

# tja?!

Issue 5 - Summer Term 2024



**SUSTAINABILITY**

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# Preface

Dear Readers,

this issue of tja?! is dedicated to the theme of sustainability. Since this term encompasses a variety of complex meanings, we would like to define what sustainability exactly means and the definition our editorial team is building upon for this issue.

Sustainability aims to shape human activities in such a way that they meet current needs without restricting the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This principle is also based on the idea that economic, social, and ecological systems are intertwined and must be kept in balance to ensure long-term stability.

The concept of sustainability generally involves the efficient use of resources, minimizing environmental impacts, promoting social justice, and creating long-term balanced development in the areas of economy, environment, and society.

Just as multifaceted as the term itself, our editors have addressed this topic in their contributions. This issue shows how prevalent sustainability is at the university and in the city of Magdeburg, for example, in a photo series by Aimée and Loana or an interview by Junia and Isabel with shop owner Betsy Peymann. In articles on topics such as representation, capitalism, and social inequality, the "Politics & Society" section also delves deeply into current issues in the implementation of sustainability. Additionally, a series of interviews illuminate the topic of sustainability from international or educational scientific perspectives. Finally, in the "Culture" section, you will find contributions from Kristina, Selina, and Isabel on how sustainability is manifested in literature and (social) media, to what extent this reflects our daily actions, and and what societal approaches to the topic look like.

tja?!, enjoy reading!

Until next time, Ella for the tja?! editorial team



# SUSTAINABILITY

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# CONTENT

# UNI & MAGDEBURG



# Sustainability at the university

## What the initiatives think about this and what they contribute

by Kristina Hinz

### Students for Climate Justice

#### **What do you contribute as an initiative to ensure more sustainability at the university?**

We do public relations work on climate justice issues, e.g. through posters and social media or the organisation/support of lectures, workshops and discussion rounds. In this way, we aim to raise environmental awareness among students in particular. In addition, we cooperate with internal university structures such as the Department for Climate Justice and Sustainability or the Sustainability Office, as well as Fridays for Future, for example. Together, we are committed to structural changes at the university, such as the development of an ambitious climate protection strategy, a programme for a climate-friendly canteen and the establishment of structures such as the Climate Commission.

#### **Where do you see yourselves as an initiative limited in making progress towards sustainability?**

Change requires communication and openness to change. For some university structures, these changes appear costly. In our opinion, however, this lack of willingness is due to the structures themselves. For example, there is a lack of staff in the area of sustainability and our capacities are often not sufficient for all projects and ideas. As a university group, we often have a fluctuation of members, which means that capacities are always needed to familiarise the new group and are therefore lacking in other areas.

#### **What would you as an initiative wish for the future in terms of sustainability?**

Our goals and wishes initially relate to our university, but should also represent a start for more sustainability in other areas. We want our university to achieve climate neutrality by 2030, i.e. net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as well as structural changes towards more climate protection offices and an active commitment to combating the climate crisis. In a broader sense, we would like to see a greater sense of responsibility for the climate crisis among students, which they can extend today and take with them into their future careers. Beyond the university, we would like to see stronger networking and solidarity with climate justice movements.

### Sidum e.V

#### **What do you contribute as an initiative to ensure more sustainability at the university?**

In our student initiative SIDUM e.V., we emphasise sustainable practices. We do this by switching to reusable crockery and cutlery solutions and minimising the use of disposable products. We are also committed to promoting more environmentally friendly travel options by subsidising, with a few exceptions, exclusive rail travel on our trips. Furthermore, we reduce disposable advertising to a necessary minimum and then choose the option with the best sustainability. Then there are a few obvious little things, such as collecting our deposit and rubbish to counteract pollution.

#### **Where do you see yourselves as an initiative limited in making progress towards sustainability?**

We are faced with the challenge that, despite our commitment to sustainability, we are reliant on physical advertising materials such as posters and flyers. This is because our experience has shown that online advertising does not always achieve the desired effectiveness. It is therefore an ongoing task for us to find a balance between effective advertising and environmental protection.

#### **What would you as an initiative wish for the future in terms of sustainability?**

We would very much welcome a well-developed, reliable and affordable rail network. Currently, rail is often the less attractive option compared to fully occupied cars, both in terms of cost and journey time. An improved rail network would make it easier for us to consistently make more environmentally friendly choices.

## Engineers without Borders

### **What do you contribute as an initiative to ensure more sustainability at the university?**

We offer the opportunity to make the challenges of the Global South visible and tangible. This kind of "thinking outside the box" is important because we live in a very privileged position here in Magdeburg (but this also applies to the living situation in Europe and the countries of the Global North in general). Perhaps not carefree, but largely without existential worries, we can live, study, work, consume and enjoy our leisure time here. It is common knowledge that this does not apply equally to everyone in the world. But what exactly are the differences, and what can individuals do to make an equalising contribution?

As part of the voluntary commitment of Engineers Without Borders, we can become active at a regional level. With our commitment and expertise, we work together with local partner organisations and their knowledge to develop solutions for specific technical issues in the countries of the South. Although these are not large-scale development cooperation projects, they are a small contribution to this. By working together with local partners and target groups, we learn to respect each other and realise the great potential of such cooperation. Each project provides a valuable social impulse and strengthens the partners' ability to design and implement solutions to existing challenges themselves.

Participation in the regional group of Engineers without Borders thus offers students and non-students the opportunity to use their commitment and skills not only to make an impact in their familiar environment, but also to think outside the box. Our projects not only produce something

"technical", but we also work intensively with those involved to understand the solution and develop strategies to maintain the respective solution in the long term. In this respect, "sustainability" is always a goal of our activities. By regularly communicating our sustainable strategies and project successes from the non-university context here in the university context, our commitment also contributes to greater sustainability at the university.

### **Where do you see yourselves as an initiative limited in making progress towards sustainability?**

Despite the formulations in the "Guidelines for Development Cooperation of the State of Saxony-Anhalt" adopted in 2019, it is not transparent and publicly visible how the state is involved in this sector. The commitment of an initiative such as our regional group of Engineers Without Borders is not supported in any way. Furthermore, our campaigns to generate local awareness and donations could be made more sustainable by using reusable cups, for example. Unfortunately, we do not have the necessary facilities for safe storage and cleaning at the university.

### **What would you as an initiative wish for the future in terms of sustainability?**

We would very much like the state of Saxony-Anhalt to recognise and support our commitment as part of the state's own development cooperation efforts (see "Guidelines for development cooperation of the state of Saxony-Anhalt", 2019). This would be an opportunity to make the people of Saxony-Anhalt more aware of the necessity and opportunities inherent in this topic.





### **What do you contribute as an initiative to ensure more sustainability at the university?**

Our purpose as a club and student initiative is to promote cycling. Cycling as a popular sport has been undergoing major changes since the coronavirus pandemic at the latest and is coming up against old club structures that are geared towards competitive sport. We see our task and our motivation in rethinking these old structures and anchoring aspects of society as a whole, such as sustainability, equality and social justice, in our values and decisions.

What does that look like in practice? 3 of many examples:

In our FlaR REnTry - Your Road Bike Rental project, people from our community make their second bikes or road bikes that they no longer need available for hire. In this way, we enable interested people to test the sport at a low threshold without incurring 4-figure debts. If you like the sport, only a little money has been "spent". If you are interested in the sport, you can make smarter and therefore more sustainable purchasing decisions thanks to the 3 months of experience and our advice (e.g. eBay classifieds instead of buying a new bike).

We use Discord as a communication platform in our club and within our community. In the "For Sale" channel, people can ask for or advertise used bike parts and accessories. As a team, we also regularly like to borrow things from each other instead of buying them all ourselves or pass on clothes to newcomers.

Even with projects that are questionable in terms of sustainability, such as our cycling camp in Mallorca, we try to break new ground and try things out in order to become more sustainable. more information: <https://www.ridewithflar.de/pages/nachhaltigkeit-flar-rad-camp>

In fact, this year we have the first two participants travelling by train and ferry. If things go well, we may be able to do without flights altogether in 2025 or at least increase the price difference between flight and train/ferry.

We could give many more examples of how sustainability plays a role for us. At the same time, we are in a privileged sport that is not really known for sustainability and has a lot of negative examples. This is exactly where we want to start and support sustainable projects in cycling or show that you can have the same fun

in cycling with more sustainable decisions. We often draw motivation from the negative examples in cycling to simply do projects ourselves, try out ideas and hopefully make the (cycling) world a little bit better.

### **Where do you see yourselves as an initiative limited in making progress towards sustainability and what would you wish for in terms of sustainability in the future?**

One thing we have not yet managed to do is cooperate with sustainability networks or seek advice. We see great potential here to find very smart sustainable ideas that are customised to our specific projects. Within the university in particular, we would like to have significantly more opportunities (not just from the Sustainability Office) to seek advice, work together and realise projects with a sustainability aspect. We also believe that the Sustainability Office needs much more decision-making power, influence and faster processes in order to really change things. An example of this is the story about the cargo bikes. It would be a good idea to give student initiatives and students in general access to them. The same applies to the vehicle fleet. A major problem in cycling is travelling to cycling events. Public transport is not designed to transport hundreds or thousands of cyclists to such events. As a result, large numbers of cars, often with single travellers, drive to these events. Our efforts to organise large buses (USC, part-car, sponsoring) have unfortunately come to nothing or are far too expensive. So we currently have no choice but to form carpools among ourselves. We can continue to report on our experience in concrete cooperation with the OVGU sustainability office. At the beginning of 2022, there were over 4 bicycle thefts on the university campus in our immediate vicinity within 2 weeks. We quickly had a face-to-face meeting and brainstorming session to come up with concrete ideas. Unfortunately, for various reasons, none of the ideas could be realised to any extent and the situation remains equally precarious. We often had the feeling that the university's structures do not allow for the necessary changes and that important issues do not change, even when students (us) and the Sustainability Office take the initiative.

In conclusion, we are delighted when we receive ideas that make projects or decisions more sustainable.

# SUSTAINABILITY IN MAGDEBURG





# Interview with Betsy

Isabel Ende & Junia Mosel in conversation with Betsy Peymann

Betsy Peymann's fair fashion shop is located on Breiter Weg, not far from the university, for more than five years now. As soon as you open the door, you are greeted by Edda, Betsy's dog, the lovingly furnished shop and the smell of coffee. Betsy's shop is one of the first places in Magdeburg where you can find sustainably produced and traded fashion. With her extensive knowledge, which she has gathered over many years, as a young entrepreneur she is a perfect example of how to create places in Magdeburg that can engage more deeply with a more ecologically conscious lifestyle.

Over a cup of coffee, you can have wonderful conversations between the carefully selected items of clothing. And that's how this interview began...

## What does Sustainability mean to you personally?

It means maintaining the best possible condition for both the environment and people for decades to come. This includes acting in such a way that we know that future generations will still find a situation worth living in. Ultimately, sustainable action is not black or white and does not require the optimum to be realised in all areas. Everyone can do their bit in different areas of life to come a little closer to a conscious and sustainable lifestyle.

## When did you first become interested in fair fashion?

Betsy's career in the fashion industry began in 2011 with a jeans brand in Hamburg that was clearly not fair. The realisation that fashion is based on the principle of exploitation of people and the environment gave her the impetus to look for a fair fashion company, which at the time was like looking for a needle in a haystack. The desire for a career in the fashion industry nevertheless remained, but it had to be compatible with her own moral compass. In order to follow this, Betsy intensified her focus on researching fair alternatives, away from the commercialised, unfair fashion industry. Today's well-known brands such as ARMEDANGELS were not yet widely recognised at the time. Betsy's frustration resulting from the lack of alternatives in the fashion industry was the starting signal for the vision of bringing fair fashion to the shop windows of cities.

## Why is sustainable fashion so important?

Sustainable fashion is currently a niche market, but it is an

actual state.

Fair fashion is still far too underrepresented on the market and in department stores, even though it actually shows the true value of clothing. The calculation does not work out that an item of clothing is worth a single-digit euro amount. In order to fairly cover all the costs of the value chain, a realistic price is needed to reflect the true value of the product. Conversely, this means that people consume less because clothing has to become a luxury good again. This concept recognises the work of the people behind the production of an item of clothing.

## How do you recognise that there is no Greenwashing, but rather transparency?

"As a business, we generally take a closer look behind the scenes: how do companies produce, where do they produce, what materials do they use, where do the resources come from?"

In general, this is a complex topic that is difficult to understand. The desired transparency on the part of fashion companies sometimes leaves a lot to be desired. The question arises as to whether words such as sustainability, consciousness etc. serve as bait or actually represent a credible promise. In order to find your way through this jungle, there are common seals such as Blauer Engel, GOTS, B Corporation and Fair Wear Foundation, which offer assistance and show sustainable products that have been manufactured under good conditions.

"When ordering, I can quickly recognise from the price whether it's a sustainable item of clothing. The composition of the fabric also provides clear information as to whether sustainable materials have been used."

## Is there a noticeable mindset shift among customers?

As part of her own bachelor's thesis, Betsy took an in-depth look at the social 'mindset shift' with regard to SUSTAINABILITY. The fact that such a mindset shift exists is confirmed in her work as a shop owner of a fair fashion shop. Since 2018, organisations such as Fridays For Future have been causing a major upswing and making the topic of sustainability one of general political and social interest. Issues such as conscious consumption are permeating more and more age groups, with younger generations in particular growing up with a greater awareness of this and becoming more enlightened. Interest in production processes is increasing, because looking away and ignoring inhumane working conditions is no longer an alternative.

## What does sustainable consumption mean to you?

...rethinking your own consumer behaviour in an ever-growing throwaway society. Nowadays, it seems easier to buy a new product because of the low prices than to repair an

old one and make it wearable again. A hole in a pair of jeans is by no means a reason to say goodbye to this piece, that's exactly where we need to go again. By making the most of the opportunities available, you can give a new lease of life to items long thought to be dead by repairing them or reintroducing them through recycling into the cycle of resources.

## What would you like to see for a sustainable future in Magdeburg?

Magdeburg as a location needs a wider range of offers to make it easier to get involved in the topic of sustainability. Every individual can contribute to change, but it would be desirable to have a policy that sets the tone with clear regulations.

### Luxury good

- to fall back on alternatives, i.e. on clothing that has already been produced, such as second-hand clothing
- Clothing that must be newly produced should correspond to the value required to produce the new item = true value of the clothing
- Fashion is currently mainly determined by trends, we should distance ourselves from this in order to keep clothes alive for a long time
- this should then also be more expensive because its "wear and tear" is not so great

### Fair Fashion

- Clothing that has been produced under fair conditions, which means that the people involved in the production process can act in a self-determined way, have essential human rights, the work does not endanger their health and they can live from the money they earn
- This includes all groups of people involved in the production process/value chain
- Fair also means the most environmentally friendly treatment of the environment

#### Disclaimer:

We think that the term 'luxury good' is somewhat unfavourably chosen here. Of course, it should be ensured that ALL PEOPLE, regardless of social class, can afford something as basic as clothing, but unfortunately this is currently difficult to reconcile with sustainably produced clothing due to high prices.

# Sustainable stroll through Magdeburg

by Isabel Ende & Junia Mosel



## STADTFELD OST

Ernas Lebensmittelpunkt  
(Annastraße 40)



Erna sees sustainability as an all-encompassing concept that incorporates social sustainability with regard to its own employees, uses regulars' tables to exchange ideas and offers unpackaged goods as an essential component. With this concept, Ernas Lebensmittelpunkt wants to be an integral part of the neighbourhood where people feel comfortable.



## BUCKAU

[What does sustainability mean to you?]

...from a gut feeling: 'deliberately acting uneconomically'

Nix Neues  
(Klosterbergstraße 20)



# Crops – vegan Bistro

(Breiter Weg 19b)



## ALTSTADT



waste reduction

plant-based

low waste

intuitive

I wanted to have access to vegan food myself and then opened Crops in 2017 out of pragmatism. I try to break down barriers and clichés with versatility, creativity and flexibility.

vegan

creative & flexible

flexible menu = no food waste

approachable & accessible

We give B-products and items a new chance and end their transport cycle by selling them in our café.

'We will find the final destination :P'  
(quote by Phine)



## Das Kurt

(Karl-Schmidt-Straße 1)

# BagSharing: for the sustainable

Guest contribution by the BagSharing team

In a world that is increasingly confronted with the effects of plastic waste in the oceans, it is becoming ever more urgent to find sustainable alternatives. More than 150 million tonnes of plastic waste are floating in the world's oceans, and at least three million tonnes are added every year. This causes thousands of animal deaths and serious damage to ecosystems. One of the main sources of plastic waste is plastic bags in retail stores.

Damit wir uns beim Einkauf umweltfreundlicher To feel more environmentally friendly when shopping, we often buy a cloth bag instead of a plastic bag, as these are often touted as a sustainable alternative. However, depending on the manufacturing process, cloth bags have to be used at least 20 to 131 times to have a better eco-balance than disposable plastic bags. High water and energy consumption and the use of chemicals during production reduce their sustainability, but most cloth bags are only used a few times before they end up in a drawer at home and a new bag is bought the next time you go shopping. As a result, cloth bags have an even more negative impact on the environment

than plastic bags. A project that addresses precisely this problem is BagSharing, supported by Enactus Magdeburg e.V.. This project aims to increase the reuse of cloth bags when shopping and thereby provide a more sustainable solution.

Share, save, protect! With BagSharing, the reusable system for cloth bags, we make sustainability tangible! This project offers an innovative solution to a pressing environmental problem. It enables people to borrow cloth bags from supermarkets and other shops free of charge, use them and return them to the cycle. This not only promotes a new way of sustainable shopping, but also reduces the waste of resources.

The BagSharing system is a deposit-free reusable system with return deadlines for higher turnover rates. The digital system includes an app that allows users to borrow bags using QR codes and track their impact. This also makes the shopping experience more relaxed, convenient and digital BagSharing is a missing innovation in the reusability of cloth bags. To make the project even more sustainable, BagSharing is only using donated bags during the pilot phase. There are already three permanent collection points for cloth bags. If you would like to support the project and you have too many unused cloth bags at home, you are welcome to hand them in at the collection points. We are happy about every bag that is donated!

BagSharing is not only an innovative solution to a pressing environmental problem, but also a step towards a more sustainable future. With a dedicated team and the support of partners and sponsors, the project is well on the way to achieving its goals and bringing about a sustainable change in the way we shop.





# use of shopping bags



Collection point in the student council of the Faculty of Human Sciences

**Contact**  
e-mail: [bag-sharing@magdeburg.enactus.team](mailto:bag-sharing@magdeburg.enactus.team)  
instagram: [bag.sharing](https://www.instagram.com/bag.sharing)  
website: [bag-sharing.enactus-magdeburg.de](http://bag-sharing.enactus-magdeburg.de)



Collection point in the university bookshop Coppenrath & Boeser

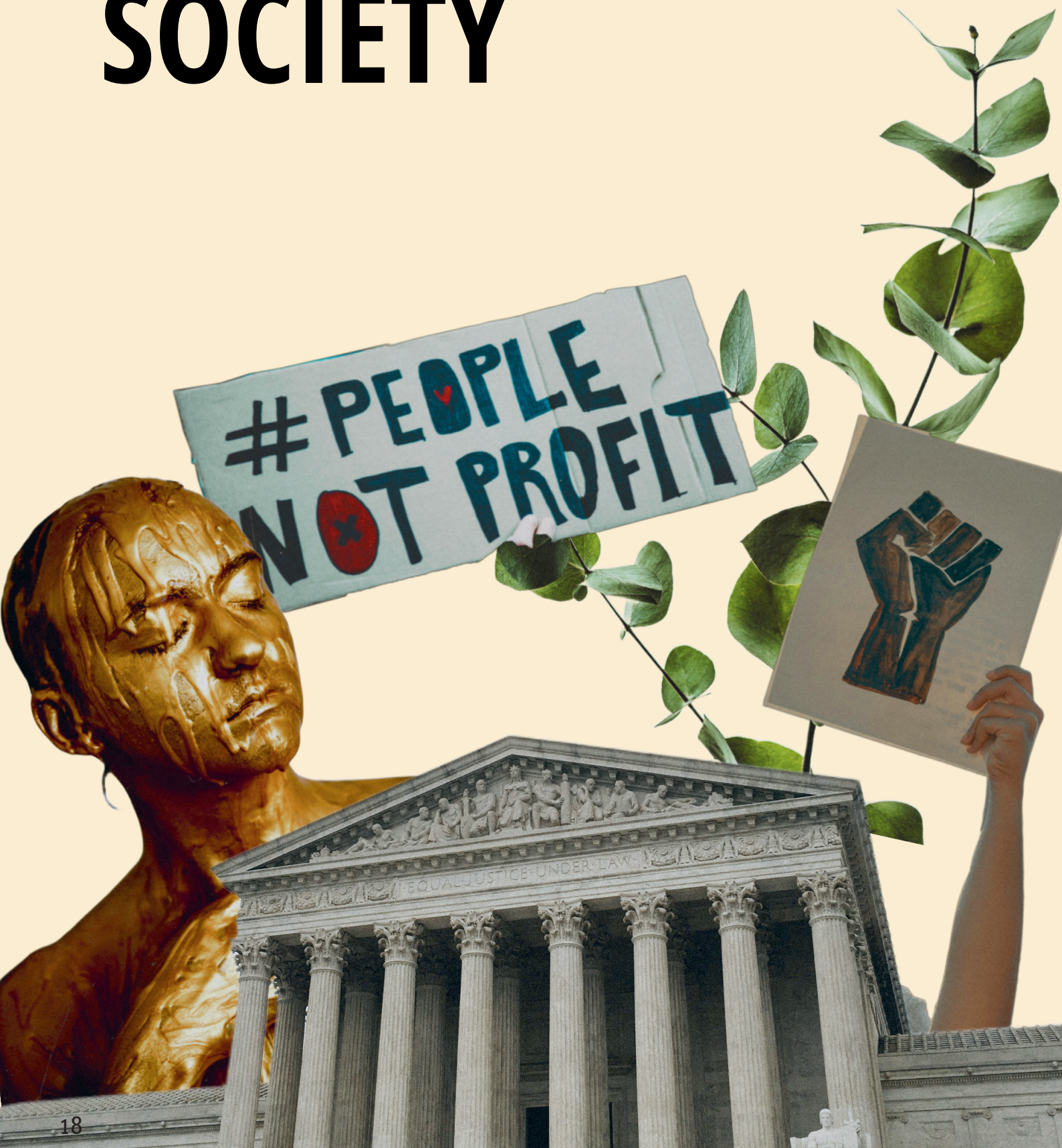


Collection point at in:takt



The BagSharing team

# POLITICS & SOCIETY



# Sustainability **in** politics

How climate-neutral are the party programmes of the German Bundestag?

by Junia Mosel

Sustainability has become a more and more important topic in political decisions. The various parties in the German Bundestag are trying to differentiate themselves from one another and generate votes through their demands, goals, and endeavours in climate policy. In preparation for the upcoming local and European elections in 2024, every person entitled to vote should get an overview of the election programmes of the parties standing for election. On 09 June, every voter has one vote to decide which party they would like to see represented in the European Parliament. Germany currently holds 96 seats for its MEPs. The results of the election will determine how many MEPs from which party will represent Germany in the EU Parliament.

The following is an overview of the endeavours and demands of the parties in the German Bundestag with special regard to climate protection and sustainability.

## INFO BOX!

**Renewable Energies** = utilise natural processes to generate energy and produce fuels, heat and electricity from rapidly renewable raw materials

- offer security of supply, avoid raw material conflicts
- wind and solar energy, biomass, geothermal energy and hydropower

**EEG** = Renewable Energy Sources Act

- primary aim is to generate electricity and heat from renewable sources, for which producers receive fixed remuneration

**Green Deal** = strategy to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 consisting of political initiatives

- targets various sectors: climate, environment, energy, transport, industry, agriculture and sustainable finance
- circular economy, biodiversity, "Fit for 55"

**Global Gateway** = Connectivity at European level

- supporting emerging and developing countries in the sustainable expansion of infrastructures

**ETS, EU-ETS** = European emissions trading

- central European instrument for the implementation of climate protection
- emissions from around 9000 plants in the energy sector and energy-intensive industry recorded
- cause 40% greenhouse gas emissions in Europe
  - **Functionality:** Participating companies receive a certain amount of emission allowances free of charge/ by auction
  - 1 entitlement = emission of one tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent
  - fewer authorisations issued year after year => price increase
  - **Cap & Trade** = Capacities and trade If a company emits more CO<sub>2</sub> than its authorisation allows, it can sell its rights
- incentive to reduce emissions in order to be rewarded: investment in clean technologies

# SPD

**Soziale  
Politik für  
Dich.**

As a social party, the SPD endeavours to reconcile social interests with climate and environmental protection. The expansion of renewable energies should secure the energy supply, create additional new jobs and not represent a financial challenge for the disadvantaged. Climate-neutral technologies of the future can strengthen the European internal market and enable Europe to consolidate its position as an industrial centre. By implementing the Green Deal Industrial Plan, the party hopes to achieve successful climate protection that also functions as a job engine.



For The Greens, the climate-neutral modernisation of the European economy and infrastructure is at the forefront of climate protection. To achieve this, there are plans to electrify transport as well as industrial and household supplies. A pan-European standardised approach to CO<sub>2</sub>-emitting production is to be applied above all in agriculture and afforestation. New investment programmes researching energy production from hydrogen contribute to the vision of an infrastructure union. Climate social funds are intended to finance the realities of life for people who are affected by rising energy and transport costs. A climate money per capita is to be paid out for this purpose, which is generated in advance through emissions trading. The party is convinced that a sustainable climate policy can also strengthen European foreign policy and that strategies such as the global gateway strategy can promote the networking of partner countries globally.

# Freie Demokraten

**FDP**

At European level, the FDP is endeavouring to achieve agreed climate targets through emissions trading and technology openness. The standardised pricing of CO<sub>2</sub> in ETS transactions and new framework guidelines for infrastructure development are the party's core objectives. A regulatory pause of the Green Deal is called for in order to be able to establish an international emissions trading system. The generation of energy from nuclear fusion is to supply the continent with electricity in the future and combustion engines are to be made climate-friendly using synthetic fuels. The aim is to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

# Europe

## CDU

According to the CDU's election programme for the 2019 European elections, economic growth and climate protection can be combined with the expansion of low-emission and renewable energies. The results of the climate conferences in Paris and Katowice should be implemented in the form of the EU ETS. A Europe-wide strategy to reduce and avoid plastic waste should be developed. Safe, clean, and affordable energy sources were envisaged as the continent's security of supply. Incentive money was to be invested in research in the economic centres of drive systems and engines.

Stand 2019

## DIE LINKE.

The Left's goal is to reduce climate-damaging greenhouse gases by 70% across Europe by 2030. This is to be achieved through climate-friendly public mobility, which is being promoted under the hashtag #wirfahrenzusammen. A global debt cut is intended to relieve the burden on southern countries in particular and support climate justice worldwide. Investments in the Next Generation Programme should enable a climate-friendly economic transformation. The phase-out of nuclear energy also means an end to the use of fossil fuels. In order to balance out social inequalities, there are calls for the climate social fund to be increased.

## Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht

The climate policy refers specifically to national changes rather than international endeavours. Overall, energy costs are to be reduced and basic energy security restored, and economic contacts with Russia are to be resumed. New technological innovations are to be introduced in response to emissions caused by transport, and combustion engines will not be written off immediately. The alliance is not in favour of the further expansion of emissions trading, but rather positions itself against it. The aim for the European future is to promote the development of a comprehensive hydrogen economy with storage options.

# National



With a focus on energy supply, transport and climate research, the aim is to achieve climate neutrality at regional level by 2045. The SPD has set itself the task of being able to generate 80% of the electricity supply from renewable energies by 2030. To this end, the planning procedures for the construction of wind turbines, for example, are to be accelerated and simplified. In order to expand transport options, a comprehensive charging infrastructure, strong public transport and a modern German railway are planned. By increasing the capacity for research funding to 3.5% of gross domestic product, the hydrogen economy is to be developed and innovation regions are to receive explicit funding.



Based on the Paris Climate Agreement and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 1.5-degree limit, the party wants to promote renewable energies by adding 1.5 million solar roofs in four years. Furthermore, various expansion opportunities are to be accelerated by reducing bureaucratic processes. In order to make new innovations and economic sectors climate-neutral, a climate impact assessment will be established which, together with a CO2 brake, will promote low-emission ideas. The Greens promise a mobility guarantee that will make short-haul flights obsolete from 2030 by expanding bus and rail services. As at European level, an energy subsidy is to be paid out to German citizens at state level in order to compensate for the initially high carbon emissions.



Within Germany, the party would like to see emissions trading extended to all emissions such as CO2 or fuels. Emissions trading offers companies many opportunities to actively participate in climate protection. Active binding of CO2 and storage, for example through reforestation, rewetting of moors and protection of marine flora, is rewarded. Furthermore, existing forests are to be better protected and reforested.

# CDU

At national level, the CDU wants to achieve climate protection in harmony with economic strength and social balance. This is to be achieved through innovation and new technologies. A so-called climate prosperity should result from the combination of economy and ecology. The approval and planning procedures for new power lines, railway lines and charging infrastructure should be better, faster and less bureaucratic.

All targeted measures should take place in the interests of protecting jobs and the competitiveness of companies (carbon leakage reduction).

Stand 2019

# DIE LINKE.

At state level, the party is striving for a socio-ecological transformation. Greenhouse gases are to be reduced, coal is to be phased out once and for all and public transport and rail services are to be expanded at zero cost. In regions that depended on the coal and car industries, the establishment of social and economic councils should enable a just transition from the old industrial sector to a climate-friendly economy.

# Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht

At national level, the newly founded party led by Sahra Wagenknecht is campaigning with honesty in relation to climate policy. Activism and change must not take place at the expense of citizens. The party is in favour of measures that are tailored to the climate situation and do not favour the economy within a climate policy. The party's approach therefore lies in research into key technologies that will enable climate neutrality in economy and transport.

**Disclaimer:** Due to recent political developments, we have decided not to print the AfD party programme in our magazine. Since 2021, there has been suspicion that the party is right-wing extremist. After some back and forth in the editorial team, we have decided that from now on we will position ourselves politically, but not party-politically. AfD ideas do not fit in with our views.



# Capitalism and sustainability

by Aimée Dittmann & Ella Keim



# An irreconcilable ambition?

With increasing attention to the climate crisis, the issue of sustainability is becoming more prevalent in society. Awareness of how we as individuals can make our consumption and daily lives more sustainable, such as through vegan or vegetarian diets, has particularly increased. While this is indubitably a positive development in the discourse around consumption and sustainability, the question arises whether this is truly sufficient for a sustainable future. Can we, for instance, prevent the climate catastrophe with individual consumption decisions? Can the choices we make in our daily lives really ensure a sustainable future? It should be mentioned that the concept of sustainability does not only refer to ecological aspects but also includes social and economical aspects. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030, for example, include objectives such as "No Poverty" and "Gender Equality." Therefore, sustainable behaviour should focus on aspects of social justice in addition to environmental protection. One of the reasons the UN will not achieve these ambitious and broadly defined goals by 2030 in their current form is the lack of political cooperation, which is often ultimately due to a focus on financial profit; here, the system fails in the sense that it is simply not profitable for a state to act sustainably. Furthermore, the term sustainability is often abstracted and instrumentalised by those in power (warnings of an 'eco-dictatorship' or similar), causing us to lose the connection to

how non-sustainable decisions affect us directly. A 2020 study conducted in the USA found, for instance, that an increase of minimum wage by \$1 USD would lead to a direct reduction in suicide rates by approximately 3.5-6%<sup>1</sup>. Capitalism here means not only living in a way that is not climate-friendly but also not living at all. Overall, experts argue that the actions of individuals are hardly enough to achieve sustainability on both ecological and social levels, and that the economic system of capitalism—due to its pursuit of endless growth—fails to meet these demands. The following article aims to clarify the need for a (more or less extensive) systemic change to ensure the various aspects of sustainability. Due to the complexity of this topic, we would like to introduce four works that address the issues of contemporary capitalism in connection to the multifaceted aspects of sustainability.

“There is no business to be done on a dead planet.”

— David Brower  
Environmental activist

<sup>1</sup> Kaufmann, John A., et al. „Effects of Increased Minimum Wages by Unemployment Rate on Suicide in the USA.“ Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, vol. 74, January 2020, pp. 219–224.



## Naomi Klein: *The Shock Doctrine* (2008)

"The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism" by Naomi Klein is a detailed examination of the role of capitalism in times of crises and disasters. The central thesis of the book is that in moments of crisis, whether through natural disasters, political upheavals, or economic shocks, capitalism sees an opportunity to advance its agenda and expand its power. Klein begins with a historical analysis, showing how this tactic was developed by economic theorists like Milton Friedman in the 1950s. She describes how free-market and deregulation ideas were presented as solutions to economic problems and how these ideas were implemented by political leaders like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. A central concept Klein introduces is "shock therapy." She describes how, in times of crisis or political upheaval, when people are disoriented and vulnerable, radical economic reforms can be implemented that would normally meet with resistance. Klein examines a

variety of case studies from different parts of the world to support her argument. She looks at the economic reforms carried out by Pinochet in Chile after the coup of 1973, the privatization of state-owned enterprises in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the effects of the "shock therapy" conducted by the Bush administration in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. The work argues that this strategy of shock therapy not only leads to economic inequalities and social problems but also undermines democratic processes and strengthens the power and influence of multinational corporations. Klein shows how this tactic is repeatedly used to expand the influence of capitalism, even at the expense of human rights and the environment. Overall, "The Shock Doctrine" offers a provocative analysis of the impacts of capitalism in times of crisis and raises important questions about how we can respond to these challenges to create a fairer and more sustainable world.

## Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett: *The Future We Choose* (2020)

The authors played central roles in the historic Paris Agreement of 2015 as the UN's Executive Secretary and Chief Political Strategist. By entering a space of decided hopelessness, they came together to create a frame of mind which takes focus in their book *The Future We Choose*. They call this frame 'a contagious frame of mind that led to collective wisdom'. For an overview, *The Future We Choose* is a guidebook for climate activism and active participation. It functions, in a way, as a kind of climate self-help book for the many who feel crushed under the 'fatal knowledge' of everything that is to come. The book shows a grounded optimism even as we look directly at the crisis and does not turn a blind eye to the dimensions of the crisis. For instance, some chapters are written in a hopeful style, whereas some are written rather fearfully. This method is supposed to emphasize that we do have agency over our climate. The authors also create a portrait of a world in 2050 in

which we have failed to halt global emissions. In this world the equatorial band becomes uninhabitable, cities are on the edge of desertification and the sea is rising. Especially the air is so heavy and hot that one's 'cough never seems to disappear'. On the other hand, the following chapter presents a 2050, where we no longer burn fossil fuels and renewable energy has created millions of jobs due to rewilding projects as well as plunges in air pollution. These two possibilities remind the reader of the urgent need for action and awakens the creativity and energy of what it takes for such transformational change. Some might think it is already too late to change anything concerning the outcome of climate change, but the authors state that 'any reduction lessens the burden on the future'. This book is written to motivate the reader to participate in meaningful actions even as individuals by outlining practical steps towards a sustainable future, avoiding falling into familiar despair when thinking about climate change.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://earth.org/book-review-the-future-we-choose/>



## Jean-Philippe Kindler:

### *Scheiß auf Selflove, Gib Mir Klassenkampf (2023)*

In this work, Jean-Philippe Kindler examines society's relationship with capitalism, critically addressing his own generation. He focuses particularly on the topic of 'self-optimization' and its commercialization, also addressing capitalism's role in creating mental health problems. In the blurb of his book, he writes: "At first glance, young people seem to be immensely political. They are sensitive to language, critical of racism, and confess penitently to their unearned privileges. According to their Tinder profiles, they are highly empathetic and know their personality type, they eat vegan, and avoid flying... These concepts of individual happiness maximization, however, seem at first glance to be a cultural counter-program to the neoliberal demand for self-optimization. For even in the countless calls to love oneself and the imperfect body, to address others

correctly and sensitively, and to behave sustainably and low-emission, the obsession with one's own self clearly shines through." Kindler argues in his work that the focus on individual self-improvement and self-love, as often propagated in advice and self-help books, is a distraction from the structural problems of capitalism. Instead of focusing on personal changes aimed at individual well-being, Kindler calls for a focus on collective action and systemic change as a means of transformation. He advocates for a return to political organization and solidarity as tools to overcome the inequalities and oppression created by capitalism. In "Scheiß auf Selflove," Kindler thus defines the hyperfocus on individual responsibility and agency as a distraction from profound systemic issues and declares (class) war on them.

## Naomie Klein:

### *This Changes Everything (2015)*

This book deals with climate change from a political perspective. It looks at why we have so far failed to really respond to this global threat. To the question of why we have done so little to prevent irreparable consequences, the answer is political. We already have technologies and ideas to reduce CO2 emissions and base our economy on renewable energy, but the political will is lacking. The existing profit-based economic model and the wealthy elite, which dominate politics and discourse, leave no room for fighting climate change, says Klein. To effectively reduce emissions, it requires drastic changes that are not possible under capita-

lism and the assumption that resources are endless. The exploitation of nature brings short-term benefits, but it has long-term costs. A "revolutionary change of the economic system" is required (p.76). Here the relationship between climate crisis and capitalism becomes clear. Climate change is also a crisis of the capitalist system. Klein emphasizes that the economic system and the planetary system are at war (see p.33). According to Klein, climate protection will also fail because of capitalism. She stresses that she does not want to kill the market, but that more planning, strategy and governance are needed.

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# GEN Z AND

In recent years, Generation Z has faced a lot of criticism from older generations. The list of accusations begins by calling them lazy, unmotivated, and lacking resilience, and goes on by claiming that they demand too much. Examples include wanting higher payments for less work or expecting people to use gender-neutral language. These accusations are debatable, but it is safe to say that Gen-Z also has its positive aspects and social influences.

Looking at sustainability in particular, the influence of this "woke" generation is not only enormous but also extremely important. The willingness to live a vegetarian or even vegan lifestyle is significantly higher among people born between 1995 and 2010 compared to previous generations. Reasons for this decision of abdication include a healthier lifestyle, ethical reasons behind the decision or the sustainable aspects associated with giving up meat, animal-, and other products. One example for this is that a vegan diet not only produces about 40% fewer CO2 emissions but also leads to lower water consumption in food procurement.

Social media also plays a big role when it comes to the influence on Gen-Z regarding

their dietary choices. Through polarizing content creators such as the "Militante Veganerin" or influencers who upload and share creative vegan recipes with the world (accounts such as "Zuckerjagdwurst" or "thefoodietakesflight"), attention to this issue, specifically among Generation Z, also known as "Digital Natives," is increasing.

As the first generation to grow up with the internet (hence the name Digital Natives), Gen-Z has more resources for education about sustainability or exchanging ideas for a more sustainable lifestyle than ever before in a generation. From informative YouTube videos on the impacts of climate change to forums on living plastic-free, everything is now readily available on the internet and easy to access.

Through these various encounters with the complexity and relevance of sustainability on the internet, the interest and engagement of Generation Z with this issue are increasing. Because of the big role that the internet plays nowadays, terms like "chronically online" may have their validity for many when it comes to young people. Nevertheless, it becomes clear what benefits spending a lot of time on the internet can bring in terms of sustainability.



# SUSTAINABILITY

by Rave Stabel

Digital activism platforms like Change.org or other petition sites are thus increasingly used by Generation Z to advocate for environmental issues and exert pressure on companies and governments. Additionally, Generation Z is not only a consumer of modern technology but also increasingly an active part of its development.

For example, young people use technology to promote sustainable solutions to problems through apps for sustainable shopping, renewable energy, or environmental monitoring systems.

Apart from the internet, other changes in generational thinking can also be observed. The Fridays for Future movement, initiated by Greta Thunberg and part of Generation Z herself, has earned enormous interest

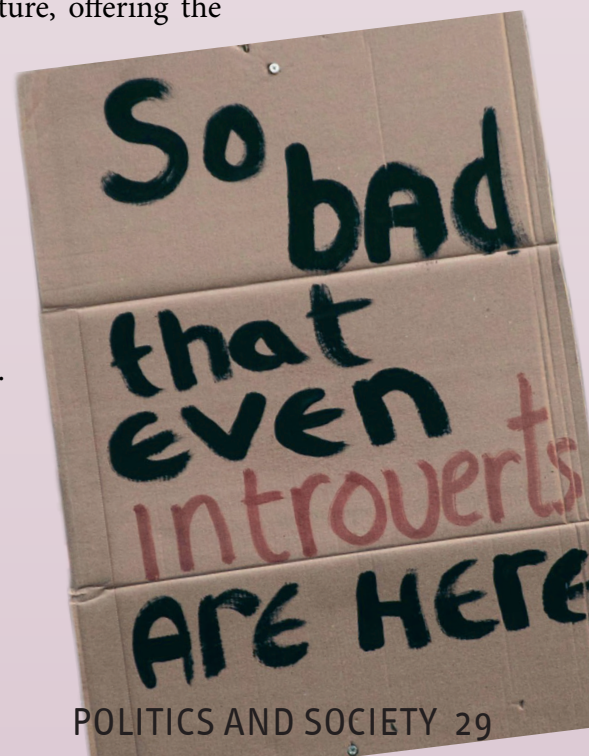
and resonance among young people, raising more awareness about climate change and giving Gen-Z the nickname "Generation Greta." From demonstrations for environmental protection to an increased willingness to use public transportation and much more, Generation Z has shown the greatest initiative so far in actually doing something for more sustainability and our planet Earth.

Besides all of that, there is an increased interest in eco-friendly consumption. Within the generation, more and more importance is put onto

conscious consumption and circular economy. Whether it's buying clothing, furniture, or other things, there is an increasing tendency to choose second-hand products. Not only does this promote a more sustainable consumption, but often it is also more cost-effective and offers qualitatively longer-lasting and more individualized products. Thus, it quickly became an eco-friendly free-time-activity for Generation Z to go "thrifting" with friends or to explore a new vintage store together.

In a world where challenges like climate change are becoming increasingly dominant, Gen-Z can be the key to positive change. The increased interest in better consumption, digital activism initiatives, and participation in global movements underscore the potential of Generation Z bringing sustainable change into this world. Perhaps, through the inspiration and determination of Generation Z, future generations will also be encouraged to actively advocate for a more sustainable world. Ultimately, the "Generation Greta" not only wants to go down in history as a critical generation but also as a beacon of hope for a greener and more liveable future, offering the

young and future generations a planet where it is still possible to live.



# Sustainability and

## social inequality

by Daniel Schüler

Sustainability is a multifaceted concept that can now be found in all social classes in our society. Whether it's the new electric car, the organic sausage from the supermarket or the new old jumper from the second-hand shop - everyone is confronted with it. So everyone has a free choice for the future of our planet - right?

All the labels, from happy cows to flowering meadows, suggest that we have a clear conscience when we buy the sustainable version. In addition to saving nature, with Fairtrade we can even help the poorest people on our planet - perfect, right?

Unfortunately, it's not that easy. Social segregation does not stop at the supermarket shelves, and lower income groups simply cannot afford the usually more expensive organic produce. According to the Federal Statistical Office, around 21% were living at risk of poverty in 2023 - so everyday life is dominated by issues other than organic certificates. Education and the environment also play a major role in the 'bubble' in which one's own purchasing behaviour is socialised. Access to media that raise awareness of sustainable consumer behaviour is more likely to be found in the middle and upper income brackets.

It is interesting to look at fashion in this context. While 'buying and selling' was quickly labelled in the past, the rebranding of 'second hand' and 'vintage' is making the hearts of the wokeness beat faster - capitalism at its best. Clothes swap parties no longer just take place within the family, but in 'kilo sales' in large market halls.

Other seemingly simple options for a more sustainable lifestyle, such as separating waste or not smoking, are also heavily dependent on a person's environment. The finger of blame is quickly raised that 'everyone can do something for the environment within their own framework', but the understanding of other realities of life is quickly put behind one's own privileges.

State sustainability mechanisms hit people affected by poverty harder and increase social inequality within borders. In addition, the exploitation of people and nature, particularly in the global South, exacerbates the imbalance - sustainability is not for everyone.

This can easily be confirmed by looking at the demos organised by the 'Fridays for Future' movement, which includes a collection of all the Adidas retro jackets worn by young white privileged people. The aim of the protests must be to reach people from other social and geographical backgrounds in order to ensure greater understanding and acceptance in society.

Low-threshold offers create access to information on the topic of sustainability.

Honest reflection on the protest movement makes it possible to work together.

Sustainability and social justice must therefore be considered together and can therefore also progress together.

An opportunity that must be seized.





**INTERNATIONAL**

# Sustainability in a Kaleidoscope: opinions of young people around the world

by Sarah Richard

In a world increasingly characterised by the challenges of climate change and environmental pollution, the importance of sustainability is becoming ever more pressing. Young people around the world are playing a crucial role in shaping a sustainable future. For this article, I interviewed people in their 20s from different countries to get their perspectives on sustainability.

From the breath-taking landscapes of Scandinavia to the bustling metropolises of Asia, views on sustainability vary considerably. Below you will find answers from different countries to the questions of how important sustainability is in the various home countries, what the interviewees think of the way in which sustainability is dealt with and what a sustainable future looks like for the interviewees.

## Olivia – France

I think in France they officially put a lot of importance on sustainability especially with the new regulations regarding products and their energy efficiency (with the EU energy label) and the same for housings and cars by having some kind of fees for very polluting cars for example. A lot of people also put sustainability as an important part of their choices in everyday life, for example when they grocery shop.

I think sustainability for the environment is emphasised in regulations and things like that, but it does not take into account the population as not everyone can afford to put sustainability as a priority since it costs more to buy or consume sustainable products.

I'm not sure if a sustainable future is possible as this involves more complex problems. For example, in Europe we recycle and separate our waste, but a lot of them end up in poorer countries on the other side of the world, so a solution nationally may not be feasible globally.

## Jiwon – South Korea

We are one of the countries that always feel the change directly. Like the fish we used to have a lot of, we couldn't catch them anymore, and our spring and winter got shorter. So it is kind of a big deal here. Also, since I was young, we have always learned to save the earth by recycling and saving energy.

Now we are taking care a lot, but still, the government policy and decisions that companies make depend on economic benefits. So most of the things they do for sustainability are out of focus, I think.

In my opinion, for human beings to live, we are going to do something that affects nature. So I think we should aim for less impact and technological developments that can restore the impact.

## Iadranca – Austria

Sustainability is highly valued in Austria, both in public perception and in political decisions.

The way in which sustainability is dealt with in Austria is often rated positively. Efforts are being made in various sectors to promote environmental protection and social responsibility.

A sustainable future for me in Austria would be characterised by further progress in renewable energy, environmental protection measures and social justice in order to ensure long-term prosperity and quality of life.

**Disclaimer:** Some answers were translated from English and/or given verbally and written down afterwards, which is why they may not be identical in every word. However, the content and the message remain the same.





### *Rj – Guam, USA*

As a Pacific Islander, sustainability is so well known in the small islands that I have even worked with it. It is a big deal as our small islands want to change to have sustainability and as to not rely so much on imports.

The way it is dealt with is that it needs more help as they are doing a great job already on the islands. It is just the lack of help they receive from the government and the civilian population. I think with more cooperation from these two sectors we could achieve sustainability.

A sustainable future for me is changing many ways as having renewable energy sources using the advantage we have to each of our specific countries and lessening our carbon footprint overall as the earth is already suffer and we are heavily affected our island is sinking due to global warming that's is why we push for sustainability I want to look at a future where we have a green and clean earth where no islands sink and less to no pollution happens.

### *YanJhen – Taiwan*

In recent times, Taiwan has emphasised sustainable development in both natural resources and energy. This allows us to create economic value even with limited land and maintain a balance between development and environmental protection.

I think the resource recycling system is the most common sustainable development. For example, clothes or toys made of plastic are all based on the concept of recycling. The government also attaches great importance to this, so every household must dedicate. There are recycling garbage bags to sort different kinds of garbage, and relevant laws and regulations are also enacted to curb littering.

Every country should face up to the importance of sustainable development because resources are always limited, and nature will one day be exhausted by human exploitation. What we can do is how we protect and extend the life of the environment, whether it is items, whether it's food or energy, we are all trying to move in the direction of sustainability so that we can coexist with the earth in the future.

### *Rodrigo – Portugal*

Presently, in my opinion, even though sustainability is debated in Portugal it is still not a priority for the government. Not a lot of policies are put in place to mitigate the problems associated with it and the ones that are taken sometimes feel like half measures. However, there are some basic needs that are fulfilled like the obligatory presence of recycling bins in the streets (although only in more residential areas... half measures), and the push to more recyclable materials being used in the packaging of products, in fast-food restaurants etc. Because of this I feel like there is a view for the future, but if these ideas are not developed and pushed forward more intensively than I don't think paper straws will be enough.

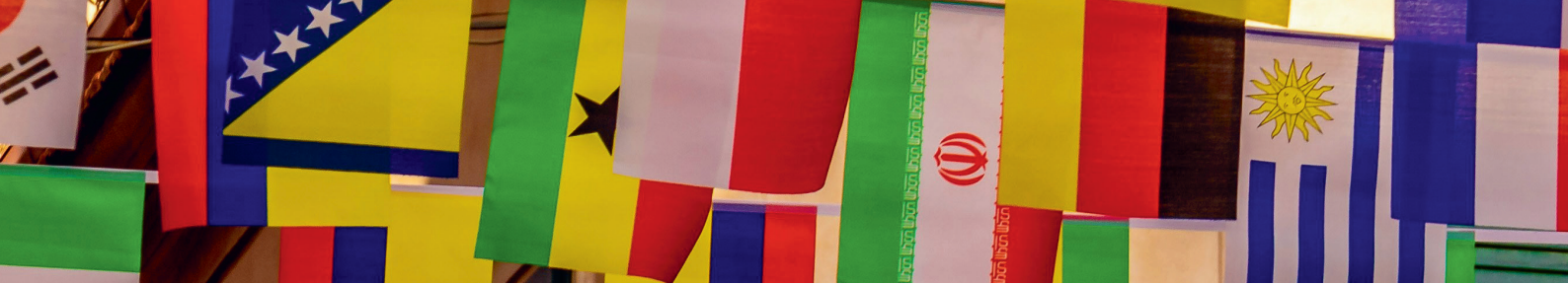
A sustainable future is one where, without being too utopian, all of the practices of the human race are done in accordance with the environment and the “necessary evils” that exist are “compensated” in the best way possible.

### *Matias – Finland*

Finland is one of the most ambitious countries in Europe when it comes to sustainability and emissions control.

Finland does a good job, but in my opinion, we have gone too far with the goals we have set for ourselves.

Nuclear. We figure out how to recycle nuclear waste and then we have the best source of power. Innovation should take care of the problem in the near future hopefully.



### *Jonas — Norway*

So, in Norway, sustainability is a huge deal. We really value taking care of the environment and making sure we use resources in a way that doesn't harm the planet. The way sustainability is handled here is pretty impressive.

There's a strong focus on renewable energy, like hydropower and wind power, and the government has set ambitious goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Plus, there's a big emphasis on recycling and reducing waste.

A sustainable future for me is all about continuing to protect our natural spaces, using clean energy sources, and finding innovative ways to minimise our impact on the environment. It's about making sure we're not just thinking about today, but also about the world we're leaving for future generations. It's super exciting to see how much progress we've made and how much potential there is for even more positive change! I think Norway positions us as a leading example for other countries!

### *Julie — Netherlands*

The topic of sustainability is getting more and more important as the impact of greenhouse gas emission is getting more noticeable. About 26% of the Netherlands lies below sea level (among which a big part of "the Randstad" (densely populated area). Other areas are at risk of flooding due to the high-water level in rivers. Therefore, flood control is an important topic for the Netherlands. This topic is getting more important because of the rising sea levels which are caused by the increase of the global temperature.

This is one of the main reasons why sustainability is getting more important in the Netherlands. There is an additional fee on plastic packaging in stores, for example at the snack bar. Customers have to pay for this additional fee. Also, there is a small deposit on cans and bottles to minimise waste and increase the flow of recyclable plastic.

More and more sustainable initiatives are taken, but still not enough. For example, driving an electric car should be promoted and be a cheaper option compared to a "normal" car. I think the government should play a more present role in supporting those kinds of initiatives.

I am especially worried about the climate and environmental changes. This week I read an article about the fact that the chance of war grows due to climate change. Harvests fail due to drought, the encroaching sea claims more and more land, and floods result in significant displacements of people. Where tensions exist, they will be intensified by climate change. For me, this is a rather scary thought. Therefore, I hope that sustainability will become a more important pillar in our society. Nowadays, profit is often more important than sustainability leading to a limited implementation of sustainable solutions. I hope this will change..

### *Bahara — Denmark*

In Denmark, we really care about being eco-friendly. People here naturally think about ways to be green, like reusing stuff, cutting down on waste, and recycling. Many things made in Denmark use packaging that's good for the environment. We've deliberately made single-use items more expensive to encourage people to use them less. So sustainability is indeed valued highly here in Denmark.

We've made some great progress in being eco-friendly. Our buses and trains run on electricity, and we've found ways to turn garbage into energy. But there's still more we can do to be even better.

For me, a future that's eco-friendly is one where everyone can afford to be green. Right now, some green products cost more than regular ones. I hope in the future, being eco-friendly won't be expensive. It should be something everyone can do without spending a lot of money.



### *Michelle — Sweden*

As a resident of Sweden, I find that the value of sustainability is somewhat debatable in our country. It depends on various factors. I believe a significant portion of the population is genuinely interested in fostering a more sustainable society. For instance, in my hometown, Young Shopping, our primary mode of public transportation is the bus, and these buses operate on biogas derived from decomposed food waste. This method effectively repurposes thrown-away food as a valuable resource. Additionally, efforts are made to promote cycling, and even here in Gothenburg, there are companies offering bike rental services.

Concerning sustainability in Sweden, there is an ongoing effort to progress in this area. However, the political landscape sometimes complicates the development of environmental policies. Despite this, there are positive aspects in our daily lives, such as extensive recycling systems. We have organised sorting systems for various types of waste, including paper, plastic, metal, and glass. This widespread practice of responsible waste disposal is a commendable aspect of our society.

Nevertheless, there are areas where we could further develop, such as addressing gas prices and reducing the reliance on cars. In larger cities, the implementation of more electrical buses has been discussed. I believe that, overall, public transportation has seen advancements in bigger cities. Perhaps, future developments could focus on encouraging major companies to adopt more sustainable practices, utilising resourceful products, and increasing recycling efforts. It may be beneficial for companies to adopt more eco-friendly practices, contributing to a more sustainable future.

While progress has been made, there is still room for improvement. In particular, people's choices regarding transportation and individual habits play a crucial role. I hope that as society becomes more conscious of environmental concerns, there will be a collective effort to make our world more sustainable in the future.

### *Daniel — South Africa*

Sustainability in South Africa is better than you think because we don't have electricity so paradoxically the situation is better because there are frequent power cuts. This is due to various reasons such as lack of maintenance of power stations, lack of coal and inefficient governance. As a result, people use less electricity, which in turn leads to lower CO2 emissions. Although sustainability is not seen as particularly important in the country, efforts are being made to promote it, especially in order to guarantee the supply of electricity.

The way in which sustainability is dealt with in South Africa must be viewed critically. There are still environmental problems such as the use of plastic bags and straws, as well as the presence of microplastics. The priority is not to improve sustainability, but rather to fulfil basic needs. Although progress is being made in renewable energies such as photovoltaics, this is being done on personal initiative rather than through government support. It seems that sustainability is seen as a compulsion rather than a conscious choice.

For me, a sustainable future means that everything is renewable and fewer resources are consumed. A circular system in which waste products are recycled is crucial. The guiding principle "Make trash valuable" emphasises the need to make even discarded things reusable. The development of fusion as an energy source shows potential as it produces less harmful by-products. The current trend towards hydrogen as an energy source harbours challenges, but there are already approaches to improve stability, for example by transforming it into a form similar to toothpaste. For me, a sustainable future includes renewable energies and innovative approaches to utilising resources sensibly.



### *Cornelia — Indonesia*

Sustainability in Indonesia has several values. First, in environmental scope, Indonesia is home to one of the most biodiverse regions in the world, including rainforests, coral reefs, and a vast array of plant and animal species. Second, social welfare, many Indonesians rely on natural resources for their livelihoods, including farming, fishing, and forestry. Sustainable management of these resources is essential for ensuring the well-being of local communities and maintaining their traditional way of life. Moreover, sustainable practices can lead to long-term economic growth by promoting efficient resource use, reducing environmental degradation, and creating new opportunities in eco-tourism and renewable energy industries.

I think sustainability in Indonesia has seen both progress and challenges. Indonesia has made commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and has taken steps to address environmental challenges on the international stage. However, some significant challenges and areas need improvement. For example, weak enforcement of environmental regulations, corruption, and conflicts between conservation efforts and economic development interests. Additionally, the impacts of climate change continue to pose significant challenges. So this requires continued commitment from government, businesses, civil society, and individuals to address the complex and interconnected environmental, social, and economic issues facing the country.

I think a sustainable future for Indonesia means finding the right balance between economic progress, fairness in society, and taking care of our environment. It's about making sure everyone has a chance to thrive while also protecting our natural resources for future generations. This goal can only be achieved through teamwork, new ideas, and a strong commitment to preserving Indonesia's unique environment while ensuring prosperity and wellbeing for all Indonesians.

### *Romy — Germany*

Sustainability is a major issue in Germany that is now polarising people everywhere. The Fridays for Future movement alone has cemented the issue of sustainability in the minds of many people. Of course, it also depends on whether you can afford a sustainable lifestyle, but it is definitely an important aspect in Germany.

Although it is often discussed, implementation here in Germany is very slow and usually falls into the background. Of course, it is important to reactivate the economy at the present time, but the aspect of sustainability should not be completely pushed into the background. However, if you look in the supermarkets, I am pleased to see that many regional products are on offer and that they are at least trying to do without some plastic items.

A sustainable future should pay off for everyone. Not just for our country, but for everyone. We should therefore endeavour to pay more attention to limited raw materials and find ecological ways of using packaging materials, for example. In addition, the combustion engine should be made more environmentally friendly (I know that is a bit unrealistic). From my personal point of view, this change must be regulated globally, which is unfortunately an impossible task. The industrialised countries should therefore implement the targets set at the climate conferences and not keep setting new limits. For me, however, sustainability also means creating a basis worth living on for people that will last in the long term. For me, democracy is therefore also an important sustainable aspect that should be preserved, as well as the economic sector in this country, which should focus more on its own exports than imports in future.

### *Ena — Japan*

Sustainability is something we should urgently address for the future.

It's being treated like a trend. While the term 'sustainability' is widespread I think, there are still few individuals and companies putting it into practice.

A society that considers the environment, avoids wasting energy, and acknowledges people's individuality and culture.



### Aleksandra — Poland

From my perspective, so far sustainability has had little value in Poland because of our previous government. The previous government didn't care about the next generation and the climate. Nevertheless, I think that sustainability is important for young Poles. That's why many young people voted for the pro-environment party. Unfortunately elderly Poles mostly think there is no problem, and we don't need sustainability.

As I said, the previous government ignored sustainability. They cut down a lot of trees, even in the protected forest areas. They did nothing to reduce the coal consumption. They were just spending money for private flights, huge unfavourable investments etc. Fortunately, we had the election in October and the government changed. This is still not enough time to get things right after 10 years of spoiling the economy and the whole country. But I hope our new government will focus more on sustainability. A sustainable future looks really good for me because the government has changed and there are more pro-environment parties. However I do not have great expectations because I am aware that many politicians lie, and time will tell.

### Chiara — Italy

Italy cares a lot about sustainability, so it has a lot of value. we're trying to use more solar panels in our homes and offices, we're preserving our green spaces and trying to recycle as much as possible.

I feel satisfied but we could do so much better and more if there was more education about sustainability.

A future where we can recycle better and reuse as much material as possible in order to not waste and to not pollute the environment.

### Valeria — Mexico

The value of sustainability in Mexico depends on who you ask but I would say that on a greater scale (like politically) is not so high, and we as a country should put more focus on that and more social struggles too.

I know I come from privilege so the people around me do know the importance of sustainability but sadly that is not the case everywhere, also being activists here is very dangerous, so I don't like that part so much.

For me a sustainable future looks like a completely different lifestyle, so we don't need things we do now. I know how dystopian this sounds but I don't think there's any sustainable way to keep having the modern lifestyle.

### Lishu — Spain

In my country we recycle each kind of trash we have, and we try to not throw away things that could have a second chance for another person. There are sometimes second-hand markets where you can go and buy stuff that you maybe need, and you can buy it from someone else because they had it. Though those markets are happening less and less there are also containers next to the different trash cans where if you no longer use the clothes from your childhood for example you can throw them inside it, and they go to an organisation called "Caritas".

I actually think that although they are trying to make the younger generation understand that they should recycle, they do not care and let them go free. Also the mayor is trying to implement a new technique in my town where you will have to take out the cardboard on Monday, plastic on Tuesday, etc.

For me a sustainable future is a future when people do better for all the people and not only for themselves because if we only think of ourselves how will the earth end? Now is the time to look into the problems and solve them so that a sustainable future is able to be there.

# SCIENCE



# Sustainable development and education

Kristina Hinz in conversation with Steven Kostka

## What has changed in the world of physics in recent years in terms of sustainability?

### Where has the greatest sustainable progress been made in physics in recent years?

I would like to start by saying that there are various technical aspects that can be considered. These include solar, battery and heat research. Keeping on with the progress of battery systems with regard to the rechargeable batteries used for e-mobility. Older systems contain large quantities of lithium, which is cheap but not very environmentally friendly or sustainable. Researchers are already increasingly looking for alternatives and innovations, focussing on solid electrolytes. These batteries are known as solid-state batteries. Not only do they have a greater storage capacity thanks to their higher energy density, they can also withstand many more charging cycles (lithium battery 3000 charging cycles, solid-state battery 100000 charging cycles). This shows that despite the continued low use of lithium in solid-state batteries, sustainability could be increased many times over, but these battery systems are not yet marketable and are still undergoing further research and testing.

### What about the other two aspects?

Solar research is looking better and better in terms of affordability for private households. Solar cells are becoming cheaper, making the switch from fossil fuels more realistic for homeowners and tenants alike. In terms of rental flats with balconies, there are already small solar panels that can offset the energy consumption of a few small appliances in the flat. In terms of sustainability, research on materials is looking for substances that can replace the use of silicon both sustainably and economically. So far, such substances have been material compounds, i.e. customised products that are very expensive and are only used for space satellites.

### What do we need to get away from this in the future and create access for private households?

I have already heard of modern projects in which electricity could be generated by amorphous silicon with doped hydrogen in windowpanes and I am sure that there will be other comparable research projects from now on that can be utilised for private use in the future.

## What can we say about the last aspect, heat research?

This brings me to the controversial topic of heat pumps. From the consumer's point of view, the benefits of a heat pump clearly depend on the state of renovation of the building in order to achieve significant potential savings. However, it is also important to realise that the energy generated can only be as sustainable as the energy mix that flows through it. A mix of hydrogen and natural gas is therefore fundamental (current appliances can only process a hydrogen content of up to 30%), whereby biogas is also an essential material for heat generation in industry. What does this currently mean for private households? With good insulation and a heat pump, they can heat much more sustainably and thus do something not only for their wallet but also for the environment.

## What sustainable progress were you able to observe during your studies at university?

Firstly, I would like to mention the Climate Commission, in which two professors from the Faculty of Physics are also represented (Prof Dr Armin Dadgar & Prof Dr Oliver Speck), who are committed to sustainable energy management at the university and to the installation and use of energy-efficient devices. Looking at energy management over the last 10 years, it can be seen that the university's energy values have largely remained constant, but water consumption has fallen by almost half, which already shows that sustainable progress is made.

Another project would be the Smart project system for green carbon-based chemical production in a sustainable society (Smart-Prosis), which is committed to the extraction of carbon from waste incineration in order to produce plastics on a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral basis, i.e. a kind of chemical recycling. This project is a co-operation between the university and the Max Planck Institute and produces a kind of bioplastic on a molecular basis. The recycling process on a molecular basis has the advantage that it can be repeated as often as required without losing parts of the material, which is very

Steven has been studying physics at OVGU since 2016 and completed his bachelor's degree in 2021, specialising in "Printing with metals: 3D printing processes with metals". He is currently studying for a Master's degree, specialising in semiconductor physics, quantum, and fields.

fascinating in my eyes. A potentially difficult step would be to rethink the population's approach to waste separation, but I am convinced that this project will have a great future.

A final, but no less important project that we should all be aware of is the use of Vytal boxes at the university. It is a good step towards sustainability that the boxes can be used several times and that the reusable system conserves resources.

## One last question. What would you personally change/improve at OVGU to make it more sustainable?

Personally, I would first and foremost be in favour of following the climate neutrality plan in order to achieve a reduction in emissions. Secondly, the university should procure more electricity and heat from green sources. As a result, sustainability offsets for electricity and heat should also be introduced, as the current focus is more on electricity. I would also be in favour of the expansion of e-charging stations and bicycle infrastructure, as well as the removal of car parking spaces. Equally important would be the sustainable construction and renovation of university buildings (current example: Campus Service Centre) and the question of the extent to which passive heating and sustainable insulation methods are possible..

## What would be your final conclusion?

There is still a lot to do in terms of sustainability, but I am confident that research will make progress both at the university and worldwide and will bring us visible results. I myself will hopefully have the opportunity to be involved in these processes after graduation.



# Sustainability in the classroom

Selina Wolter in conversation with Mr. Dr. Scheffler

According to the State School Act of Saxony-Anhalt, there is a clear obligation: students should be enabled to engage in ecological and sustainable actions. In order to ensure this, a gradual process has been initiated, with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals being gradually incorporated into the curricula since 2017. This process is expected to be completed by 2030.

In this context, we had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Scheffler, a dedicated teacher from Saxony-Anhalt. He holds a doctorate in Didactics and teaches Biology, Chemistry, and Ethics.

**Education for Sustainable Development advocates for sustainable development in education. Do you remember your first encounters with ESD?**

During my studies, there was no mention of it. However, the concept is not new, and I believe my first encounter was during my doctoral studies (2010).

**With ESD, the responsibility for sustainable education is transferred to the teacher. Are there any support services provided by the State Institute for Quality of Schools and Teacher Training Saxony-Anhalt (LISA), such as workshops or training, that have trained you in this area?**

Formally there are offerings, but the practical implementation needs improvement. Many tasks are delegated to teachers, who then have to handle them as additional responsibilities. I especially want to highlight the dedicated coordinator at my school, who often has to tackle significant bureaucratic challenges.

**According to the State Institute of Education, Saxony-Anhalt is working on incorporating ESD topics into the curricula. What changes have you noticed since its introduction in 2017?**

Curriculum adjustments occur every few years. However, I feel that the responsible committees haven't fully grasped the significance of ESD. The guidance from LISA often seems like a mere fragmentation of the curriculum.

**You teach two sciences. How do you integrate principles of sustainable development into your Chemistry and Biology classes?**

I address energy sources in Chemistry class, emphasizing opinions on key issues. I focus on topics such as resource scarcity and climate change as central problems.

I also emphasize the necessity of transitioning from fossil fuels, which should ideally receive more support through curriculum formulations.

**How do you promote environmental awareness among students?**

Through self-reflection questions about their environmental awareness. I hold myself accountable to my students just as they do to me.

**Sustainability consists of ecological, economic, and social aspects. Do you manage to incorporate all these aspects into your science classes?**

More or less. Sometimes such topics naturally arise. Distillation of petroleum is a classic topic in Chemistry class and often prompts questions about sustainability. However, none of my students have asked whether this topic should be removed from the curriculum in the context of the energy transition.

### **What experiments have you conducted to introduce sustainable principles to students?**

Many classic school experiments can be related to sustainability. However, this requires significant didactic effort. My students across all grades always enjoy it when I make the lid of a chip canister fly off using fossil fuels. However, a replacement experiment with green hydrogen, while achieving the same effect, is much more demanding and demonstrates the necessary efforts for sustainability.

### **What challenges do you see in integrating ESD aspects into science education?**

Forming informed opinions is often more challenging than learning and practicing fact-based skills. We generally need to put in more effort for the competency area of evaluation and judgment.

### **Who do you mean by "we"?**

Primarily, students and teachers together in the learning process. Central institutions like LISA need to be more aware of their supportive role.

### **Do similar aspects arise in your third subject, Ethics?**

Even more so, as the factual basis for the topics under discussion is often larger and more complex.

### **How do you connect the topics of Biology, Chemistry, and Ethics to promote an interdisciplinary understanding of sustainability among your students?**

I sometimes provoke in one subject using formulations from another subject. Additionally, I try to convey my stance on general education topics

### **How do you discuss ethical questions in the context of life sciences and chemistry, and how do you sensitize**

### **students to these issues?**

I perceive sustainability as an ethical responsibility, so there are often significant intersections.

### **What role do student discussions and debates play in your Ethics class, especially regarding bioethical and chemical ethical issues?**

Often, they only arise in response to a dilemma I present, so I'm especially pleased when students bring up these topics on their own.

### **Do you believe ESD can contribute to the development of environmentally conscious citizens?**

It must if we don't want to make our planet uninhabitable. However, like with any educational content, preaching is a very inefficient way to convince sustainably.

### **How do you encourage students to apply their insights from class to their daily lives and make sustainable decisions?**

I follow Kant's advice:

**"Have the courage to use your own understanding".**

I try to be helpful when students bring their own everyday questions, such as about bath bombs or antifreeze, and not to forget the standard chemistry questions about explosions, drugs, and anything else that makes chemistry fun.

### **Is there anything you wish for regarding ESD in the future?**

Yes, less lip service, more life. Perhaps at the expense of a certain level of accountability.

# CULTURE



# Eyes wide open in the *sealing frenzy*

by Isabel Ende

In the vastness of the seal landscape, one can quickly lose track of what is legally protected and what could any commercial company print without even keeping a promise? The reports about greenwashing are piling up because terms like “sustainable”, “consciousness”, etc. are not protected and companies try to conceal the origin of their products. That is where seals come in. They exist to verify products securely and can thus serve as a guide for buyers. But what do these endless seals mean?

Here is a short overview of the most important seals, so you know what to look out for next time.

## Various everyday products

The **Blue Angel** has been in existence for 45 years, making it the oldest sustainability seal in the world and designating environmentally friendly everyday products and services. It is a seal of the Federal Government. Today, more than 30,000 products and services as well as 1,600 companies have been awarded the Blue Angel. However, food and beverages are excluded from certification by the Blue Angel.

**Peta Approved** marks products which are free of animal testing to enable consumers to make purchases that promote animal welfare. The criteria with which Peta adds companies to its list go beyond the partially incomplete legal provisions and eliminate loopholes.

The **EU Ecolabel** is an EU-wide recognized label which identifies environmentally friendly products and services. A wide range of products and services is labeled if they have a lower environmental impact than comparable products. The EU-Ecolabel is NOT found on food and beverages as well as medical products.

This text contains information provided by the various associations themselves. It is therefore a purely informative text, which presents a selection of seals to allow an overview.

### Greenwashing

- Selling a product or service as environmentally friendly through targeted marketing and PR measures, even though they do not live up to the promise made
- E.g. through the use of non-proprietary terms

## Food, but also other product groups

The **Fairtrade** seal is well known in the food industry and identifies products that originate in fair trade. All ingredients come from 100% fair conditions. The vision of Fairtrade is to provide a livelihood for all workers worldwide by sustainably improving conditions in world trade through FAIR pay and working conditions.

In addition, there are other Fairtrade seals, which are important in the fashion world, for example, to enable consumers to make sustainable purchases. **Fairtrade Certified Cotton** is a marker for grown and traded cotton. Fairtrade standards not only monitor the entire supply chain, but also aim to link ecological and social sustainability through local projects. Since 2016, Fairtrade has explicitly supported women in the textile industry with its strategy to promote gender equality measures.

The **EU organic label** has meanwhile been encountered by everyone and belongs to the European Commission as well as the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. A unique aspect about this is that only products which are actually 'organic' are allowed to be labelled. But what does it mean that products are organic? This is based on the award criteria of the EC Organic Regulation 91/2029 on ecological farming, which state that the ingredients must come from ecological cultivation, whereas a maximum of 5% may come from non-organic sources according to strict criteria. Furthermore, producers and companies dealing with processing and import must comply with the criteria of ecological cultivation and the product must be identified by the code number of the eco control body. These criteria are the same for the EU organic label and the German organic label. It is voluntary to apply the German organic label in addition to the EU organic label.

"Fair Wear works to improve labour conditions for garment workers. Together with its partners, Fair Wear takes practical steps and tests new solutions to find a better, fairer way to make clothes." –Fair Wear



Umweltschutz beginnt im Laden.

Gut für mich.  
Gut für die Umwelt.



## Clothing

If you look at it closely, the **Fair Wear Foundation**, founded in 1999, is not really a label like the previous ones, but a non-profit organization working to improve the conditions for employees in the textile industry. Issues of gender equality, combatting power imbalances and securing livelihood-sustaining wages are at the forefront. The members of the Fair Wear Foundation now include over 140 brands that adhere to the eight FWF (Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Labour Organization) labour standards for their supply chain.

**GOTS** (Global Organic Textile Standard) is one of the most well-known textile seals in the world. It marks fair, ethical, and sustainable products, which must meet the criteria of GOTS regarding transparency of the entire value chain. Products must consist of 95% natural fibres, 70% of which must come from certified organic farming. Through controls along the entire value chain, social justice becomes an essential part of GOTS' mission.

Founded in 2006, **B Corporation** identifies companies that are committed to advancing environmental and social sustainability. The concept is therefore based on a comprehensive form of sustainability which includes all stakeholders that are important to the company. B Corporation is now represented in more than 70 countries with 5,000 certified companies.

The **Green Button** is the first government-supported textile seal that was introduced in 2019 by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Along the supply chains, the Green Button checks companies for compliance with human rights- and environmental standards. The aim is to act socially and ecologically sustainably along the entire supply chain.

**Standard 100 by OEKO-Tex** is a well-known textile seal from the OEKO-TEX family. Textile products are examined precisely for pollutants. The seal assures that the textiles are free of both legally prohibited pollutants and hazardous residues.

**MADE IN GREEN** is a label of OEKO-Tex, which labels textiles and leather goods that are produced in socially and sustainably responsible companies.

# Literature

## A Mirror of Societal Changes

by Selina Wolter

Every literary epoch is marked by the moving events of its time. Deeply embedded in Baroque works are the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. Furthermore, literary works significantly shape their time. A shocking example of this is the Werther Effect, which derives its origin from the wave of suicides following the publication of "The Sorrows of Young Werther".

But how did the concept of sustainability shape the world of literature?

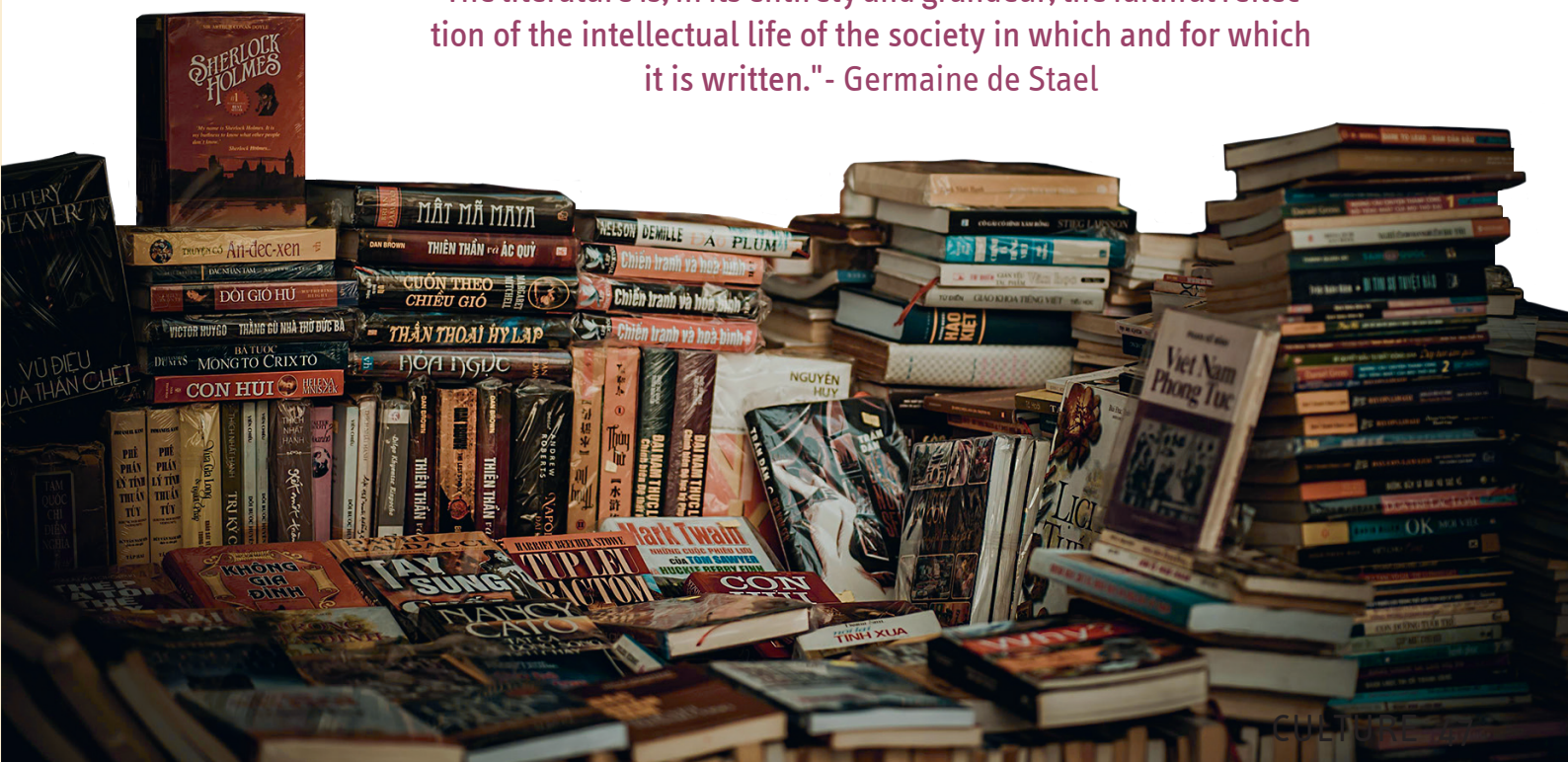
Today, it is hard to imagine life without sustainability. But does sustainability also find its way into contemporary literature?

When searching for sustainability on Thalia, initially over 1,000,000 results appear. However, when restricting the search to narratives and novels, only 117 results remain (as of March 2024). In novels, sustainability remains a relatively rare topic, but why is that?

Similar observations were made by author Amitav Ghosh, who focused his research on the topic of climate change.

The essay "The Great Derangement: Climate Change as the Unthinkable" discusses the absence of novels addressing climate change and analyzes the reasons for this. Amitav Ghosh offers three explanatory models: firstly, that the realistic novel of the 19th century was unable to grasp the catastrophic nature of climate change as it focused on the mundane. Secondly, that modernity has driven a separation of nature and culture, preventing literature from seriously addressing climate change. And thirdly, that literature focuses on individual fates and obscures collective processes, making it difficult to depict climate change. Despite some criticism, the essay encourages reflection on the role of the novel in times of climate change.

**"The literature is, in its entirety and grandeur, the faithful reflection of the intellectual life of the society in which and for which it is written." - Germaine de Stael**



This can certainly be applied to sustainability. The complex theme is difficult to fully depict in a single novel. However, the exploration of individual destinies offers authors ample space to address sustainability. Such exploration can be found in works such as "The History of Bees" by Maja Lunde.

Considering the development of books on sustainability, it can be observed that most books with this focus have a more recent publication date. Thus, the 117 books from the Thalia list are broken down into: 4 books in the period 2000-2010, 18 books in the period 2010-2018, and the remaining 95 books published in the last 5 years. The increasing number of novels addressing sustainability reflects a remarkable development, indicating various social and cultural changes. While in the years 2000-2010 only a small number of books with a focus on sustainability were published, this number exponentially increased in the following years.

Initially, this could indicate a growing awareness and increased consciousness of environmental issues and sustainability themes in society. The increasing influence of environmental organizations, the dissemination of information about climate change and its effects, as well as the growing media coverage of environmental issues, may have contributed to sustainability becoming an important concern for many people. This heightened awareness could then also be reflected in literature, as authors increasingly tend to address current societal issues in their works.

Furthermore, the increase in sustainability themes in novels could also be attributed to a shift in reading habits and interests among readers. Perhaps more and more people are looking for literature

that not only entertains but also stimulates thought and addresses relevant societal questions. In a time when environmental issues play a central role in public debates, novels addressing sustainability could provide a way for readers to engage with these issues on a more personal and emotional level.

Additionally, economic factors could also play a role. The increasing number of publications on sustainability topics could be attributed to a growing interest on the part of publishers who recognize that these books could appeal to a broad audience due to their relevance and timeliness.

Overall, the development in the number of novels focusing on sustainability reflects a broader societal movement towards more environmentally conscious thinking and behavior. It demonstrates how literature is used as a medium to reflect on current issues, open up new perspectives for readers, and stimulate dialogue on important questions of our time.

In conclusion, the increasing presence of sustainability themes in literature reflects how society grapples with the challenges of our time. This development not only highlights the growing awareness of environmental issues but also underscores the power of literature to reflect on complex themes and open up new perspectives for readers. While sustainability remains a relatively rare topic in contemporary literature, existing works provide insight into the possibilities and challenges that authors face when addressing this topic. In a world increasingly shaped by environmental problems, the role of literature as a critical medium for discussing and reflecting on sustainability and societal responsibility becomes ever more important.



# Fast fashion and influencer culture

## Fast fashion and influencer culture

### How influencers promote more fashion consumption and how we can decide against it

by Kristina Hinz

#### What exactly is fast fashion?

Fast fashion is a design, manufacturing and marketing method that focuses on the rapid production of large quantities of clothing. Producers use the imitation of new trends with low-quality materials to offer affordable styles/collections. The target group is usually young and very impressionable, and this is also where the influencers come in.

#### How influencers affect our consumer behaviour (in the course of time)

Fashion influencers and well-known celebrities are just some of the players who promote and market a wide range of trends and fashion brands. You and I can also become micro-influencers and thus represent brands that are not necessarily sustainable. Thanks to the trust and "proximity" to consumers, influencers and celebrities manage to bring almost everything to the masses. The so-called brand community creates the necessary bond between influencers and consumers in the long term. The target group of today's influencer marketing is predominantly young generations between Gen Y and Alpha, as they have grown up with social media and are therefore more susceptible to its influence. Online mass consumption in the apparel sector has been greatly amplified by the pandemic and is still going strong, despite inflationary relapse to 2022. However, it should be remembered that the pandemic has only been an accelerator for the rise in online shopping. In Germany alone, online clothing and footwear sales totalled around 19 billion euros last year. It is also important to mention the social media on which and with which influencers sell their

products, as well as the associated change. Starting with YouTube and a variety of fashion hauls, through to Instagram stories with discount codes, in-app purchase options via Instagram posts and links on TikTok to advertised products or fashion brands, the market has become increasingly fast-paced. The impact of influencers has therefore increased significantly over the years and determines the change in trends, which are becoming increasingly fast-moving. In order to keep up with these trends, large fashion groups are constantly evolving. Four season collections per year have become fifteen, and the trend is rising if you want to keep up with the ultra-fast fashion brands.



## But what is the real problem with fast fashion?

Even though many fast fashion companies such as H&M (conscious), Zara (join life) and C&A (wearthechange) are introducing sustainable products, which in certain cases demonstrably contain sustainable raw materials or have been produced sustainably, the focus is still on high consumption. Not only are the raw materials used in the production of fast fashion problematic in terms of long-term sustainability, but the number of goods produced is also an enormous burden on our environment. Every year, billions worth of goods are disposed of because they either cannot be recycled or simply are not. Every 10th item of clothing remains unsold and is disposed of, and even the items that are sold have a much shorter lifespan than clothing that is not produced by fast fashion companies. Disposal usually takes place overseas and is often incinerated there, which produces a large amount of CO<sub>2</sub>. However, the overproduced goods are not only incinerated, but some of them are also imported to countries such as Kenya, Chile and Tanzania, where they not only create an abundance of waste that ends up in the environment due to pollutants, but also weaken the production of local clothing in these countries. Overproduction therefore pollutes the environment, whether through the disposal, wearing or washing of these fast fashion products.

## What can we do about it and what happens next?

As consumers, we can continue to stand up against fast fashion and support slow fashion and second-hand clothing. We and younger generations are the target group of fast fashion companies and influencer marketing, so in the future we should think twice about whether we really need the newly advertised product of

**Brand Community:** In short, a brand community; a group of people who feel a particular affinity with a brand and actively engage with it

**Ultra Fast Fashion Brands:** Distribution of clothing exclusively online, without physical shops, e.g. Shein, Temu, Cider

our favourite celebrity and influencer and whether it is better to invest in high-quality clothing that is independent of seasons and trends. After all, slow fashion is not only good for the environment, but also takes the pressure off the workers in the factory and ensures better working conditions in the future. Nevertheless, in addition to general consumption, we should not forget to pay attention to sustainable raw materials and recycling in order to make newly produced clothing as durable as possible and do the environment a favour. Influencers can help create transparency by sharing sustainable products while reaching a whole new audience of eco-friendly shoppers. It's a win-win situation, as influencers who promote sustainable brands are perceived as authentic, transparent and sincere. Values that are highly relevant for future generations as well as for our generation(s).

All in all, we should take a more critical look at influencers and advertising on social media in order to counteract mass consumption through impulse purchases. Away from chasing the next fashion influencer trend and towards sustainable and long-lasting fashion. In this way, we can get large companies to change their production and positively change the future of the environment in which we live.

# Imprint Contact

## **Publisher:**

Redaktion tja ?!

## **Adress:**

Büro für Gleichstellungsfragen  
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## **Image credits:**

Pages 1, 5, 43: Ella Keim; Pages 2, 14, 15, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 47, 49: Pexels; Page 3: Redaktionsteam tja?!; Pages 4, 6: Selina Wolter; Pages 4, 10, 11, 18: Aimée Dittmann; Pages 5, 31: Sarah Richard; Pages 5, 38: Kristina Hinz; Pages 8, 9: OVGU Magdeburg; Pages 10, 11: Loana Aepler; Page 14: Isabel Ende, Schiepers Knipsbude; Page 15: Luise Wenke, Felix Paulin; Pages 16, 17: BagSharing (Enactus); Pages 20, 21, 22, 23: FDP, Bündnis 90 - Die Grünen, SPD, CDU, Die Linke, Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht; Pages 24, 26, 27, 28, 29: Unsplash; Page 45: Geschäftsstelle Grüner Knopf, Fair Wear, GOTS, Fairtrade Deutschland e.V., www.blauer-engel.de; Page 52: OVGU StuRa, OVGU FHW FasRa, OVGU FWW FaRa, OVGU FMB FaRa, OVGU FIN FaRa, OVGU FME FaRa, Canva, Instagram

## **Print:**

Printzipia, eine Marke der bonitasprint GmbH  
Max-von-Laue-Straße 31,  
97080 Würzburg

## **Publication rhythm:**

Once a semester

## **Print:**

300 copies

The student magazine tja?! is published as a PDF file online at the internet address: <https://www.bfg.ovgu.de/>

This entire magazine (including interviews, quotes, stats etc.) is a translation of the German original.

# STURA

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If you have any questions, suggestions, ideas, or criticism you can drop by during our office hours. You can find our office in building 26 (lecture hall 1) next to the coffee machine.

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