is included but not particularly foregrounded in the page's composition (cf. Figure 3).

The qualities making the jumper displayed in Figure 3 a sustainable product (in that case it's the use of recycled polyester) are mentioned under the section of "Additional material information". When accessing the detailed information about the product, *Conscious choice* is only included as a "Nice to know" quality without any further elaboration on the matter (Figure 4). Thus, framed in a similarly casual manner. Furthermore, while the reader/viewer is told that 52% of the polyester used for the garment is of recycled origin, H&M does not give any more description of what the process of recycling could entail, how or where the raw material was gained, or how it was processed. In other words, the claim is made in a simplified manner, resulting in the suppression of detail and obscuring of processes involved. This aligns with the idea of 'erasure' (Gal & Irvine, 2019), which will be discussed in the fifth section of this paper.

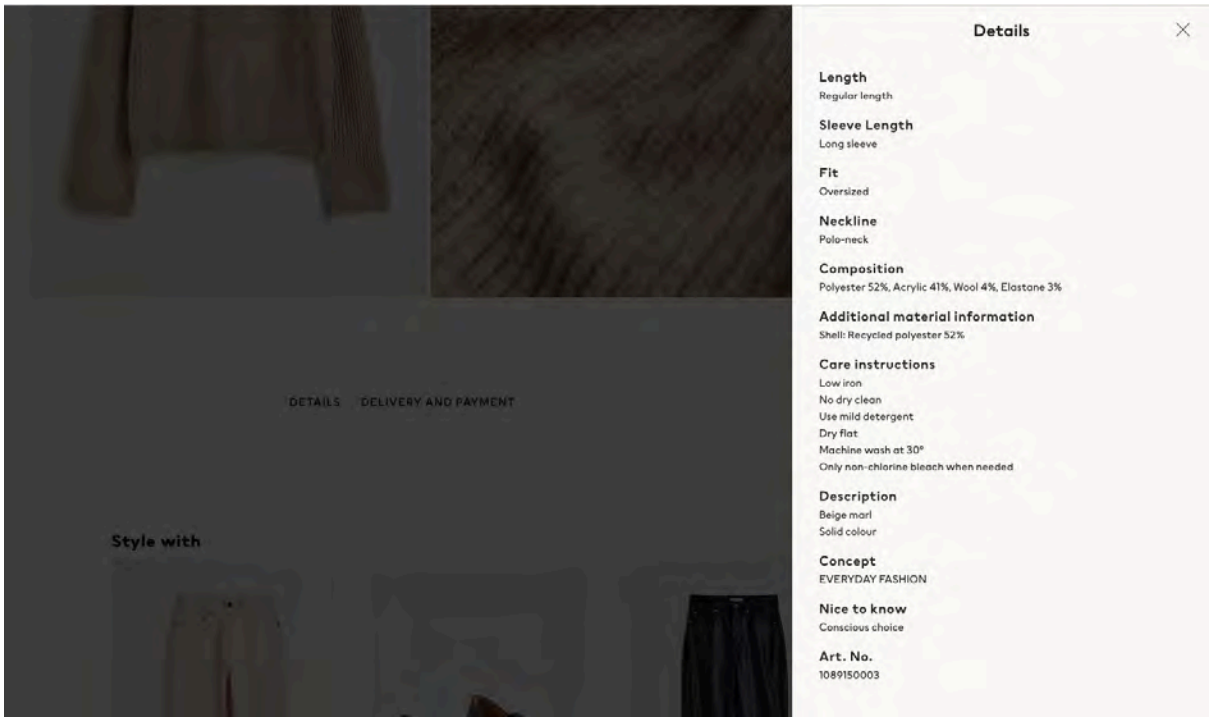


Figure 4: "Details" (Screenshot from H&M 1; www2.hm.com)

All in all, the information about the garments can be aligned with the greenwashing Sin of Vagueness (cf. TerraChoice, 2007), as H&M does not elaborate on any of its claims on the garment's web page. This argument can be backed by Blesserholt's (2021) results, according

to which H&M can be found to commit the Sin of Vagueness as well (p. 50). In addition, Blesserholt (2021) also finds H&M committing the Sin of Hidden Trade-Off, the Sin of No Proof, and the sixth Sin of Lesser of Two Evils (pp. 50-51). As the discussion will show, similar patterns can also be found in my data.

In terms of visual framing, H&M displays a lot of 'demand' images, which can be understood as addressing the viewer directly (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Most of the models are shown with a facial expression that can be interpreted as 'serious' (e.g., Figure 3). In terms of camera angle, the dominant angle used positions the model above the viewer. Besides a leather chair very few other objects are used in the visual compositions. All these compositional choices can be understood as shaping the relation between the brand and its consumers. This relation seems to be shaped discursively by the brand exercising power over the consumers, which will be elaborated on in the discussion section.

H&M strongly emphasizes material and technical characteristics of their garments, in both visual and linguistic terms. While the material characteristics refer to the fabric's composition and design, technical characteristics refer to the external qualities of a garment, hence, size, fit, or design (amongst other). Visually, the materiality of the fabrics is emphasized insofar that H&M includes a high-resolution close-up shot of every garment's fabric (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Examples of visual emphasis on the garment's material composition (Screenshots from left to right: H&M 9, H&M 3, H&M 1 and H&M 2; www2.hm.com)

Focussing on linguistic aspects, Table 2 provides examples of H&M's garment descriptions. Material qualities are emphasized by repeatedly mentioning "wool" and "ribbings" (Table 2).

A focus on the technical characteristics of the garments is a re-occurring theme across the H&M data, also reflected in the examples included in Table 2.

Table 2: H&M garment description foregrounding technical and material characteristics (www2.hm.com)

Data source	Extract
H&M 2	Jumper in a soft knit containing some wool with a ribbed polo neck. Relaxed fit with dropped shoulders, long sleeves, and ribbing at the cuffs and hem.
H&M 3	Oversized jumper in a knit containing some wool with a ribbed turtle neck, dropped shoulders, long sleeves and straight hem. Ribbing at the cuffs and hem.
H&M 5	Short jumper in a cable knit containing some wool. Relaxed fit with a rib-trimmed polo neck and long raglan sleeves. Ribbing at the cuffs and hem.
H&M 9	Shirt in a crinkled chiffon weave with a collar and buttons down the front. Relaxed fit with dropped shoulders, long sleeves with buttoned cuffs and a rounded hem. Slightly longer at the back.

As noted at the beginning of this section, sustainability aspects of H&M's *Conscious choice* garments are framed in a casual manner and not emphasized in the composition of the web page. However, below the promotional sections "Style with" and "Others also bought", H&M includes an informative section about the brand's general sustainability endeavours (Figure 6). This is interesting, as this information, although included at the bottom half of the page, characterizes the brand more than just the individual product as sustainable. This can be understood as greening H&M's entire corporate image, rather than merely their *Conscious choice* products. As will become evident in the next site's descriptive analysis, Zara's approach is very different in this regard.

H&M provides a section concerning the brand's sustainability at the top *and* bottom of their website (see Figures 3 and 6). This convention can be found on all of H&M's web pages advertising its products, regardless of the line they belong to. It is also striking how H&M includes information about their achievements as well as future goals when it comes to sustainability (Figure 6). By doing so, concrete action and future ambitions are framed alongside. Arguably, this results in H&M communicating a stronger sense of sustainable awareness than the brand could achieve by just stating present endeavours.

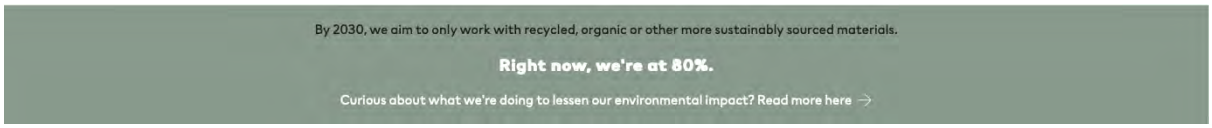


Figure 6: H&M commitment to sustainability (Screenshot from H&M 1; www2.hm.com)

As noted, H&M promotes other products on the bottom half of the garment's web page. The first section is labelled "Style with", which uses an imperative verb form. Imperative verb forms can be used to express authority (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 47), which, in this context

can be understood as an exercise of power by the brand over the consumer. Of the four products displayed only one garment is labelled as *Conscious choice* in the case of H&M 1. Hence, H&M also promotes its non-sustainably produced products on the same web page as the *Conscious choice* garment in question. Under the second section "Others also bought" the identical jumper is displayed in three different colours, basically, the same product is promoted several times with only minor inherent differences. Additionally, only one other jumper is included, but all four are *Conscious choice* products (cf. H&M 1). Noteworthily, by introducing the "Style with" section first, it is given a more salient position on the web page. By doing so, H&M foregrounds the promotion of non-sustainably made garments.

In summary, H&M does not give much insight about the sustainable qualities of the *Conscious choice* garments, relying on vague language and little information in general. Arguably, concepts such as "recycling" might suffice to give the potential customer an idea of the sustainability impact of the garment. However, compared to the information provided on the other brands' websites, H&M's informative practices are a lot less transparent and tangible. Moreover, processes and social actors along H&M's supply chain remain completely obscured. This theme will be discussed more in-depth in the fifth section of this paper. While sustainability is framed as a central concern to the entire brand, not only its *Conscious choice* products, material and technical characteristics of garments are strongly emphasized. It is also worth noting that the innovations mentioned by H&M are limited to product and process innovation, not extending to business model innovation (cf. Loetscher et al., 2017).

4.2 *Zara*

Compared to H&M, Zara presents the reader/viewer with significantly more information about the sustainable qualities of their *Join Life* garments, in terms of both quantity and detail. While H&M mentions the line's label up to three times on a garment's web pages, Zara includes the label's name up to nine times on a single garment's web page. This re-occurring mention of the label's name can be aligned with the concept of 'overlexicalization', which creates a sense of "over-persuasion" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 37).

The web page is kept concise in its composition, with different sections allowing the reader/viewer to scroll through, displaying further visual or informative material about the garment, or *Join Life* in general. Notably, while H&M includes numerous shots of the garment being worn by models, in Zara's case only the first image does this. Predominantly in all the other visual material of the garment, it is shown not being worn. The imagery and visual materials are centralized in the composition of the web page, as can be observed in Figure 7.

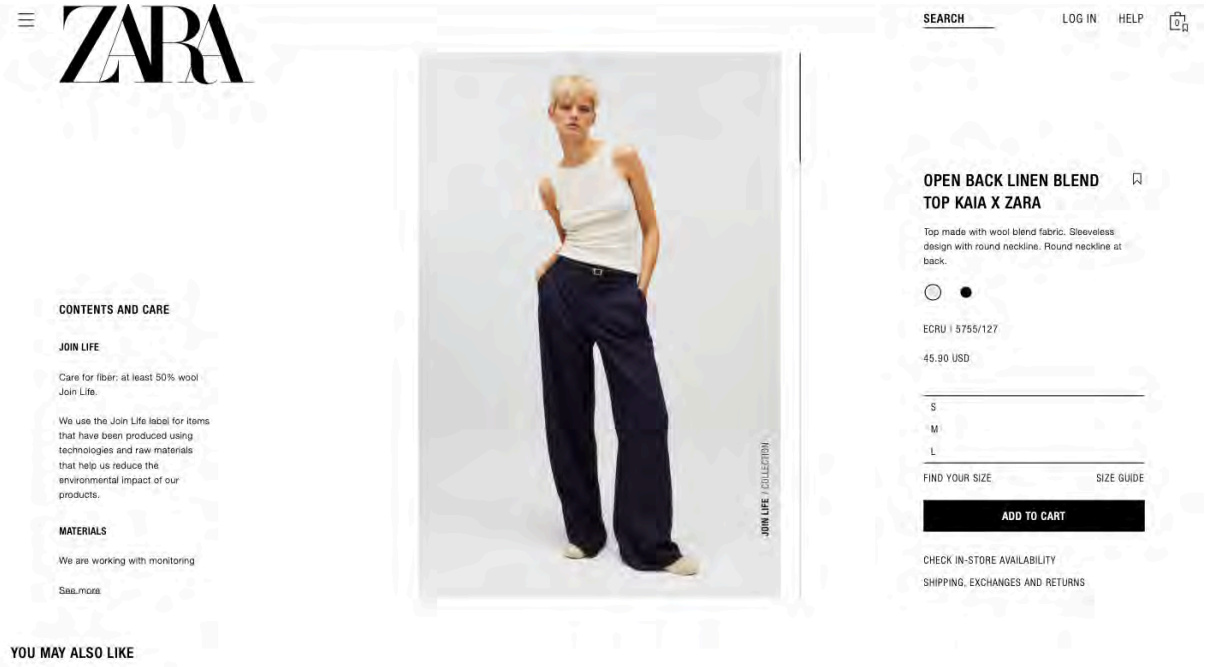


Figure 7: Web page extract of ZARA 1 (www.zara.com)

Zara describes their garments similarly to H&M, as technical and material characteristics are often emphasized. Table 3 includes four exemplary garment descriptions. Compared to H&M it can be noted how Zara's descriptions are shorter in terms of word count, predominantly highlighting technical characteristics, such as design and the material of buttons or the fabric's composition (Table 3).

Table 3: Zara garment description foregrounding technical and material characteristics (www.zara.com)

Data source	Extract
ZARA 2	Mid rise five pocket jeans. Washed effect. Front zip and metal button closure.
ZARA 4	High-waisted pants. Side pockets and back welt pockets. Front zip, metal hook, and inside button closure.
ZARA 7	Short sweatshirt with round neck, long balloon sleeves, and cuffs. Elastic rib trim.
ZARA 8	Mid rise five pocket jeans in waxed effect fabric. Front zip and metal button closure.

Focussing on the visual components, seven out of ten images (displaying models) are found to be 'demand' images. The preferred camera angle positions the model above the reader/viewer. With only two closer shots marking the exception, the models are shown from a certain distance, which can be labelled as medium long shots (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 124). The imagery of the garments shows closer shots. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) point out, frame size similar to 'demand' and 'offer' images can signal different social relations through compositional choices (p. 124). By using longer shots showing the models, Zara creates a certain social distance between viewer and model (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 124). The

closer shots of the garments on the other hand define a closer relation, centralizing the garment while distancing the model. Therefore, Zara asks the viewer to actively engage with the model by employing 'demand' images, while the relation is simultaneously characterized by social distance.

Interestingly, Zara includes an image of the garment's *Join Life* tag for each of the garments. Both sides of the tag are displayed in each case, an example is included in Figure 8. The tag is an interesting object for analysis, as its purpose on the website is questionable. While it can be imagined that it provides the potential buyer in the shop with additional information about the garment's sustainability impact, on the website the tag only repeats the information already rendered in the left column "Contents and Care" (e.g., Figure 7). Furthermore, the QR Code links to web pages which also disclose the same information already introduced on the garment's individual page. While I wish to return to the "Contents and Care" section shortly, the tag deserves some further attention.

The first visual representation of the tag, presumably the frontside, marks the garment as belonging to the *Join Life* collection. It explains which components or processes characterize the garment as *Join Life*. As shown in Figure 8, the most salient feature on the frontside of the tag is the bold label's name itself, below this, the information is rendered in smaller cap size. On the second tag, presumably the backside, Zara makes use of simple iconographic material, combining it with concise written explanations. Depending on the garment, sometimes the same icons are used. For example, all garments falling under the "Care for water" category display the water drop and the same sentence below it. Notably, Zara employs numerous nature-evoking icons on their tags (e.g., water drops, trees). As brought forward in the theoretical focus section above, nature-evoking elements can further support the greening of a product (cf. Parguel et al., 2015).

Both the iconographical elements and their written captions rely on vagueness. The icons are representing a very simplified version of the concept they signal, while the written text also lacks any detailed information. While some of the concepts are discussed in more detail under the "Contents and Care" section, others are not. This observation can be aligned with the idea of presupposition, where certain kinds of knowledge are presupposed (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 153). Taking the example of the cloud icon from Figure 8, which, derived from its caption, is meant to signal the reduction of emissions, is not discussed further at any point. Thus, the reader/viewer is left guessing which emissions are reduced, how this claim is realized, or which step in the supply chain it concerns. Through the sense of presupposition, however, this gap in knowledge remains obscured.

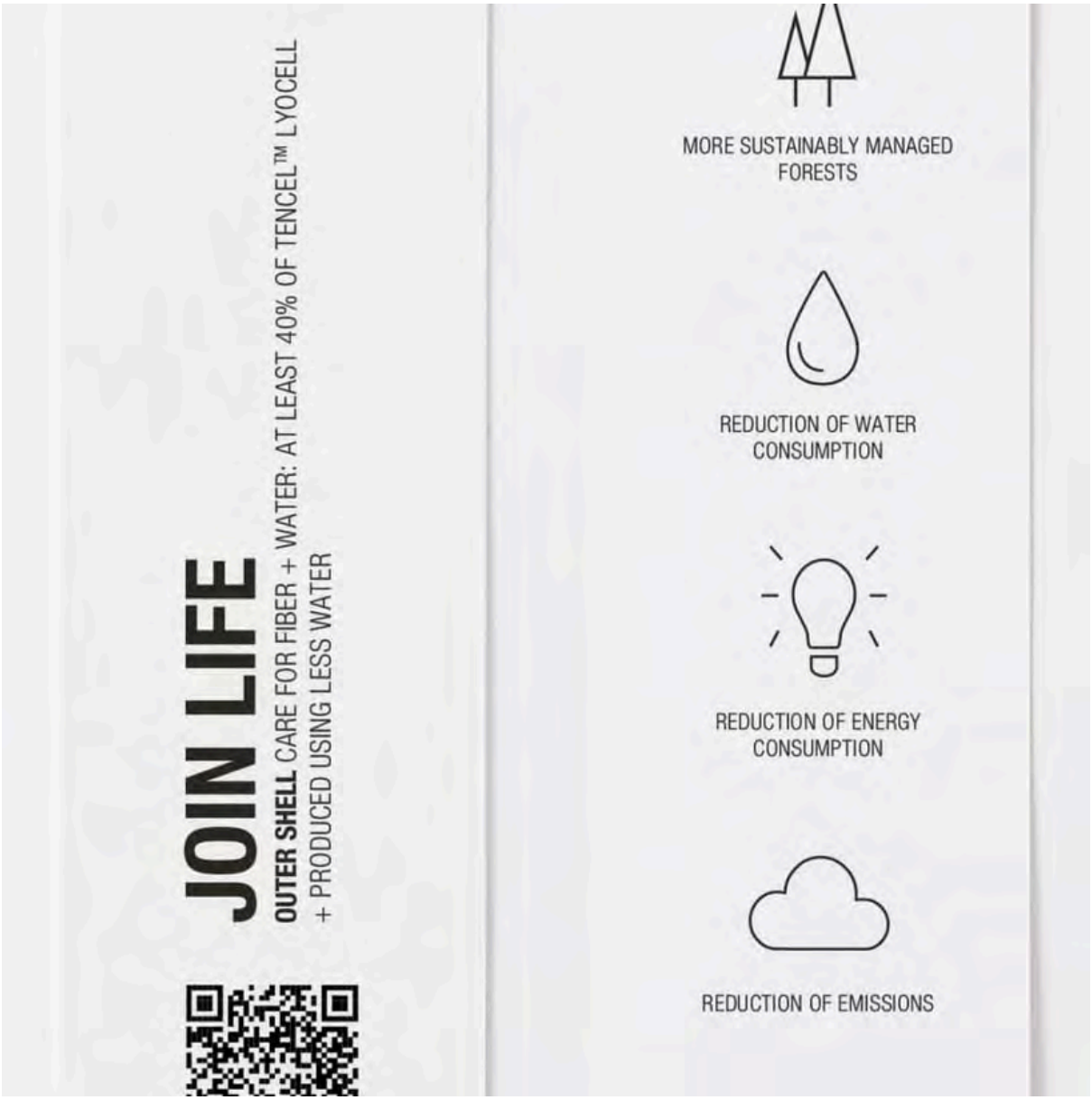


Figure 8: Join Life tag (Screenshot from ZARA 8; www.zara.com)

Another interesting aspect of the *Conscious choice* garments' web pages for this analysis is the "Contents and Care" section included on the left-hand side of the garments' imagery (see Figure 7 above). Below the title the reader learns which of the three areas of *Join Life* (care for fiber, care for water or care for the environment) the garment complies with and what this entails in general terms. Extract 1 displays the first part of the "Contents and Care" section of ZARA 1. Besides the specification of the *Join life* area in question (line 2, Extract 1) and the material composition (line 12, Extract 1), all ten garment's web pages display the identical information at the start of the section.

Extract 1: Extract from the "Contents and Care" section (from ZARA 1; www.zara.com)

JOIN LIFE
Care for fiber: at least 50% wool Join Life.

We use the Join Life label for items that have been produced using
Technologies and raw materials that help us reduce the environmental
impact of our products.

MATERIALS
We are working with monitoring programs to guarantee compliance with
the social, environmental, and health and safety standards of our garments.
To evaluate their compliance, we have developed an auditing program and
plans for continual improvement.

OUTER SHELL
60% wool · 40% nylon

There are several observations that can be made about this short extract, when paying attention to the linguistic choices. Here too, Zara works with vagueness. While a lot of information is rendered, very little of it is concrete. In terms of lexical choices, the statement of using "*At least* 50% Join Life wool" (emphasis mine, line 2, Extract 1), gives space to the reader/viewer's imagination, nowhere in the text does Zara specify if the minimal 50% are ever surpassed. Nevertheless, by pointing out that the garment could possibly consist of more *Join Life* wool, Zara communicates an idea of potential, resulting in another example of lexical vagueness. Other examples of vagueness found in the lexical choices are: "environmental impact" (lines 4-5, Extract 1) and "social, environmental, and health standards" (line 8, Extract 1). None of these claims is defined in a more tangible way. This can be linked to the idea of what Machin and Mayr (2012) call 'empty corporate business language', which "backgrounds actual concrete matters about facilities, staffing and treating" (p. 53). Furthermore, the verbs 'evaluating', 'developing', and 'improving' (lines 9-10, Extract 1) do not necessarily entail direct action. What exactly Zara does in these areas remains obscured.

It is also interesting how auditing and monitoring programs are mentioned numerous times. While indeed some third-party organizations are named individually, for example Global Recycled Standard in the case of recycled cotton (ZARA 2), Zara often abstains from specifying who the parties are (e.g., lines 9-10, Extract 1). This allows Zara to communicate a

sense of compliancy with (unspecified) standards that cannot be retraced in a comprehensible way from the text itself.

In addition to the information about the *Join Life* categories which the garment complies with, Zara introduces video material. In total the web pages selected for this analysis contain four types of videos, their length ranging from approximately 30-60 seconds each. Three videos fall under the "Care for fiber" category (recycled cotton, recycled polyester, and TENCEL™ Lyocell) and one video under the "Care for water" category. Although the videos contain different visual and auditory material, they are very similar in many ways. In terms of auditory features, industrial sounds are predominant, such as: the rumbling of machinery, material processing, sewing, water circulating. The sound and the visual components of the videos both strongly highlight the technology involved in these processes. Each video displays a compilation of different frames representing different phases (presumably) found along the garment's production chain (see Figure 9 for example screenshots). The processes are not shown in chronological order. The processes are strongly abstracted and simplified, presented in a very sterile and clean environment, which presumably does not reflect the reality of industrial production. In addition to the observations made up to this point, it can be noted how Zara's focus on industrial processes and the technological aspects of production, work together to obscure social actors involved along the supply chain.[17]

The videos are also an example of how Zara backgrounds social actors visually. Only one person is ever shown, while otherwise only hands are displayed (Figure 9). Aligned with the idea of the rhetorical trope of a synecdoche (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 172), the hands shown can be understood as signalling and standing in for the workforce involved along the supply chain. In a similar manner, social actors are never individualized or introduced in more detail in the written text. The only references made to social actors are strongly abstracted as found in Extract 1, mentioning "social, environmental, and health and safety standards" (lines 7-8). Here, social actors are only implicitly referred to, without being named or brought forward as individuals. Why this is an important observation and what ideological implications this has will be discussed further below.

Before turning to the analysis of the first slow fashion site, Reformation, there's one more linguistic pattern worth paying attention to. In their texts Zara make frequent use of personal pronouns. Personal pronouns can be used to align someone "alongside or against

[17] In Best's (2022) bachelor thesis a similar discursive pattern was identified, as in waste management processes, technological processes were foregrounded heavily, strategically obscuring social actors involved.

particular ideas" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 84). Examples of the use of personal pronouns can be found in Extract 1 and Table 4.

Figure 9: Video screenshots (ZARA 8; www.zara.com)

Zara frequently uses the personal pronouns "we" or "us", referring to the brand itself (see lines 3, 4, 7 and 9, Extract 1), but also introduces an inclusive "we" (including the reader/viewer) (Table 4). In addition to this, Zara also addresses the reader/viewer directly by using the personal pronoun "you". Interestingly, each time the readers/viewers are addressed they are given some kind of (environmental) responsibility. An example of this observation would be the third extract of Table 4. Here, the recycling of plastic bottles by consumers is identified as presenting the environmentally friendly resource. It also links individual recycling behaviour

with the production of their garments. This communicates the idea of handing over environmental responsibility the consumers rather than the brand.

Table 4: Personal pronouns in written text by Zara (emphasis mine; www.zara.com)

Data source	Extract
ZARA 1	Caring for **your** clothes is caring for the environment.
ZARA 2	To lengthen the life of **your** denim garments, always wash them inside out in low temperatures. This way **we** help preserve the colors and structure of the fabric and reduce energy consumption.
ZARA 4	Each time **you** place a plastic bottle into a recycling container, it is taken to a waste selection and classification plant.

As the analysis of Zara's data has shown, this fast fashion brand introduces its sustainable clothing line in a way which creates a sense of over-persuasion. This sense of over-persuasion is established by cases of overlexicalization, backed by the introduction of redundant information. While the web page certainly gives more insight into what the production of *Join life* garments entails, vagueness is a persistent theme across Zara's data. Not only in lexical terms, but also visually speaking, as production processes are strongly abstracted. Furthermore, the brand introduces environmentally connoted icons on their tags which presuppose contextual knowledge of the reader/viewer as they signal complex concepts without further elaboration (e.g., the reduction of emissions). Aligning with H&M, Zara also focusses its sustainability endeavours on product and process innovation (cf. Loetscher et al., 2017). Compared to H&M, however, Zara strongly foregrounds the *Join life* line, characterizing individual products rather than the brand as sustainable.

4.3 *Reformation*

In comparison to the fast fashion brands, Reformation frames its sustainability endeavour in more detail, considering the entire supply chain. Sustainability as a central theme can be observed across the websites' composition. For example, Figure 10 displays one of the brand's main aims, which is achieving climate positivity, which is introduced at the very top of the website itself. There is also a heading with the title "Sustainability", and in the bottom half of the web page a link with the title: "We're Climate Neutral certified – And committed to the planet" (e.g., REF 1) is presented. Thus, questions of sustainability characterize the entire layout. Regarding the garment's own sustainability impact, a window can be accessed providing the reader/viewer with further information. Here, Reformation pays attention to three key areas: carbon dioxide, water, and waste savings. In addition to that, the region or country

of origin of the garment is defined. The third informative section labelled as “Fabric & Care”, gives insight to the processes involved in gaining the sustainable materials used.

Comparing Reformation's layout to the two sites discussed above, it can be noted how “sustainability” is framed similarly to H&M’s website design (cf. Figure 3). However, Reformation’s outlook of becoming climate positive stands in contrast to H&M’s commitment concerning mostly the use of recycled or more sustainably sourced materials (Figure 5), as the aim is to go from “Climate neutral” to “Climate positive”. Compared to Zara, Reformation explicitly characterises itself as a brand (hence their corporate image) and not just their garments as sustainable. While H&M relies on product and process innovations to reduce the brand’s negative environmental impact, Reformation targets its business model rather than individual products (cf. Loetscher et al., 2017).

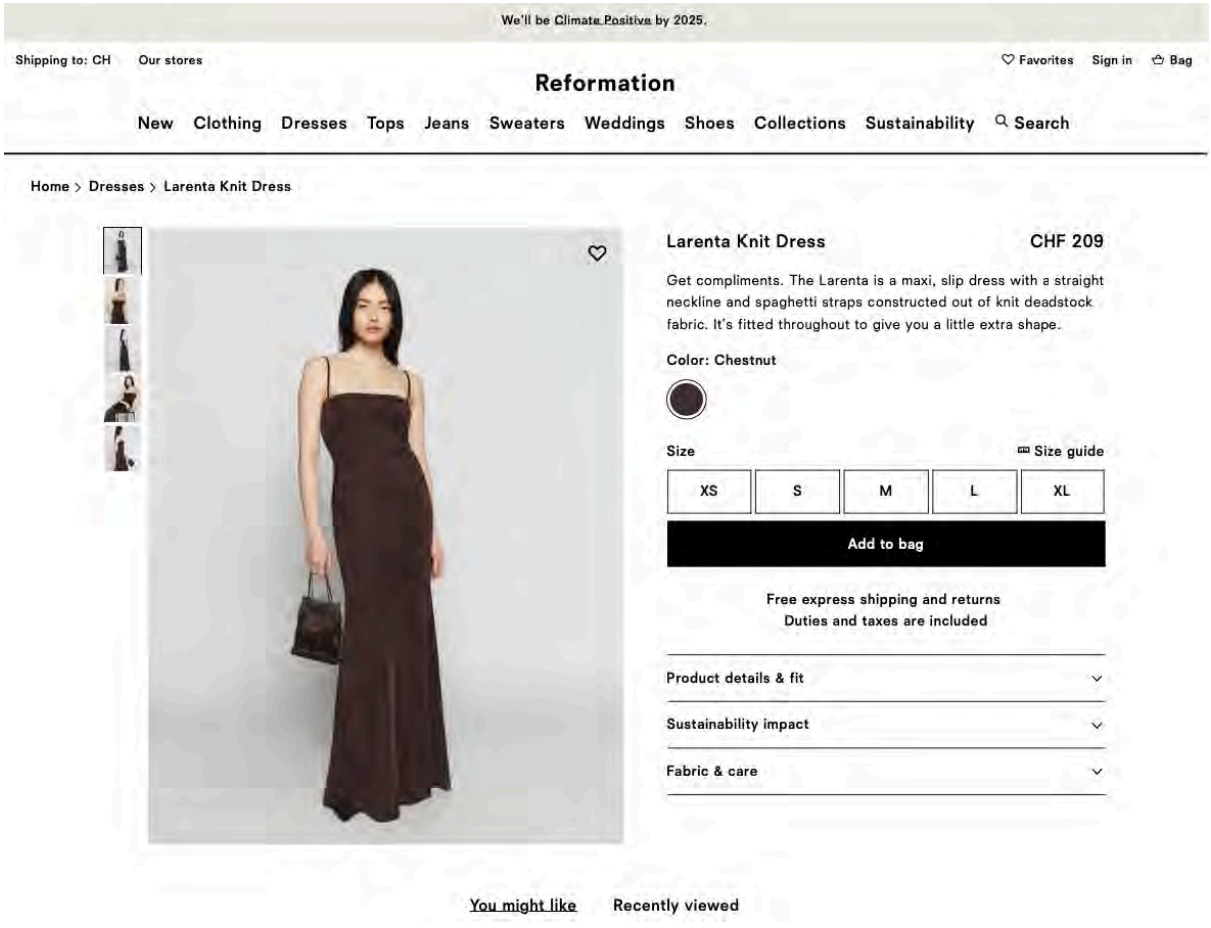


Figure 10: Web page extract from REF 1 (www.thereformation.com)

A new linguistic feature introduced here is the personification of the garments. Apart from one exception, every garment selected for analysis bears an individual name followed by noun specifying the type of garment in question (e.g., “dress” or “coat”). Besides the example shown

in Figure 10, other garment's names are: Remi Dress (REF 2), Wayne Coat (REF 3) and Ezlynn Knit Top (REF 5). The personification of the garments creates a sense of familiarity which cannot be found in the two previously discussed sites.

Interestingly, the garments' descriptions support the notion of social closeness communicated by this brand as they directly speak to the reader/viewer. Not only do the descriptions explicitly address the reader/viewer by using personal pronouns, but they also suggest when and under what circumstances the garment could be worn. Table 5 exemplifies this claim, displaying the descriptions of three garments. It is striking how these text extracts create a sense of dialogue with the reader/viewer. The interaction seems to include three parties: the brand, the garment, and the reader/viewer. The description included in Table 5 (from REF 5) pinpoints this claim with the following sentence: "It can be worn day-to-night if you ask us" (REF 5). Here, "it" refers to the garment, the reader/viewer is addressed as "you" and the "us" can be understood as referring to the brand. While many more such examples can be found across the Reformation data, the effect this has is interesting. All these aspects work together to create a sense of closeness characterising the interaction between the potential customer, the brand, and the garment itself.

Table 5: Garment's descriptions addressing the reader/viewer (emphasis mine; www.thereformation.com)

Data source	Extract
REF 2	For whatever **you** do sunrise to sunset. The Remi is fitted in the bodice with a relaxed fitting, flared skirt. It features a center front tie and a ruffle edged neckline. It has a smocked back bodice for a little bit of stretch.
REF 5	Who, me. The Ezlynn is an off-the-shoulder, short sleeve top with a center front twist. It's fitted throughout with ruching at the bust for a slightly fancier look. It can be worn day-to-night if **you** ask us.
REF 9	You're so fancy. The Twilight is fitted in the bodice with a relaxed fitting skirt, so you get structure and comfort all in one. This dress features tie straps, a smocked back bodice to provide a little bit of stretch, and a side slit to give **you** some breathing room.

Drawing attention to other striking linguistic patterns that can be seen as shaping the relationship between the reader/viewer and the brand, Reformation makes use of imperative verb forms in several instances (Table 6).

Table 6: Imperative verb forms (www.thereformation.com)

Data source	Extract
REF 1	Get compliments.
REF 3	Layer up.
REF 7	Put some pants on.

While the descriptions of the garments of the two fast fashion brands in question emphasize technical and material characteristics, it can be noted how this site shifts to a different rhetoric. Reformation, too, includes information about the qualities of the garment. However, the tone is very different as Reformation addresses the potential customer directly, personifies the garment and proposes settings for the garment to be worn (cf. Table 5). Thus, marking a shift in language use.

Compared to H&M and Zara, Reformation uses a more emotive rhetoric when describing their garments, giving this section of the garment's web page a different function. The fast fashion sites give this section of their web pages an informative function about the compositional characteristics of the garment, while Reformation uses it to create an imagined interaction between the brand and the reader/viewer.

Drawing from Noppers et al.'s (2014) article, Reformation notably centralizes symbolic attributes linked to questions of identity and social status, rather than the instrumental attributes of their garments. While the slow fashion brands seem to emphasize instrumental and environmental aspects, Reformation, and Pact for that matter, seem to rely on environmental and symbolic attributes instead (cf. Noppers et al., 2014). This can be seen as an attempt to counteract the slow fashion brands' disadvantages in the first category, i.e., instrumental attributes.

Supporting the observations made about creating social closeness are the visual components of the website. The garments are solely displayed when being worn (in the entire set of data collected). Many of the images showcasing the models are 'demand' images and positioning the model above the reader/viewer. By predominantly displaying the garment as being worn, it is not detached to the same degree from a person wearing it. Visually Reformation therefore aligns more closely with H&M compositional conventions. Nevertheless, as implied above, H&M does by no means emphasize the interaction between reader/viewer and the brand to a comparable extent.

While there are stark differences between the two fast fashion sites and Reformation, there are also some striking similarities. One of them is the use of *vague* vocabulary (Table 7). Most prominently the concept of "sustainability" is introduced but not necessarily discussed in any more detail. In the second example of Table 7, "Overseas" (REF 4) does not communicate anything specific, besides pointing out that the garment has been produced outside of the American continent. When studying the brand's website, however, it provides an interested reader/viewer with a lot of more concrete information. The same cannot be said for Zara, as their information rendered elsewhere on their website is kept in a similarly vague tone.

Therefore, while the use of vague language can be identified in the case of Reformation, the brand's general efforts concerning the transparency of their activities are significantly more elaborated, compared to H&M and, especially, Zara.

Table 7: Examples of vagueness in the Reformation data (emphasis mine; www.thereformation.com)

Data source	Extract
REF 2	We're committed to ensuring all our forest-based products come from **sustainably managed forests**.
REF 4	Sustainably made in **Overseas**.

4.4 *Pact*

The general layout of the Pact web pages promoting their clothing centralizes sustainability more than the three other brands, in both visual and linguistic terms. As can be observed in Figure 11, Pact includes a "sustainability" section in its headings, comparable to H&M and Reformation. It is notably displayed at the right-hand side top corner of the page. In the bottom half of the web page (below the "You may also like"-section) Pact introduces and shortly describes four areas of concern which are: "Sustainability Certified", "Organic", "Carbon Neutral" and "Fair Trade" (cf. PACT 1 in Tables 11, 12, 13 and 14 in the appendix).[18] Comparing this with the sustainability commitments mentioned by Reformation, the features are much more salient in their display. The increased salience is achieved by using more space of the web page, bigger font size, and supplying colourful imagery. Salience, according to Machin and Mayr (2012) can define "different hierarchies of importance" (p. 223). Thus, Pact frames sustainability as a core concern through salience.

Visually, the garments are also predominantly displayed as being worn by models, although close-up shots of the fabrics are included as well, similarly found in the H&M data. While the other sites display a higher number of 'demand' images, Pact includes a fairly balanced amount of 'offer' and 'demand' images. While H&M and Zara models exclusively show facial expressions that can be interpreted as "serious" (Reformation less so), Pact includes numerous shots of the models laughing (e.g., Figure 11). This can be understood as an important difference, as laughing is an emotive expression of happiness, which can be seen as shaping a relation of "social affinity" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 118) with the viewer. Besides connoting the wearing of Pact garments with a good mood, by portraying the models

[18] As the information about the garments does not differ significantly across the data, I've chosen to use PACT 1 as the main object of analysis.

in such a manner, the brand can also be understood as shaping a closer relationship to the reader/viewer by showing such emotion.

Before turning to a more detailed discussion of other striking features, Pact's transparent communicative practices shall be brought forward. Besides the saliency of sustainability, it is noteworthy how much insight about its practices Pact shares with the reader/viewer. Apart from identifying the country of origin, specifying the number of employees working in the respective factory and naming the third parties involved, nearly every claim made on the page is in some way elaborated on (Figure 12 displays such an informative section about organic cotton). In addition to this feature, Pact also includes numerous links which lead the curious reader/viewer to pop-up windows providing further information about specific claims (e.g., about how the garment's carbon footprint was offset) or third-party websites (e.g., SimplyZero). The reader/viewer can identify where more information can be accessed, by paying attention to the underlined parts in the text.

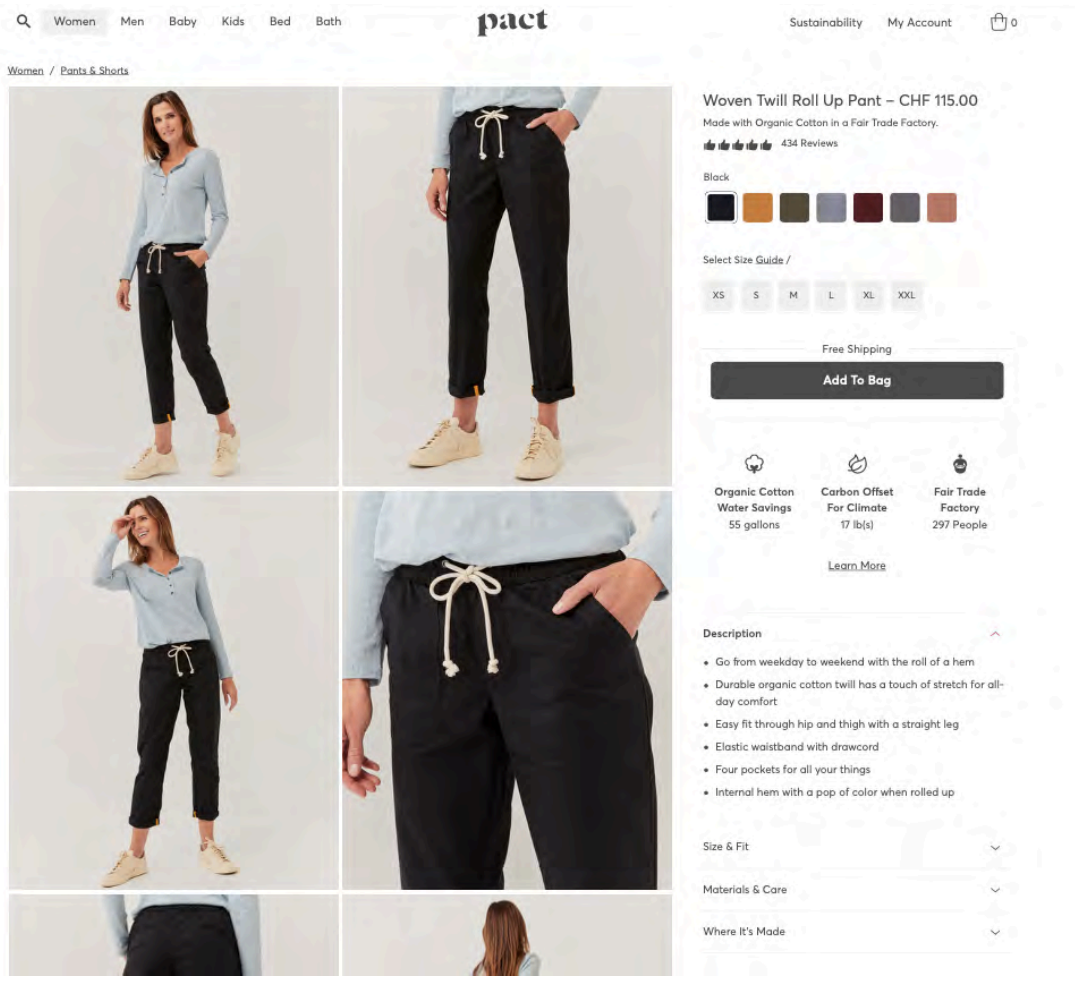


Figure 11: Web page extract of PACT 1 (www.wearpact.com)

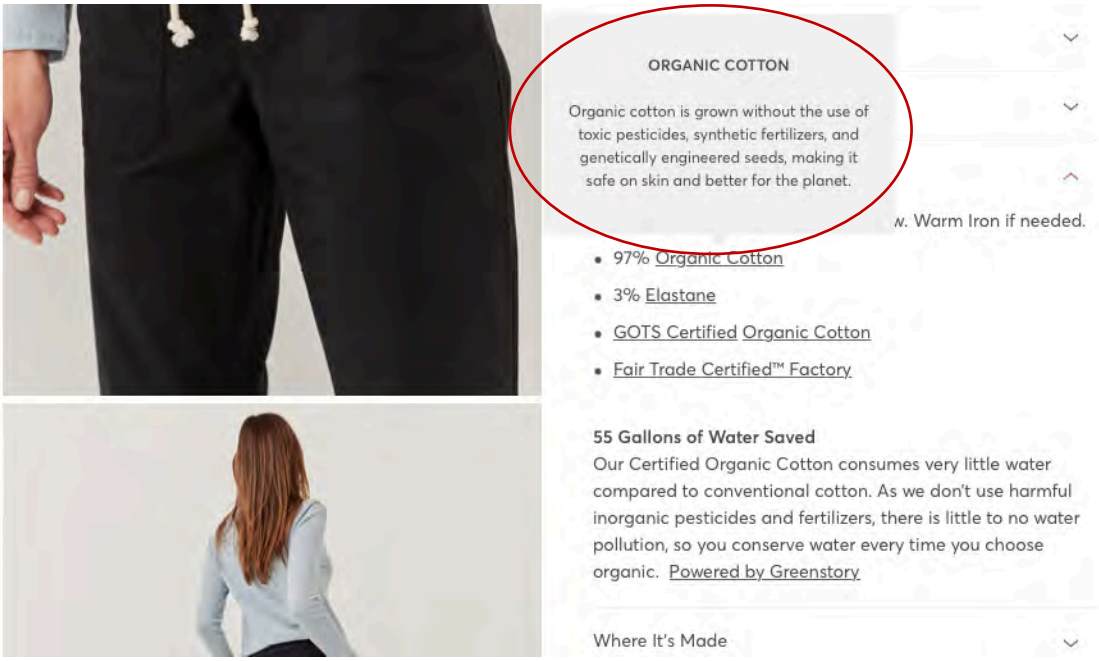


Figure 12: Screenshot of detailed information about organic cotton (emphasis mine, PACT 1; www.wearpact.com)

Another example of Pact's transparent informative practices are the detailed accounts of how the brand offsets its carbon emissions (Figure 13). Here, the reader/viewer is given extensive insight about the why and how of the garment's carbon footprint is offset, not only through environmental, but also through social projects. Furthermore, the supply chain of the garment is represented visually, although in a strongly simplified manner (see bottom of Figure 13). Pact explicitly acknowledges their commitments to different UN SDGs. By doing so, the brand links its production patterns with social and environmental concerns to a degree not found on the other websites, taking a stance on wider debate on sustainability. Sustainability, here, is also introduced as a more complex concept by highlighting the different areas of concern (environmental/social).

While the three sites H&M, Zara and Reformation predominantly focus on environmental aspects of sustainability (e.g., emission reduction, recycling of materials), the introduction of social questions throughout the Pact web pages stands in stark contrast to the other sites. Social actors involved in production processes are implicitly and explicitly mentioned or hinted at numerous times (Table 8 includes examples of written and visual reference). The most obvious example of introducing social aspects is the re-occurring mention of the garment being produced in Fair Trade factories. Fair Trade is a globally recognized organization which knowingly focusses on fair working conditions (cf. Fair Trade Certified, 2022). Thus, the mention itself already connotes social awareness of the brand. In addition, two images can be found to be displaying social actors other than the models. While the previously

discussed brands do so in other parts of their website, none shows the social actors involved along the supply chain on the garment's web page itself.

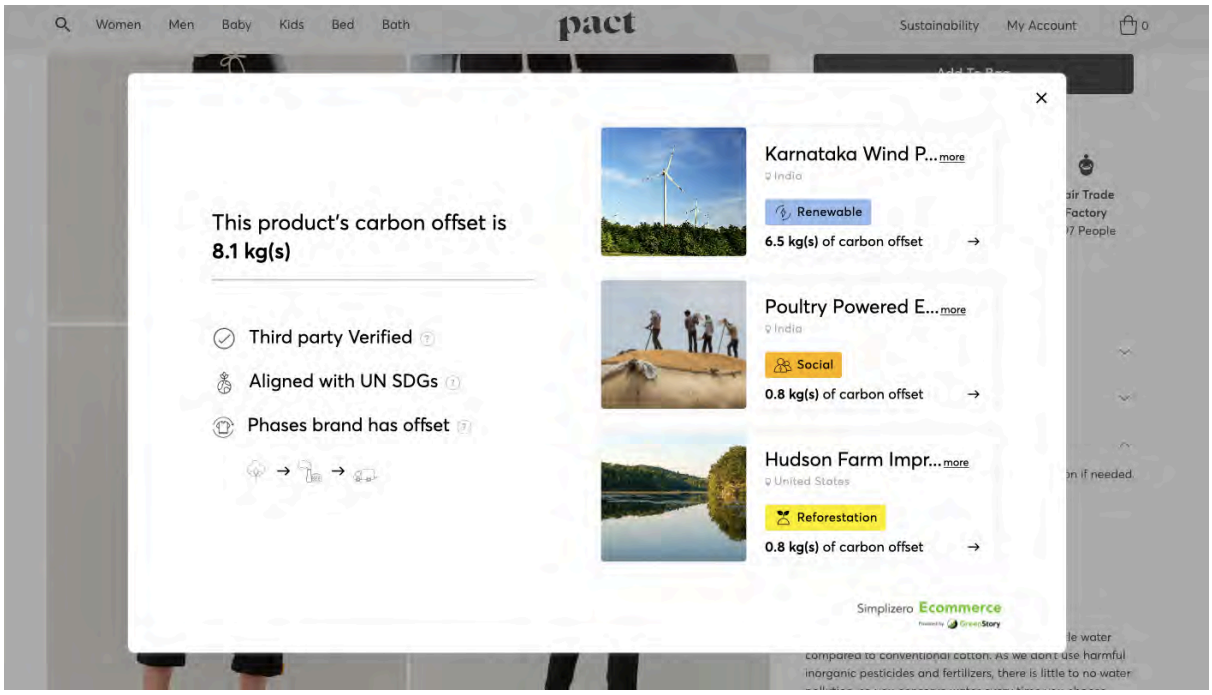
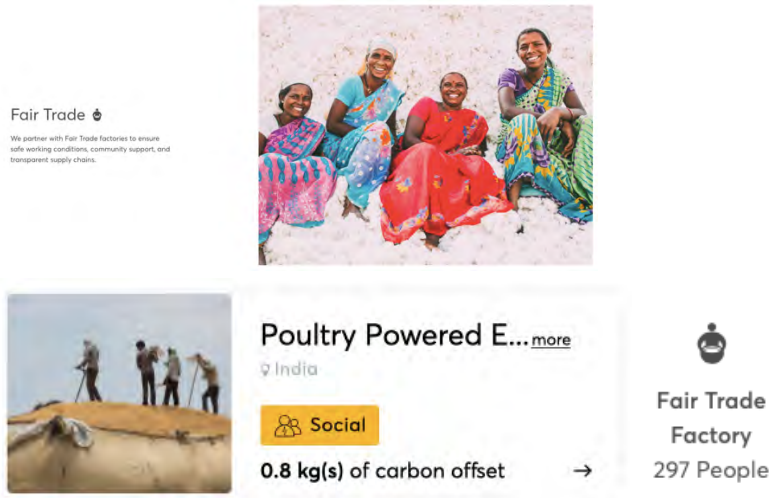


Figure 13: Carbon offset (PACT 1; www.wearpact.com)

Table 8: Mention (visual and linguistic) of social actors on garment's web page (emphasis mine; www.wearpact.com)

Data source	Extract
PACT 1	Fair Trade Factory
	This product is made in a Certified Fair Trade Factory. This means sustainable livelihoods, safe working conditions, environmental protection, and zero tolerance for sexual discrimination and child labor.
	GOTS Certified and Fair Trade Factory based in India. Empowering 297 People.
	

When paying closer attention to the garment's sustainable qualities, it is also striking how much information is given in this regard, making use of both written and visual material. First, Pact

directly renders two sustainable qualities just below the garment's name on the left-hand side, claiming that it is "Made with Organic Cotton in a Fair Trade Factory" (Figure 11). Secondly, below the link to "Add to Bag", three icons with an accompanying caption are shown: a strongly simplified version of a cotton plant fibre in its natural state, two leaves and a person presumably holding what seems to be a bowl (Figure 11). The captions then specify the commitment in question (e.g., the cotton icon signals the water saving achieved by organic cotton production processes). Interestingly, Pact and Zara use different iconography to signal similar ideas, while Zara uses a cloud icon to refence their emission reduction, Pact employs two leaves to signal their carbon offset.

Another aspect worth looking at as it has been discussed concerning the other sites, is the description of the garments. Table 9 displays three descriptions of garments taken from the Pact data. Compared to the three other sites, Pact's descriptions align with both the fast fashion sites as well as Reformation in different regards. While emphasis is put on technical characteristics, Pact also addresses the reader/viewer directly, marking a social closeness lacking for H&M and Zara. Comparing the descriptions included in Table 9 with Reformation's descriptions (Table 6), Pact introduces a new aspect: the experience of wearing the garment (e.g., "all-day comfort", "feeling active with ease") (Table 9). Reformation focuses more on the appearance instead, e.g., "You're so fancy!" (Table 6; REF 9).

Table 9: Description of garments (www.wearpact.com)

Data source	Extract
PACT 1	• Go from weekday to weekend with the roll of a hem • Durable organic cotton twill has a touch of stretch for all-day comfort • Easy fit through hip and thigh with a straight leg Elastic waistband with drawcord • Four pockets for all **your** things • Internal hem with a pop of color when rolled up
PACT 3	• A durable, reliable, adventure-ready jacket • Lightweight, twill organic cotton • Metal zipper with metal snap buttons • Two chest pockets, two side pockets Cinched waist to find **your** fit • full length sleeves with snap button
PACT 5	• Our PureActive Collection is all about feeling active with ease • Mid rise, hits just below the belly button • Full length, fitted silhouette • Two side pockets with plenty of room for **your** phone • Contouring elastic waistband with internal infinity drawcord • Stretch for easy movement

As indicated above, the reader/viewer is addressed directly. Here, the personal pronouns are embedded in contexts where functional aspects are discussed, e.g., the garment's fit or whether it has pockets or not (Table 9). Another instance of using the personal pronoun "you" can be found in the "Material & Care" section, addressing the potential customer directly (Figure 12). Here, Pact points out that "you conserve water every time you choose organic" (Figure 12). This is important insofar as Pact communicates an idea of consumer responsibility by highlighting the positive impact of buying their products.

While the use of personal pronouns certainly appeals for an interaction between the reader/viewer and the brand, there's a feature on Pact's web pages which cannot be found elsewhere in the data. This feature is introduced on the top right-hand side of the web page where it displays several "thumb up" icons and a number of reviews.[19] Then, at the bottom half of the page (below the information about the brand's certifications), a review section is included (Figure 14).

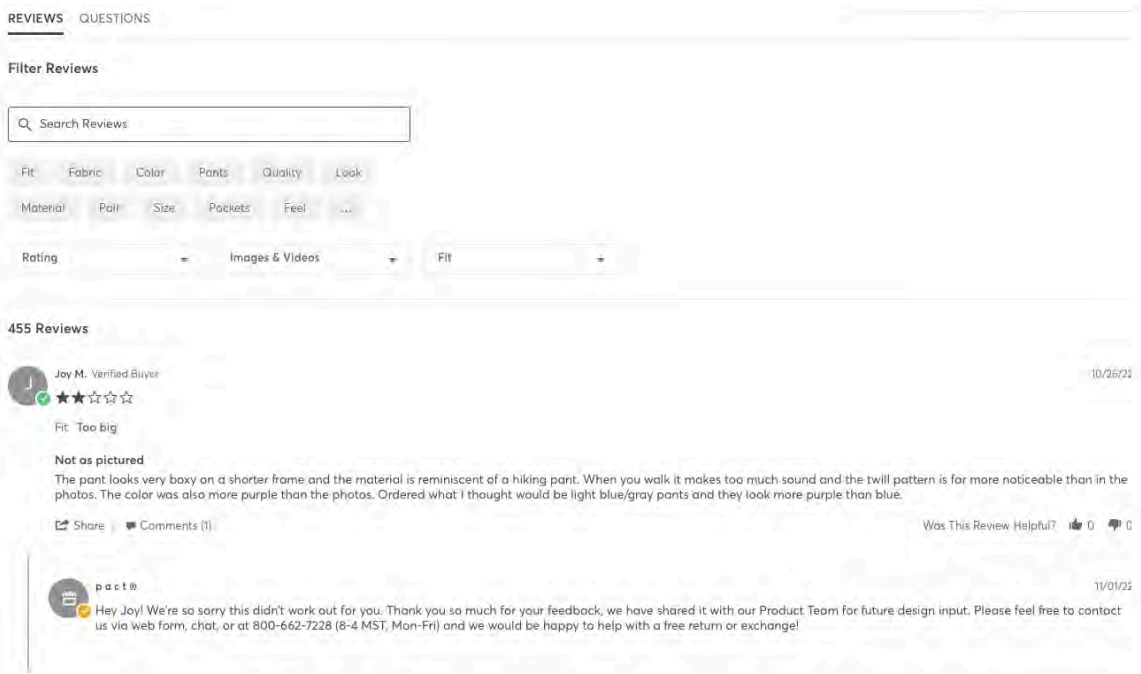


Figure 14: Review section Pact (www.wearpact.com)

This section allows any visitor of the website to leave a review or a question. Whenever a negative comment or a complaint is made, Pact replies to the customer by offering them contact information or discussing potential solutions, an example is given in Figure 14. This allows for an active exchange of information between Pact and their (potential) customers. It also provides the reader/viewer with a lot more information about the garment and its qualities, giving

[19] When revisiting the web page at later stages of the analysis, the "thumb up" was replaced with star icons.

experiential insight as well. Through the inclusion of the number of reviews and the garment's rating directly below its name in addition to the review section, customers' opinions and experiences are given a strong voice. This observation can be understood as enhancing the interaction between consumers and brand, also validating customer's personal experience with the brand's products. Taken from these observations, the power relation between the brand and its customers can be described as fairly levelled.

5 DISCUSSION

Derived from the mainly descriptive and tentatively interpretative analysis above, I now intend to adopt a more critical stance, answering the second and third research questions stated in the introduction. To reinstate, the first research question, addressed in the previous analysis, was articulated as follows: How are 'green' products framed discursively on websites of fast and slow fashion brands? The second and third research questions, which shall be answered in this fifth section, are concerned with similar or differing framing patterns, ultimately drawing links to greenwashing agendas and other ideological implications. Thus, this section aims at unravelling the ideological contentions found in the analysed texts. Here, this paper's findings will be linked to the theoretical conceptualizations introduced in the first and second section of this paper, aiming at bettering our understanding of the discursive framing of green fashion. Ultimately, this discussion should enhance our critical knowledge about the communicative practices employed by fast and slow fashion brands. As Wodak and Meyer (2009) argue, critical approaches "want to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection" (p. 7).

The analysis yields diverse discursive themes, this section is organized in six thematic subsections to facilitate a focussed discussion. The six themes are the following:

(1) Erasure & Invisible labour: this first theme is concerned with processes of 'erasure' (cf. Gal & Irvine, 2019), especially that of social actors involved along the supply chain and its ideological effect.
(2) (Un)equal social relations: how brands frame their relationship with potential customers discursively.
(3) Consumers' responsibility & 'Footprint ideologies' (cf. Huber, 2019): this third theme is dedicated to the ways in which individual consumer power is framed by the brands.
(4) 'The Sin of Hidden Trade-Off' (cf. TerraChoice, 2007): fast fashion brands use single or partial attributes of their products to label the whole garment as sustainable. In

analogy, the launching of their sustainable clothing lines can be perceived as greening the entire corporate image of the brands as well. Both findings align with this greenwashing sin.

(5) 'The Sin of Vagueness' (cf. TerraChoice, 2007): this subsection addresses how transparent the brands are about their production processes and how tangible their sustainability claims are.

(6) 'The Sin of Lesser of Two Evils' (cf. TerraChoice, 2007): the sixth theme draws attention to how the fashion brands explicitly and implicitly frame their green garments against their 'conventionally' produced goods.

5.1 *Erasure & Invisible labour*

As the analysis has shown, H&M, Zara and Reformation constrain their visual and written text about sustainability predominantly to environmental aspects. Only Pact overtly discusses social sustainability questions in more depth. Machin and Mayr (2012) fittingly point out that "[j]ust as it is revealing to ask who is backgrounded linguistically from a text, so it is important to ask the same visually" (p. 102). Therefore, the first striking observation that can be made about the four sites is the erasure of social actors involved along the supply chain of fashion, as three out of four sites fail to represent social aspects to varying degrees. This observation has profound ideological implications, as the process of 'erasure' refers to the "aspect of ideological work through which some phenomenon (linguistic forms, or types of persons, or activities) are rendered invisible" (Gal & Irvine, 2019, p. 20). In our case the erased party is the workforce producing the garments in question. Regarding the 'stories we live by', Stibbe (2021) similarly defines erasure as a discursive framing of something or someone as negligible, rendering it unimportant in people's minds (p. 141).

To identify erasure, attention must be paid to what remains hidden in a text, i.e., which elements were deleted through the process of recontextualization (Machin, 2013, pp. 352-353; Mayr, 2016, pp. 267-268). The fashion sites choosing to neither mention nor represent social actors 'erase' them discursively, implicitly communicating an idea of the actors and their labour being insignificant (cf. Stibbe, 2021).

While H&M completely fails to mention any social actors involved in the production of their *Conscious choice* garments, Zara makes implicit textual reference to social aspects on several occasions (cf. section 4.2). Reformation similarly mentions social actors implicitly by providing information about the country/region the garment was sustainably produced in (e.g.,

Table 7). Nevertheless, this brand too fails to give the reader/viewer any more specific information or to make any visual reference.

In the case of Zara, the question is, how are social actors mentioned/represented in the data? The analysis has yielded some interesting results, as implied in the respective subsection above (cf. 4.2). Social aspects are mentioned covertly using very vague vocabulary, for example by referring to "health and safety standards" (Extract 1). In addition to this, in their video material, Zara displays minimal visual material of its workers. In fact, Zara only ever shows one person entirely, who is presumably engaging in an auditing activity. Therefore, the person does not represent the larger part of the social actors involved in the production and distribution of Zara's garments, but someone who oversees quality controls. In other words, the only social actor shown entirely is displayed in an authoritative function, again obscuring the numerous other social actors involved throughout the supply chain.

As discussed above, the hands Zara displays can be seen as a part standing in representatively for all workers (cf. Figure 9), aligning with the idea of a synecdoche (cf. Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 172). Although a synecdoche is a rhetoric trope, its notion and effect can be applied to these visual texts in analogy. A synecdoche is found when a part is used to represent a whole (cf. Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 172). Here Zara uses the image of a hand to represent the entire workforce. This allows the brand to stay unspecific, not individualizing the workers, while still signalling their presence. This too can be linked to the process of deletion and therefore the erasure of social actors in the data.

The analysis has also shown how both H&M and Zara strongly emphasize technical characteristics in the descriptions of their garments. In addition, Zara notably foregrounds technological processes in the visual composition of their videos. Through the focus on technical language and technology the brands establish a certain authoritative stance through their semiotic choices (cf. Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 44), while still communicating a sense of being factual and informative. Through the foregrounding of these features, the social actors are further backgrounded. This also supports the idea of deletion found in these advertising texts.

These observations can be aligned with the idea of "visible-invisible labour" (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012). In short, 'visible-invisible labour' is a semiotic structuring principle found in advertisement of so-called 'luxury travel', it refers to the strategical staging of the results of labour which often conceals the workers that carry it out (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012; 2014). While Thurlow and Jaworski's (2012; 2014) studies focus on the context of the travel industry, Haudenschild (2021) also identifies similar patterns in the analysis of Zero-Waste discourses.

Haudenschild (2021) brings forward how visual representation of workers that only displays their hands or shows them from behind detaches them, rendering them anonymous (p. 51).[20]

The ideological implications of this semiotic structuring principle are far-reaching. Visible-invisible labour is found in contexts where privilege manifests, hence, where unequal power distribution is found to shape social relations (cf. Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012; 2014). On the other hand, Zara's representation of social actors renders them 'invisible' and voiceless by neglecting their role in the production of garments discursively. Together, Zara, as well as H&M and Reformation, support a 'story we live by' (cf. Stibbe, 2021) where social actors involved along garments' supply chains stay anonymous and side-lined; a 'story' where the results of capitalist production can be consumed by consumers without having to face the grim social reality of these processes or even who is involved at all. This can be seen as a discursive process that also aligns with the Marxist idea of commodity fetishism (cf. Lewin & Morris, 1977; Thurlow, 2020), where the labour in capitalist production is obscured, and monetary and material aspects define a commodity's value instead.

As mentioned above, questions of social sustainability are a central concern of garment production (Public Eye, 2020; Niinimäki et al., 2020), however, Zara, H&M and Reformation do not confront the potential customer with such social questions overtly. Instead, social actors are rendered invisible, or shown in a strongly abstracted manner, which portrays an image that does not reflect the reality of garment production processes adequately. Pact is the only brand addressing social aspects, framing them as an important part of their sustainability endeavours. By doing so, Pact gives this aspect of production a different worth, valuing the workforce to a degree not found in the three other sites.

5.2 *(Un)equal social relations: the relationship between consumer and brand*

The second discursive theme is concerned with the kind of relationship brands steer for with their potential customers. As Cameron and Panovic' (2014) discussion of advertisement brings forward, when analysing such textual materials, it is important to take notice of the "kinds of power and inequality" consumers could be "buying into" (p. 74). As the analysis has shown, the potential consumers are addressed or positioned differently throughout the data. In most cases, both visual and linguistic aspects tie in to create (un)equal relations.

Visually speaking, the fast fashion brands in particular employ 'demand' images. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) the effect of 'demand' images is twofold, on the

[20] Similarly, Best (2022) also identifies 'visible-invisible labour' as a theme in their analysis of waste discourses in the airline industry.

one hand, the viewer is directly addressed, on the other hand the viewer is asked to interact with the image, shaping an imaginary relation between the image and its viewer (pp. 117-118). What kind of relation is then determined by other aspects, such as "the facial expressions of the participants" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 118). The models' facial expressions are predominantly serious, and they are directly looking at the viewer. If a represented participant looks at the viewer with "cold disdain" (p. 118) this can be understood as shaping an imaginary unequal relationship, in this case, between a superior model and an inferior viewer (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 118). Derived from these scholars' interpretation, therefore, the two fast fashion sites communicate a sense of superiority coming from the brands' models. Furthermore, the camera angle often positions the viewer below the depicted model. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) note how this pattern can often be found in advertisement of magazines, and that "these models are exercising symbolic power over us" (p. 140). Thus, drawing these observations together, the fast fashion brands (and the slow fashion brands to a lesser degree) can be found to steer for an unbalanced power relation between consumers and brands. The imaginary relationship aligns somewhat with the power distribution Huber (2019) attributes the capitalist system with, where often bigger corporations have more power than the individual consumers. Here, this theme is reflected in the advertising discourse of the fashion brands in question. While the fast fashion brands seem to shape unequal power relations, the slow fashion brands showcase a somewhat different approach.

In the case of Reformation and Pact, the analysis has shown how both linguistic and visual features work together to address the potential consumer directly. Besides addressing the reader/viewer by using personal pronouns, the personification of garments, the feedback/rating function and the visual features work together to appeal to the potential consumer, shaping a different kind of relation. Especially Pact's models are often smiling into the camera. This can be perceived as a sign of inviting the viewer to "enter into a relation of social affinity" (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 118) with the represented participant. Hence, derived from the analysis, it can be noted how Pact puts great emphasis in aiming for egalitarian power relations, as consumers are invited to directly engage with the brand on the webpage.

In summary, the fast fashion brands can be observed to exercise symbolic power over the reader/viewer, while the slow fashion brands seem to aim for a relation defined by social closeness between the brand and the reader/viewer. All four sites, however, appeal to the potential customers in some way or another, creating a sense of individualization typical for neoliberal and capitalist ideologies (cf. Budinsky & Bryant, 2013), achieved through the direct address of potential consumers supported by both linguistic and visual features. While an in-

depth discussion of these aspects would surpass the scope of this paper at this point, it was deemed important to mention it. It should relativize the 'good' and 'bad' division characterizing the fast and slow fashion brands in this subsection, as all four brands seem to support such potentially problematic neoliberal ideologies.

5.3 *Responsibility and Footprint ideologies*

As established in the previous sections, questions of environmental and social responsibility are an essential aspect of green marketing (cf. Mukonza et al., 2021). Therefore, who is given or relieved of responsibility in the context of green advertising are important questions. As noted above, throughout the analysis consumers are frequently addressed in the data, either directly by using personal pronouns or indirectly through imperative verb forms. While the slow fashion brands predominantly make use of personal pronouns to establish an interaction between the brand and the potential consumer, the fast fashion brands address the consumers in contexts which hand over environmental responsibility, this pattern can be aligned with the phenomenon of communicating so-called 'footprint ideologies' (cf. Huber, 2019).

Adopting this ideological concept for this thesis, I use the term 'footprint ideologies' (cf. Huber, 2019) to refer to the ways fashion brands deflect environmental responsibility onto individual consumers. As Huber (2019) argues, looking at individual consumers' ecological footprint "construes a power equation in reverse order" (pt. 1). Both fast as well as slow fashion brands address the environmental impact (i.e., ecological footprint) of their garments, the question is, who is framed bearing responsibility, the brand or the individual consumer?

The analysis has shown how especially Zara identifies the consumer as bearing environmental responsibility after the garment's purchase (cf. Table 4). Interestingly, while Zara targets waste reduction, which is an important area of action identified by both Niinimäki et al. (2020) and Loetscher et al. (2017), the consumers are framed as the key player here (Table 4). In the light of textile waste production being of great concern throughout the supply chain of garment production before and after purchase (Niinimäki et al., 2020) this can be perceived as distort of responsibility.

Pact also individualizes the consumers as parties responsible for their environmental impact by promoting organic cotton (e.g., Figure 12). However, Pact generally addresses questions of sustainability more holistically and in fact can be seen as taking on responsibility for their products' environmental and *social* impact throughout their data. Zara on the other hand is a global fast fashion brand, causing significantly more damage, especially through the production of unsustainable garments. Hence, their deflection of responsibility onto the

individual consumer can be perceived as somewhat graver. Viewing the consumers as fulfilling their needs, the responsibility should lie on the profiting party (Huber, 2019, pt. 1), thus, the fast fashion brands instead.

Here, the two fast fashion brands' sustainable clothing lines become interesting, especially their names. As the lines co-exists with conventionally produced H&M and Zara products, the choice of which products to purchase lies in the hand of the consumers. H&M's *Conscious choice* communicates an idea of consciousness, which can be linked to both the consumers' and the brand's sustainability values. Implicitly, *Conscious choice* appeals to the consumer to decide whether they want to consume consciously (i.e., sustainably) or not. Viewed from this perspective, thus, the line and the name itself communicate an idea of exaggerated consumer power, while the brand's own responsibility remains backgrounded. In other words, H&M discursively frames a part of their garments as environmentally *conscious* allowing the consumer to choose, which simultaneously gives up responsibility into the consumers' hands. This can be aligned with the notion of creating a "power equation in reverse order" which also support 'footprint ideologies' (Huber, 2019, pt. 1).

In a similar tone, Zara's *Join life* line also appeals to the consumer, using an imperative verbform 'join' and using the concept of 'life' as an incentive. As noted above, imperative verb forms can be used to express authority (cf. Machin & Mayr, 2012), here the brands exercise authority over their potential customers. Again, asks the consumer to 'join' their sustainable clothing line, implicitly allowing the option of a choice. While H&M openly identifies this choice, Zara, by using the imperative verb form addresses the consumer more authoritatively. This, too, can be seen as an example of deflecting responsibility from the brand by instead appealing to the individual consumer's choice.

5.4 *The Sin of Hidden Trade-Off*

While the fast fashion brands' sustainability efforts are certainly not insignificant, the role of their sustainable clothing lines and their products should be analysed critically. As has been established in the introduction, small changes such as implementing environmental elements in advertising can have far-reaching effects on consumer attitude towards a brand (Parguel et al., 2015). Moreover, Ehrsam's (2016) study has shown how the launching of H&M's *Conscious choice* can be perceived as having a positive spill-over effect onto the entire brand (p. ii). Neumann et al. (2020) also found how consumers' trust is enhanced by sustainable behaviour of fast fashion brands. Against this backdrop, the two sustainable clothing lines of

these global fast fashion retailers can be seen as greening the entire corporate image of both Zara and H&M. By doing so, their unsustainable practices are discursively backgrounded.

In analogy to the greenwashing "Sin of Hidden Trade-Off" (TerraChoice, 2007), where one green attribute suffices to characterize the entire product as sustainable, the sustainable clothing lines can be seen as a part of the brand which greens the entire corporate image. While the sustainable clothing lines, in that sense, greenwash the entire brand, there is another observation which also aligns with this greenwashing sin. As the analysis has brought forward, the green products of the fast fashion brands are not produced using exclusively sustainable products or sustainable processes. Certain criteria must be met by the product to be sold under the sustainable label of the brands; the criteria that are met are often signalled by how much percent is sustainably sourced material. Figure 3 and 7 can be used as examples where a partial quality of the material composition (i.e., 52% of recycled polyester or 50% sustainably sourced wool) is enough to characterize the entire garment as green. A striking example is found in ZARA 7, where 10% (of 21%) recycled polyester, in addition to using water-saving processes, is enough define the product as *Join life*.

Linking these observations to the Sin of Hidden Trade-Off (TerraChoice, 2007), both fast fashion sites show examples of such greenwashing practices. When applying the concept in a broader sense, the sustainable clothing lines are greening the entire corporate image of the brand, painting a "'greener' picture of the product [or brand in analogy] than a more complete environmental analysis would support" (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 2). By doing so, the brands present themselves and their products in a positive way that appeals to an environmentally responsible consumer. Obviously, promoting a brand or product positively and appealing to potential customers is the main function of ads (cf. Cameron & Panovic, 2014). Regardless, what is problematic here is the discursive backgrounding of the actual impact of the brand or product by solely presenting the desirable sustainable qualities of the garments.

Noteworthily, Reformation also displays cases of using only partially sustainable components in their garments' material composition. However, Reformation implements sustainability values holistically, for example by being 100% climate neutral as a brand, which is why they cannot be seen as committing this greenwashing sin to a comparable degree.

5.5 *The Sin of Vagueness*

Throughout the analysis cases of vague and unspecific language use were a dominant theme. The use of vague lexical or visual choices deserves critical analysis, because with unspecified and broad claims their "real meaning is likely to be misunderstood by the intended consumer"

(TerraChoice, 2007, p. 3). TerraChoice (2007) renders a list of possible manifestations of the "Sin of Vagueness", including examples such as "all natural", "green", "environmentally friendly" (p. 3). In these cases, vagueness can communicate a false or misleading idea to the consumer about the actual greenness of a product by including such lexical choices, much like environment-evoking elements can green an entire corporate image in consumer perception (Parguel et al., 2015). Derived from these observations, the questions that served as the basis for the following discussion were, how much and what kind of information is included on the web pages, and to what degree is it backed by evidence?

Arguably, it is not advisable to define and back each claim made by a brand, as the website would likely lose its appeal to the potential customer due to an overload of information. Nevertheless, as my analysis has shown, websites have a range of functions which the brands can work with to inform an interested customer about the product they are viewing. There are stark differences between the sites in how much insight they provide on the individual brand's claims about activities along its supply chains and the qualities of their garments.

As brought forward in the analysis, H&M does not give much, if any, further insight on the garments' web pages. The findings show H&M committing the Sin of Vagueness in their advertising. Similarly, Blesserholt's (2021) case study also identifies examples of this sin in H&M's reports (p. 50), which suggests this being a wider issue, not an isolated case found in my data alone.

Zara on the other hand works with overlexicalization, which creates "a sense of over-persuasion and is normally evidence that something is problematic or of ideological contention" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 37). While Zara makes use of this rhetorical strategy, the information given is often held in a generalized tone. In other words, without close analysis of the meaning communicated by Zara, a false sense of transparency is communicated to the potential consumers. Vagueness determines most of the claims Zara makes about their sustainability endeavours, with little to no concrete information or evidence available to the reader/viewer. Especially concerning third party organizations involved in auditing programs, Zara often fails to render tangible information. By failing to back the claims made about third party organizations, Zara can furthermore be seen as committing the 'Sin of No Proof' (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 3). Another noteworthy example of vagueness are Zara's tags and the iconography depicted on them. As the analysis has shown, they represent a number of complex concepts/ideas in an abstracted manner, not rendering any tangible specifications. The iconography often uses nature-related elements (e.g., trees, grass), which can be found to further green the garment when drawing from Parguel et al.'s (2015) study.

These two different approaches, H&M relying on supplying the reader/viewer with scarce information, while Zara showcases a theme of overlexicalization, can be seen as the attempt of the two brands navigating the issue of promoting consumerism in light of conflicting sustainability endeavours. Although the brands don't frame their garments in the same way, both seem to depend on vague language rather than concrete and tangible information. I would argue that it is this vagueness which allows the two brands to promote their garments despite unacknowledged questions of their true sustainability impact. Linking this observation to the theories introduced in previous sections, it can be noted how the fashion brands seem to handle the challenge of promoting sustainable consumerism discursively (cf. Haudenschild, 2021; Cooper et al., 2012) *through* vagueness.

Reformation too, displays examples of using vague language. While the information backing different claims is not directly available to the reader/viewer, Reformation does specify the claims on other parts of their website. However, as the reader/viewer must be interested enough to search the website to access the information, this can be seen as a shortcoming on Reformation's side. To a certain extent, therefore, Reformation also commits the Sin of Vagueness (cf. TerraChoice, 2007). However, as the discussion above has shown, both Zara and H&M can be found to rely on the greenwashing Sin of Vagueness to frame their garments more significantly.

Pact clearly stands out against the three other brands. As brought forward in the analysis of Pact's data, the information and insight given about the supply chain and questions of sustainability is extensive. Not only does Pact back the claims with links to more concrete information, but the brand also addresses the complexity inherent in questions of social and environmental sustainability. TerraChoice (2007) advises brands not to "use vague names and terms (such as environmentally-friendly) without providing precise explanations of your meaning" (p. 7). Compared to the three other sites, I would argue that Pact's informative practices can be seen as exemplary in implementing TerraChoice's (2007) advice on how *not* to commit the Sin of Vagueness.

5.6 *The Sin of 'Lesser of Two Evils'*

In the analysis of my data, the sustainable qualities of garments are predominantly framed as desirable, without always specifying its undesirable counterpart, unsustainable fashion. Especially in the case of the two fast fashion brands, it becomes evident how the foregrounding of sustainable aspects implicitly characterizes the 'conventionally produced' garments as

unsustainable. This theme can be linked to the idea of structural opposition (cf. Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Structural opposition occurs when something or someone is implicitly or explicitly defined through opposition (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 39). Often, only one aspect is represented in the text, however, its counterpart implicitly characterizes it nonetheless (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 39). Processes of structural opposition can be used to communicate normative values (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p. 41)

The two slow fashion brands can define their entire brand against the undesirable impact of unsustainable production, somewhat more overtly, as their environmental impact is much smaller than that of the heavily criticized fast fashion brands. Both Reformation and pact use normative language which frames their garments as good, in structural opposition to the 'bad' conventionally produced garments. The fast fashion brands must navigate this contention in light of their own unsustainable practices. H&M and Zara face the challenge of promoting and framing 'green consumerism' (Budinsky & Bryant, 2013) discursively. As already mentioned tentatively in the analysis, the slow fashion brands rely on centralizing the environmental and symbolic attributes of their garments (Noppers et al., 2014), which appeal to the consumers' values and their identities. The fast fashion brands on the other hand have the instrumental attributes (cf. Noppers, et al., 2014) in their favour, as their prices are significantly lower than the slow fashion brands' products.[21] Drawing from Noppers et al.'s (2014) article H&M and Zara can be found to emphasize instrumental (note how the lowered price is highlighted in the case of H&M 1) and environmental attributes instead.

H&M seems to take on this challenge by framing the entire brand as sustainable, which deflects attention from their unsustainably produced garments. Zara navigates this challenge differently and strongly highlights the sustainable qualities of the *Join life* products. To some degree, Zara fails to discursively counteract the negative effects of structural opposition, implicitly framing its other activities as unsustainable. Nonetheless, arguably (being the world's largest fashion retailer) this does not seem to harm Zara in any substantial way. It does, however, say a lot about the brand and its endeavours towards sustainability, as Zara relies on an over-persuasive rhetoric, aligning with several greenwashing sins.

The co-existence of the sustainable clothing lines with conventionally produced garments can be aligned with another of TerraChoice's (2007) greenwashing sins. Against the

[21] See Tables 11, 12, 13 and 14 in the appendix, the prices (in CHF) of the fast fashion brands are predominantly lower than those of Pact and Reformation.

assumption that the two fast fashion brands are unsustainable in their entirety (which is not undisputed), them promoting their sustainable clothing lines can be seen as committing the Sin of 'Lesser of Two Evils' (TerraChoice, 2007). To reinstate, this greenwashing sin manifests as "'green' claims that may be true within the product category, but that risk distracting the consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole" (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 4). Here, the sustainable clothing lines *Conscious choice* and *Join life* can be seen as deflecting attention of the greater environmental impact of the entire fast fashion brands.

In contrast, the two slow fashion brands acknowledge their environmental impact and promote their sustainable practices without committing this greenwashing sin similarly, as they explicitly distance themselves from the fast fashion industry. Reformation and Pact both emphasize and elaborate on their efforts of embracing sustainability as a whole.

6 CONCLUSION

This penultimate section is structured as follows. First, a short recapitulation of the aims of this research project and its area of interest is given, before summarizing the most important results. After that I wish to address some broader implications of the arguments articulated throughout this paper. Lastly, before stating my limitations in the next section, a very brief outlook on potential solutions to counteract the spread of greenwashing is included.

As established at the beginning of this paper, sustainability is one of the great challenges of our time (cf. UN, n.d.-b), especially in a western society relying on unsustainable consumption and production patterns. The fashion industry contributes to global pollution through considerable GHG emissions, waste production and use of chemicals (Niinimäki et al., 2020). Due to the rising concerns about the environmental and social issues linked to the fashion industry, the demand for greener and more sustainable fashion has increased in recent years (Fletcher, 2010). This trend has not only supported the expansion of green marketing strategies (Delmas & Burbano, 2011), but also favoured greenwashing agendas (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020). Against this background, the aim of this research project was to analyse the discursive framing of fashion labelled as sustainable, of both fast as well as slow fashion brands. The results and discussion should contribute to the growing body of literature on the subject, enhancing our understanding of the ideological contentions and greenwashing agendas found in fashion brands' advertising practices.

To reinstate, the research questions this paper set out to answer were the following: (1) how are 'green' products framed discursively on websites of fast and slow fashion brands? (2)

What are the similarities or differences of the discursive strategies employed to advertise the garments, and to what extent can links be made to possible greenwashing agendas? (3) And lastly, how can the identified communicative practices be understood as enhancing problematic ideologies about sustainability issues?

To tackle these research questions, I've chosen to analyse websites of four different fashion brands. The global retailers H&M and Zara were chosen as representative fast fashion brands, due to numerous references to these two brands in literature (Joy et al., 2012; Neumann et al., 2020; Hall, 2018). After a thorough search of slow fashion brands' rankings on the internet, Reformation and Pact were selected as apt sites. The data was collected on the brands' official websites, yielding ten garments' web pages per site, and analysed according to the principles of a multimodal critical discourse analysis (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This methodology was deemed as most suitable, as advertising practices rely on both visual and linguistic modes (cf. Freitas, 2011) and MCDA embraces the importance of multimodality (Mayr, 2016).

The analysis of the four fashion brands has revealed several interesting themes. In general terms, the web pages are surprisingly similar in terms of colour and layout. The garments are predominantly displayed as worn by models. While the two fast fashion brands emphasize material and technical characteristics in the description of garments, the slow fashion brands use this section to build a closer social relation through emotive rhetoric and by addressing their potential customers directly. Derived from the visual (focusing on features such as gaze and camera angle) and linguistic (paying attention to lexical choices) analysis, it was brought forward how the fast fashion brands can be seen to exercise power over their potential consumers, establishing an unequal power relation between brand and customer which is reflected in the capitalist system (cf. Huber, 2019). The slow fashion brands in contrast seemed to put greater effort in supporting more levelled relations.

Another striking difference between the sites was the extent to which social actors, involved in the production and distribution of garments, were presented in the data. My analysis has shown that H&M fails to represent or mention social actors on the web pages entirely. While Zara does refer to social questions, these examples are negligible as they do not adequately represent the labour involved along garments' supply chains. While Reformation, too, does not represent social actors, more extensive information is given elsewhere on their website, to a degree not found on H&M's and Zara's websites. Only Pact acknowledges the production processes of their garments by including visual as well as textual material of social actors, also making explicit reference to their working conditions.

Drawing these observations together, this theme can be understood as a result of the process of 'erasure' by which certain aspects or participants are consistently backgrounded or neglected in texts (cf. Gal & Irvine, 2019). Links can also be made to the semiotic structuring principle of "visible-invisible labour" (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2014), where the result of labour is strategically staged in a way that obscures the people carrying it out. Especially the fast fashion brand Zara showcases numerous examples of this pattern. The ideological contentions are significant as three out of four fashion brands do not sufficiently represent social actors. When holding these observations against the ecolinguistic framework proposed by Stibbe (2021), it becomes apparent how these brands enhance 'stories we live by' that neglect a great number of people required to produce the fashion western societies consume. Taking these observations a step further, this discursive theme can be found to support 'commodity fetishism' (cf. Lewin & Morris, 1977; Thurlow, 2020), which fails to appropriately value the labour required in the production of a commodity. The fashion industry is a sector where the three main areas of concern for sustainability: social, economic, and environmental interests intersect. Therefore, the lack of acknowledgement of social issues linked to garments' supply chains is particularly grave.

Touching upon questions of environmental and social responsibility, the analysis brought forward that the fast fashion brands, Zara in particular, can be seen as creating a sense of consumer choice and responsibility. This observation, aligned with the notion of 'footprint ideologies' (Huber, 2019), enhances a problematic discourse of exaggerated consumer power. In contrast, the slow fashion brands seem to be more conscious about their own impact, refraining from handing over too much environmental responsibility to the consumers. On the topic of deflecting environmental responsibility onto consumer it can be noted that consumers certainly carry some responsibility for their consumption behaviour and appealing to an environmental responsible consumer is important. Nevertheless, as Blesserholt (2021) notes, H&M (and other fashion brands for that matter) have "a bigger responsibility to be sustainable and engage in sustainable practices and actions" (p. 52).

Drawing attention to potential greenwashing agendas, especially Zara and H&M, Reformation partially too, seem to rely on communicative practices that green their garments to a questionable degree when paying closer attention. To reinstate, greenwashing is characterized by communicative practices that obscure the negative environmental impact of a company's activities and strategically foregrounds its positive performance (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020, p. 6). Greenwashing ultimately results in entirely false or misleading ideas being communicated to the consumers (TerraChoice, 2007). The fast fashion brands can be found to

commit three out of six different 'Sins of greenwashing' (TerraChoice, 2007), namely the Sin of Hidden Trade-Off, the Sin of Vagueness, and the Sin of 'Lesser of Two Evils'. In addition, in Zara's case, alignment with the 'Sin of no Proof' (cf. TerraChoice, 2007) was brought forward.

The Sin of Hidden Trade-Off is committed when single attributes are used to disproportionately 'green' an entire product (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 2). The fast fashion brands can be found to commit this sin by foregrounding the sustainable components of the garments, which suffice to label the entire product as *Conscious choice* or *Join life.* Similarly, the two sustainable clothing lines also work to green the entire corporate image of the brands. The Sin of Vagueness is concerned with vague communicative practices which obscure tangible information from consumers (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 3). Both H&M and Zara, as well as Reformation to some extent, can be found to lack clear definitions about different sustainability claims made on the web pages. While vagueness found in the H&M data manifests as the disclosure of minimal information about *Conscious choice* in general, Zara, in contrast, seems to rely on rhetorical strategies of overlexicalization and vague lexical choices to frame their *Join life* garments. Both Reformation and Pact can be found to aim for more transparency, which is why they cannot be considered to be committing this sin to a comparable degree. Noteworthily, Pact takes on an exemplary role in its endeavours to give potential customers as much concrete information as possible. The third Sin of 'Lesser of Two Evils' (TerraChoice, 2007) was found to be committed by both fast fashion brands, through their simultaneous promotion of sustainable and conventionally produced products.

Throughout the different sections of this paper, the issues that result from greenwashing have been discussed. Holding the results of my analysis against the theory of greenwashing, what kind of broader implications of the communicative practices studied here could be articulated? By implementing greenwashing in their advertisement, H&M and Zara ultimately communicate false or disingenuous ideas about the sustainability and environmental performance of their garments to consumers. This can be seen as fuelling consumers' distrust in light of growing 'green skepticism' (Nyilasy et al., 2014) in the long run. This development could ultimately hinder the expansion of sustainable brands which could have a wide-spread positive environmental impact (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 1). Therefore, greenwashing can be seen as a serious challenge for sustainable development. As stressed multiple times, Pact seems to be the only brand which actively engages in communicative practices which clearly resist the temptation of greenwashing.

Proposing some solutions to the issue of greenwashing, TerraChoice (2007) highlights the need to strengthen and encourage green marketing, as it is an "important accelerator toward environmental sustainability" (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 7). They fittingly pinpoint that "[a]voiding greenwashing does not require waiting for a perfect product. It does mean that sound science, honesty, and transparency are paramount" (TerraChoice, 2007, p. 7). In their study, Parguel et al. (2015) also propose approaches on how to mitigate the effects of greenwashing on consumers. They recommend traffic-light labels which give consumers concrete insight about the environmental performance of a product to combat greenwashing (Parguel et al., 2015). Put together, tangible information and transparency seem to be recommended communicative practices in the fight against greenwashing. Derived from these considerations I would argue that transparency could also reduce the problematic ideologies communicated through these texts and the unequal power relations between brands and consumers shaped by them. Whether brands chose to address this issue by adopting Parguel et al.'s (2015) approach or just by engaging in genuine communicative practices, the need for action in this regard is ever so urgent.

This research project should have shed some light on the semiotic choices which fashion brands rely on to advertise their garments. By doing so, the 'stories we live by' (Stibbe, 2021) promoted by these brands should have become clearer. The slow fashion brands, especially Pact, predominantly support 'stories' valuing transparency, as well as such centralizing social and environmental sustainability aspects. Pact seems to take on a pioneering role in implementing communicative practices aligning with TerraChoice's (2007) recommendations to combat greenwashing. The fast fashion brands, however, can be seen to uphold 'stories' of problematic ideological implications, which fail to adequately address social aspects, presumably resulting in misled consumers through greenwashing. Therefore, the fast fashion brands' advertising texts, while certainly communicating positive environmental ideas, can be seen as encouraging problematic consumption behaviour (cf. Stibbe, 2021).

The results of my analysis of advertising texts, held against issues of promoting green consumerism (Budinsky & Bryant, 2013, p. 208) and encouraging unsustainable consumption (Stibbe, 2021, p. 1), emphasize the importance of paying critical attention to the advertising of fashion brands. Herein lies the contribution of this research project to sustainable development. All the observations made throughout the analysis and discussion should enhance our understanding of advertising discourses and stress the need for transparent communicative practices to allow consumers to adequately assess the environmental and social impact of their consumption of fashion. Hopefully, as the demand for greener products increases and green

marketing expands (Mukonza et al., 2021), the ‘stories we live by’ (Stibbe, 2021) shaped by fashion industry will encourage positive change among both consumers and brands.

7 LIMITATIONS

While the analysis of the collected data has opened an interesting discussion, there are some limitations which need to be brought forward. First, the qualitative approach chosen for analysis does not allow the findings to be generalized. Thus, the claims made throughout this paper should be considered with due care. However, I tried to mitigate the subjective character of the analysis by giving insight to selection and thought processes, aiming for transparency.

Another limitation lies in the choice of sites. In hindsight choosing local slow fashion brands could have enriched the discussion, as more types of data would have been accessible (e.g., interviews, ethnographic data, etc.). Moreover, the aspect of locality inherent to slow fashion (e.g., Hall, 2018) would have been better reflected. Due to the limited scope of this paper, however, I chose to rely on the two selected slow fashion brands, which provided suitable data as well.

Noteworthily, the four sites are extremely heterogenous in their communicative practices, and the analysis of more fashion brands or a bigger sample of web pages could have mitigated this effect. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity reflects the diversity of advertising discourses of green garments, which is an important observation as well.

One important aspect which I was not able to appropriately address in this paper is the importance of the role of pricing of garments. While the difference in pricing between slow and fast fashion brands’ garments was mentioned briefly, an exhaustive discussion would have surpassed the scope of this paper. The focus was put on the communicative practices discussed above, predominantly paying attention to environmental and social questions of sustainability. Nevertheless, as Noppers et al. (2014) have noted, greener innovations are often more expensive, which can hinder their adoption (p. 53). Thus, such attributes are essential to the adoption of green garments and should be considered as a key factor in the aim to encourage more sustainably produced fashion. Further research in the area could therefore include a discussion of the role of economic aspects, and how they are discursively framed by the fashion brands.

On a similar note, fashion brands should also be studied critically in this regard, as garments' prices also define their accessibility for different groups of consumers. Hence, raising questions about social (in)equality inherent in the capitalist production and consumption

system. Huber (2019) and Haudenschild (2021) have criticized the promotion of so-called 'lifestyle environmentalism' which "fails to recognize and address the social inequalities at the root of the problem" (p. iii). This type of environmentalism is often tailored for a middle-class audience, while the working class does not have the same access to it (Huber, 2019). Therefore, questions of class inequality arise in this context.

As a last limitation I want to point out that any questions of gender and gender inequality were not addressed due to the focus defined for this project. However, the garments chosen for analysis are tailored to a presumably female (read) audience and imagery was found of female workforce in the case of Pact. Therefore, gender could also represent an intriguing topic to be studied in this context of the fashion industry.

I wish to conclude this paper with one last recommendation for future research in this area. As the supply chain of garments is extremely complex and numerous actors are involved in their production and distribution, it would be interesting to adopt Thurlow's (2020) proposed 'discourse-centered commodity chain analysis' to map the different discourses framing this industry. While the focus of this paper lies on identifying the discursive framing of green garments and its possible ideological contentions and links to greenwashing agendas in *advertising*; I see great potential for further analysis of privilege and elite discourses (e.g., Thurlow, 2020) along the entire supply chain of the fashion industry. This potential is brought forward due to the identified alignment with semiotics of "visible-invisible labour" (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2014), which shape an ideology of power inequality and class distinction.

8 REFERENCES

About The Good Trade. (n.d.). Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://www.thegoodtrade.com/about

About Us. (2021, November 3). Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://thesustainablelivingguide.com/about-us/

Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, music, text.* London, UK: Paladin.

Batista, C. (2022a, June 27). The Worst Of the WORST Fast Fashion Brands. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://theecohub.com/the-worst-of-the-worst-fast-fashion-brands/

Batista, C. (2022b, August 4). About. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://theecohub.com/about-me/

Best, Y. (2022). *Mapping the language of waste in the airline industry: A multimodal critical discourse analysis*. Unpublished BA thesis, University of Bern, Bern, CH.

Blesserholt, J. (2021). The 'sins' of greenwashing: A content analysis of greenwashing's role in the fast fashion industry. Master thesis, University of Stockholm, Sweden.

Budinsky, J., & Bryant, S. (2013). It's not easy being green": The greenwashing of environmental discourses in advertising. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, *38*(2), 207-226. https://doi.org/10.22230/cjc.2013v38n2a2628

Cameron, D., & Panovic, I. (2014). *Working with written discourse*. London, UK: Sage.

Commitments & Certifications. (n.d.-b). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://www.thereformation.com/sustainability/commitments-certifications.html

Company. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://www.zara.com/us/en/z-company-corp1391.html?v1=11112

Cooper, G., Green, N., Burningham, K., Evans, D., & Jackson, T. (2012). Unravelling the threads: Discourses of sustainability and consumption in an online forum. *Environmental Communication: a journal of nature and culture*, *6*(1), 101-118. https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2011.642080

Corporate image. (n.d.). In Cambridge Dictionary. Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/corporate-image

de Freitas Netto, S. V., Sobral, M. F. F., Ribeiro, A. R. B., & Soares, G. R. D. L. (2020). Concepts and forms of greenwashing: A systematic review. *Environmental Sciences Europe*, *32*(1), 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12302-020-0300-3

Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2011). The drivers of greenwashing. *California management review*, *54*(1), 64-87. https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2011.54.1.64

Driving systemic change in business, culture and society. (n.d.). Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://www.forbes.com/connect/who-we-are/

Earth.Org. (2021, May 11). Our Mission Statement & Guiding Beliefs. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://earth.org/mission-statement/

Ehrsam, M. M. (2016). Is green the new black?: the impact of sustainability on brand: Conscious fashion, a case study on H&M. Master thesis, Católica-Lisbon School of Business & Economics, Lisbon, Portugal.

Eric. (2022a, July 24). Best Sustainable Clothing Brands (2022). Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://thesustainablelivingguide.com/best-sustainable-clothing-brands/

Eric. (2022b, June 28). A List of 41 Fast Fashion Brands To Avoid (2022). Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://thesustainablelivingguide.com/fast-fashion-brands/

Evans, D., & Jackson, T. (2008). Sustainable consumption: Perspectives from social and cultural theory. *Ecological Economics*, 1-22.

Fair Trade Certified. (2022a, March). 2021 Consumer Insights [Report]. Retrieved, October 10, 2022, from https://go.fairtradecertified.org/l/930963/2022-02-24/br6k

Fletcher, K. (2010). Slow fashion: An invitation for systems change. *Fashion practice*, *2*(2), 259-265. https://doi.org/10.2752/175693810X12774625387594

Freitas, E. S. L. (2011). Advertising and discourse analysis. In P. Gee (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 453-466). London, UK: Routledge.

Frith, K. T. (1997). Chapter 1: Undressing the Ad: Reading Culture in Advertising. *Counterpoints*, *54*, 1-17.

Gaiser, W., Krug, W., & de Rijke, J. (2012). *Jugend, Nachhaltigkeit und nachhaltiger Konsum* (No. 262). Arbeitspapier.

Gal, S. & Irvine, J. T. (2019). *Signs of difference: language and ideology in social life*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Gershoff, A. D., & Frels, J. K. (2015). What makes it green? The role of centrality of green attributes in evaluations of the greenness of products. *Journal of Marketing*, *79*(1), 97-110. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.13.0303

H&M Group. (2021, January 12). History. Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://hmgroup.com/about-us/history/

H&M Group. (2022a, September 16). Sustainability Commitment. Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://hmgroup.com/sustainability/standards-and-policies/sustainability-commitment/

H&M Group. (2022b, September 29). Market overview. Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://hmgroup.com/about-us/markets-and-expansion/market-overview/

H&M Group. (2022c, October 3). Climate. Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://hmgroup.com/sustainability/circularity-and-climate/climate/

Hall, J. (2018). Digital kimono: fast fashion, slow fashion?. *Fashion Theory*, *22*(3), 283-307. https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2017.1319175

Harré, R., Brockmeier, J., & Mühlhäusler, P. (1999). *Greenspeak: A study of environmental discourse*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE publ.

Haudenschild, N. (2021). *The Rhetorics of Rubbish: A Critical Analysis of Language, Class, and "Zero-waste" Discourse*. Unpublished MA thesis, University of Bern, Bern, CH.

History. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://www.inditex.com/itxcomweb/en/group/history

Huber, M. T. (2019). Ecological politics for the working class. *Catalyst Journal*, *3*(1).

Huynh, C. (2022, September 6). 10 Fast Fashion Brands We Avoid At All Costs. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://goodonyou.eco/fast-fashion-brands-we-avoid/

Hvass, K. K. (2015). Business Model Innovation through Second Hand Retailing: A Fashion Industry Case. *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, *57*, 11–32. http://www.jstor.org/stable/jcorpciti.57.11

Igini, M. (2022, August 18). 5 Fast-Fashion Brands Called Out for Greenwashing. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://earth.org/fast-fashion-brands-greenwashing/

Inditex Memoria Anual 2017. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://static.inditex.com/annual_report_2017/en/our-products/join-life

Industry Ranking. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://www.fastretailing.com/eng/ir/direction/position.html

Joy, A., Sherry Jr, J. F., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J., & Chan, R. (2012). Fast fashion, sustainability, and the ethical appeal of luxury brands. *Fashion theory*, *16*(3), 273-295. https://doi.org/10.2752/175174112X13340749707123

Kress, G. (2011). Multimodal discourse analysis. In P. Gee (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 35-50). London, UK: Routledge.

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (1996). *Reading images: the grammar of visual design* (1st ed.). London, UK: Routledge.

Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2006). *Reading images: the grammar of visual design* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Routledge.

Lewin, H., & Morris, J. (1977). Marx's Concept of Fetishism. *Science & Society*, *41*(2), 172–190.

Loetscher, S., Starmanns, M., & Petrie, L. (2017, September). Changing fashion: The clothing and textile industry at the brink of radical transformation. *WWF-Rating Der Bekleidungs- Und Textilindustrie*. WWF Switzerland. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://www.wwf.ch/sites/default/files/doc-2017-09/2017-09-WWF-Report-Changing_fashion_2017_EN.pdf

Machin, D. (2013). What is multimodal critical discourse studies?. *Critical discourse studies*, *10*(4), 347-355. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2013.813770

Machin, & Mayr, A. (2012). *How to do critical discourse analysis: a multimodal introduction*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Majláth, M. (2017). The effect of greenwashing information on ad evaluation. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, *6*(3), 92-104. https://doi.org/10.14207/ejsd.2017.v6n3p92

Mapes, G. (2018). (De) constructing distinction: Class inequality and elite authenticity in mediatized food discourse. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, *22*(3), 265-287. https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12285

Mayr, A. (2016). 11. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). In N. Klug & H. Stöckl (Eds.), *Handbuch Sprache im multimodalen Kontext* (pp. 261-276). Berlin, G and Boston, MA: De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110296099-012

Miles, S. (1998). *Consumerism*. London, UK: Sage

Miles, S., Cliff, D., & Burr, V. (1998). 'Fitting in and sticking out': consumption, consumer meanings and the construction of young people's identities. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *1*(1), 81-96. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.1998.10592996

Morgan, B. (2020, February 25). 11 Fashion Companies Leading The Way In Sustainability. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/blakemorgan/2020/02/24/11-fashion-companies-leading-the-way-in-sustainability/?sh=5caaae616dba

Mühlhäusler, P., & Peace, A. (2006). Environmental discourses. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *35*(1), 457-479. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.35.081705.123203

Mukonza, C., Hinson, R. E., Adeola, O., Adisa, I., Mogaji, E., & Kirgiz, A. C. (2021). Green marketing: An introduction. In C. Mukonza, R.E Hinson, O. Adeola, I. Adisa, E. Mogaji, A.C. Kirgiz (Eds.), *Green Marketing in Emerging Markets* (pp. 3-14). Palgrave Studies of Marketing in Emerging Economies. Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74065-8_1

Neumann, H. L., Martinez, L. M., & Martinez, L. F. (2020). Sustainability efforts in the fast fashion industry: consumer perception, trust and purchase intention. *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal*. *12* (3), 571-590. https://doi.org/10.1108/SAMPJ-11-2019-0405

Niinimäki, K., Peters, G., Dahlbo, H., Perry, P., Rissanen, T., & Gwilt, A. (2020). The environmental price of fast fashion. *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*, *1*(4), 189-200. https://doi.org/10.1038/s43017-020-0039-9

Noppers, E. H., Keizer, K., Bolderdijk, J. W., & Steg, L. (2014). The adoption of sustainable innovations: Driven by symbolic and environmental motives. *Global Environmental Change*, *25*, 52-62. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2014.01.012

Nyilasy, G., Gangadharbatla, H., & Paladino, A. (2014). Perceived greenwashing: The interactive effects of green advertising and corporate environmental performance on consumer reactions. *Journal of business ethics, 125*(4), 693-707. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1944-3

Oh hi, we're Reformation. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://www.thereformation.com/sustainability/oh-hi.html

Olsen, M. C., Slotegraaf, R. J., & Chandukala, S. R. (2014). Green claims and message frames: how green new products change brand attitude. *Journal of Marketing*, *78*(5), 119-137. https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.13.0387

Our Stores | Reformation. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://www.thereformation.com/stores.html

pact | Sustainability, Certified. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://wearpact.com/sustainability

PACT. (2021, November 8). [Blog post]. Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://www.panaprium.com/blogs/i/pact

Parguel, B., Benoit-Moreau, F., & Russell, C. A. (2015). Can evoking nature in advertising mislead consumers? The power of 'executional greenwashing'. *International Journal of Advertising, 34*(1), 107-134. https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2014.996116

Profile Zara. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://www.forbes.com/companies/zara/?sh=7aaf052e7487

Public Eye (2020). *Orientierung im Label-Dschungel.* Retrieved from https://www.publiceye.ch/fileadmin/doc/Mode/2017_PublicEye_Orientierung_im_Label_Dschungel_Flyer.pdf

Ref Timeline & History: How We Got Started. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2022, from https://www.thereformation.com/timeline.html

Scanlan, S. J. (2017). Framing fracking: scale-shifting and greenwashing risk in the oil and gas industry. *Local Environment, 22*(11), 1311-1337. https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2017.1345877

Staff. (2022, September 15). 35 Sustainable Clothing Brands Betting Against Fast Fashion. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://www.thegoodtrade.com/features/fair-trade-clothing

Stibbe, A. (2021). *Ecolinguistics: language, ecology and the stories we live by* (2nd ed.). London, UK: Routledge.

Tannen, D., Hamilton, H. E., & Schiffrin, D. (2001). Introduction. In D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (1st ed., pp. 352-371). Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

TerraChoice. (2007). *The "Six Sins of Greenwashing": A study of Environmental Claims in North American Consumer Markets.* TerraChoice Environmental Marketing Inc. Retrieved November 18, 2022, from https://sustainability.usask.ca/documents/Six_Sins_of_Greenwashing_nov2007.pdf

Thurlow, C. (2020). Expanding our sociolinguistic horizons? Geographical thinking and the articulatory potential of commodity chain analysis. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, *24*(3), 350-368. https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12388

Thurlow, C. & Jaworski, A. (2014). Visible-invisible: The social semiotics of labour in luxury tourism. In T. Birtchnell & J. Caletrío (Eds.), *Elite Mobilities* (pp. 176-193). London, UK: Routledge.

Thurlow, C., & Aiello, G. (2007). National pride, global capital: A social semiotic analysis of transnational visual branding in the airline industry. *Visual communication*, *6*(3), 305-344. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1470357207081002

Thurlow, C., & Jaworski, A. (2012). Elite mobilities: The semiotic landscapes of luxury and privilege. *Social Semiotics*, *22*(4), 487-516. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2012.721592

United Nations. (n.d.-a). Goal 12 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Retrieved November 7, 2022, from https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal12

United Nations. (n.d.-b). THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development. Retrieved November 7, 2022, from https://sdgs.un.org/goals

Valor, C. (2007). The influence of information about labour abuses on consumer choice of clothes: a grounded theory approach. *Journal of marketing management*, *23*(7-8), 675-695. https://doi.org/10.1362/026725707X229993

Van Dijk, T. A. (2001). Critical Discourse Analysis. In D. Tannen, H. E. Hamilton & D. Schiffrin (Eds.), *The handbook of discourse analysis* (1st ed., pp. 352-371). Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Van Leeuwen, T., & Wodak, R. (1999). Legitimizing immigration control: A discourse-historical analysis. *Discourse studies*, *1*(1), 83-118. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445699001001 00

Wear the change you want to see. (2022, June 24). Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://goodonyou.eco/about/

Wodak, R. (2014). Critical discourse analysis. In C. Leung, B. V. Street (Eds.), *The Routledge companion to English studies* (pp. 302-316). Oxon, UK and New York, NY: Routledge.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical Discourse Analysis: History, Agenda, Theory, and Methodology. In R. Wodak, & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 1-33). London, UK: Sage.

Wong, M. (2022, May 30). 16 Most Sustainable Fashion Brands to Support in 2022. Retrieved September 26, 2022, from https://earth.org/most-sustainable-fashion-brands/

World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). Our common future. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yalley, A.A., & Twum, K.K. (2021). Green Consumer Behaviour. In C. Mukonza, R.E Hinson, O. Adeola, I. Adisa, E. Mogaji, A.C. Kirgiz (Eds.), *Green Marketing in Emerging Markets* (pp. 3-14). Palgrave Studies of Marketing in Emerging Economies. Cham, CH: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74065-8_4

9 PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I hereby state that I have read the section on plagiarism on the Department of English's website and I confirm that I have complied with the requirements.

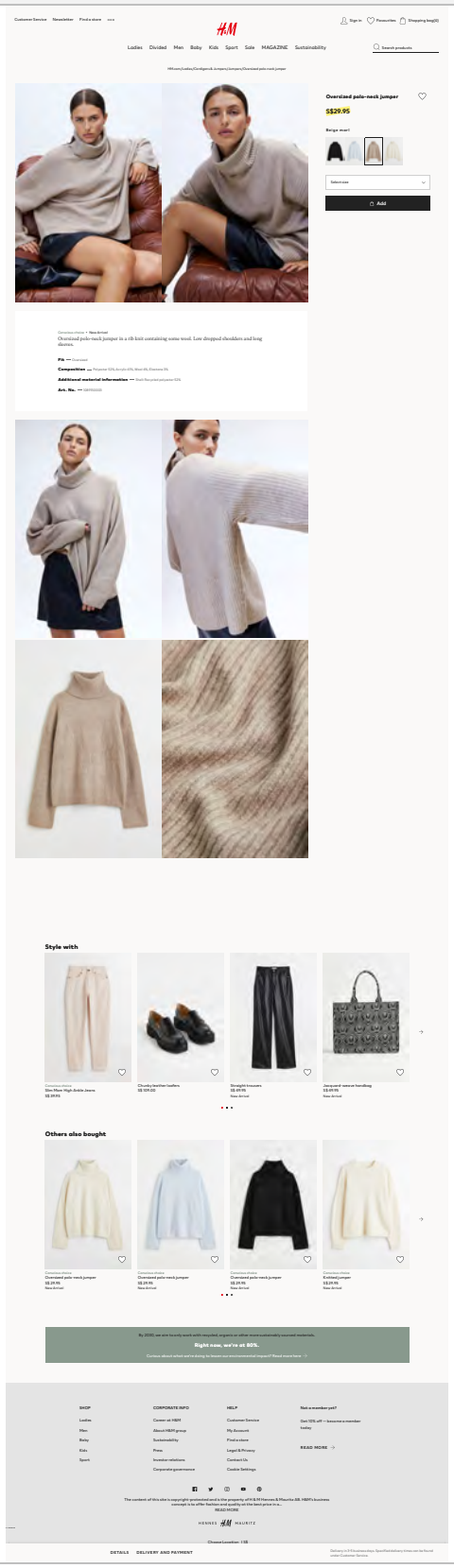
Date: 5th January 2023 Signature: 

10 APPENDIX

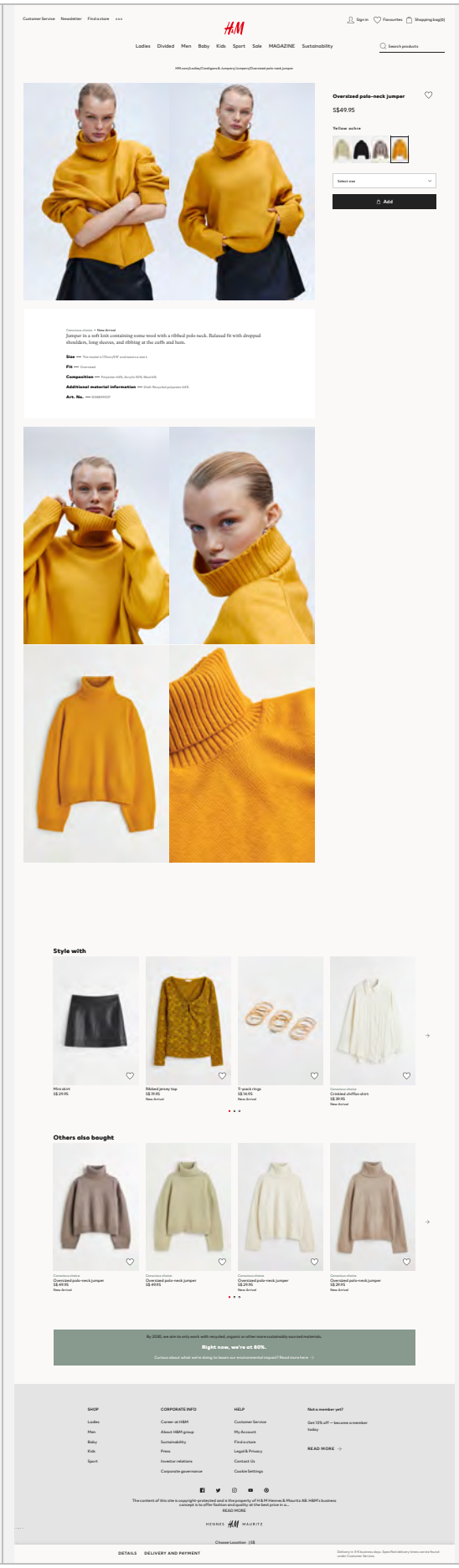
Table 10: Choice of sites – websites and brand rankings

Website (short URL): Title	Short description	Brands (ranking)
Fast Fashion		
thesustainablelivingguide.com: A List of 41 Fast Fashion Brands To Avoid (2022) (Eric, 2022b)	Online guide that promotes sustainable lifestyles ("About Us", 2021).	Zara (1), H&M Group (2), SheIn (3), Mango (6), GAP (7), Forever 21 (9)
theecohub.com: The Worst Of the WORST Fast Fashion Brands (Batista, 2022a)	Website promoting and sharing ideas and insights about sustainable ways of living (Batista, 2022b).	Boohoo, SheIn, Forever 21, Zara, H&M
goodonyou.eco: 10 Fast Fashion Brands We Avoid At All Costs (Huynh, 2022)	Website committed to provide sustainability advice to consumers, focused on supporting SDG 12 ("Wear the change you want to see", 2022).	SheIn (3), Boohoo (6)
earth.org: 5 Fast-Fashion Brands Called Out for Greenwashing (Igini, 2022)	Not-for-profit organization focusing on environmental questions that is based in Hong Kong (Earth.Org, 2021).	H&M (1), Zara (2)
Slow Fashion		
thesustainablelivingguide.com: Best Sustainable Clothing Brands (2022) (Eric, 2022a)	Online guide that promotes sustainable lifestyles ("About Us", 2021).	Reformation (1), Pact (2), Patagonia (11)
thegoodtrade.com: 35 Sustainable Clothing Brands Betting Against Fast Fashion (Staff, 2022)	Based in LA, life-style media brand that has over 100 million readers/viewers. Focused on promotion sustainable ways of living ("About The Good Trade", n.d.).	Pact (1), Reformation (6), Patagonia (10), Tentree (11)
forbes.com: 11 Fashion Companies Leading the Way in Sustainability (Morgan, 2020)	One of the leading economic magazines world-wide that has a global audience ("Driving systemic change in business, culture and society", n.d.).	Patagonia (2), Pact clothing (3), Tentree (6)
earth.org: 16 Most Sustainable Fashion Brands to Support in 2022 (Wong, 2022)	Not-for-profit organization focusing on environmental questions that is based in Hong Kong (Earth.Org, 2021).	Reformation (4)

Table 11: H&M – Data label, access dates, URLs & PDFs

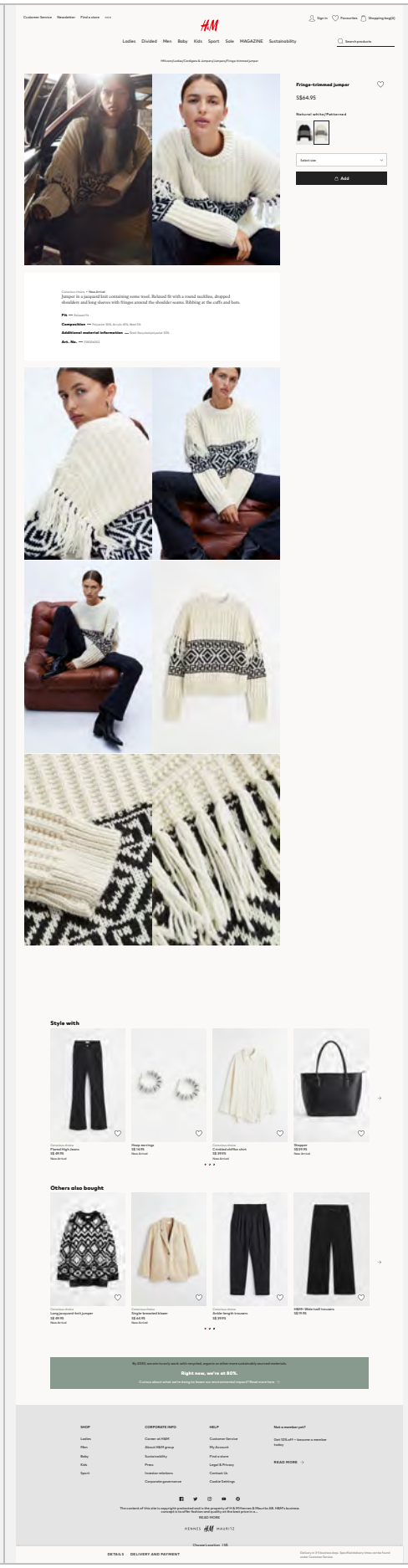
Label & URL	PDF of web page
Site	H&M
H&M 1 https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1089150003.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)	

H&M 2
https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1038839007.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)

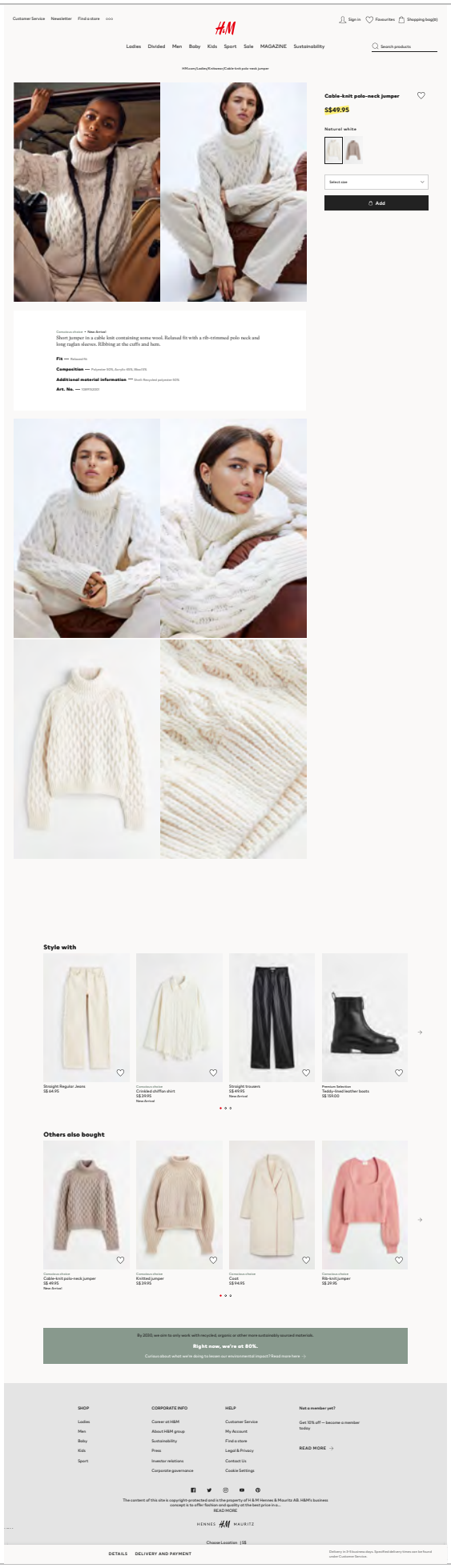


H&M 3
https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1089153004.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)

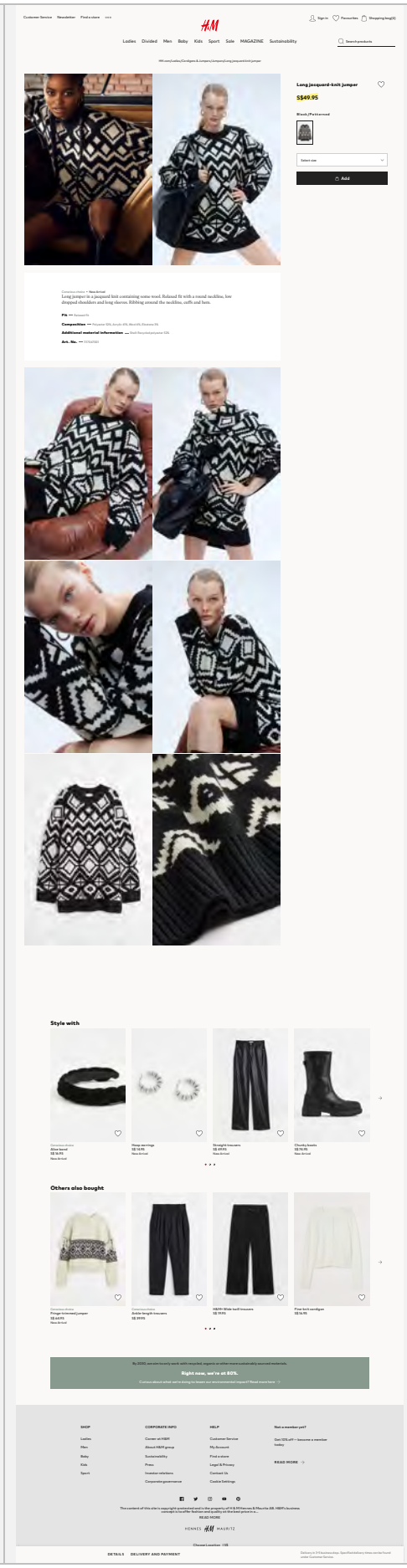
H&M 4
https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1118006002.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)



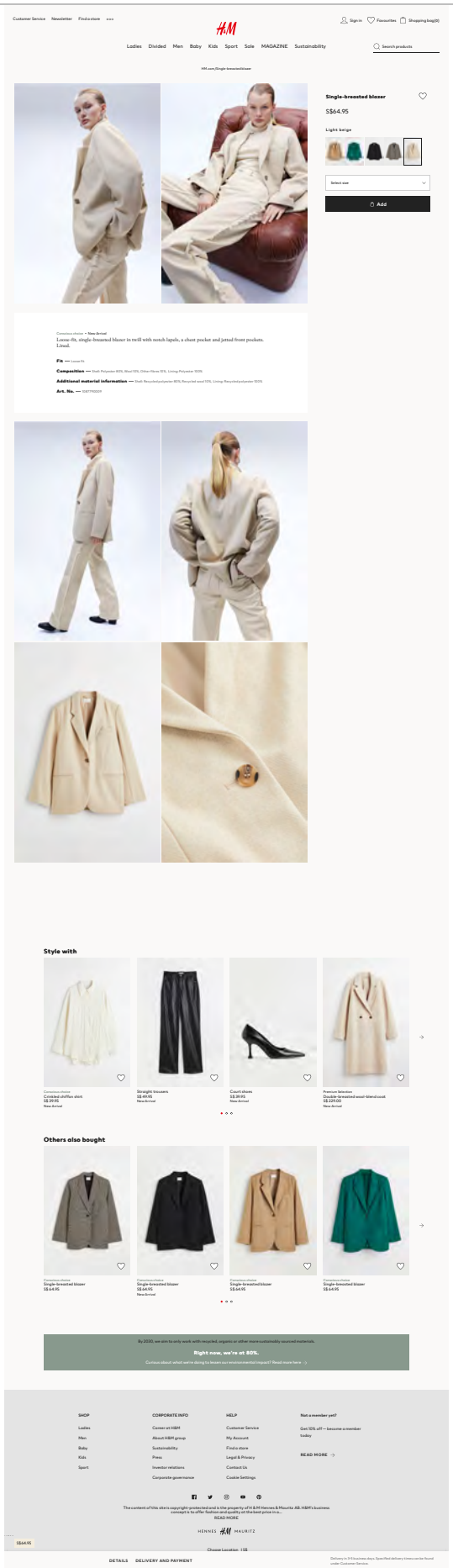
H&M 5
https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1089152001.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)



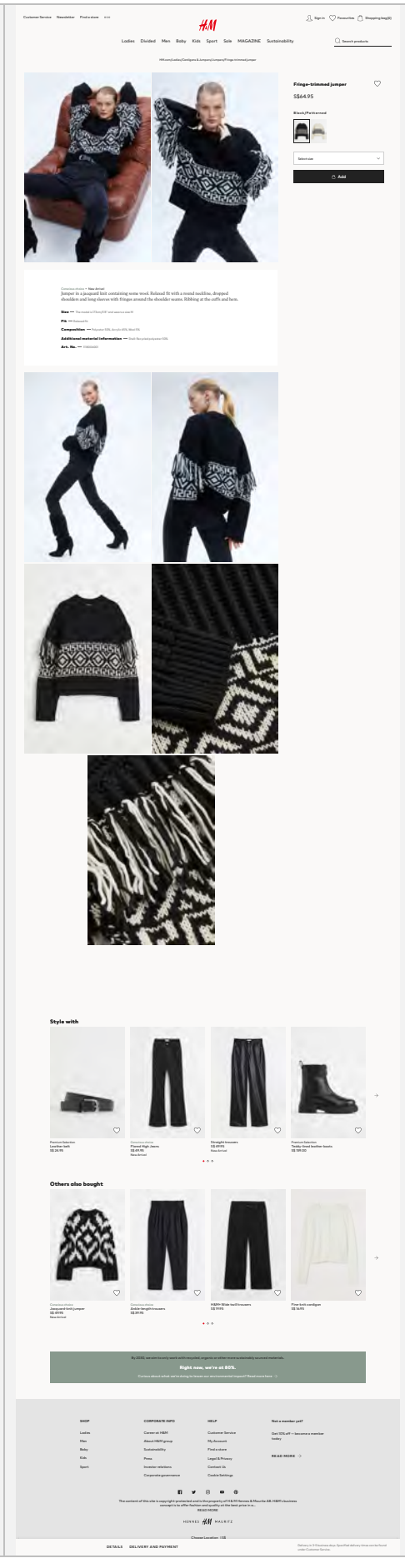
H&M 6 https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1117047001.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)



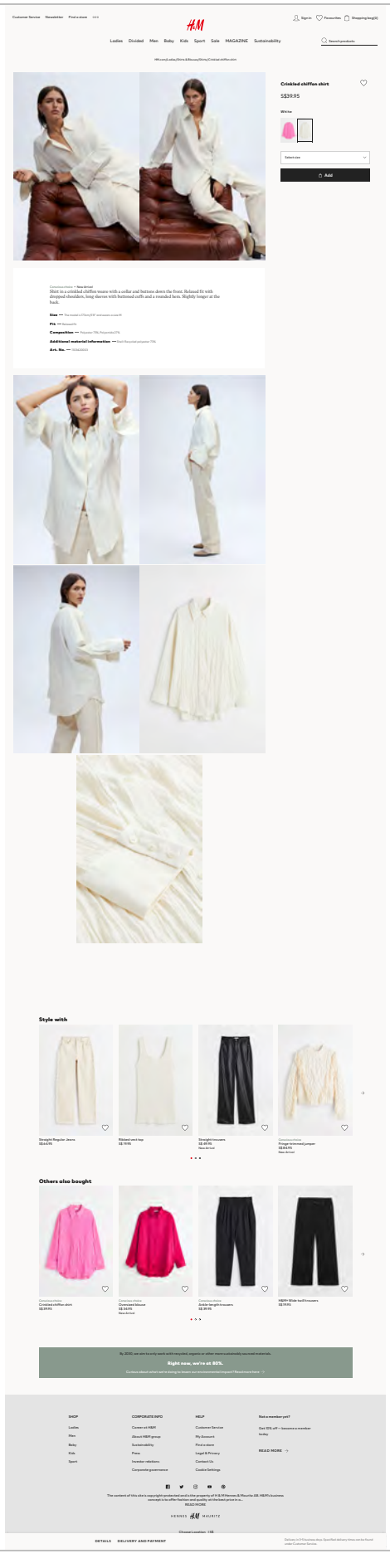
H&M 7
https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1087790009.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)



H&M 8 https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1118006001.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)



H&M 9
https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1103420003.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)



H&M 10
https://www2.hm.com/en_sg/productpage.1042761002.html (Accessed 7.10.2022)

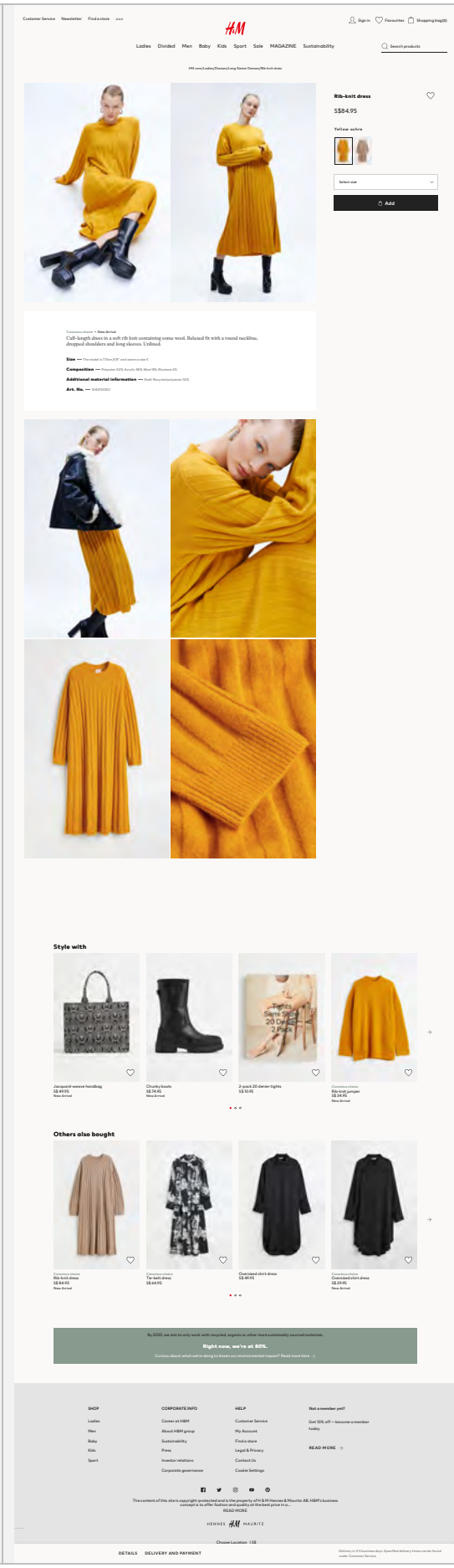
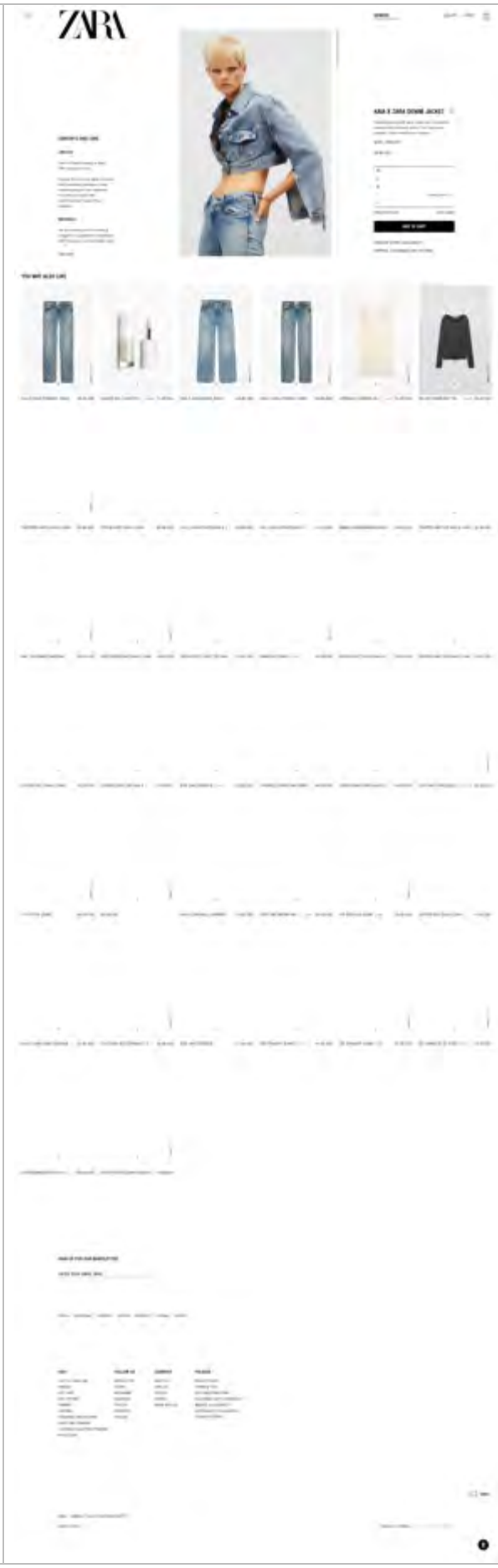


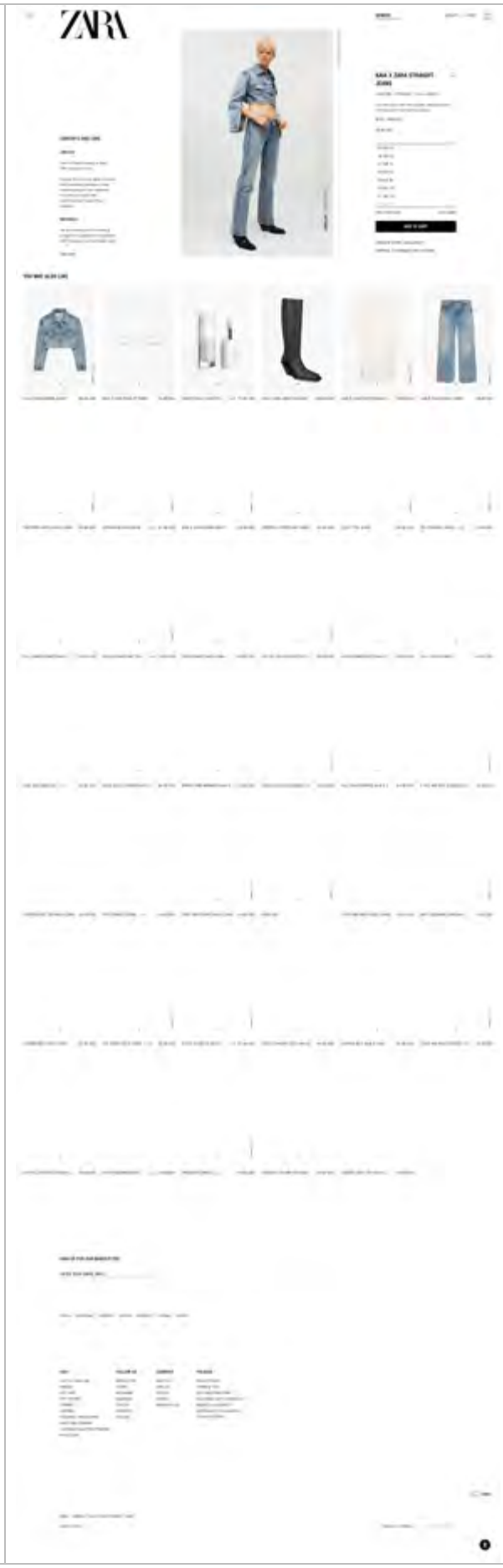
Table 12: Zara – Data label, access dates, URLs & PDFs

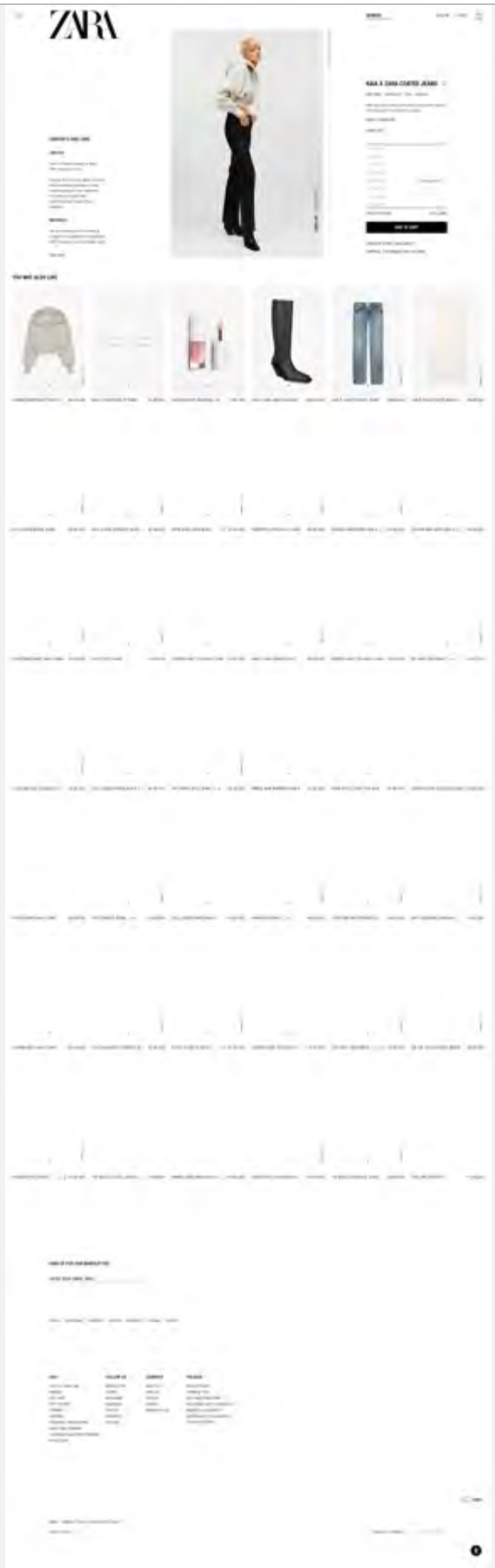
Label & URL	PDF of web page
Site	Zara
ZARA 1 https://www.zara.com/us/en/open-back-linen-blend-top-kaia-x-zara-p05755127.html?v1=200060665&v2=2111785 (Accessed 06.10.2022)	

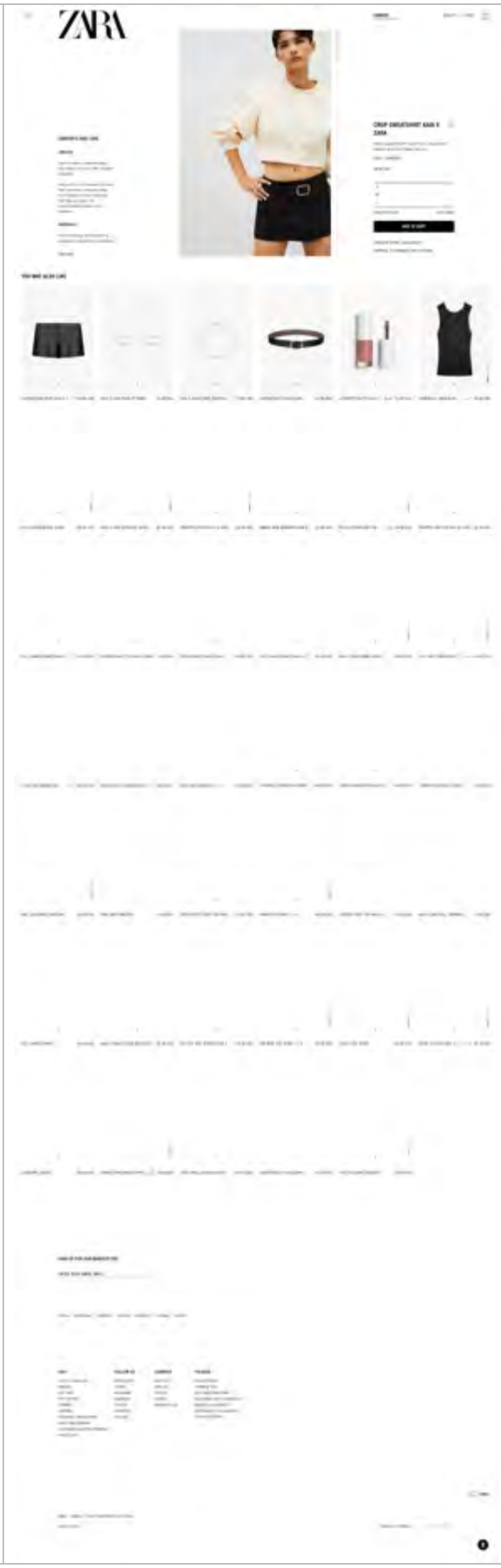
ZARA 2 https://www.zara.com/us/en/kaia-x-zara-baggy-jeans-p06688221.html?v1=204848968&v2=2111785 (Accessed 06.10.2022)	

ZARA 3 https://www.zara.com/us/en/kaia-x-zara-denim-jacket-p06688220.html?v1=204323809 (Accessed 06.10.2022)	

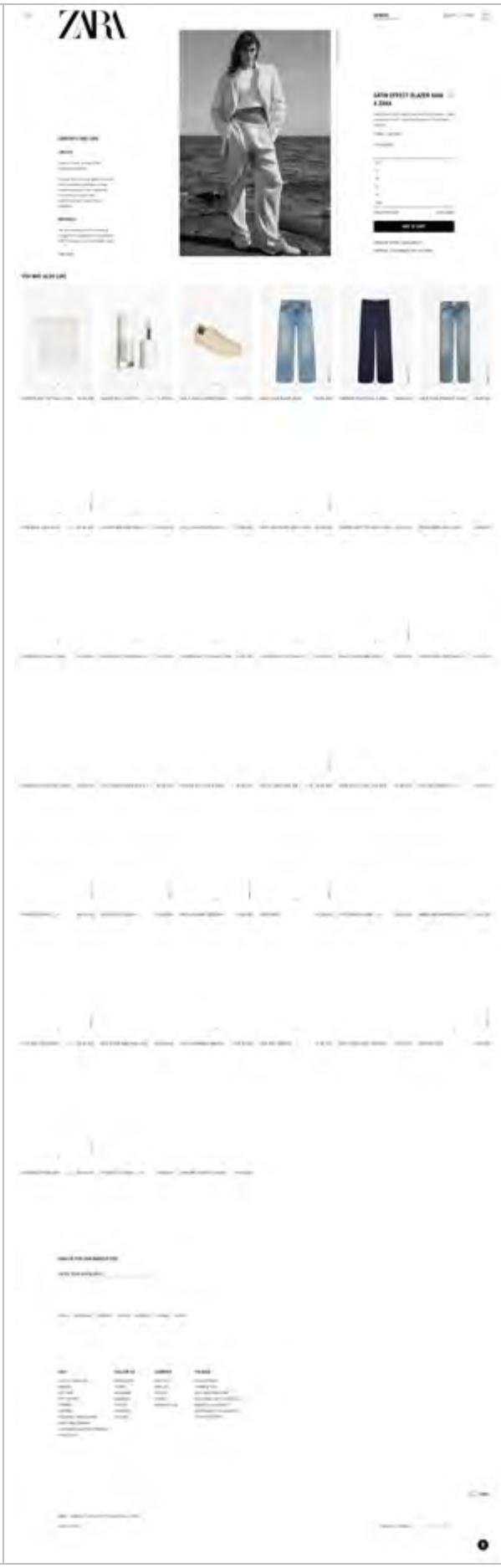
ZARA 4 https://www.zara.com/us/en/pinstripe-pants-kaia-x-zara-p06929504.html?v1=208861669 (Accessed 06.10.2022)	

ZARA 5 https://www.zara.com/us/en/kaia-x-zara-straight-jeans-p06688222.html?v1=204848260 (Accessed 06.10.2022)	

ZARA 6 https://www.zara.com/us/en/kaia-x-zara-coated-jeans-p06688226.html?v1=204324037 (Accessed 10.10.2022)	

ZARA 7 https://www.zara.com/us/en/crop-sweatshirt-kaia-x-zara-p00264838.html?v1=203277399 (Accessed 06.10.2022)	

ZARA 8 https://www.zara.com/us/en/kaia-x-zara-coated-baggy-jeans-p06688219.html?v1=218914415 (Accessed 06.10.2022)	

ZARA 9 https://www.zara.com/us/en/satin-effect-blazer-kaia-x-zara-p02010913.html?v1=218914404 (Accessed 06.10.2022)	

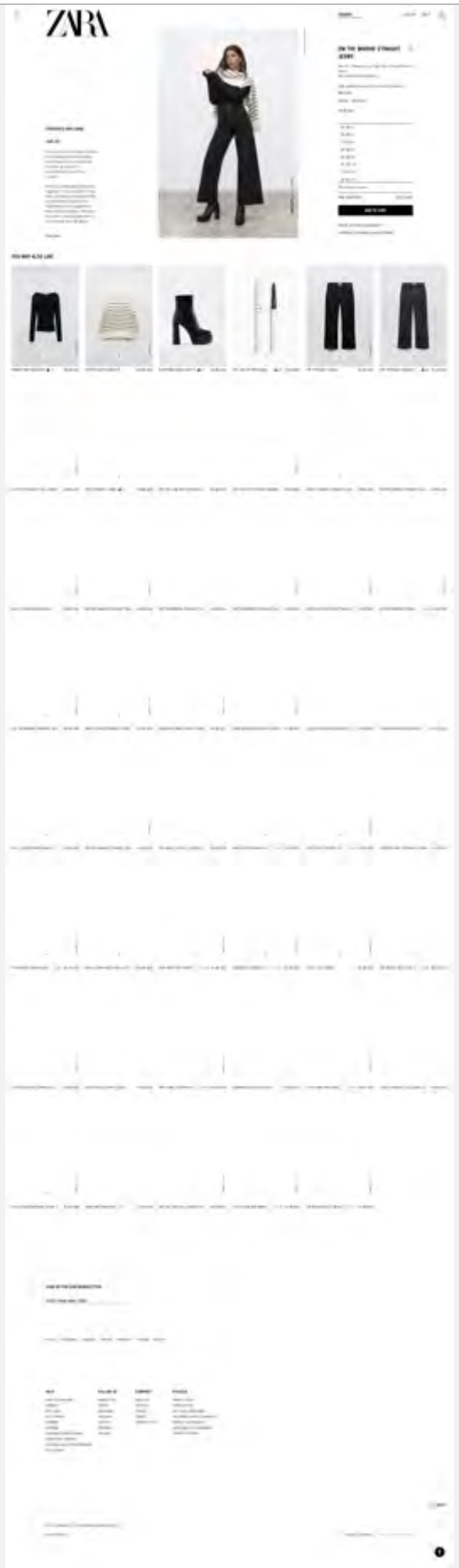
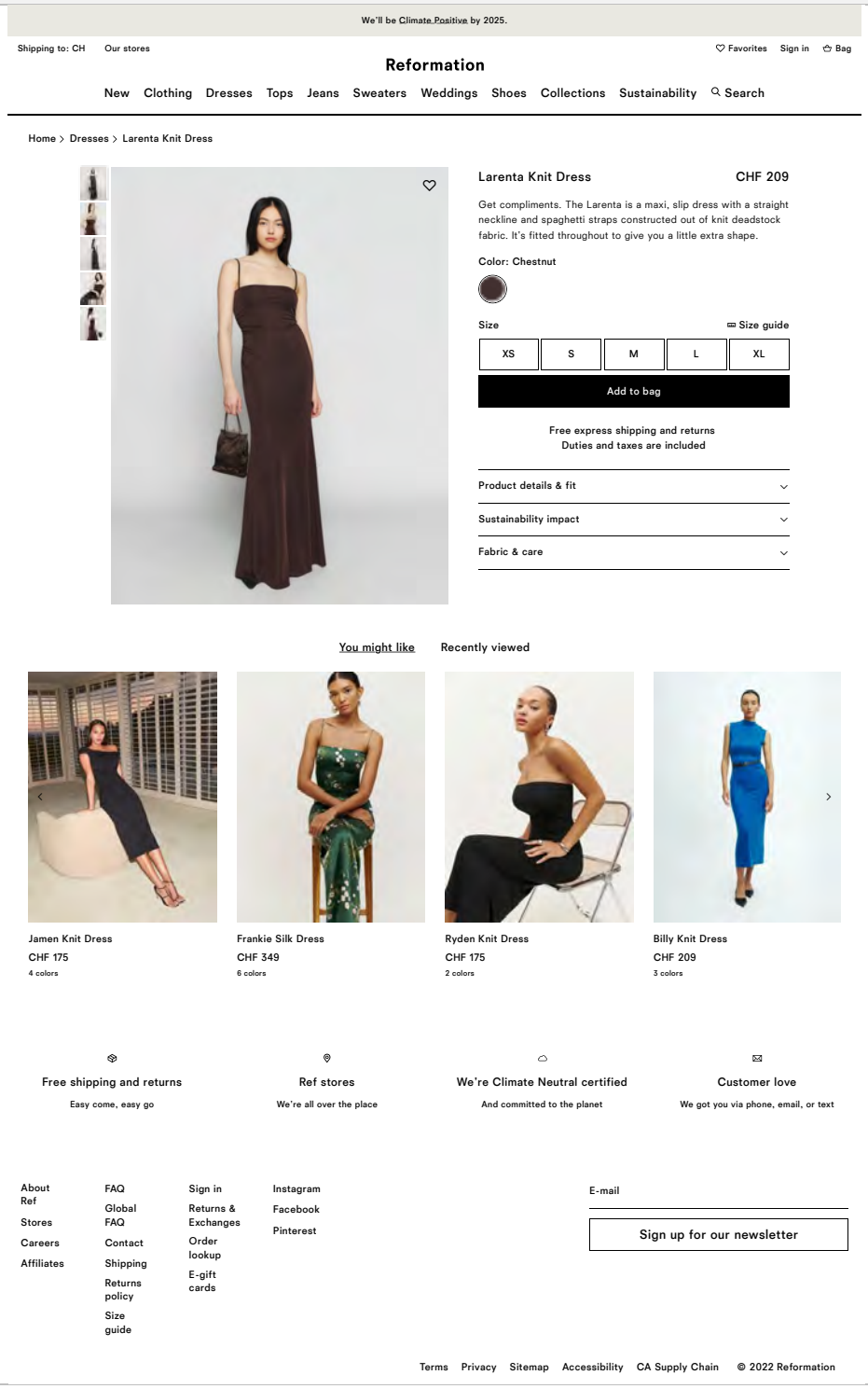
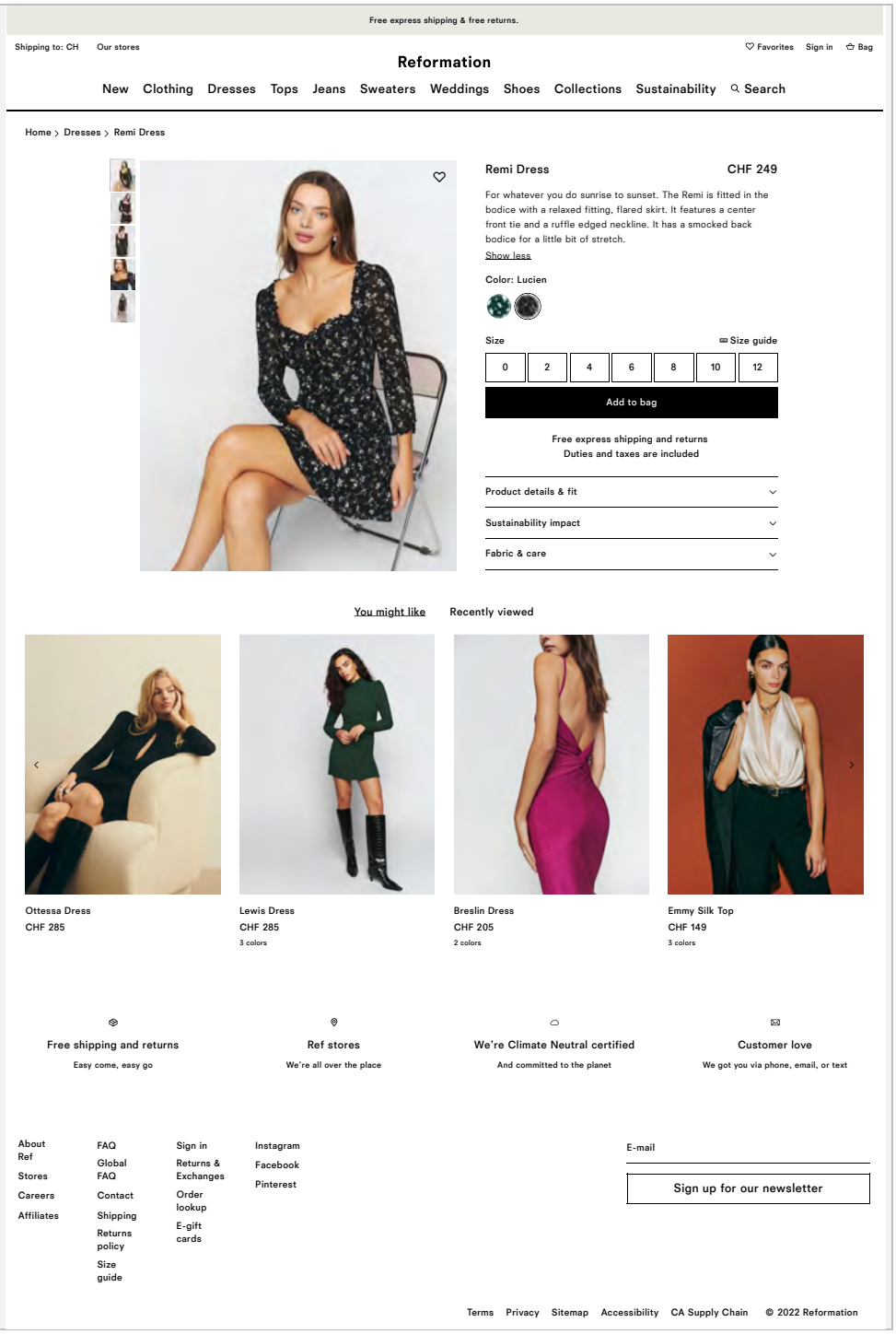
ZARA 10 https://www.zara.com/us/en/zw-the-marine-straight-jeans-p01934244.html?v1=183950229 (Accessed 06.10.2022)	

Table 13: Reformation – Data label, access dates, URLs & PDFs

Label & URL	PDF of web page
Site	Reformation
REF 1 https://www.thereformation.com/products/larenta-knit-dress/1311528CTN.html?dwvar_1311528CTN_color=CTN (Accessed 7.10.2022)	

REF 2
https://www.thereformation.com/products/remi-dress/1307173LCI.html?dwvar_1307173LCI_color=LCI
(Accessed 7.10.2022)



REF 3 https://www.thereformation.com/products/wayne-coat/1311092IRT.html?dwvar_1311092IRT_color=IRT (Accessed 7.10.2022)

We'll be Climate Positive by 2025.

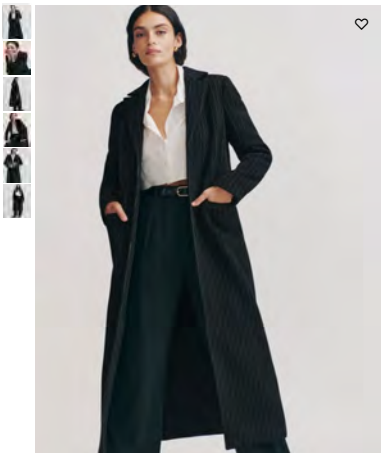
Shipping to: CH Our stores

Reformation

Favorites Sign in Bag

New Clothing Dresses Tops Jeans Sweaters Weddings Shoes Collections Sustainability Search

Home > Clothing > Outerwear > Wayne Coat



Wayne Coat CHF 455

Layer up. The Wayne is a long, slim fit, single breasted coat. It features a notch lapel collar, functional button front, and single welt pockets. The Wayne Coat pairs well with the Mason Pant

Color: Pinstripe

Size Size guide

XS S M L XL

Add to bag

Free express shipping and returns
Duties and taxes are included

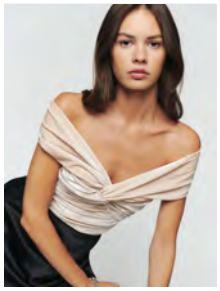
Product details & fit

Sustainability impact

Fabric & care

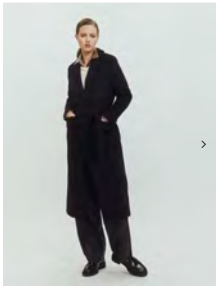
You might like Recently viewed

Albert Coat
CHF 419
2 colors



Ezlynn Knit Top
CHF 105
5 colors

Ottessa Dress
CHF 285



Downing Coat
CHF 419
2 colors

Free shipping and returns
Easy come, easy go

Ref stores
We're all over the place

We're Climate Neutral certified
And committed to the planet

Customer love
We got you via phone, email, or text

About Ref
Stores
Careers
Affiliates

FAQ
Global FAQ
Contact
Shipping
Returns policy
Size guide

Sign in
Returns & Exchanges
Order lookup
E-gift cards

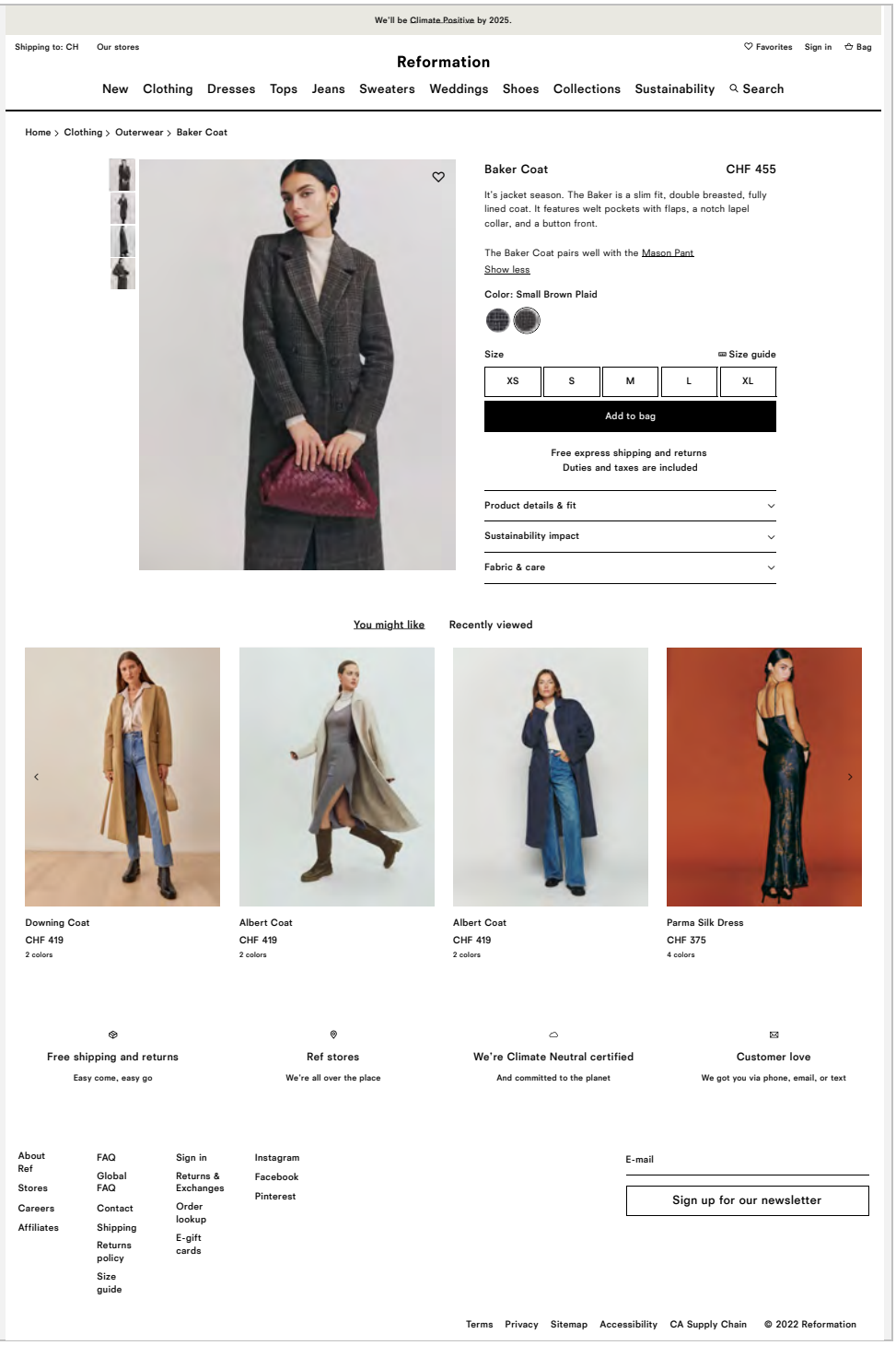
Instagram
Facebook
Pinterest

E-mail

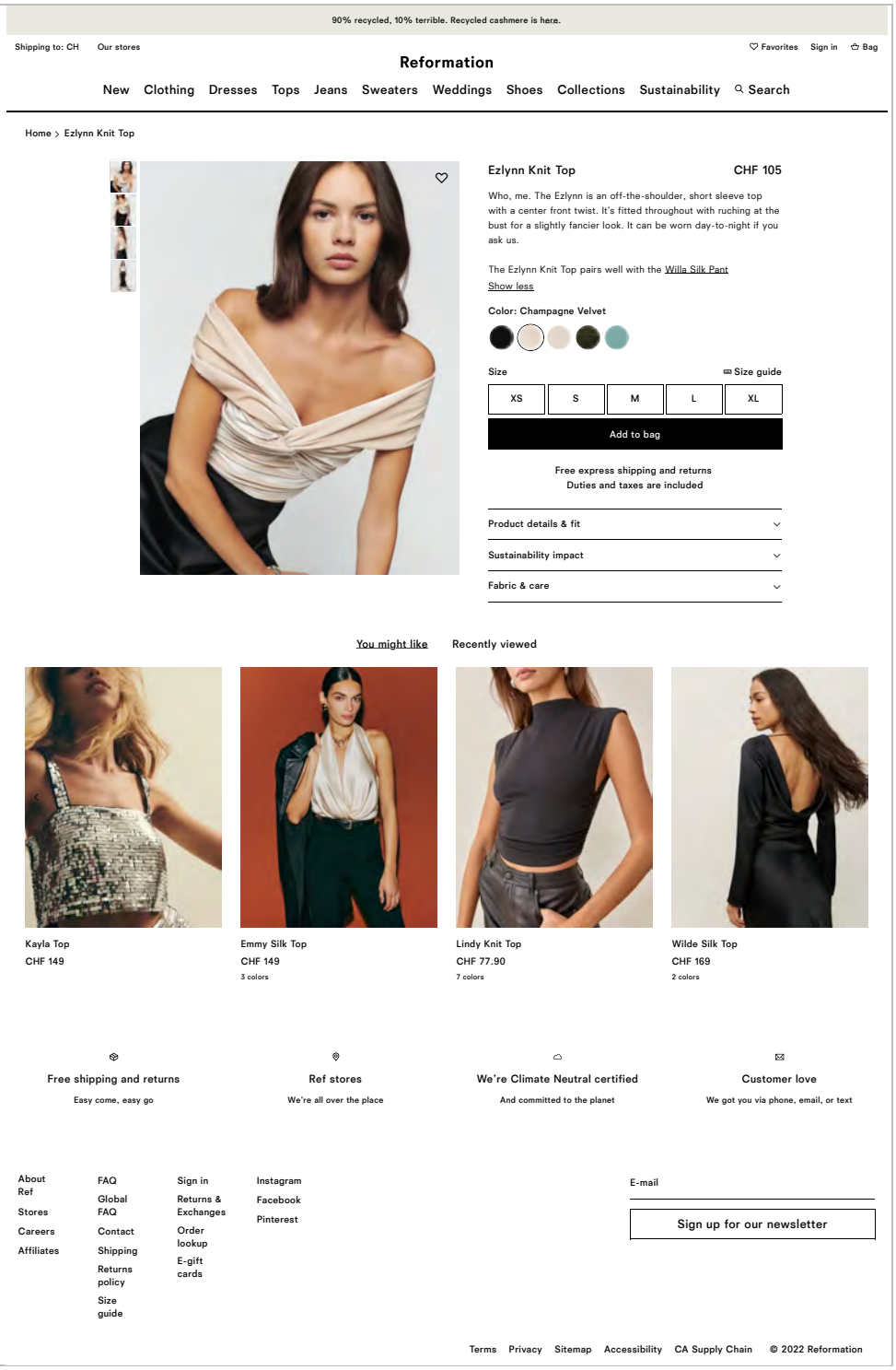
Sign up for our newsletter

Terms Privacy Sitemap Accessibility CA Supply Chain © 2022 Reformation

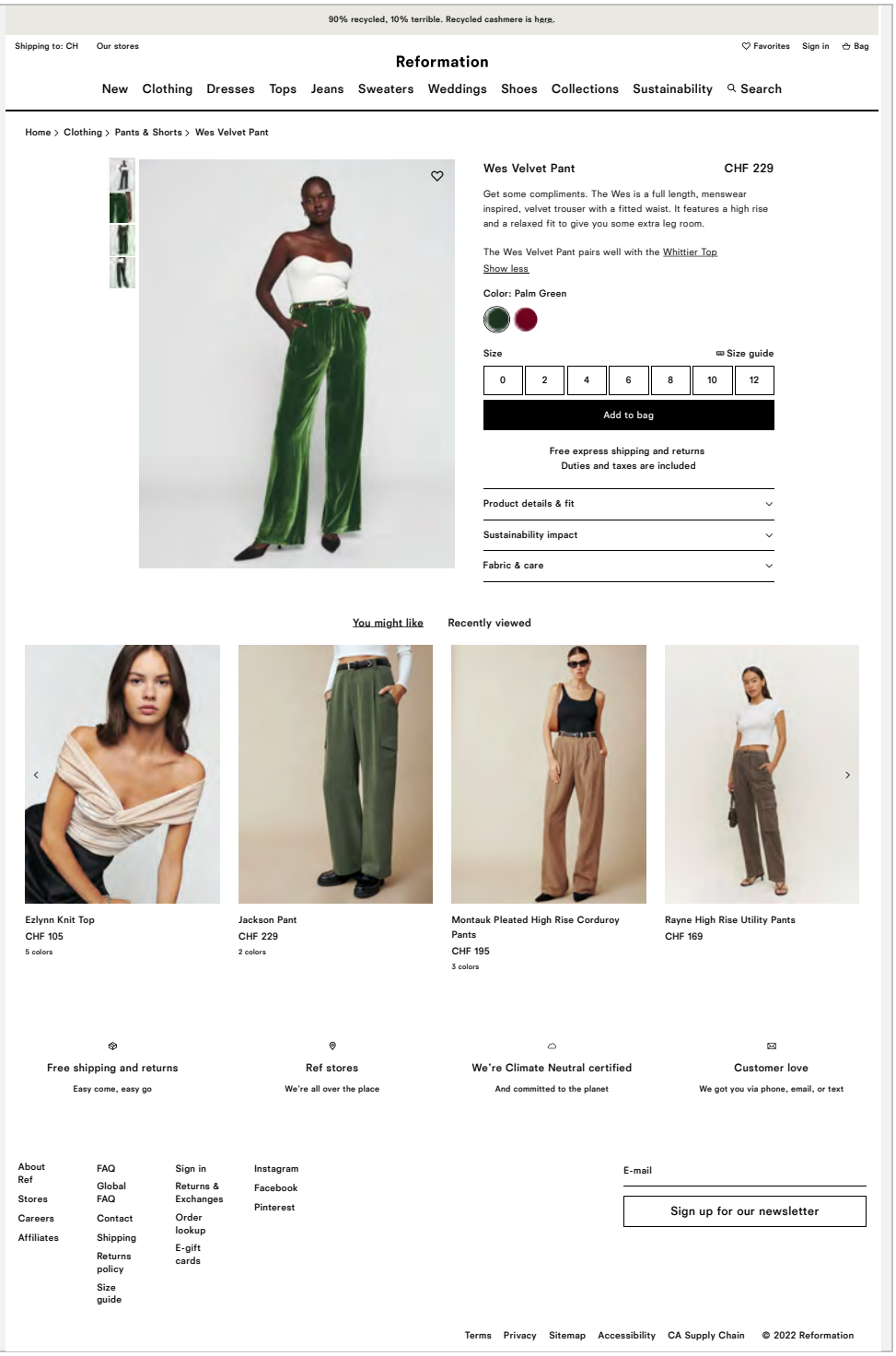
REF 4
https://www.thereformation.com/products/baker-coat/1311104SBP.html?dwvar_1311104SBP_color=SBP
(Accessed 7.10.2022)



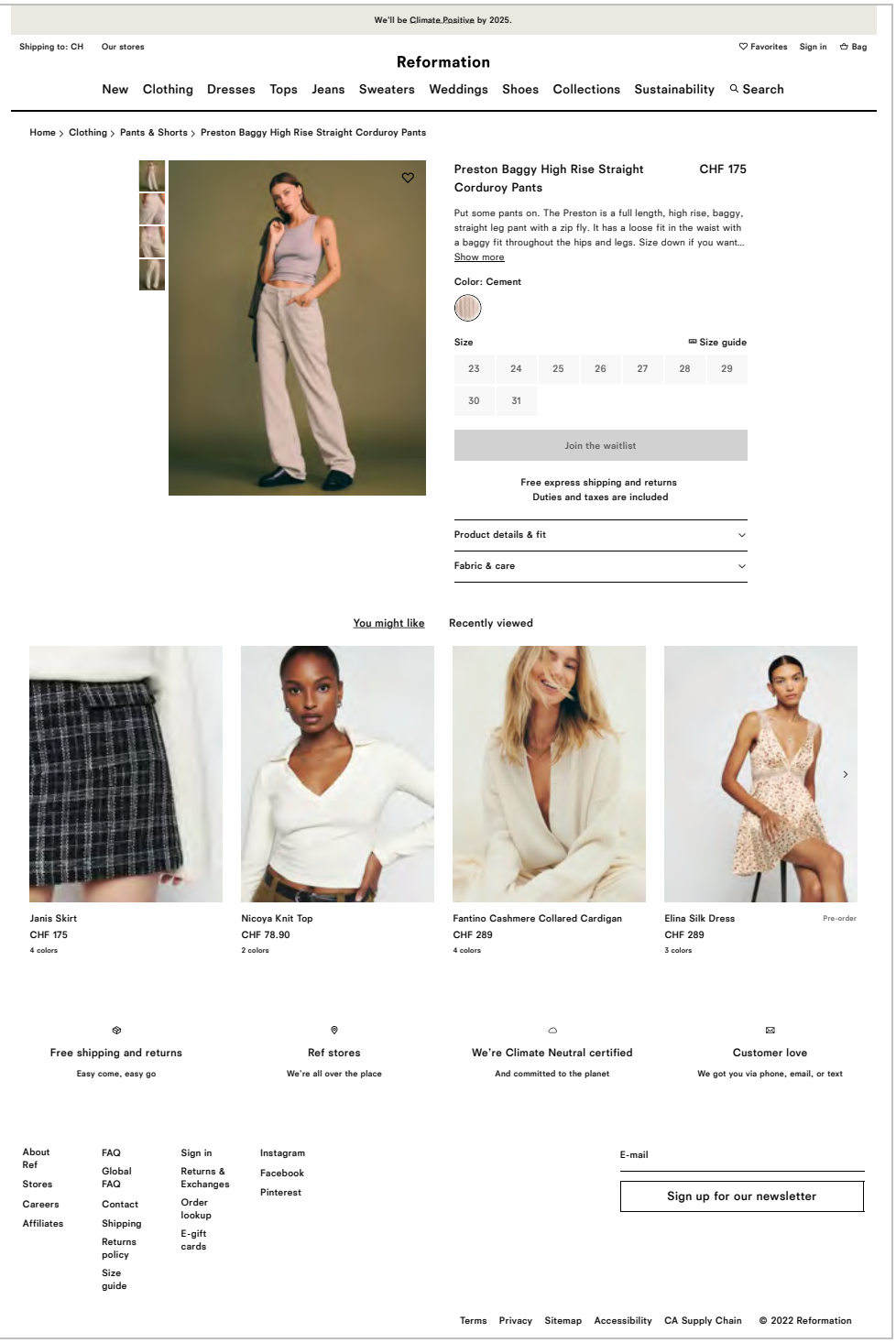
REF 5 https://www.thereformation.com/products/ezlynn-knit-top/1310957CPV.html?dwvar_1310957CPV_color=CPV (Accessed 7.10.2022)



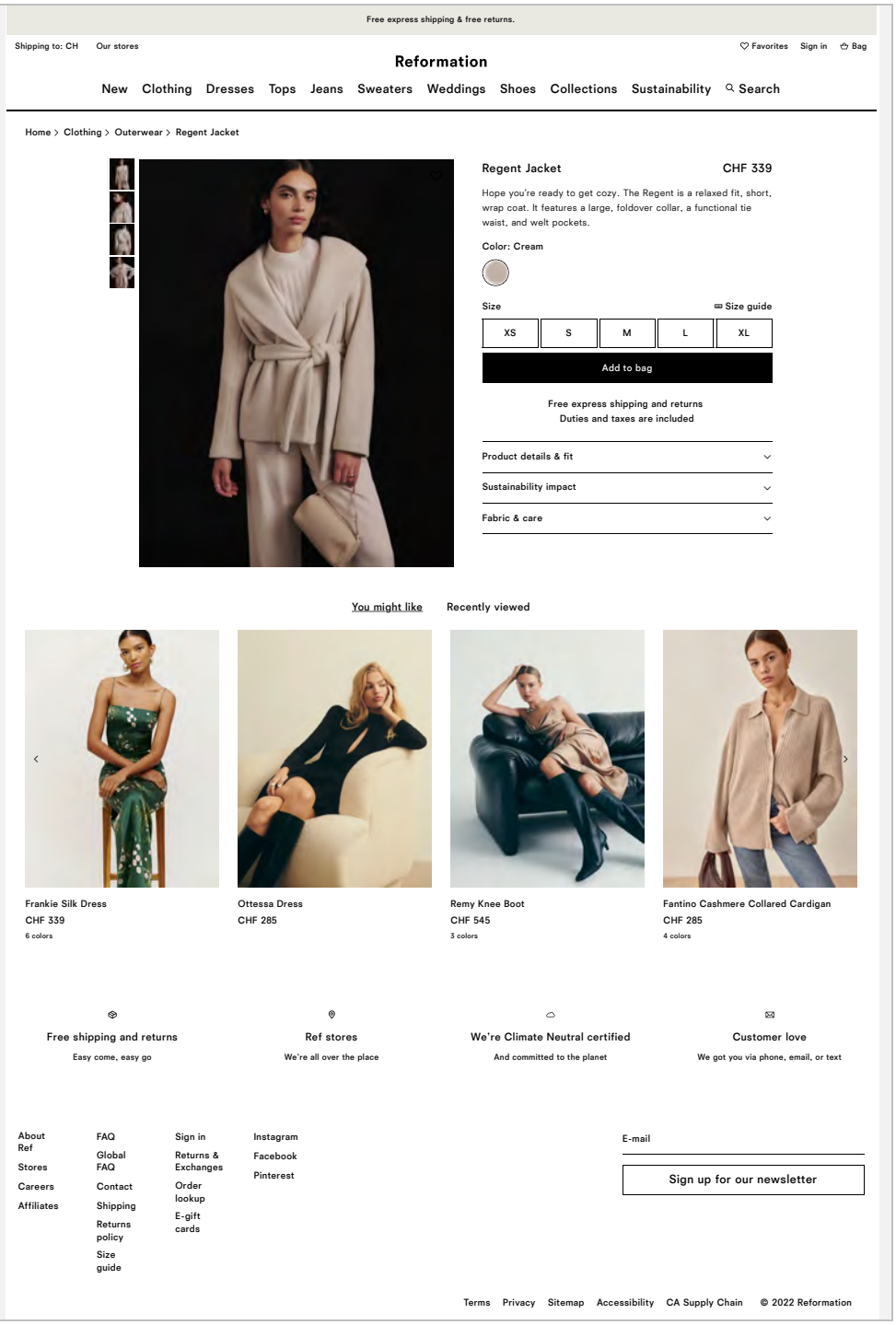
REF 6 https://www.thereformation.com/products/wes-velvet-pant/1305558PAG.html?dwvar_1305558PAG_color=PAG (Accessed 7.10.2022)



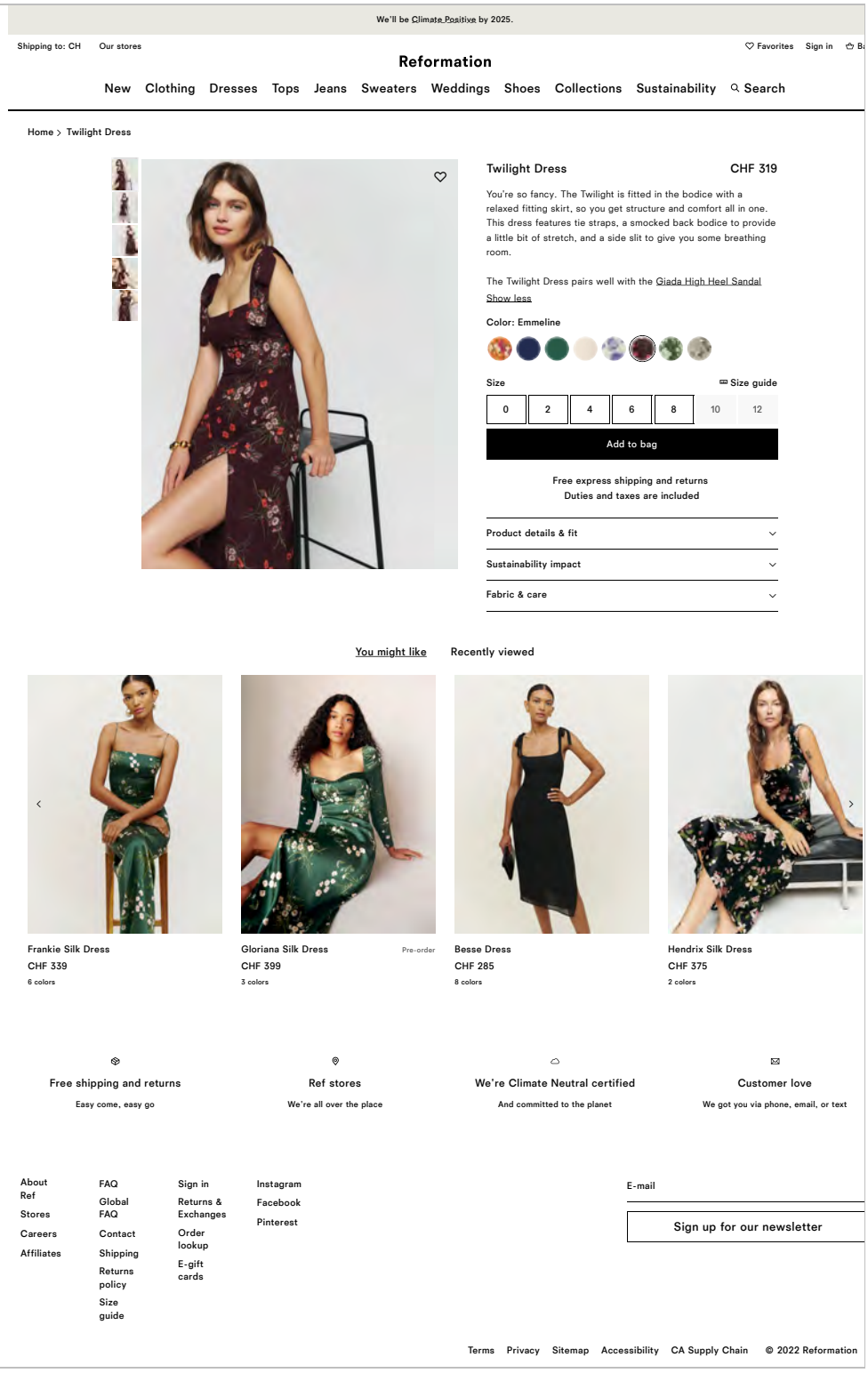
REF 7
https://www.thereformation.com/products/preston-baggy-high-rise-straight-corduroy-pants/1311454ENT.html?dwvar_1311454ENT_color=ENT
(Accessed 24.10.2022)



REF 8 https://www.thereformation.com/products/regent-jacket/1311091CRM.html?dwvar_1311091CRM_color=CRM (Accessed 7.10.2022)



REF 9 https://www.thereformation.com/products/twilight-dress/1307986MME.html?dwvar_1307986MME_color=MME (Accessed 7.10.2022)



REF 10
https://www.thereformation.com/products/lewis-dress/1311676FOE.html?dwvar_1311676FOE_color=FOE
(Accessed 7.10.2022)

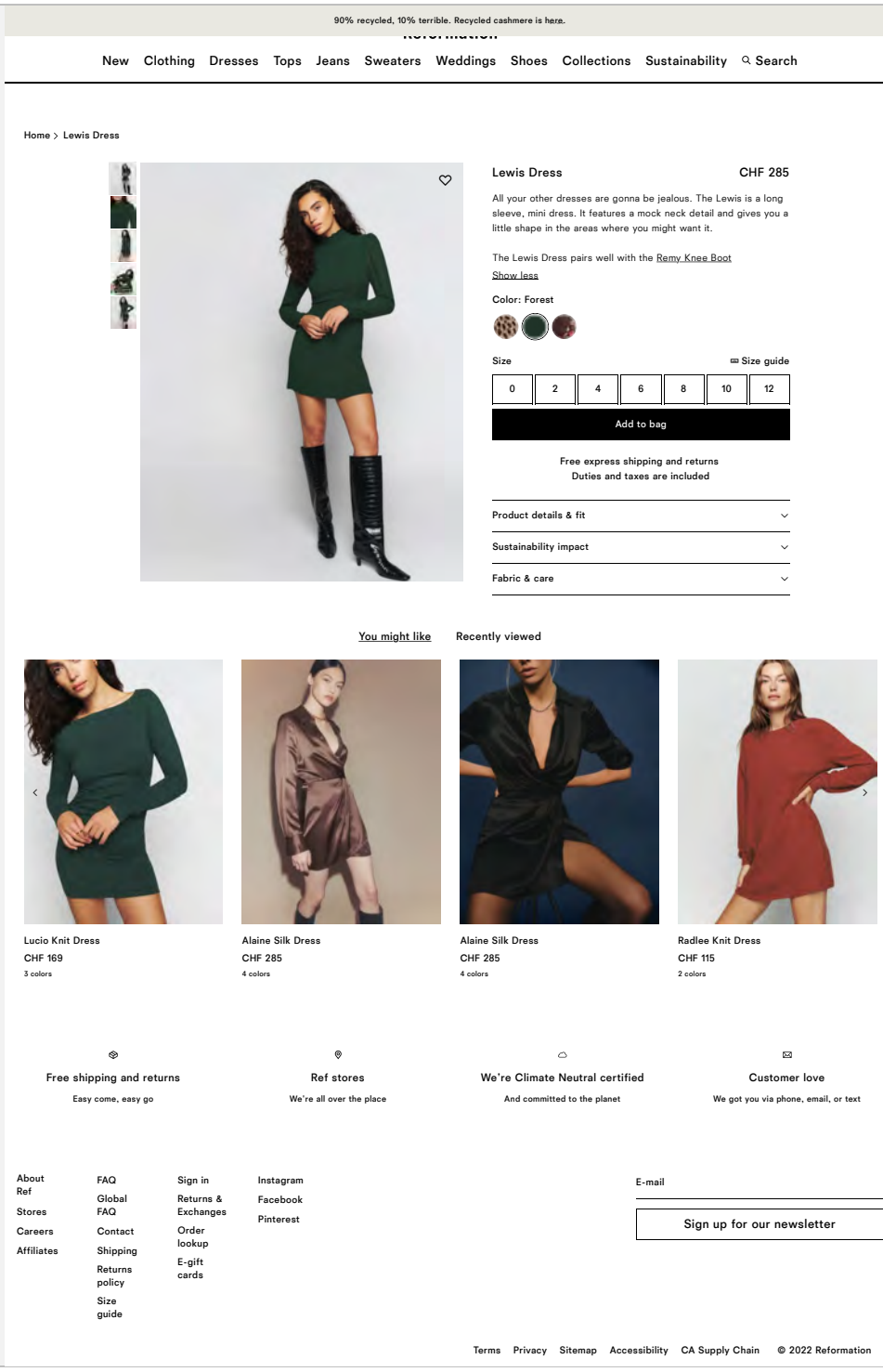
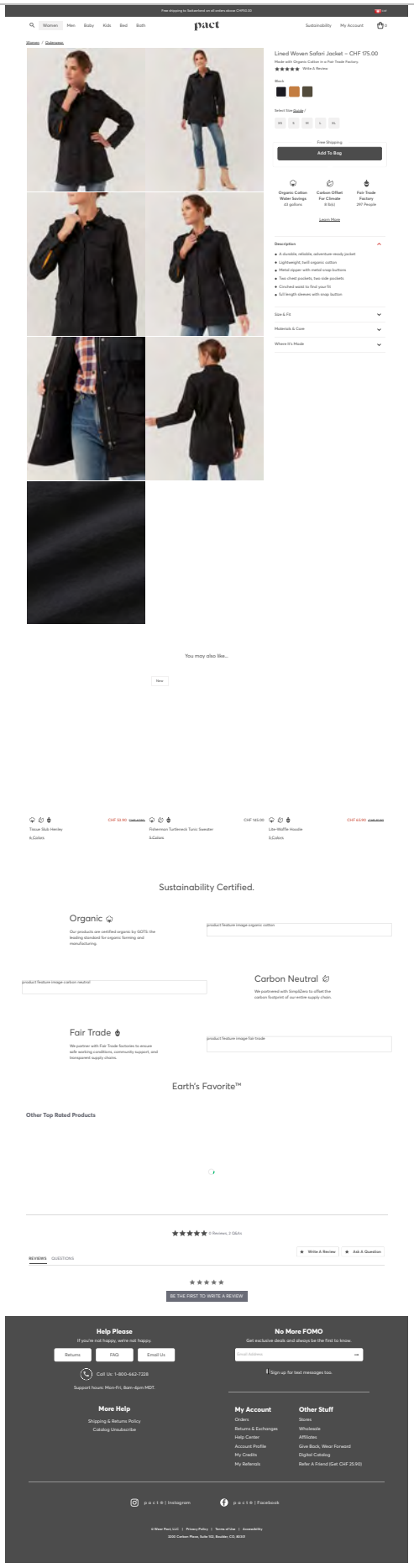


Table 14: Pact – Data label, access dates, URLs & PDFs

Label & URL	PDF of web page
Site	Pact
PACT 1 https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/pants%20&%20shorts/woven%20twill%20roll%20up%20pant/wa1-wwr-blk (Accessed 7.10.2022)	

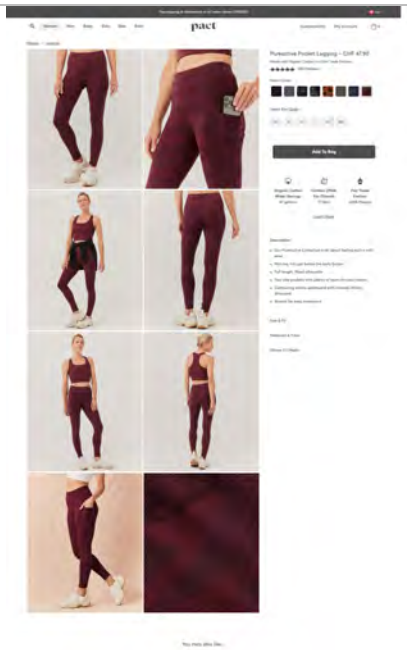
PACT 2 https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/pants%20&%20shorts/woven%20twill%20utility%20jogger/wa1-wtj-blk (Accessed 7.10.2022)	

PACT 3
https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/outerwear/lined%20woven%20safari%20jacket/wa1-wdw-blk
(Accessed 7.10.2022)

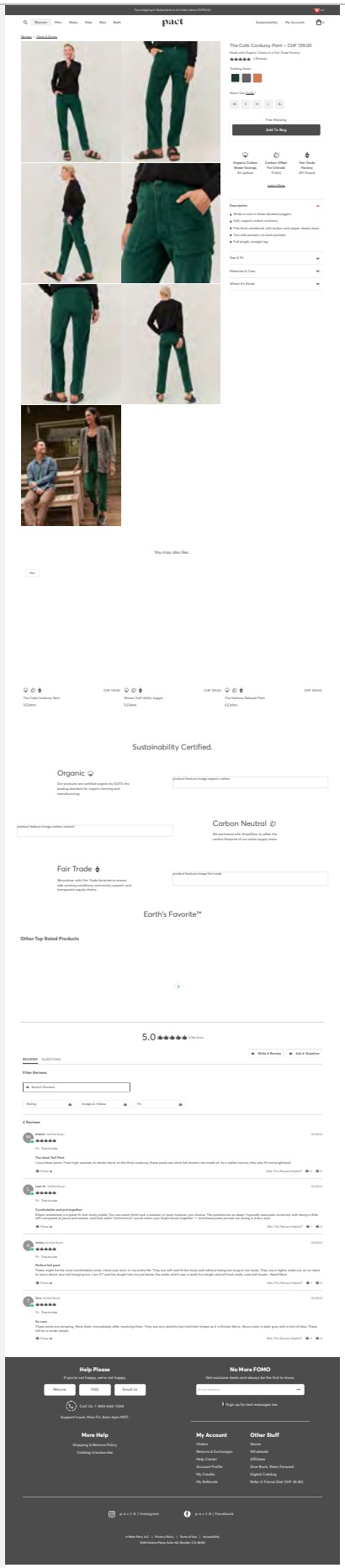


PACT 4 https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/leggings/purefit%20legging/wb1-wln-osk (Accessed 7.10.2022)	

PACT 5
https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/leggings/pureactive%20pocket%20legging/wb1-wlo-rac
(Accessed 7.10.2022)



PACT 6
https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/pants%20&%20shorts/the%20cafe%20corduroy%20pant/wa1-woj-tkg
(Accessed 26.10.2022)



PACT 7 https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/hoodies%20&%20sweatshirts/gender%20neutral%20pullover%20hoodie/wa1-uoh-cae (Accessed 7.10.2022)	

PACT 8 https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/hoodies%20&%20sweatshirts/gender%20neutral%20zip%20hoodie/wa1-uoz-arb (Accessed 7.10.2022)	

PACT 9
https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/sweatpants/gender%20neutral%20sweatpant/wa1-uos-mrn
(Accessed 7.10.2022)

PACT 10
https://wearpact.com/women/apparel/sweaters/classic%20polo%20sweater/wa1-woa-mgt
(Accessed 7.10.2022)