

Green Marketing vs. Greenwashing

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Master thesis
2013

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Faculty of Multimedia Communications

Univerzita Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně
Fakulta multimediálních komunikací
Ústav marketingových komunikací
akademický rok: 2012/2013

ZADÁNÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: **Bc. Zdeňka POSPÍCHALOVÁ**
Osobní číslo: **K10217**
Studijní program: **N7202 Mediální a komunikační studia**
Studijní obor: **Marketingové komunikace**
Forma studia: **prezenční**

Téma práce: **Zelený marketing vs. Greenwashing**

Zásady pro vypracování:

1. Zpracujte rešerši literatury pojednávající o zeleném marketingu a greenwashingu. Na základě teoretického vymezení studovaného problému formulujte pracovní hypotézy a cíle práce.
2. Zpracujte komplexní analýzu zeleného marketingu a greenwashingu a jejich aplikací na vybrané skupiny produktů. Formulujte silné a slabé stránky zeleného marketingu a greenwashingu.
3. Na základě výsledků analýzy zpracujte srovnání obou jevů. Naznačte možnosti implementace v praxi, případně vymezte možné budoucí pokračování práce na tomto tématu.

Rozsah diplomové práce:

Rozsah příloh:

Forma zpracování diplomové práce: **tištěná/elektronická**

Seznam odborné literatury:

Dahl, Richard. **GREEN WASHING**. Environmental Health Perspectives. 2010, roč. 118, č. 6, A246. ISSN 00916765.

Delmas, Magali A. and Cuerel Burbano, Vanessa, **The Drivers of Greenwashing** . 2011. California Management Review.

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Patil, Vinayak. Gopal. "Green Marketing: Myths & Facts." Golden Research Thoughts 1.7 (2012): 1-8. Academic Search Complete. Web.

Vedoucí diplomové práce:

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Datum zadání diplomové práce:

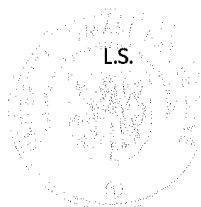
1. října 2012

Termín odevzdání diplomové práce:

19. dubna 2013

Ve Zlíně dne 3. února 2013


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ABSTRAKT

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá srovnáním green marketingu a greenwashingu a jejich využitím firmami, které produkují ekologické čisticí prostředky. Hlavním cílem práce je nalezení rozdílů a podobností v propagaci jejich produktů za použití takzvaných environmentálních tvrzení a tiskové reklamy. Na jedné straně tyto analyzované společnosti využívají nástrojů zeleného marketingu, na straně druhé greenwashingu. V teoretické části jsou popsány definice, znaky a nástroje obou fenoménů. Praktická část je rozdělena na tři samostatné celky: analýzu environmentálních tvrzení, sémiotickou analýzu tiskových reklam a analýzu využívání green marketingu k propagaci trvalé udržitelnosti. V závěru práce je každá z těchto analýz vyhodnocena a shrnuta do přehledné tabulky.

Klíčová slova: zelený marketing, greenwashing, hříchy greenwashingu, trvalá udržitelnost, environmentální tvrzení, marketingový mix, zelený spotřebitel, eko značky, čisticí prostředky pro domácnost, společenská odpovědnost firem

ABSTRACT

This diploma thesis deals with a comparison of companies producing household cleaning products applying either green marketing or greenwashing. The main aim is to find differences and similarities when promoting products with a help of green claims and print advertisements. On one hand, the analysed companies employ green marketing tools, on the other hand, tools of greenwashing. The theoretical part addresses definitions, signs and tools of both the phenomena. The analytical part is divided into three individual parts: analyses of green claims, semiotic analyses of print advertisements and analyses of companies using green marketing as a tool to promote the sustainability. At the end of thesis all the data is interpreted and compiled in individual tables.

Keywords: green marketing, greenwashing, sins of greenwashing, sustainability, green claims, marketing mix, green consumer, eco-labels, household cleaning products, CSR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance and the help of several individuals who in one way or another contributed and extended their valuable assistance in the preparation and completion of this study. I owe my gratitude to Radim Bačuvčík, whose encouragement, guidance and support enabled me to develop an understanding of the subject. Secondly, I owe special thanks also to all family and friends who have always supported me.

I hereby declare that the print version of my Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	10
THEORY	12
1 GREEN MARKETING.....	13
1.1 DEFINITIONS.....	13
1.2 GREEN MARKETING TERMS.....	16
1.2.1 SUSTAINABILITY.....	16
1.2.2 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY.....	16
1.2.3 ECO-LABELS.....	17
1.3 GREEN MARKETING MIX.....	18
1.3.1 PRODUCT.....	19
1.3.2 PRICE.....	19
1.3.3 PLACE.....	20
1.3.4 PROMOTION.....	21
1.4 GREEN CONSUMER.....	22
1.4.1 TYPES OF GREEN CONSUMERS ACCORDING TO OTTMAN.....	22
1.4.1.1 LOHAS (Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability).....	22
1.4.1.2 Naturalites.....	23
1.4.1.3 Drifters.....	23
1.4.1.4 Conventionals.....	23
1.4.1.5 Unconcerneds.....	23
1.4.2 SEGMENTING BY GREEN INTERESTS ACCORDING TO OTTMAN.....	23
1.4.2.1 Resource Conservers.....	24
1.4.2.2 Health Fanatics.....	24
1.4.2.3 Animal Lovers.....	24
1.4.2.4 Outdoor Enthusiasts.....	24
1.5 GREEN MARKETING TOOLS.....	25
2 GREENWASHING.....	27
2.1 GREENWASHING DEFINITIONS.....	27
2.1.1 MISGUIDED GREENWASH.....	29
2.1.2 UNSUBSTANTIATED GREENWASH.....	29
2.1.3 GREENWASH NOISE.....	29
2.1.4 EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNICATION.....	30
2.2 SIGNS AND TOOLS OF GREENWASHING.....	30
2.3 TRADITIONAL MARKETING MIX.....	32

2.3.1	PRODUCT.....	32
2.3.2	PLACE	32
2.3.3	PRICE	32
2.3.4	PROMOTION.....	33
2.4	SEVEN SINS OF GREENWASHING	33
2.5	DRIVERS OF GREENWASHING.....	35
3	METHODOLOGY	38
	ANALYSIS	40
4	GREEN MARKETING VERSUS GREENWASHING – GREEN CLAIMS.....	41
4.1	GREEN FIRMS SELLING HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS.....	41
4.1.1	SEVENTH GENERATION (SG).....	41
4.1.2	METHOD COMPANY	43
4.1.3	ECOVER.....	45
4.1.4	SUMMARY - GREEN COMPANIES - CLAIMS	47
4.2	GREENWASHING COMPANIES SELLING HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS.....	48
4.2.1	CLOROX - GREEN WORKS (GW)	48
4.2.2	MOUNTAIN GREEN	50
4.2.3	SUN COMPANY – SUNLIGHT GREEN CLEAN	53
4.2.4	SUMMARY - GREENWASHING BRANDS - CLAIMS.....	55
4.3	SUSTAINABILITY FROM THE GREEN MARKETING PERSPECTIVE	55
4.3.1	METHOD	56
4.3.2	SEVENTH GENERATION (SG).....	58
4.3.3	ECOVER.....	60
4.3.4	SUMMARY - SUSTAINABILITY OF GREEN COMPANIES.....	62
4.4	SEMIOTIC ANALYSES	63
4.4.1	GREEN WORKS.....	63
4.4.2	METHOD.....	68
4.4.3	MOUNTAIN GREEN	71
4.4.4	SEVENTH GENERATION	74
4.4.5	SUNLIGHT.....	77
4.4.6	ECOVER.....	80
4.4.7	SUMMARY OF THE SEMIOTIC ANALYSES.....	82
4.5	OVERVIEW	83

4.5.1 GREEN CLAIMS – SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES	83
4.5.2 GREEN MARKETING - A TOOL TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY	86
4.5.3 PRINT ADVERTISEMENTS – SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES	89
CONCLUSION	91
BIBLIOGRAPHY	92
LIST OF TABLES AND PICTURES	100

INTRODUCTION

It can be assumed that modern societies are at the top of prosperity's peak which brings positive as well as negative traits. One element which is a key element to prosperity and a part of well-being is consumerism. People tend to consume more and more to satisfy their needs and desires. Unfortunately, the consumption of goods and services has been on rise enormously over the last few decades causing a negative impact on the environment and the mother planet Earth. Therefore, many companies, non-governmental organizations and consumers themselves have been paving the way for a better and more sustainable world, a world where there is a need for greener products and services and people are willing to buy and use them, a world where people deeply think about the impact they may cause to the environment and how to avoid doing irreversible deeds, a world in which environmental mantra "reuse, reduce, recycle" should play a key role, a world which would be governed by sustainable rules, but also a world where two rivals meet, a good one in the name of Green Marketing and an evil one called Greenwashing, to compete with each other and attempt to gain consumers on their side by using all possible tools they have.

Structure of the paper

This diploma thesis is divided into two parts only, a theoretical and analytical. A project part is omitted due to a specific scope of the topic and it is believed that the analytical part can bring more valuable results than the project, but also that in case of a comparative work it would be difficult to conduct and apply it to a theoretical and analytical framework used in the thesis. Omitting of the project part allows deeper analysis of the studied field for it deals with very current and significant phenomena.

The thesis tries to make a complex comparison to see that green marketing is a key element which helps to businesses to promote the sustainability, but also it aids consumers to distinguish the good from the tricky traps of greenwashed products and help them to avoid renouncing the green world and using of greener household cleaning and laundry products. The theoretical part is devoted to terminology which addresses both topics and aids the reader to understand the analytical part thoroughly. The analytical part analyses various cases of both fields, more specifically using of green claims and print adverts to

promote the greener products, but also points out that green marketing as a tool to promote the sustainability is needed and not useless as many people think due to the occurrence of greenwashing as well as due to a green fatigue.¹

¹ Green fatigue is a term which describes an instant flood of “green buzz-words” and of tremendous exposure of green products. Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing: Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 134.

I. THEORY

1 GREEN MARKETING

Green marketing is not any novice, quite the opposite. It has been a part of the business world for several decades. Unfortunately, its essence has not been fully appreciated yet. Nevertheless, green marketing is starting to gain momentum and we are witnesses that it has been quite successful at it.

The history of the green marketing dates back to late 1980s, but the topic of the phenomenon itself had been discussed earlier, more precisely in 1975 at The Marketing American Association's workshop on "Ecological Marketing."² The term ecological marketing was coined and defined there as analysing of the negative and positive impacts on the environment such as "pollution, energy depletion and nonenergy resource depletion."³ In addition, green marketing has overcome various stages of development since then. The first stage was called "*Ecological marketing*" dealing with the protection of the environment. The second phase was named "*Environmental marketing*" which emphasised greener and clean technologies for designing new products to fight against pollution. The last phase is called "*Sustainable marketing*" which stresses the sustainability and how to reach it as well as it is often dubbed as Green marketing.⁴

1.1 Definitions

There are numerous definitions and names for the same phenomenon. Nonetheless, no matter the name is, the idea is the same, to minimise the negative impact on the environment and pave the way for the sustainability.⁵

Cambridge dictionary defines green marketing as: "...[an] activity of trying to sell a product or the products of a particular company to consumers by emphasizing how they protect the environment."⁶

According to Polonsky, green marketing is a complex set of activities which try to achieve a satisfaction of human needs and wants, but with a minimal negative and harmful impact on the environment.⁷

² Patil, "GREEN MARKETING: MYTHS & FACTS," 3.

³ Polonsky, "An Introduction To Green Marketing", 2.

⁴ "Green Marketing : Management - Archive - ISRJ".

⁵ Aseem Prakash, "Green marketing, public policy and managerial strategies", 285.

The American Marketing Association (AMA) characterizes the green marketing as a promotional tool for ecological products which are environmentally safe, thus it consists of a wide range of activities which span from a product production and design, packaging to advertising. Above all, all the activities should be harmless to the nature.⁸

John Grant, an author of a brilliant book on green marketing *Green Marketing Manifesto*, argues that “[g]reen marketing is mostly about making (breakthrough) green stuff seem normal – and not about making normal stuff seem green.”⁹ Grant divided the green marketing into a strategy matrix which describes a set of activities how to do green marketing in a very complex manner. All the parts of the grid play a special role of how to do small or bigger steps to reach the sustainability. Grant’s matrix divides the marketing activities into 3 levels of independent cooperation, “public, social and personal,” as well as it parts the grid into 3 marketing hierarchies, “green, greener and greenest.”¹⁰

	A. Green	B. Greener	C. Greenest
1. Public Company & Markets	Set an Example	Develop the Market	New Business Concepts
2. Social Brands & Belonging	Credible Partners	Tribal Brands	Trojan Horse Ideas
3. Personal Products & Habits	Market a Benefit	Change Usage	Challenge Consuming
	<i>Set New Standards</i> <i>Communicate</i>	<i>Share Responsibility</i> <i>Collaborate</i>	<i>Support Innovation</i> <i>Culture Reshaped</i>

Table no. 1: Grid with Titles¹¹

⁶ "green marketing noun - definition in Business English Dictionary - Cambridge Dictionary Online".

⁷ Polonsky, "An Introduction To Green Marketing", 2.

⁸ Syeda Shazia Bukhari, "Green Marketing and its impact on consumer behaviour", 375.

⁹ Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 56.

¹⁰ Ibid., 12–13.

¹¹ Ibid., 69.

At the public level, marketing deals with a wide spectrum of subjects, for instance companies, markets and try to communicate “political and cultural values.”¹² The role of a brand is important; for instance, a brand should have a role “as company and also as policy.” Moreover, companies should not have only stories and numbers behind them, but also “trustworthy credentials ... political policies and values.”¹³

At the social level, the importance is placed upon “identity, meaning and branding” and brands which create tribes and communities for consumers to be a part of them. It is not about images, pictures, advertising and fake words, but about being a part of some group and identifying oneself with it as well as about feeling of the brands’ “*authenticity*”.¹⁴

The last level is a personal level. At this level, the most important things are “practical benefits,”¹⁵ personal needs, habits of using products or experiencing products. Meeting the needs with green/er alternatives can make a difference.¹⁶

Furthermore, the three columns of the matrix labelled green, greener, and greenest “refer to the extent to which the marketing *per se* contributes.”¹⁷

A: “*Green – setting new standards – communicate:*” the green objective sets its goal for a profit only, “the product, brand or company is greener than alternatives” and the marketing is clear-cut “about establishing the difference.”¹⁸

B. “*Greener- sharing responsibility – collaborate:*” the goals of these activities are for a profit as well as for “green objectives,” the marketing tries to accomplish a change of “the way people use the product.”¹⁹

C. “*Greenest – supporting innovation – cultural reshaping:*” at this level companies try to achieve several targets, commercial, green, but more importantly “cultural objectives.” Marketing tries to change the way of living, innovate and create new business models.²⁰

¹² Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 13.

¹³ Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 65–66.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 13, 67.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 68–69.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 12.

1.2 Green Marketing Terms

In order to understand the scope of green marketing thoroughly, it is important to introduce and explain some of the terms which are often use when talking about the phenomenon.

1.2.1 Sustainability

According to Grant, sustainability is an environmental or ethical idea which has its objectives compatible with the environment and with “ongoing economic prosperity.”²¹ Ottman claims that sustainability “represents deep psychological and sociological shifts.”²² EPA (US environmental protection agency) defines sustainability as a harmonic relationship between human beings and the environment meaning that all the current as well as future generations’ human needs and desires could be fulfilled in harmony with the Earth if only all people lived a sustainable life and protected the natural resources we all share. According to Yaranella et al, it is important to see the difference between being green and being sustainable. They claim that sustainability is “tied to whole systems” as well as is radical which means “going to the roots,” as opposed to being green which “connotes quick and inexpensive steps to make the world less unsustainable...” They further develop it that sustainability should undertake “changes in ...economic, social, and urban processes to achieve a dynamic, virtuous, and balanced relationship with nature.”²³ Put differently, sustainability is a way of living and doing business in endless loops without having a damaging impact on the planet Earth.²⁴

1.2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR – fully corporate social responsibility is explained by Cambridge dictionary as: “the idea that a company should be interested in and willing to help society and the environment

²¹ Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 2.

²² Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 4.

²³ Yanarella, Levine, a Lancaster, "Research and Solutions:, Green‘ vs. Sustainability: From Semantics to Enlightenment", 296-297.

²⁴ "Sustainability Basic Information".; Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 4.; Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 2.

as well as be concerned about the products and profits it makes.”²⁵ Revathy argues that CSR is “a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model.” Companies which have implemented CSR into their business models are characterized by attempting to have a positive impact with their activities on public, employees, stakeholders as well as on the environment. In other words, they respect “the triple bottom line: people, planet, profit.”²⁶

1.2.3 Eco-labels

Eco-labels are considered as a powerful tool of green marketing, especially as a part of green promotion because they inform consumers about the quality of the product or service, but they also provide information about “value function which presents the recyclability and CRS brand related prestige.”²⁷ According to Laursen and Gøtje, eco-labels are tools to inform consumers about a “positive environmental aspect of a product.”²⁸ The positive features vary and span from a production stage, a content of the product, a packaging of the product, use of the product, to a post-usage and disposal of the product. They further argue that due to a vast number of eco-labels their “beneficial aspects become unclear” and consumers confused because it is not possible to know all the eco-labels. In addition, they report that there are three categories of eco-labels characterized by the controlling instance, a) governmental, b) non-governmental and c) organizational labelling. Owing to authorities granting the labels, their liability differs. The higher the controlling instance is, the higher the credibility is and vice versa.²⁹

Moreover, Ottman claims that there are more than 400 eco-labels in around 207 countries. It can be argued that consumers can be confused not only by the amount of eco-labels, but also about the meaning of claims as well as by the purpose of the labels. However, there are several online tools that help consumers to check the credibility of the label

²⁵ "corporate social responsibility noun - definition in Business English Dictionary - Cambridge Dictionary Online".

²⁶ Revathy, "CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY -- AN IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR BUSINESS.", 15.

²⁷ Jacob Cherian, "Green Marketing: A Study of Consumers' Attitude towards Environment Friendly Products", 121.

²⁸ Pernille May Laursen, "Coloring Marketing Green: a Study on the Phenomenon of Greenwashing", 28.

²⁹ Ibid.

and also legibility of the claims to see if the labels are true or fraud such as *ecolabeling.org*, *ecolabelindex.com* or *greenchoices.org/ecolabels*.³⁰ Ottman also mentions that there are several types of eco-labels which “can lend credibility to environmental messages,” however, there is a high possibility of consumers’ misleading. Furthermore, she reports that on one hand, eco-labels “focus on a single product attribute (e.g. recycled content) which can mislead consumers because the consumers might think that the whole product is green, but it is only partly green. On the other hand, there are multi-attribute eco-labels which are given to the products which are green due to many characteristics of the product or due to a product’s entire life-cycle. In addition, the eco-labels differ in the certification manners because some of them demand “independent third-party certification and stakeholder review, while others allow manufactures to self-verify.”³¹ Grant argues if a company wishes to avoid “a virtuous green image” it is important for them to find a credible partner to promote the company’s products and services, for example to gain eco-labels by a credible association such as Carbon Trust, Green seal or USDA Organic.³² To sum it up, on one hand, eco-labels provide consumers valuable information, on the other, they influence consumers purchasing behaviour. According to Rashid, when consumers are familiar with the eco-label, their purchasing behaviour is positive, on the other hand, other researchers claim that this fact is not necessarily valid. Nonetheless, eco-labelling still helps consumers to make a decision if the product meets the environmental, social or health benefits they are looking for.³³

1.3 Green Marketing Mix

According to Ottman “conventional marketing is out.”³⁴ New marketing strategies have appeared and the marketing rules have changed. Businesses have to accept it. It is not about selling the product or service in a green coat. Green marketing is about “addressing sus-

³⁰ Dahl, "Greenwashing: Do You Know What You're Buying?", A251.

³¹ Ottman, *The new rules of green marketing : strategies, tools, and inspiration for sustainable branding*, 144-145.

³² Grant, *The green marketing manifesto*, 71; Delmas a Burbano, "The Drivers of Greenwashing", 23.

³³ Jacob Cherian, "Green Marketing: A Study of Consumers' Attitude towards Environment Friendly Products", 121.

³⁴ Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 43.

tainability-related challenges” [as well as about] a total commitment to greening one’s products and communications.”³⁵ Thus, the green marketing equals to a green marketing mix which consists of traditional four Ps.

1.3.1 Product

Ottman states that green product is a relative term; therefore she uses a “greener” product instead.³⁶ In her book, *The New Rules of Green Marketing*, she maintains that greener products are ones which “are ideally designed to travel in endless loops,” as well as having less harmful impact on the Earth than conventional products.³⁷ Ottman also defines “sustainable” products which “add a social dimension,” for instance fair trade products.³⁸ Moreover, the entire life-cycle of greener products plays a crucial role, from mining the resources for the product, through the product manufacturing, product’s launch, selling and use, to its disposal. All should be followed by “reuse, recycling, or remanufacturing”³⁹ while bearing in mind a consumption and minimizing of raw materials, natural resources, energy and water, as well as having the positive impact on the environment. In other words, greener products should apply cradle-to-cradle designing approach (an endless loop design approach) and should satisfy both needs of consumers and manufactures. Nevertheless, the more sustainable processes are applied, the greener and more sustainable the products are.⁴⁰

1.3.2 Price

Price is one of the most crucial elements of the green marketing mix.⁴¹ As research shows, the green products are sold at a premium price and a higher price than the conventional counterparts.⁴² Nevertheless, consumers are willing to pay the premium price if the product brings an extra value. As Ottman notes, the premium price “needs to be justified through

³⁵ Ibid., 44, 2.

³⁶ Ibid., 57.

³⁷ Ibid., 45.

³⁸ Ibid., 2.

³⁹ Ibid., 45.

⁴⁰ Patil, "GREEN MARKETING: MYTHS & FACTS.", 4; Ottman, *The new rules of green marketing: strategies, tools, and inspiration for sustainable branding*, 53–67; Syeda Shazia Bukhari, "Green Marketing and its impact on consumer behavior", 378.

⁴¹ Syeda Shazia Bukhari, "Green Marketing and its impact on consumer behavior", 379.

superior performance or another benefit.”⁴³ According to Sheths, the extra value is for example, product’s function, design, taste or improved product’s performance.⁴⁴ Patil claims that green pricing takes into a consideration the triple bottom line, people, profit and planet. The triple bottom line should be applied “in a way that takes care of the health of employees and communities and ensures efficient productivity.”⁴⁵ In addition, Boztepe argues that businesses have to choose appropriate strategy to sell their products depending on the product’s price. Put differently, the higher the price is, the more effective tools need to be used. For instance, lower price products will encourage more consumers to buy it, the same level price as a brown (conventional) counterpart can market the product by emphasizing product’s environmental advantage, in case the price is higher, the promotion must stress all the benefits of the differentiated product.⁴⁶

1.3.3 Place

As research shows, the choice of the distribution channels plays a significant role not only for businesses to be successful, but also for consumers because they are not willing to travel long distances to buy greener products.⁴⁷ For that reason, greener products must be accessible and available on the web as well as on supermarket’s shelves right next to the conventional counterparts.⁴⁸ According to Patil, the main focus should be on the management of logistics, taking into account a cutting down consumption of resources and emissions connected with the product’s transportation. In other words, in order to meet the environmental conditions, the distribution of products should be in accordance with green logistics. Green logistics refers to an optimization of energy and resources consumption during the transportation and storage.⁴⁹ This can be done by a packaging innovation which is able to save transportation cost, plus by using renewable energy for warehousing or by us-

⁴² Patil, "GREEN MARKETING: MYTHS & FACTS.", 4.

⁴³ Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 110.

⁴⁴ Dr. Ketaki Sheth, "Role of green marketing in current scenario", 25.

⁴⁵ Patil, "GREEN MARKETING: MYTHS & FACTS.", 4.

⁴⁶ Boztepe, "Green Marketing and Its Impact on Consumer Buying Behavior," 10-11.

⁴⁷ Syeda Shazia Bukhari, "Green Marketing and its impact on consumer behavior," 379; Dr. Ketaki Sheth, "Role of green marketing in current scenario," 26.

⁴⁸ Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 110.

ing integrated transport systems.⁵⁰ Regarding a food produce, consumers should eat locally grown food, and not the food which is often transported from far lands of our planet causing enormous pollution to the environment as well as wasting of natural resources and energy.⁵¹

1.3.4 Promotion

Green promotion consists mainly of green advertising and claims, eco-labelling (see eco-labels) or eco-certification, for instance ISO 14000.⁵² As far as the green advertising is concerned, it helps marketers to promote “social awareness about eco-friendly products and assist their sales.”⁵³ Ottman claims that greener products use communication which stresses product’s values and benefits, educates and empowers consumers with solutions which can support purchasing, as well as stresses protecting one’s health, uses statistics to dramatize environmental benefits, or tries to engage consumers to be pro-active and share experience with others.⁵⁴ Basically, there are three types of green advertisements. Firstly, there are ads which promote “a relationship between a product/service and the biophysical environment,” secondly, ads addressing greener and sustainable lifestyle, and thirdly, ads promoting companies’ environmental responsibility.⁵⁵ Put differently, according to Polonsky, green marketing claims have to meet the following requirements: explicitly express the ecological benefits, explain the way the green benefits are achieved, describe environmental characteristics, only use significant images and terms, and “ensure negative factors are taken into consideration.”⁵⁶ Nonetheless, the choice of the communication mix depends on many factors which can influence its possibilities to success.

⁴⁹ Hrnecková Hana, "Green Marketing," 18. Own translation.

⁵⁰ Patil, "GREEN MARKETING: MYTHS & FACTS.", 4; Hrnecková Hana, "Green Marketing", 18. Own translation.

⁵¹ Patil, "GREEN MARKETING: MYTHS & FACTS", 4.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Gurbuz, Akin, a Karabag, "Content Analysis of 'Green' Claims in Advertisements", 60.

⁵⁴ Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 111–123.

⁵⁵ Syeda Shazia Bukhari, "Green Marketing and its impact on consumer behavior", 379.

⁵⁶ Polonsky, "An Introduction To Green Marketing", 6.

1.4 Green Consumer

Green consumers are characterized as consumers who are more environmentally concerned, therefore, they buy green/er products and services and are willing to pay a higher (premium) price for that.⁵⁷ Green consumers do not consume or use products which might be dangerous to their health; they use energy efficient products or avoid using products with harmful impact on the environment.⁵⁸ Moreover, they can also be described as people who do not use disposable products, tend to reuse things, try to reduce the consumption of products as well as try to eliminate wasting of resources and energy.⁵⁹

According to Grant, there is a high potential for marketers to make people be willing to be and go green. He claims that this can be done by various ways, for instance by educating people what it takes to be green, “making green choices attractive in cultural terms,” making harmful practises unattractive, or making green living more popular lifestyle and take it out of “the green lifestyle niche” and as a result to have more green consumers than ordinary ones.⁶⁰

1.4.1 Types of Green Consumers according to Ottman

Ottman divides green consumers into several groups because she claims that there are “five shades of green consumers” depending on their “lifestyles and commitment to green” buying, activities and values.⁶¹

1.4.1.1 LOHAS (*Lifestyle of Health and Sustainability*)

This is the darkest group of green consumers. Those consumers are the most environmentally conscious, buy products and services which support their well-being as well as a well-being of the planet. LOHAS are very active consumers who try to live a sustainable life with everything what it takes, for instance – reduce use of energy, conserve water, recycle,

⁵⁷ Pernille May Laursen, "Coloring Marketing Green: a Study on the Phenomenon of Greenwashing," 19.

⁵⁸ Gurbuz, Akin, a Karabag, "Content Analysis of 'Green' Claims in Advertisements," 59.

⁵⁹ Patil, "GREEN MARKETING: MYTHS & FACTS.," 2.

⁶⁰ Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 33.

⁶¹ Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 23.

or reuse things, etc. They are not too sensitive to price and can be considered as “early adopters of green technologies.”⁶²

1.4.1.2 Naturalites

Naturalites are consumers who are very health conscious and care a lot about a healthy lifestyle. Organic food and non-chemical cosmetic products are the products they look for. They are willing to learn more about a sustainable lifestyle and be active doing so, however, they do not recycle or purchase various green products, only the ones they recognize as “safer alternatives.”⁶³

1.4.1.3 Drifters

Drifters are consumers “driven by trends.” Being green means being cool to them. Nevertheless, they do try to recycle and minimise electricity consumption.⁶⁴

1.4.1.4 Conventionals

Common sense plays a key role for conventionals. Everything they do is done for practical reasons. They try to minimize costs for their utility bills or reuse old things to reduce waste, but they are not interested in organic food or other healthy products.⁶⁵

1.4.1.5 Unconcerneds

Unconcerneds are consumers who do the least things to protect the environment.⁶⁶

1.4.2 Segmenting by Green Interests according to Ottman

In addition, Ottman also divides consumers according to their green interests because she claims that “eco-aware consumers tend to prioritize their environmental concerns...[which

⁶² Ibid., 25, 27.

⁶³ Ibid., 26.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

are] characterized by specific issues and causes.” The specific groups are the following: resource conservers, health fanatics, animal lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.⁶⁷

1.4.2.1 Resource Conservers

Resource conservers cannot stand waste, hence, they try to do everything to minimise it. They reuse plastic bags, drink water from reusable bottles, have water-saving toilets and showerheads or try to save every watt of energy. Moreover, they share their experiences with others to help them reduce wasting and consumption.⁶⁸

1.4.2.2 Health Fanatics

As the name of the group suggests, health fanatics are consumers who do really care about their health and products and practises which can minimise the negative impacts on their well-being. They look for organic, non-toxic and health boosting products.⁶⁹

1.4.2.3 Animal Lovers

Animal lovers are consumers who are interested in a well-being of animals and care about wilderness. They tend to be vegans or vegetarians; therefore, they purchase products which are not tested on animals.⁷⁰

1.4.2.4 Outdoor Enthusiasts

Outdoor enthusiasts spend as much time as possible outdoors. They are very active people who make trips to wilderness while keeping in mind preservation of natural and virgin places. They can also be called eco-tourists because they do avoid littering and try to minimize their negative impact on the environment when camping or doing activities outdoor.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Ottman, *The new rules of green marketing : strategies, tools, and inspiration for sustainable branding*, 29.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 31.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 32.

⁷¹ Ottman, *The new rules of green marketing : strategies, tools, and inspiration for sustainable branding*, 32.

1.5 Green Marketing Tools

Recent studies have shown that green marketing mix, eco-labels and certification are the most powerful tools of the green marketing; however, there are various strategies and ways how to do green marketing successfully.⁷² In Grant's view, green marketing can be characterized by five I's which can be assumed as strategies to meet the targets the green marketing sets. Firstly, green marketing should be *intuitive* and become common sense. Green products ought to be a part of ordinary life and not a part of niche market. In other words, the products need to be "easy to grasp." Secondly, it should be *integrative* and blend technology, business, ecology and social effects in order to improve the quality of life for current plus future generations, thus, marketing ought to address green as well as social objectives. Thirdly, *innovative* and try to create new products and lifestyles. Fourthly, *inviting* and be seen as a positive choice, not something which is "turning back the clock." Accordingly, it should "create new myths and codes which are utopian and joyful and fun, [but as well as] to tackle the culture of green lifestyles." Lastly, *informed* meaning that customers need to be educated and have the possibility of participation. To sum it up, green marketing success can be characterized as a combination of: "commercial success, green (and/or ethical) success, [and] cultural success."⁷³

In addition, Ottman names seven strategies for green marketing success: 1) it is important to understand the environmental and social beliefs of consumers and stakeholders, 2) there is a need to produce such products which are in balance with the consumer's desires and as well as with environment, 3) brands should provide practical benefits, but at the same time engage consumers to be proactive, 4) all the companies' efforts must be credible and transparent, 5) not only consumers, but companies need to be proactive as well to solve social and environmental problems, 6) companies should "think holistically" and emphasize communities with users and stakeholders, 7) promotion of sustainability and

⁷² Davinder Aulakh, "Green Marketing: Think Before You Act", 9; Gurbuz, Akin, a Karabag, "Content Analysis of 'Green' Claims in Advertisements.", 60.

⁷³ Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 51–53.

“responsible product use” to have “zero” negative impact should not and cannot be stopped.⁷⁴

Furthermore, Jessica Tsain, in her paper “Marketing the New Green,” suggests also several approaches to promote green marketing. She also mentions using of eco-labels and engaging customers to participate in the campaigns. Regarding the eco-labels she mentions label blindness. Consumers have become blind to eco-labels due to the labels oversaturation, for that reason, when using the eco-labels, companies have to think about whether the logo is “credible, meaningful...and fits with organizations message.” She further adds that companies should integrate “green initiatives into every aspect of the organization” which implies a connection of the brand with social and environmental responsibility that can result in an improvement of customer relationship. Secondly, businesses need to take in account customers’ preferences and choices resulting in an appropriate segmentation and targeting. Lastly, companies should apply a lifecycle approach spanning from choosing “green materials and products for their marketing” activities and campaign.⁷⁵

No matter what the green marketing tools and tactics are, the companies had better play fair in order to avoid the possibility of greenwashing (see below) and as a consequence the possibility of losing their credibility.

⁷⁴ Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 47.

⁷⁵ Tsai, "MARKETING THE NEW GREEN: Companies should be rightfully proud of their environmental improvements. So why can't they market those achievements without seeming mercenary?", 26–27.

2 GREENWASHING

With an increasing demand for greener and alternative products or services there is a rising number of cases when companies and businesses try to fool their customers by claiming something which is not true or is only partly true. Due to this fact a new term which refers to this kind of activities was coined. *Greenwashing* is a term which was created by Jay Westerverld who criticized hotels for asking customers to “reuse towels for environmental reasons,” but actually the hotels did not do much to protect the environment, they only wanted to look greener than they actually were.⁷⁶

2.1 Greenwashing Definitions

As in the case of the green marketing, there are several definitions which refer to the same thing. Cambridge dictionary defines *greenwash* as a verb, “to make people believe that your company is doing more to protect the environment than it really is.”⁷⁷

According to Grant, the greenwashing means: “making something normal seem greener.”⁷⁸ He further develops it saying that the greenwashing relates to companies which try to look green and portray their products as natural, but actually they are genetically manufactured, or in terms of cattle, they are fed with antibiotics. Concerning brands, they often mislead customers by vague and false claims.⁷⁹

J. Ottman describes greenwashing as an exaggerating or misleading of consumers about the environmental attributes of companies’ offerings within a particular industry.⁸⁰ Moreover, she explains it further that some companies can advertise products or services which “may, intentionally or not, be less than legitimately green.”⁸¹

Dahl claims that the greenwashing is a term which is used “for ads and labels that promise more environmental benefit than they deliver.”⁸²

⁷⁶ Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 131–132.

⁷⁷ "greenwash verb - definition in British English Dictionary & Thesaurus - Cambridge Dictionary Online".

⁷⁸ Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 62.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 79.

⁸⁰ Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing : Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, preface.

⁸¹ Ibid., 131–132.

⁸² Dahl, "Greenwashing: Do You Know What You're Buying?," 247.

OgilvyEarth in their report observes that greenwashing is a very serious matter which is malicious because it abuses consumer's trust and poisons "the credibility of all sustainability-related marketing..." and decelerates progress "toward a sustainable economy."⁸³ In addition, they also claim that the credibility of sustainable or green claims is threatened and it is caused by marketers who are willing to respond to consumer's green wishes and desires, but they often daze them by false claims in order to gain a competitive advantage over their competitors.⁸⁴

BSR characterizes the greenwashing, in their business guide how to prevent greenwash, as "giving the impression that you're doing more for the environment than you really are..."⁸⁵ BSR also argues that the greenwashing is also an obstacle and a decelerating element to sustainability because it misleads customers and keeps them from making a right distinction between "valid and invalid claims," and as a result, prevents consumers from buying any kind of green products.⁸⁶

In other words, the greenwashing is either intentional or unintentional fooling of customers by portraying companies and their products as greener alternatives to conventional counterparts, but they actually are only shrouded in a green coat.

In addition, BSR divides greenwashing into four types which are portrayed in a matrix. Axis *y* represents "value to the environment and axis *x* represents "effectiveness of communication."⁸⁷

⁸³ Ogilvy Earth, "From Greenwash to Great: A Practical Guide to Great Green Marketing (without the Greenwash)," 2.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁵ Rina Horriuchi et al, "Understanding and Preventing Greenwash: A Business Guide", 6.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 3-4.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Picture no. 1: Types of Greenwashing⁸⁸

2.1.1 Misguided Greenwash

This category is characterized by companies which have tried to be more environmentally concerned, however, their claims are not very effective and their communication uses vague claims such as “environmentally friendly.” In order to change their business position, they need to start communicate effectively and back up their claims with appropriate data.⁸⁹

2.1.2 Unsubstantiated Greenwash

Companies falling into this category might seem as doing creditable backed up deeds for the environment, nevertheless, they do it for effect. Only a closer investigation can reveal what is hidden behind, for instance lobbying or investing more in communication than in sustainable practises.⁹⁰

2.1.3 Greenwash Noise

This group is created by companies claiming being green. On one hand, they do not have any evidence to support such claims, on the other, the claims are not convincing to consumers. In order to reach “effective environmental communication” group, businesses have to implement a complex environmental strategy and a proper way of communicating it.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 4.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

2.1.4 Effective Environmental Communication

This is the group which all the companies should want to be in. Companies in this group are doing everything to improve “environmental and social performance” as well as they are able to communicate it effectively.⁹²

2.2 Signs and Tools of Greenwashing

As already mentioned, the greenwashing is an intersection of the green marketing and deception. It uses various methods to mislead consumers. According to Ross et al., greenwashing often applies techniques such as misinforming of consumers by vague statements, various images which give people false sense about the product, by exaggerating and vague advertising claims or by providing insufficient information about the product.⁹³

Laursen and Gøtje discuss the ideas mentioned above in details. They claim that “ambiguous wording” is one of the frequently used greenwashing tools and signs as well as sins. Claims such as *future friendly* or *eco-friendly* are often seen on packaging of products, however, they do not really prove any friendship between the nature and the consumer. As they argue we do not give chocolate to the nature, thus, green products can only be less harmful not friendlier to the environment.⁹⁴

Furthermore, Laursen and Gøtje believe that eco-labels can be considered as a tool of greenwashing due to a vast and constantly increasing number of new labels causing confusion to consumers by marketing claims, as well as due to the label’s category. For instance, brands using organizational labelling system (see eco-labels) are seen as the least reliable companies since they frequently lack a third-party control. On the other hand, if the company decides not to have the third-party control, but to have a private eco-label, there is a strong possibility that those companies cannot be given more credible labels as a result of a low product quality or due to other reasons. Thus, we can deduct that the probability of greenwashing in this label’s category is quite high.⁹⁵

⁹² Rina Horriuchi et al, "Understanding and Preventing Greenwash: A Business Guide", 5.

⁹³ Ross, Deck, "STUDENT GUIDE TO GREENWASHING", 2, 4.

⁹⁴ Pernille May Laursen, "Coloring Marketing Green: a Study on the Phenomenon of Greenwashing", 27.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 28–29.

Another greenwashing tool being used, according to Laursen and Gøtje, is colour green. Businesses frequently use this colour because of its symbolic meaning. Green represents and symbolises nature, ecology and environment, however, the colour does not mean that the product itself is really ecological. Nevertheless, from the consumer's perspective it appears to be green.⁹⁶

In addition, nature imagery, wind turbines and logos appeals are other tools and signs of greenwashing described in Laursen's and Gøtje's paper. Regarding the nature imagery, the use of it can arouse positive emotions and feelings in consumers on brand attitude. Therefore, it makes this sign a very powerful greenwashing instrument since many companies use nature imagery, even though there is no real connection between the marketed product, a brand and the nature.⁹⁷

Moreover, BSR in their report characterizes 10 signs of greenwashing which should help not only to businesses to avoid it, but also to consumers to reveal the greenwashing. They are more or less the same as discussed above; however, they add a few more to the list. BSR's signs of greenwashing are: "*fluffy language*" equals to ambiguous wording (see above); "*green product vs. dirty company*" when non-sustainable or non-green business produces green product, but the production itself damages the environment; "*suggestive pictures*" is the same instrument as Laursen's and Gøtje's nature imagery; "*irrelevant claims*" meaning that only one part of the product is green, but the rest is not; "*best in class*" denoting that you are greener and better than your competitors even though they all are bad; "*no proof*" the product is green except there is no back up data to prove it; "*outright lying*" means obvious and evidently false claims; "*imaginary friends*" signifies that a company claims a third-party verification, however, there is nothing like that; "*jargon*" using of such a language that nobody can understand; "*just not credible*" means "greening of a dangerous product," but it does not make it safer, e.g. eco-friendly cigarettes.⁹⁸

As discussed above, the tools are multiple, but one thing is obvious, they all try to mislead consumers. However, one can relieve because, fortunately, powerful instances and

⁹⁶ Ibid., 27.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 29–30.

⁹⁸ Rina Horriuchi et al, "Understanding and Preventing Greenwash: A Business Guide", 7.

tools have been created to fight against it and pave the way for the green marketing to reach its target, to promote the greener products and the sustainability.

2.3 Traditional Marketing Mix

We can assume that when applying the greenwashing intentionally or unintentionally, the marketing mix to be used by companies is the traditional one. According to Kotler, the marketing mix is a set of tools which are utilized to reach companies' objectives in the target market. The four basic marketing mix tools are known as four Ps, product, place, price and promotion.⁹⁹

2.3.1 Product

It is a goods or service offered to customers on the target market to satisfy their desires and needs. The product itself consists of several parts such as core product, product's quality, variety, design, packaging, service, features or brand name, etc.¹⁰⁰

2.3.2 Place

It is a term which refers to activities used to make the product or service available and accessible to consumers. It uses various channels to achieve it. The channels are either direct or indirect. Place consists of distribution channels, logistics, transportation, inventory, locations and etc.¹⁰¹

2.3.3 Price

Price is a key marketing tool because it affects consumer's purchasing choice and behaviour. It denotes the amount of money consumers have to pay for the product. In other words, it means the cost of the product. Businesses can choose from different pricing strategies to market their goods and services and to sell their products to the target mar-

⁹⁹ Riaz a Tanveer, "Marketing Mix, Not Branding", 44; Kotler a Armstrong, *Principles of marketing*, 76.

¹⁰⁰ Kotler a Armstrong, *Principles of marketing*, 76; Riaz a Tanveer, "Marketing Mix, Not Branding", 44.

¹⁰¹ Riaz a Tanveer, "Marketing Mix, Not Branding", 46; Kotler a Armstrong, *Principles of marketing*, 76.

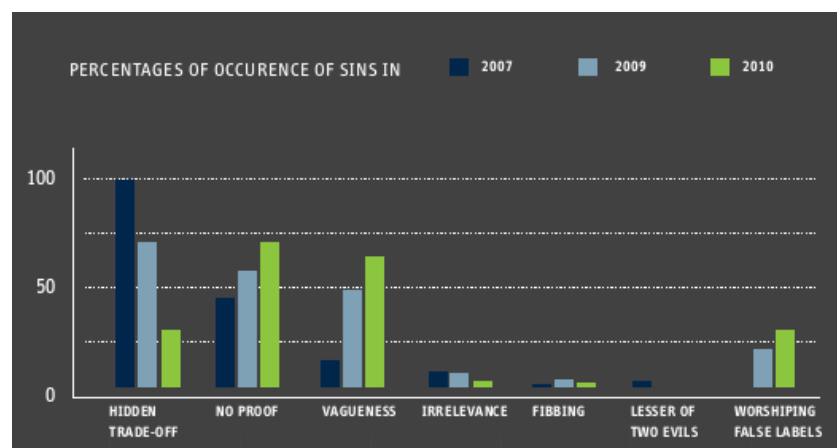
ket.¹⁰² The price comprises of several tools as for example discounts, credit terms, allowances, or payment period.¹⁰³

2.3.4 Promotion

Promotion is another crucial marketing tool. Promotion comprises of such activities that communicate the values and benefits of goods or services to customers. Promotion helps to persuade consumers to buy a particular product. Various channels are used to succeed. Moreover, promotion consists of sales promotion, public relations, personal selling or advertising, etc.¹⁰⁴

2.4 Seven Sins of Greenwashing

Due to a prevailing number of greenwashing cases, a Canadian based company Terra Choice created a greenwashing framework called “seven sins.” The framework is used in order to evaluate companies’ claims and products and therefore avoid greenwashing.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, it is interesting to note the development of individual sins between years 2007 and 2010.



Picture no. 2: Occurrence of Individual Sins¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Riaz a Tanveer, "Marketing Mix, Not Branding", 45.

¹⁰³ Kotler a Armstrong, *Principles of marketing*, 76.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Davinder Aulakh, "Green Marketing: Think Before You Act", 7.

¹⁰⁶ Terra Choice, "Greenwashing Report 2010 | The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition", 16.

Sin of the Hidden Trade-off

A claim proposing that a product is green, but it is backed only by a “narrow set of attributes”¹⁰⁷ and omits other significant environmental issues, for instance promoting only recyclability of the product, while not mentioning wasting of resources.¹⁰⁸ In order to avoid this sin, companies should not overstate one element to hide other flaws.¹⁰⁹

Sin of No Proof

Such claims which are not able to be proved and supported “by a reliable third-party certification or...by accessible information.”¹¹⁰ Put differently, companies lack supporting data which can support, for instance, the statistical information about percentage of “post-consumer recycled content” which companies provide about the product.¹¹¹ Advice, businesses always ought to have provable evidence.¹¹²

Sin of Vagueness

Claims which use vague and ambiguous language, as a consequence the real meaning is misunderstood and consumers confused. For example, using of expressions “all-natural” or nature-friendly and neither of them is “necessarily green.”¹¹³ Therefore, businesses need to use such claims and a language that consumers are able to understand without misconception.¹¹⁴

Sin of Irrelevance

Sin of irrelevance includes images and claims that are true, but do not provide consumers with any helpful and relevant information when deciding about buying green alternative products.¹¹⁵ To be more specific, an irrelevant claim is the one which implies that the

¹⁰⁷ Mulch, "The Seventh Sin.", 40.

¹⁰⁸ Dianna Ross, "STUDENT GUIDE TO GREENWASHING", 5.

¹⁰⁹ Mulch, "The Seventh Sin.", 40; Tsai, "MARKETING THE NEW GREEN:", 29.

¹¹⁰ Mulch, "The Seventh Sin.", 40.

¹¹¹ Dianna Ross, "STUDENT GUIDE TO GREENWASHING", 5; Mulch, "The Seventh Sin.", 40.

¹¹² Tsai, "MARKETING THE NEW GREEN:", 29.

¹¹³ Dianna Ross, "STUDENT GUIDE TO GREENWASHING", 6; Mulch, "The Seventh Sin.", 40.

¹¹⁴ Tsai, "MARKETING THE NEW GREEN:", 29.

¹¹⁵ Mulch, "The Seventh Sin.", 40.

product is free of a banned substance which cannot be used anyway due to a law ban.¹¹⁶ Thus, companies should not claim something what is banned or irrelevant.¹¹⁷

Sin of Worshiping False Labels

It is the newest sin included in the Terra Choice's framework. Basically, it means using of eco-labels that do not exist or suggest that they have the third-party verification.¹¹⁸ To avoid the greenwash, brands should use eco-labels which come from accredited programs.¹¹⁹

Sin of Lesser of Two Evils

Sin emphasising being green which might be true within the product category, but on the other hand, it distracts consumers "from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole."¹²⁰ Instead, business ought to show buyers the right products which are really less-harmful and have a positive impact on the nature.¹²¹

Sin of Fibbing

Such statements that are false and bogus. Fortunately, those claims occur the least.¹²² The most common example is of goods which claim that they are Energy Star certified, but in fact they are not. In order to stay away from this sin companies should never use false statements, but to be honest instead.¹²³

2.5 Drivers of Greenwashing

As research shows, the greenwashing has been on the rise for over the past years due to several reasons. One of the main reasons for the rising trend is a growing number of

¹¹⁶ Dianna Ross, "STUDENT GUIDE TO GREENWASHING", 6.

¹¹⁷ Tsai, "MARKETING THE NEW GREEN:", 29.

¹¹⁸ Mulch, "The Seventh Sin.," 40.

¹¹⁹ Tsai, "MARKETING THE NEW GREEN:", 29.

¹²⁰ Mulch, "The Seventh Sin.", 40.

¹²¹ Tsai, "MARKETING THE NEW GREEN:", 29.

¹²² Mulch, "The Seventh Sin.", 40.

¹²³ Dianna Ross, "STUDENT GUIDE TO GREENWASHING", 5; Tsai, "MARKETING THE NEW GREEN:", 29.

greener products but as well as a growing demand for greener products, despite of economic crisis throughout the world; however, those reasons are not the only ones.¹²⁴

According to Terra Choice, a company which has conducted three greenwashing surveys identifying the sins of greenwashing in different product groups, the greenwashing rate as well as the incident of eco-labels and greener products rose year by year. Numbers released by Terra Choice speak for themselves. To be more specific, the surveying started in 2007 when 1.018 products and 1.753 green claims were examined and “all but one made claims that [were] demonstrably false or that risk[ed] misleading intended audiences.”¹²⁵ In 2009 2.219 products and 4,996 claims were investigated, meaning an increase of 79% of green claims, however, the result of greenwashing was alarming because in over 98% of the cases companies committed one of the seven greenwashing sins, “only 25 products were found to be a sin-free.”¹²⁶ In 2010 4.744 products were examined and the number of greener products rose by 73% from 2009 resulting in 95% cases companies committed one of the greenwashing sins.¹²⁷ Furthermore, the conducted surveys also show that the phenomenon of greenwashing was slightly declining; nevertheless, its rate is still very alarming. On the other hand, some positive numbers were also revealed. The studies illustrated that “the proportion of sin-free products... doubled in each of the ...last years, from less than 1% in 2007 to approximately 2% in 2009, and almost 4.5% in 2010.” Additionally, it was proved that eco-labelling, on one hand, can be and is a helpful tool because 30% of certified products were sin-free, but on the other hand, it is also a tool of greenwashing due to the fact that the *sin of worshipping false labels* has achieved a dramatic increase over the last years.¹²⁸ Regarding the situation in the Czech Republic there were around 750 greener products in 2011. Currently there are around 120 products of a Czech origin which were granted the European eco-label or “ekologicky šetrný product” label. Those products exclude organic food products.¹²⁹

Furthermore, according to Delmas and Burbano, the greenwashing drivers can be divided “into three levels: external, organizational and individual.” Regarding the external

¹²⁴ Rina Horriuchi et al, "Understanding and Preventing Greenwash: A Business Guide", 9.

¹²⁵ Terra Choice, "Greenwashing Report 2007 | The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition", 1.

¹²⁶ Terra Choice, "Greenwashing Report 2009 | The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition", i.

¹²⁷ Terra Choice, "Greenwashing Report 2010 | The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition".

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 6–7.

level, the most significant driver is an uncertain regulatory system “due to limited punitive consequences of greenwashing.” The reason is an imperfect scope of regulations. The only greenwashing activities that are somewhat regulated on the US market are product and service advertising by US Federal Trade Commission Act, section 5 which prohibits “unfair or deceptive acts or practises.”¹³⁰ As far as the greenwashing regulation in the EU is concerned, the Unfair Commercial Practises Directive (UCPD) from 2005, more specifically Directive 2005/29/EC, deals with “a wide array of business-to-consumer practises including misleading adverting... and aggressive marketing” including environmental claims. However, each member state of the EU is free to choose the ways to regulate the greenwashing.¹³¹ For example, the greenwashing in the CR is not yet regulated. Nevertheless, a Czech environmental agency (CENIA) issued a guide for consumers and companies which addresses advice on green claims and informs about the evils and traps of greenwashing, but on the other hand, no law against the greenwashing have been put in force yet.¹³²

In addition, at the organizational level the greenwashing drivers “include firm incentive structure and ethical climate, effectiveness of intra-firm communication, and organizational inertia.” Concerning the individual-level, the greenwashing drivers include “narrow decision framing, hyperbolic intrapersonal discounting and optimistic bias.”¹³³

¹²⁹ "EnviWeb - Ekologicky šetrné výrobky a služby". Own translation.

¹³⁰ Delmas a Burbano, "The Drivers of Greenwashing", 9.

¹³¹ "EUROPA - Consumer Affairs - Rights - Unfair commercial practices"; "Greenwash Confronted - Misleading Advertising Regulation in the EU and its Member States | Friends of the Earth Europe", 4–5.

¹³² Trojánek Štěpán, "Marketingové komunikace a udržitelný rozvoj: 4.3. Greenwashing". Own translation.

¹³³ Delmas a Burbano, "The Drivers of Greenwashing", 4-5.

3 METHODOLOGY

The theoretical part of the thesis is based on a theoretical framework of a collection of relevant books, journal and newspaper articles dealing with green marketing and greenwashing. The information was gathered via an online library search of various databases which offer a vast number of articles and books related to the topic as well as via an online search of web sites dealing with the two phenomena. The collected data was analysed with a help of deductive methods with an application of critical stance towards the gathered information.

Regarding the analytical part of the thesis, real examples of companies from both camps are used to analyse differences and similarities of both phenomena and how they are translated into practise, particularly their uses of green claims and print advertisements. For analysing the claims, the individual greenwashing sins are used to demonstrate a divergence or an analogy of both the phenomena. They are being applied to the claims found on the company's websites and compared with the theory of greenwashing sins in order to find out if the studied companies do really differ or on the contrary are similar even though they conduct business with a help of diverse sets of marketing tools. With regard to the print advertisements a semiotic analysis was chosen as it is argued to be one of the meaningful analyses in terms of advertising.¹³⁴ The meanings and associations of textual and graphic signs, but as well as the meanings and associations of colours are used to conduct the analyses. The print advertisements of individual companies were found with a help of Google search engine and key words of the company name and print ad. For the individual analyses, the product category of cleaning detergents was used due to a high predominance of greenwashing occurrence in this category. Furthermore, the thesis examines various green companies and demonstrates their steps to reach the sustainability. Truly green companies are analysed with a help of green marketing tools and examined individually to find out if they really are sustainable and what they do for being sustainable and how they promote it. The green marketing tools of marketing mix elements of product and place are analysed to see what kind of elements the companies use. With regard to the product, the

¹³⁴ Blažková Marika, "Vymezení a referenční rámec vybrané metody: Sémiotická analýza". Own translation.

whole production was taken into account as it is one of the most important elements of the product to be green. Eco-labelling, pro-activeness and sustainable approaches were also taken into consideration as they are significant aspects of the green marketing. All the analyses are conducted in accordance with the theory used in this thesis. Moreover, the analysed companies were found and chosen after a bibliographic search as some of them are cited examples of household cleaning and laundry detergents in the studied literature. Most of the companies (except Ecover) are not available in the Czech Republic as it is a very small market with a limited supply of green cleaning products. Therefore, the foreign well-known companies were chosen and found in the studied literature, but also with a help of advance search on the Internet using search words (sustainable cleaning products, green cleaning companies, greenwashing products, greenwashing companies). The search results consist of six analysed brands (method, Seventh Generation, Ecover, Mountain Green, Green Works, and Sunlight Green Clean).

Objectives of the paper

Firstly, the purpose of this thesis is to analyse and compare the two phenomena as well as the methods they both use when employing green claims and print adverts to market the household cleaning and laundry products. The reason for a comparative study is that not such a work has been found, quite the opposite. Only works dealing with those phenomena separately not in a comparative manner were found. Secondly, another aim is to see how green marketing is applied to promote the sustainability, a phenomenon which has started to gain its momentum. Put differently, the main objective is to evaluate and analyse examples of green claims and prints of companies which, on one hand, conduct their business with a help of green marketing activities, but on the other, with a help of greenwashing. In other words, the study tries to answer the following research questions.

Research questions:

R1: What are the similarities and differences of green marketing and greenwashing companies in terms of green claims and print advertisements?

R2: How is green marketing used to promote and reach sustainability?

ANALYSIS

4 GREEN MARKETING VERSUS GREENWASHING – GREEN CLAIMS

The following sections deal with real examples of companies which are either doing their business with a help of green marketing or with a help of greenwashing. The aim is to illustrate on real examples how the promotional claims, in other words green claims, vary or are similar when promoting products which on one hand are greener products, but on the other are greenwashed products. Category of household products (cleaning and laundry detergents) is used not only to make a complex analysis and to see how the green marketing and greenwashing phenomena differ or are similar to each other when using the green claims.

4.1 Green Firms Selling Household Cleaning Products

This section addresses analysis of green claims which are used by green companies selling cleaning products and which were found on companies' websites. The individual analyses are based on greenwashing sins which are discussed in both cases of companies. The category of household products was chosen due to the fact that a vast number of revealed greenwashed products belong to this category, according to Terra Choice's report.

4.1.1 Seventh Generation (SG)

Seventh Generation is the US based company founded in 1988. The aim of the company is to produce household and cleaning products with the minimal detrimental impact on the nature. It is a company which takes the corporate social responsibility seriously and wants its products "to make a difference – from their development through to their production, purchase, use, and disposal."¹³⁵ The company released its Corporate Consciousness Report in 2011, available on the company's website, where it informs about current environmental and sustainable goals as well as about the goals for future.

According to Terra Choice's report, the *sin of vagueness* is the most often used sin in the category of household cleaning products.¹³⁶ However, in case of the SG company all terms which are often considered as ambiguous, such as non-toxic, bio-gradable formula or

¹³⁵ "About Seventh Generation | Seventh Generation". Web.

natural are fully explained on the website. When SG claims that the product *contains biodegradable formula* it means that: “the formula [itself] and each of its carbon containing ingredients will rapidly decompose into simple, non-toxic substances in 28 days or less.”¹³⁷ In case of the term *non-toxic* they mean that the non toxic product is a product which does not meet the guidelines “for acute toxicity as defined by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).” Moreover, each product has its own material safety data sheet where amounts of each ingredient as well as an amount of toxicity are provided there.¹³⁸ With respect to *natural*, according to Seventh Generation “ingredients that are derived from plant oils without any chemical modification are considered... to be natural.”¹³⁹ In addition, SG does not use words like nature-friendly or environmentally friendly claims which are often seen on greenwashed products. Thus, for those reason SG does not mislead consumer about offering greener products than they really are, and it is not possible to accuse it of misleading consumers by ambiguous claims.¹⁴⁰

The *sin of no-proof* is the second most common sin in the category of household cleaning products.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, SG company uses such terms and language which are backed up by verifiable data. The company’s commitment is to be completely transparent and disclose all the ingredients used in their products and display individual certification on the particular product, therefore, each product has its own material safety data sheet, information about products’ eco-labelling, or product’s characteristics and its use. For those reasons, the sin of no-proof is not affirmable.¹⁴²

In case of the *sin of the hidden trade-off*, SG provides complex information about the ingredients used in each product, if they are dangerous or not, how the ingredients are obtained, if they are recyclable and how much post-consumer plastic is used for packaging (average post-consumer plastic of SG is 76% or above depending on the product),¹⁴³ as well as it provides information about ingredients the company never uses and inform con-

¹³⁶ Terra Choice, "Greenwashing Report 2010 | The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition", 24.

¹³⁷ "What does “biodegradable formula” mean to Seventh Generation?". Web.

¹³⁸ "Non-toxic definition". Web.

¹³⁹ "About Our Products | Seventh Generation". Web.

¹⁴⁰ "About Our Products | Seventh Generation". Web.

¹⁴¹ Terra Choice, "Greenwashing Report 2010 | The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition", 24.

¹⁴² "About Seventh Generation | Seventh Generation"; "About Our Products | Seventh Generation".

¹⁴³ "Seventh generation 2011 Sustainability Update", 27.

sumers through particular eco-labels and various certification in order to prove the company's striving for offering greener products. Thus, the accusation of using only a narrow set of attributes cannot be proved.¹⁴⁴

Concerning *the sin of worshipping false labels*, they take the third rank of sins in a household cleaning product group. In case of Seventh Generation, the company uses only the third-party certified labels such as USDA Biobased Certification¹⁴⁵ (the United States Department of Agriculture Certification), EPA certification (the US Environmental Protection Agency), Kosher Certification, or Leaping Bunny Certification certifying the company as a cruelty free organization.¹⁴⁶

According to the Terra Choice's study, the sins of *irrelevance*, *of fibbing*, *of lesser two evils*, belong to the group of sins which are scarcely connected with cleaning products; the same is valid for the Seventh Generation. None of the mentioned sins was found when analysing the company's green claims as the SG does not use bogus and irrelevant claims to promote their products and neither is a company which has only one green product line, but all are greener than browner counterparts.¹⁴⁷

4.1.2 method¹⁴⁸ company

The often cited example of truly green household products is San Francisco based company called *method* which has been producing truly green products since 1999.¹⁴⁹ The company strives for having as minimal harmful impact on the environment as possible and tries to be truly sustainable. In order to achieve its target the company has been applying all possible means to do so. The brand's success is not only hidden in the product or in its marketing, but the whole company's strategy plays a key role. Method company cannot be accused of greenwashing because it does everything to avoid it as well as it applies a thorough set of tools to promote the sustainability. The individual green claims are analyzed with a help of

¹⁴⁴ "About Our Products | Seventh Generation". Web.

¹⁴⁵ "Biobased content is a measure of how much carbon in a product is derived from renewable materials, like plants, instead of non-renewable materials, like petroleum."; "USDA Certified Biobased Product Logo on label". Web.

¹⁴⁶ "Certified and Verified Products | Green Power Partnership | US EPA"; „About Our Products | Seventh Generation"; "USDA Certified Biobased Product Logo on label". Web.

¹⁴⁷ Terra Choice, "Greenwashing Report 2010 | The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition", 24.

¹⁴⁸ The company uses lower case for its name, because according to Grant lower case is "a defining characteristic of empathy brands." Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 167.

¹⁴⁹ "Three Green Marketing Companies | Jacquie Ottman". Web.

greenwashing sins which are applied to prove if the company's claims can or cannot really be classified as greenwashing.

Sin of no proof cannot be applied to the company because *method* is a certified company using the third-party certifications such as Cradle-to-Cradle (C2C) certification (all processes are checked – use of ingredients, packing materials, design, distribution, etc.),¹⁵⁰ EPA certification proving safety of ingredients, or EPEA certification evaluating quality and safety of materials.¹⁵¹ In order to validate that the *sin of no proof* cannot really be connected with the company, *method* also provides consumers with very complex information about the post-consumer recycled content which is easily understandable by using of an appropriate logo so consumers can see how much recycled plastic the packaging of a particular product contains. Thus, all the claims the company uses have back up data and *method* cannot be charged with committing the *sin of no proof*.¹⁵²

Sin of the hidden trade-off could hardly be applied to the *method* company due to a wide range of product's environmental attributes which are easily verifiable with a help of Cradle-to-Cradle certification (see above) as well as by transparent information about the content of the product, about striving for zero-waste during manufacturing, or about used materials. Put differently, *method* does not overstate only one green element to portray the product as greener, but on the contrary, it emphasises more environmental attributes to prove that the product is a greener alternative based on verifiable and justifiable data.¹⁵³

Sin of vagueness – even though *method* uses expressions such as natural, bio gradable, non-toxic, compostable, and those expressions could be associated with the greenwashing, *method* cannot be accused of the greenwashing even in this case. The reason is that all the terms have backed up data which consumers can check on *method*'s website. To be more specific, when *method* uses the term *natural* the company means that all the ingredients used in the product “are either found in nature or derived from natural sources.” Concerning the term *non-toxic*, it refers to “...a formula when all of the ingredients meet a certain level of non-toxicity, or when the modelled sum of all of the ingredient toxicities is

¹⁵⁰ "method : c2c certification". Web.

¹⁵¹ "method : our ingredients". Web.

¹⁵² "method : plastic coding". Web.

¹⁵³ "method : greensourcing program"; "method : greenskeeping"; "method : ingredients + colorants"; "method : our formulation". Web.

less toxic than a widely accepted threshold for safety.” In addition, the company uses data provided by suppliers and gained from various tests. Regarding the biodegradability, *method*’s policy is “to select such cleaning ingredients to meet the internationally recognized OECD biodegradation testing standards.” According to *method*’s website 70% of natural ingredients will biodegrade within 28 days.¹⁵⁴

As far as the *sin of irrelevance is concerned*, the research shows that *method* does not use any irrelevant information about its products or product’s ingredients. All the “dirty” ingredients that the company never uses are available for checking on *method*’s webpage which helps to the consumer to make the purchasing decision.¹⁵⁵

In addition, neither of the following sins, *sin of worshipping labels, of fibbing and of lesser two evils*, has any association with the *method* company as the company uses only labels which have the third-party certification (see *sin of no proof* for examples), it does not have any hidden evil products because all the products’ lines are greener and are manufactured in a sustainable way, and most importantly, the *method* company does not use any bogus statements.¹⁵⁶

4.1.3 Ecover

Ecover is a Belgium based corporation producing “ecological detergents and cleansing agents” with a clear mission to make “a healthy and sustainable lifestyle easy.”¹⁵⁷ It was founded in 1980 and since then the company has been setting high standards for cleaning products which are in harmony with the nature. In 2012 Ecover joined the American *method* company to “create the world’s largest green cleaning company.” Thus, it can be argued that this company rightly belongs to the truly green companies producing green cleaning products as well as to the group of sustainable companies.¹⁵⁸

With regard to the most common sin of household products, *the sin of vagueness*, Ecover cannot be accused of committing this sin for the following reasons. Ecover claims that its products are *ecological* and *biodegradable* which are often regarded as misleading

¹⁵⁴ "method : faqs"; "method : terminology". Web.

¹⁵⁵ "method : dirty ingredient list". Web.

¹⁵⁶ "method : faqs"; "method : ingredients + colorants"; "method : our ingredients". Web.

¹⁵⁷ "Ecover Professional - about ecover"; "Our Mission - Our Values - Our Principles|Ecover|Australia". Web.

¹⁵⁸ "method : press room: method and Ecover join forces to create the world’s largest cleaning company". Web.

terms. With regard to the *ecological* part of the product it means that Ecover's products are in balance with nature. The company keeps to its promises by having developed a unique model controlled by an independent auditor to prove that all deeds are in harmony with the nature as the company claims. The model is called Diamond Model and evaluates all manufacturing steps "from sourcing the ingredients to finally being absorbed back into the environment, and everything in between." Moreover, the model has a third party certification by "Vincotte Environment, a prominent international environmental and safety service provider," which proves the credibility of the model and can be concerned as transparent.¹⁵⁹ When analyzing the claim *biodegradable*, the company provides consumers with transparent data about what they mean by biodegradability as well as how the products are biodegradable. All Ecover's products are biodegradable in two phases and start with a correct choice of ingredients and are followed by testing in accordance with the Diamond Model. On the other hand, no exact period of the biodegradability is mentioned which could be considered as a vague explanation and could lead to an accusation of committing the sin of vagueness.¹⁶⁰

Concerning the second common sin in this particular product category *the sin of no proof* cannot be connected with Ecover either due to the fact that the company is a proud holder of ISO 14001 standard. ISO 14001 is "an international standard for the development of effective environmental management systems (EMS) applicable to all industry types." Applying the ISO 14001 standard Ecover's environmental steps are checked every year by a special audit to prove that all company's actions are in harmony with nature.¹⁶¹ Additionally, some of the Ecover's products are certified with the EU eco-label which proves that the product meets the criteria of an ecological product. Furthermore, another reason why Ecover cannot be accused of committing the *sin of no proof* is that all the claims are substantiated by easily accessible data not only about the certification, but also about packaging and a plant-astic packing, a unique element of Ecover's product. The plant-astic packing is a green plastic which is 100% renewable, recyclable and reusable because it is pro-

¹⁵⁹ "Ecover - FAQs - Ecological product; The Ecover Diamond". Web.

¹⁶⁰ "Ecover - FAQs - Biodegradability". Web.

¹⁶¹ "ISO 14001 STANDARD"; "Ecover, Faqs". Web.

duced from sugarcane plants.¹⁶² With regard to recycling and recyclability, all products are provided with a clear label signalling used materials and how they can be recycled.¹⁶³

In case of *the sin of hidden trade off*, Ecover argues that its products are green due to the claims based on a wide set of green attributes as opposed to greenwashed products. Not only all ingredients are listed on the website, but also transparent information about characteristics of individual ingredients as well as how they are sourced. Claims about the packaging are not only verifiable by an appropriate logo on the product, but also on the company's website when clicking on a specific product. Concerning other environmental elements, all steps must be in accordance with the Diamond Model "to evaluate the impact of the total life cycle of its products" as well as with Environmental Management System (ISO 14001.)¹⁶⁴

Moreover, neither of the remaining sins was found when analyzing the Ecover's claims because Ecover does not use eco-labels and certificates which are without the third party verification, or does not use bogus and irrelevant claims or either false labels.¹⁶⁵

4.1.4 Summary - Green Companies Claims

All the analysed green companies show some kind of consistency when using the green claims and cannot be accused of committing the sins of greenwashing. The reasons are following: they all provide consumers with easily accessible data to verify their statements, they are holders of green third-party certifications which strengthen their credibility, all claims which could be considered as ambiguous are explained in details (only Ecover's explanation of the term biodegradable lacks the length of the process), they all disclose the product's ingredients as well as a dirty ingredients list, all do not overstate some claims over others in order to portray the product greener than in reality is, but also all brands produce only greener product lines and strive for a minimal negative impact on the planet as well as for zero waste with a help of their sustainable targets.

¹⁶² "Ecover- FAQs - Packaging Materials"; "Fantastic Plant-astic - ECOVER". Web.

¹⁶³ Ecover, "Recycling labels". Web.

¹⁶⁴ EMCC: European Monitoring Centre on Change, "Belgium: Ecover". Web.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.; "Ecover - FAQs". Web.

4.2 Greenwashing Companies Selling Household Cleaning Products

The following section deals with companies which can be charged with perpetrating one or more sins when promoting their products. The individual sins are used to analyse the green claims to see why the accusation of greenwashing can be propounded.

4.2.1 Clorox - Green Works (GW)

Green Works is a greener product line “that clean[s] powerfully without harsh chemical fumes or residue.”¹⁶⁶ The line is produced by well-known Clorox company which mainly produces bleach and cleaning products.¹⁶⁷ Even though Clorox is a global company with different product lines, it tries to strengthen its commitment to corporate social responsibility and apply it to manufacture products which are “safe for the environment when used as directed.”¹⁶⁸ However, the company portrays the line as greener as it claims that it is almost 100% natural, but also the brand makes such ads that consumers might think that the products are greener than they really are. Is it really like Green Works claims? Individual greenwashing sins are used, as in all analysis above, to see if the company can and or cannot be accused of the greenwashing.

Green Works claims that its products’ ingredients are biodegradable and naturally derived, formulated to be nonallergic, have an environmentally sustainable packaging or plant and mineral-based cleaning ingredients. On one hand, such vague terms can be dubbed as committing the *sin of vagueness*, on the other, if they do have back up data they cannot be accused of it. When claiming *natural* GW means that it contains “natural ingredients, [or] avoid any ingredients with suspected human health risks, use biodegradable ingredients along with environmentally sustainable packaging...” When claiming that the product is 95-99% naturally derived, GW means that the amount of ingredients stated comes from natural resources and all the ingredients’ list is available on the Clorox’s website so the consumer can verify which is plant and mineral based ingredient and what are its characteristics. Looking at the claims with more critical stance, the following was found. GW claims that products are biodegradable; however, there is no explanation and evidence

¹⁶⁶ "About Green Works Naturally Derived Cleaning Products". Web.

¹⁶⁷ "The Clorox Company | Company". Web.

what the company means by that.¹⁶⁹ Only they argue there that their “products come from biodegradable ingredients,” but do not mention which and how they are biodegradable. Moreover, claiming that products have environmentally sustainable packaging, neither Green Works nor Clorox’s website provide consumers with helpful data to check what is meant by that. There are only claims that products are packaged in bottles that can be recycled, however, proving data is lacking. Furthermore, GW claims that products are formulated to be non-allergic, but again the evidence how or which products are non-allergic is lacking. Therefore, the company can be accused of committing the sin of vagueness for not providing verifiable data to explain the ambiguous terms they use.¹⁷⁰

Concerning the *sin of hidden trade-off* which means overstating one claim to hide other flaws, it can be argued that this sin could be attached to Green Works product line for the following reasons. Albeit, Green Works claim that their products are 95-99% natural and that there is 1-5% of content created by preservatives and synthetic ingredients, on the other hand, they do not mention that corn-based ethanol, which is very often used in GW products, “has a larger greenhouse gas footprint than petrochemicals, as well as the use of coconut oil, which contributes to rainforest habitat destruction.”¹⁷¹ Even though, all products’ lines are provided with Material Safety Data Sheet where information about handling and working with the products is provided, the negative impact on the environment is not mentioned and the company can be accused of hiding its environmentally harmful flaws.¹⁷²

Additionally, Green Works is a holder of the third-party certification Design for the Environment, granted by an Environmental Protection Agency, which proves that Green Work’s products are certified as products recognized for safer chemistry. For this reason, the *sin of no proof* cannot be proved. On the other hand, as mentioned, they claim the products to be biodegradable and that they “use environmentally sustainable packaging whenever possible,” but what does whenever possible mean? In order to find proving evidence that their claims have a verifiable proof, company’s corporate responsibility report as

¹⁶⁸ "The Clorox Company | Corporate Responsibility | Products". Web.

¹⁶⁹ Biodegradable Products Institute, Inc., "Member profile - Green Works". Web.

¹⁷⁰ "About Green Works Naturally Derived Cleaning Products"; "FAQ | Green Works"; Inhabitat, "IS IT GREEN?: Clorox Green Works"; "The Clorox Company | Corporate Responsibility | Products".

¹⁷¹ Inhabitat, "IS IT GREEN?: Clorox Green Works". Web.

¹⁷² "FAQ | Green Works"; "The Clorox Company | Material Safety Data Sheets". Web.

well as products' line web pages where analyzed, however, no evidence proving those claims was found.¹⁷³ Consequently, claiming something without evidence can be accused of committing the sin of no proof.

Green Works claims that its products are never tested on animals; however, there is no evidence for such a claim. This claim is bogus, and could be dubbed as *the sin of no-proof* and as well as *the sin of fibbing* due to claiming something which is not true. When searching for evidence to dismiss the sin of fibbing, GW was found on a black list of companies which test their products on animals. Therefore, for this reason the company could be charged with committing the sin of fibbing.¹⁷⁴

Regarding the *sin of lesser two evils*, such claims that may be true within a product category, but as a whole they are considered to be harmful as in case of detergents, Green Works is produced by Clorox company which is well-known for manufacturing bleach and other cleaning products that cannot be considered natural whatsoever. For that reason, it can be assumed that Green Works could also be charged with committing this sin.¹⁷⁵

In addition, when analysing the *sins of worshipping false labels*, as well as *the sin of irrelevance*, neither of them was found in connection with Clorox product's line Green Works. Nevertheless, Green Works is often portrayed and cited as an example of a greener alternative, but after analysing its claims with a more critical stance, five out of seven sins can be attached to the product line.

4.2.2 Mountain Green

Mountain Green is an American based company, with a seat in Arizona, manufacturing cleaning and laundry detergents. The company was founded 20 years ago with a mission to assist to have a greener place for living with the help of their natural cleaning and laundry products. Mountain Green claims that they in the company “do not believe in advertising hype with partially-true claims of "green," "natural" or "organic,”” however, when opening their website not only an ad claiming “earth-friendly, mommy approved” appears on the

¹⁷³ "Design for the Environment | Green Works".

¹⁷⁴ "Beauty Without Bunnies | Companies That Do Test on Animals: Green Works (Clorox) | PETA.org"; "About Green Works Naturally Derived Cleaning Products". Web.

¹⁷⁵ "When We Buy Green, What Are We Buying Into?: Greenwashing Analysis: Green Works Laundry Detergent".

main page, but also other vague claims are used, for instance terms such as naturally safe, naturally clean or environmentally friendly. It seems that the company's claims contradict each other and could lead to the accusation of greenwashing.¹⁷⁶

Having looked at company's claims closer, it can be argued that the company can be accused of committing the greenwashing, more specifically the *sin of vagueness*. As mentioned several times companies should avoid using vague claims, but if they still intend to do so they need to be clearly explained not to confuse consumers. Mountain Green company uses terms such as all natural, earth friendly, naturally safe or biodegradable. When searching for evidence to find an explanation of those terms, none was found except a term biodegradable. The company does not deny that the products are biodegradable, however, the explanation itself is a little bit ambiguous too because Mountain Green claims that "all of ... [their] products are plant-based with no harsh chemicals; therefore, they biodegrade quickly with minimal environmental impact." The question arises, what does quickly mean? Concerning the remaining terms, neither clear explanation nor evidence was found. Therefore, all the claims are ambiguous without providing a clear explanation of them. Consequently, Mountain Green has committed the sin of vagueness.

In case of *the sin of no proof*, Mountain Green is a holder of several third-party certifications, such as Leaping Bunny for being a cruelty free company, an Earth Kosher for being a kosher company, or of Green America Seal approved for people and planet which is granted to companies "that actively use tools for positive social change."¹⁷⁷ On the other hand, after searching for evidence to prove the company's claim that company uses minimal packaging, is 100% recyclable or particular products' labels declare that they are a green product no evidence to verify those claims was found on the company's website and neither on the photos of individual products provided on the website. Nevertheless, some evidence was found after an advanced search, but not a single link to such information is provided on Mountain Green company's website. This fact clearly does not portray the

¹⁷⁶ "Mountain Green All Natural Laundry & Cleaning Products"; "Mountain Green All Natural Laundry & Cleaning Products - About Us". Web.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.; "National Green Pages™ Seal of Approval | Ecolabel Index". Web.

company in a positive light and Mountain Green can be accused of *the sin of no proof* for not providing easily accessible supporting information.¹⁷⁸

Concerning the sin of *the hidden trade-off*, Mountain Green product's labels claim that they are non-toxic, biodegradable, use natural ingredients as well as the individual product's description claim the same. Nonetheless, accessible evidence is not provided on the website, but only on the web page buygreen.com where the products standard report is available. The report briefly informs consumers about the source material overview - life-cycle standard, manufacturing, usage and disposal overview. However, as already mentioned, such information is not provided on the company's website. On the other hand, the company is a holder of third party certificate of Green America Seal which should guarantee the company's environmental responsibility during the whole manufacturing process as well as other certification such as Go Green Deliveries or Renewable choice energy should do and they do prove that Mountain Green cannot be accused of committing the *sin of hidden trade-off*.¹⁷⁹

Even though *the sin of irrelevance* is not very common one, it can be argued that Mountain Green uses an irrelevant claim on several products. Some of the labels claim that the product is *all natural*. In case of the sin of irrelevance, consumers should ask if the claim is important to the product. In this case it is not. There are much more important elements to be claimed on goods, such as the ingredients used, recycling or use of the third party logos and labels to prove that the product really is greener. Accordingly, Mountain Green could be charged with perpetrating *the sin of irrelevance*.

With regard to *the sin of worshipping labels, of lesser two evils and of fibbing* neither of the company claims has any connection to the mentioned sins whatsoever. The reasons are following: the company uses only the third party certification which was checked through various online tools (greenamerica.com or [Leaping Bunny](http://LeapingBunny.com) webpage); it was found out that the labels exist and Mountain Green really is a holder of them. In addition, the

¹⁷⁸ "Mountain Green Laundry and Cleaning - BuyGreen.com"; "Mountain Green All Natural Laundry & Cleaning Products - Ingredients & Packaging".

¹⁷⁹ "Mountain Green All Natural Laundry & Cleaning Products"; "National Green Pages™ Seal of Approval | Ecolabel Index"; "Mountain Green Laundry and Cleaning - BuyGreen.com". Web.

company does not use bogus claims or claims which could be dubbed as the sin of lesser two evils.¹⁸⁰

4.2.3 Sun Company – Sunlight Green Clean

Sun Company is an American based company with its headquarters in Connecticut which manufactures laundry and household products. The company sells various products which are sold under different brand names such as Sunlight, Whisk, Sun, all, and many more. The brand being examined in this paragraph is Sunlight Laundry Canada which has been a part of Sun Company since 2010.¹⁸¹ Sunlight CA produces a range of conventional laundry product lines that are accompanied with a Green Clean line which according to the company is environmentally conscious and kinder to the environment.¹⁸² Nevertheless, the company's claims were analysed with a more critical stance to find out if the company can or cannot be accused of the greenwashing.

Looking at the claims closer, the most common sin in the category of household products the *sin of vagueness* can be attached to the Sunlight Green Clean product line for the following reasons. The product description on the company's website claims that the Green Clean products consist of plant-based ingredients, is biodegradable after 28 days or that it is environmentally conscious formula. However, neither of the claims is provided with easily accessible data to prove their validity. On one hand, the company informs that the product is biodegradable after 28 days, but on the other hand, neither an explanation what is meant by the biodegradability nor the proof is provided. The same is true for the rest of the claims as the company only states that being kinder to the environment means that "Green Clean includes plant-based ingredients and is biodegradable*."¹⁸³ Even though Sunlight uses asterisk which usually refers to some extra information, neither reference nor information what plant-based ingredients are and how they are obtained were found. Consequently, the company can be charged with perpetrating the sin of vagueness.

¹⁸⁰ "MOUNTAIN GREEN | Green Business Directory Featuring Sustainable Business Products and Sustainable Business Services from Green America Approved Businesses"; "How Do I Shop Cruelty Free? Look for the Leaping Bunny : LeapingBunny.org". Web.

¹⁸¹ "Brands | History". Web.

¹⁸² "Sunlight® Green Clean". Web.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

As far as the *sin of no proof* is concerned, it can be argued that Sunlight Green Clean can be accused of committing this sin too. As mentioned in the analysis of ambiguous claims above, Sunlight uses terms which cannot be easily verified by accessible data or proved by a reliable third-party certification. Although Sunlight claims that their “laundry and fabric care products packaging uses 25% or more post consumer recycled plastic and paperboard packaging,” no proving evidence was found, only an empty claim without verifiable evidence. Claiming something without an accessible proving data leads to a charge of committing the sin of no proof.¹⁸⁴

With respect to the *sin of worshipping false labels*, it was found out that Sunlight Green Clean uses an eco-label which does not exist. The company attaches a logo claiming that the product is biodegradable, but when searching for evidence with the help of online tools dealing with the third-party certification, such as www.greenerchoices.org/eco-labels/ or www.ecolabelindex.com/ecolabels/, the eco label used on Green Clean products was not found. For that reason, Sunlight Green Clean could be accused of perpetrating the sin of worshipping false labels.¹⁸⁵

Concerning the remaining *sins of irrelevance, fibbing, hidden trade-off* and *of lesser two evils*, it can be contended that two out of four can be associated with the Sunlight Green Clean product line -the *sin of lesser two evils* and of the *hidden trade-off*, the other two cannot for the company does not use irrelevant (material data sheet provided) and bogus claims. On one hand Sunlight does not portray the product to be greener based on the narrow set of attributes because the product is greener due to many green deeds the company says it does, on the other hand, they are hardly to be verified and lack proof, thus, it is hard to believe which attributes are true and which are not and Sunlight could be charged with perpetrating the *sin of hidden trade off*. With regard to the *sin of lesser two evils*, as in the case of Green Works, the Sunlight brand is a part of Sun Company that manufactures conventional cleaning and laundry detergents and only one product line is somewhat greener than the rest, but yet not as the company portrays or as the other greener products

¹⁸⁴ "Sunlight® Cares About the Environment". Web.

¹⁸⁵ "All ecolabels matching 'biodegradable' | Ecolabel Index"; "GreenerChoices.org | Eco-labels center | Label logo search results - biodegradable". Web.

offered on the market. Therefore, it can be argued that Sun with its Sunlight Green Clean could be accused of committing the sin of lesser two evils.¹⁸⁶

4.2.4 Summary - Greenwashing Brands Claims

As in case of green companies, the greenwashing brands also show some kind of consistency when using the green claims to promote the cleaning and laundry detergents. According to the Terra Choice's report, the most common sin occurring in the category of household cleaning products is the *sin of vagueness* which was also proved by the conducted analyses since all the brands use such statements that lack explanatory data of the claims. Secondly, the second most used sin, the *sin of no-proof*, can also be attached to all the brands since the verifiable data or certification was not found during the analyses. Thirdly, the *sin of hidden-trade off* could be connected with two of the brands for they promote their products as greener. On one hand, the product's greenness is based on a narrow set of attributes (Green Works), but also the greenness lack back-up data (Green Works, Sunlight Green Clean). Fourthly, Green Works and Sunlight Green Clean could be charged with perpetrating the *sin of lesser two evils*, not very common sin, for they are produced by companies which mainly manufacture conventional chemical cleaning products that harm the environment and their greener lines are only additional ones. Lastly, all the remaining sins were also detected, but were valid only for one of the three brands (the *sin of irrelevance* – Mountain Green, *fibbing* – Green Works, *worshipping false labels* – Sunlight Green Clean). Put differently, the greenwashing brands try to promote their products to be greener which on one hand may be greener, but on the other hand, they use such claims that can mislead consumers as they do not explain or provide them with sufficient data to prove their claims and the greenness of the product.

4.3 Sustainability from the Green Marketing Perspective

The following section deals with specific green marketing tools which are used to reach the sustainability. Individual tools mentioned in the theoretical part are analyzed with a help of examples of truly green companies in order to find out how companies promote sustain-

¹⁸⁶ "Sunlight® Green Clean"; "Brands | History"; "How We Operate | Responsibility | Environment | Commu-

ability, what kind of elements they use and implement, but as well as to see what companies attach the most importance to in order to be sustainable.

4.3.1 method

Method's pursuit of sustainability is a remarkable one. According to *method*, the company "evaluates and optimizes across a wide array of factors spanning health, community, and environmental impacts." Due to a very comprehensive scheme, *method* "is able to broadly build sustainability into ... product designs and company organizations." Furthermore, *method*'s sustainable instruments consist of *health-related implications*, which are either short term (products which are non-toxic or non-allergic) or long term (fighting for products being not carcinogenic or not endocrine disrupting), secondly, they consist of *community related implications* which are ethical and local, dealing with internal and external stakeholders (concerning the former group the company provides employees education and a possibility to take part in a community volunteers project, regarding the latter the company strives for fair labour practises or for healthy and safe working conditions for their employees), and thirdly, they consist of *globally environment-related implications* which are upstream (meaning that ingredients are of a natural origin, responsibly harvested and safely processed and at the same time having minimal negative effects on the climate, or having minimal energy and resources consumption) and downstream (meaning that products are bio gradable and recyclable).¹⁸⁷

Put differently, with regard to the products, the company applies the cradle-to-cradle approach implying that the products have an endless lifetime, all have disclosed information about the ingredients, the third-party certification proving that all materials used are safe not only for consumer's health, but also for the environment.

In addition, *method* uses a very complex system for packaging to eliminate waste not only by using recyclable and recycled materials and refillable pouches, but also by a close collaboration with TerraCycle company which freely collects and processes non-recyclable materials and turns them into new green products.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, *method* cooper-

nity | Innovation". Web.

¹⁸⁷ "method : defining sustainability". Web.

¹⁸⁸ "method : terracycle"; "method : greenskeeping"; "method : our ingredients". Web.

ates only with suppliers who “adhere to the highest material quality standards ... [which] are manufactured in environmentally responsible ways.” All the activities are tracked in order to improve the production efficiency with regard to a low consumption of water (striving for the reduction and zero waste in all factories), of energy (*method* uses mainly energy from renewable resources, but as well as offsets the carbon emissions for all consumed energy), and of materials (the method’s aim is to minimize wasting of all materials throughout the processes and designing of products).¹⁸⁹

As far as the processes are concerned, *method* puts in a lot of effort to secure effective and ecological distribution with a help of US EPA’s Smartway program, strategic route planning, using of rail transport as well as with shipping companies with efficient shipping, or exploiting of its biodiesel truck fleet.¹⁹⁰

Looking at the sustainable perspective of the whole company, *method* is a climate conscious company striving for better solutions to tackle the climate change and minimize carbon footprints of all company’s actions. In order to achieve so, as has already been mentioned, *method* tries to reduce the consumption of resources as well as offsets the carbon emission that cannot be omitted, uses alternative energy,¹⁹¹ or is a cruelty-free recognized company. More importantly, *method* is so called B corporation having a B Corp certification which is granted to sustainable businesses that need to “meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency.” The aim of B Corps is to create a new kind of business that helps “to solve social and environmental problems.”¹⁹²

Bearing in mind all the aspects presented above, it can be assumed that *method*’s green marketing activities, using Grant’s characterization of 5 Is, are *intuitive* for *method* tries to take its products from the niche market and make them easy to grasp for they are available at various U.S. and Canadian retailers and online stores;¹⁹³ *integrative* because the company embodies ecology, technology, business and social effects to improve well-being of people as well as of the planet; *innovative* because it puts in a lot of effort to create

¹⁸⁹ "method : our sourcing". Web.

¹⁹⁰ "method : our distribution". Web.

¹⁹¹ "method : climate consciousness". Web.

¹⁹² "What are B Corps? - B Corporation"; "method : changing business". Web.

¹⁹³ "method : where to buy". Web.

new and better products; *informed* as it provides very comprehensible information about the products, but also offers consumers to be a part of method's community; *inviting* because it tries to create a new movement of "people against dirty" or in other words "progressive domestics."¹⁹⁴ Moreover, according to Grant, *method* belongs to a group of tribal brands (see table 1) meaning that the company creates a tribe of users.¹⁹⁵

Applying Ottman's seven green marketing strategies (see green marketing tools), *method* meets strategy of credibility and transparency, respect consumers as well as stakeholders, products provide practical benefits and make consumers pro-active (recycle, teracycle, refillable pouches), produces such products which try to meet consumer's needs and desires and at the same time be in harmony with the nature and tirelessly promote sustainability and strives for zero-waste. To sum it up, *method* integrates sustainability into every aspect of its organization which can be assumed as the most fundamental feature of all mentioned above.

4.3.2 Seventh Generation (SG)

Seventh Generation takes both the social responsibility and sustainability very seriously. In order to fulfil its commitment to the environment, the company issued a report where all its up-to-date achievements and future plans to tackle the sustainability are mentioned. Since its inception SG has been concentrating all possible means to have minimal detrimental impact on the planet as well as has been maintaining its priorities of "tracking, improving, and reporting...[its] environmental performance." The numbers speak for themselves. For instance from 2010 to 2011 the company managed to decrease the amount of "normalized greenhouse gas emissions by 8% and 2% decrease in absolute emissions."¹⁹⁶ Compared to traditional products Seventh Generation saved 77.000 trees, 105 991 530 litres of water, or approximately 4 600 000 litres of petroleum of energy in 2011.¹⁹⁷ Nonetheless, the numbers are not the only elements hidden behind the Seventh Generation's sustainability, there is much more into it.

¹⁹⁴ Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing: Strategies, Tools, and Inspiration for Sustainable Branding*, 49.

¹⁹⁵ Grant, *The Green Marketing Manifesto*, 72.

¹⁹⁶ "Seventh generation 2011 Sustainability Update", 21.

¹⁹⁷ "Seventh Generation Corporate Responsibility | Seventh Generation". Web.

Seventh Generation is a proud holder of the B Corp certification for being a sustainable business with the highest environmental score out of four examined areas (environment, governance, community and workers).¹⁹⁸ The reasons for having the highest environmental score result are numerous. For example the company puts in a lot of effort to use ingredients that comes from plants and have a lower carbon footprint than brown counterparts; to produce concentrated products (2 and 4 times concentrated) resulting in a reduction of packaging; to maintain strategic logistics and distribution minimizing travelled kilometres resulting in a reduction of green house emissions by 36% since 2008; to use recycled and renewable content as well as renewable materials which increased by 2% from 64 to 66% from the year 2010 to 2011; to increase the amount of post-consumer recycled and also of recycled plastic content in plastic packing which increased from 19% in 2006 to 42% in 2011; or to make employees more proactive by switching to cold-water washing or by car-pooling.¹⁹⁹

From Grant's green marketing perspective, Seventh Generation's green marketing is *intuitive* because the company's products are easy to grasp, they are available through various distribution channels, such as retail stores, e.g. Wall-Mart, Whole-food, or online stores, e.g. Amazon, Natural Store and many more;²⁰⁰ *integrative* because it connects business, ecology and social effects through engaging stakeholders and making them pro-active by education via social media as well as by a possibility to take part in volunteering projects;²⁰¹ *innovative* as the company strives for an improvement and innovative technologies in order to minimize the negative impact throughout all processes; *inviting* by being a greener alternative to brown counterparts and *informed* by providing transparent and complex information about products, visions, achievements.

Concerning the Ottman's seven green marketing strategies for sustainability, Seventh Generation has mastered all seven for the following reasons: SG provides transparent and credible data, all negatives are clearly stated on their website and all data are backed up and verifiable; SG attaches enormous importance to corporate social responsibility; produces such products which try to meet consumer's needs and desires and at the same time

¹⁹⁸ "Seventh Generation | B Corporation". Web.

¹⁹⁹ "Seventh generation 2011 Sustainability Update", 21–27.

²⁰⁰ "Where to Buy Seventh Generation -Where to Buy Seventh Generation Diapers | Seventh Generation".

be in harmony with the nature; engages consumers and employees to be proactive by educating them and offering them the possibility to take part in volunteering programs; they build communities within the staff as well as with other stakeholders, but more importantly, sustainability and corporate social responsibility promotion are the key elements of company's deeds.²⁰²

4.3.3 Ecover

By merging with the most successful sustainable company *method*, Ecover strengthens its commitment to sustainability. Ecover has been a European cleaning leader for more than thirty years and sustainability has always been a part of the company's core. Being the ISO 14001 certified company proves its pledge to sustainability even more.

Ecover's individual steps to be sustainable are following: a) manufacturing of greener products which have minimal negative impact on the environment – the whole life-cycle of the product is very important, therefore, the company has implemented its unique Diamond Model which takes into account the sourcing of ingredients, performance at consumer's homes to disposal and "complete assimilation in the water cycle," the model consists of three phases (extraction, usage, absorption) and 13 important criteria which the company is obliged to meet as it is annually audited by a third party auditor Vincotte Environmental;²⁰³ b) while the production is conducted the energy and resource consumption are taken into account – electricity comes from windmills and ingredient resources only from renewable materials meeting the strict guidelines of ISO certification which Ecover applies to a whole company structure, more specifically to water, waste, energy, packaging, internal environmental reporting, etc. and all play a very crucial role for being the sustainable business;²⁰⁴ c) Ecover has very close ties and relationship with its stakeholders in order them to be a part of decision making, for instance when choosing suppliers, all have to

²⁰¹ "Seventh generation 2011 Sustainability Update", 31–35.

²⁰² "About Seventh Generation | Seventh Generation"; "Seventh Generation | B Corporation"; "Seventh Generation Corporate Responsibility | Seventh Generation"; "Seventh generation 2011 Sustainability Update".

²⁰³ "Ecover - FAQs- The Ecover Diamond"; "Ecover Sustainable Cleaners - In the Spotlight - Naturally Savvy".

²⁰⁴ "Benny Oostvogels - ECOVER Expert"; "Ecover - FAQs"; "Ecover Sustainable Cleaners - In the Spotlight - Naturally Savvy"; EMCC: European Monitoring Centre on Change, "Belgium: Ecover". Web.

use green practices to gain sustainable products;²⁰⁵ d) the company is a cruelty free recognized company for not testing its products on animals and is a holder of the Leaping Bunny certification;²⁰⁶ e) the whole company applies very comprehensive system for distribution and selling in order to minimize its carbon footprint, for instance Ecover transports its product in a piggy backing way meaning no space is wasted; f) the company provides employees with special training to increase their environmental awareness and tries to make them pro-active by persuading them to cycle to work, in case of carpooling they get special bonuses in return.²⁰⁷

Looking at Ecover from the green marketing perspective, Ecover's green marketing is *intuitive* due to a vast distribution channel net causing an ease of accessibility – in all major supermarkets in the Czech Republic and in Europe Ecover's products are on offer as well as they are available at various online stores;²⁰⁸ *integrative* putting together technology, business and ecology, for instance producing own plant-astic plastic bottles which are 100% renewable and reusable;²⁰⁹ *innovative* creating new and improving old products with the help of Clever Science which is the essential part of the Diamond Model as well as by using such ingredients which are in harmony with the nature;²¹⁰ *informed* allowing consumers to take part in testing of products and thus become a part of the product development, or by the possibility of being an agent of change to receive free samples and share them with family and friends;²¹¹ *inviting* by being a greener alternative which is easily accessible and meets the consumer's desires and needs by doing the job properly as do the brown counterparts.

As far as the Ottman's green marketing strategies are concerned, Ecover fulfils five out of seven. Firstly, 1) it manufactures such products which fulfil customers needs and desires and at the same time are produced in balance with the nature, 2) tries to build strong relationship with its stakeholders by providing them with special training or possibility to

²⁰⁵ EMCC: European Monitoring Centre on Change, "Belgium: Ecover".

²⁰⁶ "Cruelty free cleaning products | The-Splash | ECOVER".

²⁰⁷ "Ecover - FAQs - Product Development"; EMCC: European Monitoring Centre on Change, "Belgium: Ecover".

²⁰⁸ "Ecover - Zelená domácnost.com | přátelská k lidem i k prostředí"; "Effective green house cleaning products at the Official Ecover Online Shop". Web.

²⁰⁹ "Fantastic Plant-astic - ECOVER". Web.

²¹⁰ "Ecover - Product lifecycle". Web.

²¹¹ "Spread The Word | The Splash"; "Test Ecover's Products | The Splash". Web.

become a part of the product development, 3) engages consumers and staff to be proactive and environmentally responsible by educating them, 4) provide consumers with data on the products as well as on the website, it is a holder of ISO certification and Diamond Model which both prove company's tackling of sustainability being the third party credible partners, and lastly 5) promote the need of sustainability via its interactive webpage as well as by merging with the American B Corp certified sustainable company *method*.²¹²

4.3.4 Summary – Sustainability of Green Companies

Sustainability is a key concept which has started gaining its momentum. Businesses have realised the need of implementing such approaches not only to be left behind the competition, but also to minimize the negative impact on the environment within the whole product life cycle as well as the whole company's impact with regard to their community of stakeholders, processes, cultural and social activities. Concerning all the analysed companies, all have implemented such green marketing tools to tackle the sustainability. The most important part of their sustainability approaches is the product itself since all try to produce such products which travel in endless loops and are easily accessible for consumers, in other words they are *intuitive* as Grant's first I suggests. Moreover, all the brands connect business, technology and ecology making their marketing activities *integrative*, *innovative* as they have been paving the way for zero waste, thus they have to find innovative technologies and processes to reach it, *informed* for they provide stakeholders with possibility to be educated and lastly *inviting* creating new communities. With regard to Ottman's green marketing strategies, all the brands attempt to engage stakeholders to be proactive by providing them with possibilities to participate in various volunteering projects or by educating them, they all purvey transparent information, manufacture such products which are in harmony with nature and at the same time satisfy the needs and desires of consumers, but most importantly all strive to promote their attempts to zero waste.

²¹² EMCC: European Monitoring Centre on Change, "Belgium: Ecover". Web.

4.4 Semiotic Analyses

The following section deals with semiotic analyses of print adverts of already analysed companies producing household cleaning products. The aim of the analyses is to find the differences and similarities between the greenwashing and green marketing print adverts as well as to see what signs and symbols the companies use to promote their products. All the advertisements were found via the search engine Google with the help of keywords of the brand name (method, Seventh Generation, Green Works, Mountain Green, Ecover, Sunlight Green Clean) plus print ad. Firstly, the narration of the advert is conducted and is followed by a semiotic analysis of used colours, image and textual signs to see how they may be understood by the receiver of the advert or how the signs convey the message.

4.4.1 Green Works



Picture no: 3 Green Work Print Advert²¹³

²¹³ "Portfolio of Darcy Adams | Green Works". Web.

Green Works is a greener line of products manufactured by Clorox company which mainly produces conventional household cleaning products. When searching for adverts, three were found, but all have something in common as the products are displayed in natural scenery. The advert used in this analysis is the one which came first during the search.

The analysed Green Works' print advert displays the company's cleaning products which are portrayed in a natural environment; more specifically they are set in a branch of a leafy tree. The top and the bottom margins of the advert are blurred which creates different shades of green colour and helps the products to look prominent. The left and right margins are clear and depict the tree twigs. In the centre of the picture there are five cleaning products in line, all more or less of the same size. Right above them there is a slogan in bold capital letters: "A new kind of a clean." On one hand, it can be argued that the slogan uses two kinds of emphasis. Firstly, the bold text which "contrasts in colour from the text" and secondly, a capitalizing that is regarded as the least effective as it is uncomfortable for viewers to read.²¹⁴ On the other hand, the message is clear in its meaning – introducing a new range of products which are somewhat different from the other cleaning detergents, different because they are to be safer to the environment. In the lower left hand corner a short paragraph is placed informing the consumers about the company's environmental consciousness, company's partnering with Sierra Club as well as about its products and provide the consumer with its webpage to find out more about the products. The paragraph ends with a claim in a slightly bigger font size than the rest of the text "Clean, with a Conscience" which is given stronger emphasis than remaining paragraph. It seems that the claim is the most important information from the whole paragraph and tries to stress out the importance of cleaning one's household with such products that do not harm the environment, and such products can be the ones of Green Works. In the lower right hand corner there is a brand name as well as a Sierra Club logo which symbolises the Green Works' partnership with this non-governmental organization giving the company higher credibility.

As far as the colours used in advertising are concerned, it is proved that they help to arouse emotions, have own symbolism and own psychology to affect people. With respect

²¹⁴ "TYPOGRAPHY: Emphasis". Web.

to the used colours in the advert, the colour which prevails there the most is a green colour in different shades. The general symbolism of green for many people is a symbol of nature and environment as well as of harmony, balance, fertility, freshness, jealousy and envy. Nevertheless, the meaning of the colour changes according to its shade. When connected with an object, the associations with green are cold, juicy, moist, fresh or young.²¹⁵ Green Works' ad uses two different shades of the colour green, but one seems clear, both basically symbolise the nature and being in harmony with it. Furthermore, the main sign of the print is a leafy branch with a yellowish green shade on most of it and a slightly darker green at both tops of the advert where the green is blurred. From the colour meaning point of view, the yellowish tone of the green symbolises cowardice, conflict or fear. With respect to darker shades, they symbolise striving for money, wealth or in case of olive shade it symbolises caring about feeling of others and also deceit.²¹⁶ Thus, some questions arise. Is Green Works striving for money? Is it afraid of something or were the shades of green colour used without deeper thinking of the meaning? It is very difficult to say. It can only be speculated what the real meaning is. Nonetheless, without a deeper colour shade's analysis, it can be assumed that when companies use the colour green, they want the consumers to arouse association with the environment and nature, bring positive feelings, but also make them think or believe that the product must be somehow greener when being green and placed in nature.

Concerning the colour of the textual part of the advert, the white colour is used. The primary associations with it are purity and perfection. It also connotes new beginnings, equality, virginity, but as well as it has negative meanings such as boring, empty, or in some countries it is a symbol of death.²¹⁷ With regard to Green Works, the main message is written in bold capital letters and it is centred at the top of the advert putting the highest stress on it. The message itself is simple - "A new kind of a clean". The white colour suits it at best as the Green Works sells cleaning products and their aim is to clean (equals to cleanliness) and at the same time not to harm the environment, to stay innocent. The message of the white colour is also underlined on the product itself as all the products are either

²¹⁵ Vysekalová a kolektiv, *Psychologie reklamy - 3., rozšířené a aktualizované vydání*, 155–156; "The Color Green". Web.

²¹⁶ "The Color Green". Web.

in white or transparent packaging. With regard to textual signs of the brand's name, Green Works written characters are in blue (Green), green (Works) and completed with a yellow semi sun/flower above the letter "n" in the word green. Further, a blue colour is a symbol of the sky and the ocean, again elements associated with nature. However, blue also connotes trust, honesty, loyalty, reliability or represents manipulation or superstitions.²¹⁸ In case of Green Works, it can be deduced that the blue colour was chosen to emphasise that consumers can trust the company's saying that their green products work, literally, as the name of the brand suggests. With respect to a yellow colour, it represents the sun, joy, happiness, wisdom, stimulates mental activity as well as it symbolises cowardice, egoism or spitefulness. In case of this advert, the yellow is represented on every single product of the product line in form of semi-circle flower in the brand's name as well as the sunflower itself is yellow which provokes thoughts and also helps easily to recall the product.²¹⁹

Regarding the individual image signs used in the advert, the key element of it is a nature imagery which in this case is in a form of a tree branch stretching through the whole advert. Additionally, the nature imagery is a very powerful tool of green advertising as its aim is to arouse positive feelings and emotions. On the other hand, it is often argued that "the combination of product and nature scenery creates associative environmental claims, which are vague in their nature" and often such ads lead to an accusation of the greenwashing.²²⁰ In this particular ad, the natural imagery is created by portraying a tree branch which symbolises growth due to leaves presence.²²¹ The second most prominent part and the most important element of each advert is the product itself, in this case it is a group of five cleaning products which are positioned in the middle of the advert. Placing an object into a centre is a very strategic step as most of the viewers look first at the centre; thus, the products are to be noticed at first.²²² The products are in line, neither of them standing out, all of equal importance and all trying to bring the same effect - to clean the household and at the same time protect the environment. They all have the same label design depicting the brand name, the name of the product, and all carry the logo of Clorox company. The packaging is

²¹⁷ "The Color White". Web.

²¹⁸ "Color Wheel Pro: Color Meaning"; "The Color Blue". Web.

²¹⁹ "The Color Yellow"; "Color Wheel Pro: Color Meaning". Web.

²²⁰ Pernille May Laursen, "Coloring Marketing Green: a Study on the Phenomenon of Greenwashing", 30.

²²¹ "The Color Green". Web.

the same for three products which come in a clear container so it is possible to see the content of the product; the remaining two have a white container. All products depict a sunflower, placed in the left hand corner, which is a symbol of loyalty and energy, but also a distinctive sign of the whole Green Works' product line. Yet, it is another natural imagery used in the advertisement of GW company.

To conclude, when connecting the product with nature it arouses positive emotions in consumer and might make them think that the product is safer to the environment when it is depicted in the nature. It can be assumed that this advert tries to claim that the product is really safer to the environment and uses various links to the nature. Basically, the leafy branch and sunflower are symbols of nature, but as well as all used colours have some connection to it, be it green which symbolises nature and ecology, blue which is a symbol of ocean and the sky, yellow the symbol of sun and white the symbol of virginity as once the nature used to be virgin and pristine.²²³ Put differently, Green Works uses all possible tools and elements to portray the product as a greener and safer alternative than the other cleaning products on offer. Nonetheless, it was proved that the company can be accused of committing the sins of greenwashing due to the green claims it uses. Nevertheless, it can be argued that Green Works portrays the products greener than they actually are also with the help of the print advertisement as it uses such tools to achieve it.

²²² "Design Notes: Emphasis". Web.

²²³ "Connotation | Define Connotation at Dictionary.com". Web.

4.4.2 Method



Picture no. 4: Method Print Advert²²⁴

Method is a manufacturer of greener products which are safer to the nature. All of the product's lines have a minimal harmful effect on the environment. The brand has several prints available on the Internet, but all are created along the same lines, simple, neat and straightforwardly communicating the company's message.

The chosen advert of the *method* promotes a hand wash product. The advert is divided into two parts and both are separated by a slight decorative pattern. The left one displays the product itself, the bottle of hand wash placed on the wooden floor. An interesting point about the product design is that it is shaped into a baby's dummy. The right part of the advert is of a different colour and portrays the drop-shaped bottle of hand wash, underneath which a "baby-proof" slogan is placed. The slogan is of a bigger size than the rest of the text giving it emphasis. The rest of the text is an explanation and description of what is meant by "baby proof." In the lower right hand corner there is a logo of the company.

With regard to the colours used in the advert, *method* mainly uses two colours, blue and brown which are equally used and create a division between the visual and textual part

of the advert. The product itself is green, but in case of baby's dummy-shaped bottle the top of it is yellow. In the second case the top is white. As already said, a blue colour is the colour of the ocean, but also of trust, honesty, and loyalty or of peace. From the negative side, it is a colour of weakness, manipulation or conservatism. Method uses a pale blue colour which is believed to "inspire creativity and the freedom"²²⁵ This fact is in accordance with the method's adverts as they appear to be creative, but at the same time clear. The blue fits the context of this advert even more since it is a colour of trust and loyalty and *method* is a proud holder of several third-party certificates promising the consumers that the company is credible and an institution to trust to. In reference to brown, it is a colour which is mainly associated with the earth; expressing stability, responsibility, friendliness, honesty, warmth, but also lack of sophistication or cheapness.²²⁶ In case of method's advert, brown fits it perfectly. The reason could be as follows, *method* claims that they produce non-toxic products which are safer for the earth which is here symbolised as a brown floor on which the baby's dummy-shaped hand wash lies, but also because the product does not use any chemicals, therefore, neither the baby nor the earth is harmed. Moreover, the hand wash bottle is of a green colour, and as mentioned, it is a colour of nature, growth and harmony, thus, it can be assumed that the product itself symbolises the harmony with nature.

As far as the image signs are concerned, the advert uses only a few. The main emphasis is placed upon the product since it is the most dominant symbol in the whole advert. The baby's-dummy-shaped hand wash conveys the company's message very clearly owing to a direct reference to the claim "baby-proof" which is also explained in the textual part of the advert below a drop-shaped bottle of the hand wash. Another image sign is the wooden floor being the reference to the nature and forest, due to the colour, but also due to the material itself. A very tiny visual symbol of a house is placed right next to the brand's name signifying that the products are to be used at home in order to detox it, which is also stressed by the claim below the brand's name.

²²⁴ Advertising Is Good For You, "Beautiful ads for Method non-toxic cleaners". Web.

²²⁵ "The Color Blue". Web.

²²⁶ "The Color Brown". Web.

With regard to textual signs, the most prominent and emphasised claim of the whole advert is simple and straightforward slogan of “baby-proof.” It stands out not only because it is bold, but also due to contrasting the background of the advert. The remaining text is of a smaller font size. Nevertheless, it does not make it unreadable and it fully explains the message of the baby-proof claim and serves as a support to visual reference to the claim.

In conclusion, method’s advert is very neat and its message seems easy to read. It employs only colour like references to nature to underline that the product is greener and safer to environment, but also makes a clear link between the product and the slogan.

4.4.3 Mountain Green

Mountain Green
a healthier clean

NEW!

natural lavender laundry detergent

Laundromat Vending Ready Detergent

Our Single-Use Green Detergent

- For use in all Soap Center Machines
- 1 ounce packet does 1 load of laundry
- Environmentally friendly
- Incredible price
- Low suds & HE compatible
- Compare performance to leading brands
- Bilingual packaging

Features:

- Natural, plant-based and earth friendly
- Tough on dirt, easy on skin, fabric and delicates
- 3X concentrated formula
- Gets clothes clean without harsh chemicals, alcohol or dyes
- Hypoallergenic, great for sensitive skin and baby laundry
- Formulated for HE washers and conventional washers
- Never tested on animals

Also Available:

- Commercial bulk packaging, 5 gallon and 55 gallon
- Retail ready packaging
- Other products: fabric softeners, kitchen and household cleaners

Natural Laundry Detergent
Lavender Scent
Tough on Dirt, Easy on Fabric and the Earth

Detergente azul lavanda natural de ropa sucia

Picture no. 5: Mountain Green Print Advert²²⁷

Mountain Green is an American company manufacturing as they claim a healthier clean products. The company's product line consists of laundry and cleaning detergents which are made to be safer for the environment. The analysed advert promotes a single-use natural laundry detergent with a lavender scent. The ad is divided into four independent sections which are colourfully split. The upper part of the ad presents the company's name, and alerts receivers that the company has launched a new product. Just below it on the left there

²²⁷ "Mountain Green All Natural Laundry & Cleaning Products". Web.

is an image of a lavender field with an explanation referring to the scent of the detergent. To the right of it there is information about what kind of a product it is, in this case it is Laundromat vending ready detergent. The last bottom part takes more than the half of the advert. It represents the product and provides the receivers of the message with the characteristics of the product.

As in other analysed adverts, the green colour of different shades prevails also in the one of Mountain Green. The other two prominent colours are purple (a lavender shade) and yellow. Moreover, it is not necessary to say more about the green and yellow colour as everything has already been mentioned, but nothing has been said about purple. Purple is a colour that represents positive concepts for instance, individual, unusual, creative, humanitarian, fantasy and spirituality, but also negative ones such as immaturity, corrupt, cynical, depressed or arrogant. As for the lavender shade of purple it represents beautiful things, but also sensitivity and fragility. It can be argued that here in this ad the purple creates a connection between the scent and the plant of lavender.²²⁸ With regard to the colour of the textual part, the majority of it is in black and is used in contrast with white and also little bit with purple. Additionally, black means mystery and protection. It is frequently associated with formality, comfort, strength, but also with depression, pessimism, power and control.²²⁹ It could be argued that here the black colour is used to make the text contrasty and helps the receiver to absorb the informative message which is very extensive and is divided by two bold headlines (“features” and “also available”).

This ad focuses more on the informative point than on visual and imagery elements since the only nature imagery is a field full of lavenders underlining the feature of lavender scent. Moreover, receivers of the message are comprehensibly briefed about the features of the product which are as follows: an environmentally friendly product, can be used in all soap machines, works well as other leading brands’ products, consists of natural and plant-based ingredients, is not tested on animals or that it cleans the clothes without using chemicals, etc.²³⁰ On the contrary, this text is written in a small font size, the bold claims inform us about the name of the product, in three variants, in any case, all refer to the same thing.

²²⁸ "The Color Purple and The Color Violet". Web.

²²⁹ "The Color Black". Web.

²³⁰ "Mountain Green All Natural Laundry & Cleaning Products". Web.

Overall, Mountain Green chose a little bit different approach to promote its product. From the visual point of view, the ad quite fails to impress the receiver. On the other hand, it tries to persuade the consumer by information, not by images. The greatest stress is placed on the name and use of the product – a single use green detergent (in white and bold on purple background making it very contrasty), Laundromat vending ready detergent in bold having the first letters in capital. The product seems to be subordinated as it has a very similar colour as the background, making it difficult to notice, but also because it is placed askew on the right, not very close to the centre where the attention is usually drawn to first.²³¹ The text feels more dominant and important. On the other hand, the claim on the product “Natural Laundry Detergent” is clearly visible and noticeable, but at the same time the other claims are more dominant such as the two mentioned above. Nevertheless, as already mentioned, Mountain Green can be charged with perpetrating the sins of green-washing for using vague claims without having back-up data. The advert itself contains several ambiguous claims which attracts the receiver’s attention (natural, green), but are vague and can mislead them.

²³¹ "Design Notes: Emphasis". Web.

4.4.4 Seventh Generation



Picture no. 6: Seventh Generation Print Advert²³²

Seventh Generation is a sustainable certified business, a holder of B Corp certification and a manufacturer of greener cleaning household products. The advertisement chosen for the analysis is animated and represents a Seventh Generation's cleaning product, however, not an exact image of the detergent is provided. On the other hand, the textual part placed in the left hand lower corner informs that the ad promotes an all-surface cleaner which is

²³² Ibid. Web.

made of natural ingredients. In the second corner a company's logo is placed. The background of the ad depicts houses skyline and a field in a brown colour of different shades from which a spray-shaped plant is growing and its roots are clearly visible. To the left of the picture a slogan is placed stating "home grown for a healthy relationship."²³³

As in the other advertisements, the green colour (see above) is also used, but the brown colour is the most prominent. Brown is a "colour of security, protection and material wealth," it indicates stability and honesty. It is associated with nutrition, health, farming and agriculture in general.²³⁴ The advert uses various shades of brown, starting with the palest at the bottom and shades into a darker one. The roots are of the darkest brown used in the ad. It can be deduced that brown suits the context of the advert perfectly and helps to convey the message. As mentioned, brown is a symbol of protection which can be related to the product that is made of natural ingredients (claim – made in nature) and helps to protect the environment, but at the same time it is a colour of farming, supported by the roots and the growing plant in the field. The houses skyline is black, individual houses having yellow windows. As said, black is a colour of power, mystery and protection, signifies depression, pessimism, but also it is sophisticated, formal and seductive colour.²³⁵ Here, the meaning of the black could be translated as a protective colour, protecting people living in the houses. Even though, when black is combined with yellow, as in case of this advert, it signals danger, nonetheless, it can be assumed that here the yellow is used to represent lights of individual households, not that houses are dangerous. Having looked at it from other angle, it could be deduced that if people do not clean their houses with greener products, it will harm them, so will the nature (a risk of danger). In any case, the first scenario seems to be more probable as the yellow is often applied to symbolise light when used in combination with buildings.

Concerning the visual signs of the ad, the image of the skyline, a growing plant and the field are used. The skyline is very contrasty to the rest of the ad and represents a group of eight houses, some kind of neighbourhood having a field (nature) at close distance and their disposal. It could be argued that the field belongs to the houses which would support

²³³ Matt Pisano, "Seventh generation Cleaner- Advertising Campaign". Web.

²³⁴ "The Color Brown". Web.

²³⁵ "The Color Black". Web.

the claim “home grown for a healthy relationship.” It could be decoded as that the ingredients are grown in the garden of some house (meaning natural) and when used at home it does not harm the household either the environment since they are in harmony, thus, they have a healthy relationship. Further, the growing plant with a bloom shaped as a spray cleaner quite underlines the meaning of natural ingredients for the ingredients are gained from the earth and the plant is nourished naturally and is able to grow. All the imagery supports the claim that “cleaning supplies should be made in nature, not in a chemical lab.”²³⁶ The field itself can be considered as a symbol of earth as it basically comes in different shades of brown and again highlights the connection between the product and the environment and that the cleaner is naturally derived.

All in all, Seventh Generation’s advertisement promoting the all-purpose cleaner tries to convey the message quite straightforwardly. The main emphasis is put on the product itself, especially its environmental aspect for it is made of natural ingredients and is safe for the user as well as for the nature as the claim states, but also the image of the detergent depicts it (a growing plant with very powerful roots). Moreover, the image is centred and stands out of the advert, the roots and a spray-shaped blossom of the plant are bigger in scale and make them the most dominant elements of the advert stressing the message “made in nature.” The skyline creates the background of the ad and is very contrasty to the rest of the advert due to the colour combination – black buildings on the green base. The houses’ skyline also supports the claim – “home grown for a healthy relationship” as the claim is in green highlighting a link to nature, and in boldface making the statement stronger and most prominent of all the text. The remaining text is of an informative nature, supporting the visual signs fully.

²³⁶ "Matt Pisano: Seventh generation Cleaner- Advertising Campaign". Web.

4.4.5 Sunlight



Picture no. 7: Sunlight Green Clean Print Ad²³⁷

Sunlight Green Clean is a Canadian green product line of laundry detergents produced by Sunlight Brand, owned by the Sun Products Corporation. The analysed advert depicts the laundry liquid detergent with a lemon scent wrapped in a plant leaf. The product is centred and both the tops of the advert contain textual information. The upper margin informs the receivers why they should buy the Sunlight Green Clean as a washing liquid and tries to persuade them claiming that there is no need to “choose between green and clean.” At the bottom of the print there are two eco-labels – the left stands for biodegradability granting

²³⁷ Ibid. Web.

that the product will biodegrade within 28 days, the right one grants that the product is suitable for all the standard washing machines. Moreover, a reference to company's website stands alone, but is in line with the eco-labels. At the bottom of the advert, there is an explanation of the asterisks in a very small font size.

The whole advert is green, only the detergent itself is white, so is the text except one claim which is in yellow ("Pick up a green that really cleans today") causing that the statement stands out and helps the consumer to make a quick decision (one of the yellow colour traits).²³⁸ As already mentioned, the green colour is associated with nature, balance and growth, therefore, it is often used to promote ecological products as it is believed that green highlights the need of ecology and the protection of the environment.²³⁹ The connection between the product and the environment is more than obvious since it is also supported by the claim "Pick up a green that really cleans today" – "a green" standing for the greener and safer product to the environment. Concerning the choice of colour for the textual part of the ad, Sunlight uses white to make a contrast as the background is of a darker green, therefore, the pale colour makes the text readable. It can be assumed that here the white fulfils its characteristics perfectly for it underlines the purity and cleanliness, both connoting the basic purpose of cleaning detergent, to make something clean and at the same time not to harm the environment – purity. The same is valid for the product itself due to the fact that its packaging is mainly white and at the top it shades into green.

As in other analysed ads, the main message of the advert is bold stressing its importance. The meaning of the claim "You don't have to choose between green and clean" is clear. Consumers are being persuaded that also greener products work, and in this case they will make your laundry clean and at the same time will not harm the environment. The rest of the message is in a small font size, but is quite clearly readable. The receivers of the message are informed that this is the best Sunlight clean* that "the product works in cold water and is biodegradable" or that its "super concentrated formula ... works better than Tide Total Care**." Both the claims are marked with asterisk referring to hardly readable explanation at the bottom of the ad. Nevertheless, after zooming in, the messages were un-

²³⁸ "The Color Yellow". Web.

²³⁹ Vysekalová Jitka a kolektiv, *Psychologie reklamy - 4., rozšířené a aktualizované vydání*, 97–98. Own translation; "The Color Green". Web.

covered. This first asterisk stands for “No other Sunlight liquid cleans better,” while the second “Based on tough set-in mud stains on 100% cotton washed at 15°C.”²⁴⁰ Due to the second claim, the advert can be considered as comparative advertising as the Sunlight compares its product with the competitor producing other laundry products. However, it is impossible to make some conclusion, if the product really works better than Tide or no without some additional evidence. In any case, it can be deduced that Sunlight lauds its products in order to persuade consumers that Sunlight is a green and better product than other products of conventional brands, such as Tide. After all, everything is supported by the statement “Pick up a green that really cleans today” making it crystal clear what the whole advert is about. Promote Sunlight Green Clean as a green and alternative product which works as it cleans and protects the environment, thus, it is better than its browner counterparts.

With regard to image signs, the most prominent one is the plant leaf wrapped around the washing liquid. The leaf, besides the green colour, is another reference to the nature highlighting the link between the product and the environment. The second image is the product itself. At first it might seem that wrapping a plastic bottle into a leaf gives the whole advert a very environmental concept, but on the contrary, when looking at it with more critical stance plastic and nature do not really match unless the packaging is made of biodegradable plastic material, for instance as in case of plant-astic bottles made by Ecover. However, this is not the case of Sunlight. Even though the company states that its products’ packaging is made with 25% or more post-consumer recycled plastic that on one hand is a good feature, but on the other, not sufficient enough to remove the doubt. Thus, a question arises. What is the rest of packaging made of? No information was found, therefore, one can only speculate about how much green the product is. Nonetheless, it was found out that Sunlight Green Clean can be considered as the greenwashed product owing to committing several greenwashing sins. (see section 5.2.3)

Put differently, Sunlight employs such signs and tools that evoke associations with the nature, be it the colours (mainly green and white) or the nature imagery, but it also depicts the product as a green one, the use of words as well as the whole composition helps it.

²⁴⁰ "PRINT -SUNLIGHT GREEN CLEAN on Behance". Web.

4.4.6 Ecover



Feel Good Cleaning

PEOPLE WHO SAY THEY DON'T **FEEL** THE TOUCH OF FABRIC SOFTENER HAVEN'T EXPERIENCED ECOVER'S "AMONGST THE FLOWERS." THE PLANT-BASED INGREDIENTS ARE **GOOD** WITH SENSITIVE SKINS, AND THE DIVINELY DELICATE SCENT MAKES YOUR OLD CLOTHES SEEM NEW. ADD A LITTLE LUXURY TO YOUR **CLEANING**.

ECOVER
Join in & feel good at facebook.com/EcoverUK

LEMON
ALL PURPOSE
EPO-ACTION

Good Housekeeping
Institute
APPROVED 2012

Picture no. 8: Print Advert of Ecover²⁴¹

Ecover is a Belgium based company, a proud holder of ISO 14001 granting the company credibility for manufacturing greener cleaning products in a sustainable way. The advert chosen for the analysis portrays a woman who looks as she is having fun cleaning with Ecover's products. She is in her kitchen, wearing a green dress, standing on her toes, carrying a mop which she is probably using as a microphone for singing "feel good cleaning."

²⁴¹ Trevor Brady, "ECOVER UK Campaign – Trevor Brady | Photographers". Web.

Just above her, the main claim of the adverts is “Feel Good Cleaning.” At the bottom of ad the Ecover’s products with an informative paragraph and the company’s logo are placed.

Ecover’s ad is very different from the other analysed ones since it is the only print which depicts the product in such environment in which are household cleaning products meant for, an environment of household. This particular ad portrays the cleaning detergent in a kitchen. Another distinct element of Ecover’s ad is the use of colours. White and silver colours are the most dominant. From a colour meaning perspective, silver is a colour of illumination and reflection, wealth and prestige, prosperity and modernity. From a color psychology point of view, “silver is respectable and courteous, dignified, self-controlled, responsible, patient, determined and organized - it relates well to the corporate world and those in positions of responsibility, whether they are male or female.” Silver is related to the moon and illuminates other colours used around it.²⁴² Hence, here in this ad silver “illuminates and reflects the energy” of white colour which, as already mentioned, on one hand is a colour connected with purity, innocence, protection and with sterility, emptiness or isolation on the other.²⁴³ Therefore, it can be argued that here the combination of white and silver highlights the meaning of cleanliness, purity and protection, as the main purpose of cleaning detergents is to clean, but at the same time in case of Ecover’s product protect the environment. With regard to the textual signs, the majority is in blue, individual words of the slogan (Feel Good Cleaning) are green, included in the informative text. The words are of a bigger font size than the rest of the informative part placing emphasis on them and underline the whole message of the print – feel good cleaning when cleaning with Ecover’s product. As for the blue, it makes a contrast to the white background and as mentioned, it is a colour of trust, honesty, and responsibility, but at the same time a corporate colour used in the logo. It can be assumed that here in the advert it stresses the honest aspect of the message as well as the trustworthiness of the company.

The most important of all is the slogan “Feel Good Cleaning” as it stretches across the whole upper part of the advert and is white, again stressing the cleanliness. The individual words are emphasized in the rest of the textual part which is promoting a fabric softener. On the contrary, the imagery signs do not explicitly make a reference to a laundry

²⁴² "The Color Silver". Web.

detergent, but to a kitchen cleaning detergent. Nonetheless, different cleaning products are displayed just next to the claims. It could be argued that the advert promotes the fabric softener which the claims inform about, but at the same time, it tries to promote the other Ecover's cleaning products which are recognized as good housekeeping products having the third-party certification by Good Housekeeping Institution making them more credible.

All in all, Ecover's advert is of a different nature than the rest of the adverts, uses imagery typical for cleaning products (household environment), employs white and silver colours as the most dominant, green colour is used only on the girl's dress (could symbolise natural fabric softener) and on the individual words of the slogan - feel good cleaning – which is also the most important message of the whole advert as it is mentioned twice in the advert.

4.4.7 Summary of the Semiotic Analyses

With regard to the individual semiotic analyses, all the print advertisements tend to use similar, but at the same time different elements, different in sense of their meanings and associations connected to them. The natural shades of colours are the most dominant in all the print advertisements (except Ecover as it uses white). In case of the greenwashing companies (greenwashing according to the green claims) a green colour prevails, in case of the green companies a brown colour is the most dominant (except Ecover as the white prevails there). The natural imagery is prevailing in case of the greenwashing companies, but is also used in the advert of Seventh Generation. The most emphasis in all the adverts is placed on the product and the claims which stress the whole composition of the prints. Bold and capitalized type face is often used on the main claim which tends to be placed in the upper part of the adverts in order to catch the consumer's attention. Moreover, all the products promoted by the prints are connected to the nature mainly by the use of colour. In case of greenwashing companies and a green company Seventh Generation the natural element of the product is also underlined by the natural imagery in order to arouse positive feelings about the connection of the nature and the product. On the other hand, it can be argued that the greenwashing companies use more links to the nature than the green companies in order to arouse positive feelings and evoke a need to purchase the green product.

²⁴³ "The Color White". Web.

5 OVERVIEW

This section deals with describing differences and similarities of the green marketing and greenwashing practises, how they differ and in what aspect they are similar with respect to the green claims. This synthesis is followed by a summary of using of the green marketing as a tool to promote sustainability - the most used elements and implements as well as how the green companies communicate it. The last part of this chapter is devoted to divergences and resemblances of print adverts of both kinds of companies.

5.1.1 Green Claims – Similarities and Differences

As mentioned, green claims are used by both types of companies, which on one hand try to promote their products clearly without misleading consumers by vague claims, by providing easily accessible provable data or by portraying the green product greener as it really is. On the other hand, the others try to practise not very fair tactics and persuade consumers by portraying the product in a very tricky way that consumers might think that the product is greener than in fact is or by not providing back-up data to verify the claims.

From the greenwashing sins point of view and as the research shows, the most common sins in the category of cleaning products are: 1) the *sin of vagueness*, 2) the *sin of no proof*, 3) the *sin of hidden trade-off* and the *sin of worshipping false labels* share the same third rank of occurrence according to Terra Choice's report from 2010.²⁴⁴ The remaining three occur rarely. However, it was found out that the analysed companies could be accused of committing the less common sins such as the *sin of lesser of two evils* in two out of six cases (Green Works, Sunlight Green Clean for both product lines are produced by companies which mainly concentrate their production on conventional, toxic and bleach household cleaning products), the *sin of fibbing* in one case (Green Works claims that the company does not test on animals, but no proof or certification was found, only an empty claim), and lastly the *sin of worshipping false labels* (Sunlight Green Clean uses an eco-label to promote biodegradability which does not exist). With regard to the sinners, there are two biggest greenwashing ones - Green Works since the company could be accused of five out seven sins (all except the *sin of irrelevance* and *worshipping false labels* and

Sunlight Green Clean that could also be accused of five out of seven sins (all except the *sin of irrelevance* and of *fibbing*). The smallest “sinner” is Ecover because the company does not provide sufficient information about how long it takes the product to biodegrade. On the other hand, it fully explains what it is and how it happens. The third rank of the bigger sinners goes to Mountain Green, facing an accusation of three sins (the *sin of vagueness*, *irrelevance* and of *no proof* since the company does not fully and clearly explain ambiguous claims, uses irrelevant information which does not help the consumers anyhow, and lastly it does not provide easily accessible data to verify its claims).

Concerning the likeness and divergence of both phenomena, it is interesting to note that both sides of green companies’ spectrum use similar terms related to the characteristics of the greener product, namely biodegradable, non-toxic, and natural. However, with regard to the term biodegradable – only two companies (*method* and Seventh Generation) fully explain what the biodegradability is, how long it takes, and how it is done, the remaining companies lack full information about the terms. On the contrary, the greenwashing companies use other terms which are of vague nature such as sustainable packaging, environmentally conscious, naturally safe, mineral-based ingredients, but do not provide the consumers with simply approachable explanations of such terms. Secondly, another similar element for both sides is eco-labelling, all except one (Sunlight Green Clean displays false eco-label) are holders of some kind of the third party certification granting the product higher credibility, nonetheless, the more “green” third-party certification the company has, the greener and the sustainable product is. That is the case of *method*, Seventh Generation and Ecover since all of them have implemented a thorough set of sustainable approaches to the whole company structure to reach their goal, to be sustainable as much as possible and were granted various certifications and eco-labels as a proof. Thirdly, all of the analysed companies do not use false claims apart from Green Works claiming that its products are not tested animals, but no verification was found. Fourthly, all communicate that their products are greener than other products based on a wider set of ecological attributes, though, in case of greenwashed companies, excluding Mountain Green, lack sufficient support to back up their claims. Fifthly, all except *method* provide Material Safety Data

²⁴⁴ "Greenwashing Report 2010 | The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition", 24.

Sheet, but on the contrary, the provided information in them differs. With regard to *method*, the company offers all the necessary information on the website and disclose the dirty ingredients list, as it does Seventh Generation. Lastly, four out of six analysed companies (method, Seventh Generation, Mountain Green and Ecover) are such businesses that manufacture only greener product's lines as opposed to Green Works and Sunlight companies which are brands belonging to conventional cleaning products producers.

Moreover, in order to be absolved from the accusation of greenwashing as well as to minimize the potential of losing customers, as a consequence of misleading them by the green claims, those companies need to change their promotional strategies. In other words, they should provide consumers with statements that are true, transparent, easily verifiable and relevant to aid them to make a buying decision, but as well as, they could partner with a recognized third-party institution which could grant them higher credibility. Nevertheless, the question is if those companies greenwash on purpose or not and want to make money by selling green products which only look green. In case they really do it intentionally, tough legislation should come into a play and clearly define the rules of green advertising for as the research showed (see 2.5) the legal aspect of the greenwashing is insufficient. In case they do unintentionally, they should follow the green advertising rules as well as the recommendation of anti-greenwashing authorities to minimize the risk of being charged with perpetrating the greenwashing.

All in all, the biggest differences between the green marketing and the greenwashing companies are in explanations of vague terms, the amount of third-party certification, the way of manufacturing (granted eco-labels and ecological attributes differ here) and in providing the consumers with valuable and relevant information which can help them to make the purchasing decision. On the other hand, without knowing the traits and traps of the greenwashing and the signs of the green marketing, it is quite hard for the consumer to discover if the product being bought is truly green, or on the contrary the greenwashed one. For a detailed summary of the greenwashing sins see the table below. The red colour signifies that the claim was labelled as a sin of greenwashing.

COMPANY	SINS						
	Vague Terms	No Proof - certification	Hidden Trade Off	Irrelevance	False Labels	Fibbing	Lesser Two Evils
method	biodegradable, natural, non-toxic	C2C, EPEA, Recycling, PCC, disclose ingredients	multiple attributes	dirty ingredients list	verified 3rd party certification	no bogus claims	all product lines greener
Seventh Generation	biodegradable formula, non-toxic, natural	USDA, EPA, Leaping Bunny, disclose ingr.	multiple attributes	dirty ingredients list, Material Safety Data Sheet	verified 3rd party certification	no bogus claims	all product lines greener
Ecover	ecological, biodegradable	ISO 14001, EU eco-label, disclose ingr.	multiple attributes	Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)	verified 3rd party certification	no bogus claims	all product lines greener
Green Works	biodegrad. , natural, sustain. pkgng, mineral based ingr	DFE - safer chemistry, disclose ingr., no proof-biodegr.	no infor. about the negative impact	Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)	one verified 3rd party certification	claiming not tested on animals / no evidence	Clorox-one product line greener
Mountain Green	all natural, earth-friendly, biodegrad., naturally safe	LeapingBunny, Green AmerSeal/ no easily accessible data	multiple attributes	all natural - not important info, MSDS	verified 3rd party certification	no bogus claims	all product lines greener
Sunlight Green Clean	plant-based ingr., biodegrad., environ. conscious formula	not easily accessible provable data	multiple attributes - no proof	Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)	false label - biodegradability	no bogus claims	Sun Co. -one product line greener

Table no. 2: Green Marketing Firms vs. Greenwashing firms – Green Claims

5.1.2 Green Marketing - a Tool to Promote Sustainability

Three of the six analysed companies (method, Ecover, Seventh Generation) were chosen to analyse how they use the green marketing to promote the sustainability. As can be seen, all have implemented a complex set of tools to meet their target, to be sustainable companies in everything what it takes. The most important tool of all is the first “p” of the marketing mix “product” since all the analysed companies produce such products which meet the high standards and criteria for obtaining the particular eco-label that serves as a proof of credibility as well as a proof that the product is greener and safer for the environment. The rea-

sons are multiple, the use of natural ingredients, recycled and recyclable material, minimal packaging, the consumption of resources during the production (water, energy, material, etc.), or most importantly the endless life-cycle (cradle-to-cradle approach). With regard to approaches, each of the companies has executed a different set of standpoints, but all are quite similar because the businesses adhere to the corporate social responsibility and take into account not only the environment, but also own employees, stakeholders as well as social implications. All the companies are proud holders of third-party certifications which grant them credibility and verify them as sustainable businesses. Both *method* and Seventh Generation are holders of the B Corp certification to prove their striving for sustainability. On the other hand, Ecover, as it is a European company, is a holder of ISO 14001 certificate signifying that the company has implemented a complex set of sustainable approaches to its business strategies. Concerning the other part of the marketing mix, more specifically “place,” all businesses use a variety of distribution channels, but at the same time all strive for having as minimal carbon footprint and consumption of resources as possible while delivering their products. For instance *method* employs a strategic route planning and bio-diesel truck fleet, Seventh Generation uses strategic logistics and distribution in order to minimize the travelled kilometres and reduce the green house emissions, and Ecover uses a piggy backing system not to waste space, but also uses only trucks to purvey the deliveries on mainland in Europe. In addition, as already mentioned, one of the key green marketing strategies for sustainability is to be pro-active and all companies should try to make their stakeholders proactive. All analysed companies have succeeded in it since each of them does it. For example: *method*’s employees are provided with education or they participate in some volunteering projects and help people in need, concerning *method*’s consumers, they are pro-active when recycling or buying *method*’s refillable pouches, and doing so they minimize waste. Similarly, Seventh Generation does it as its employees are motivated to use carpooling or to switch to colder water washing, but also they have the possibility to take part in some volunteering project as *method*’s employees do. As for Ecover, all its stakeholders are engaged into a decision making process, its employees are provided with a special training to increase their environmental awareness, and they are also benefited when carpooling or cycling to work.

In a nutshell, all companies have taken the sustainability seriously and have done their best to achieve it with the help of green marketing tools – be it the product, place or communication, eco-labelling, the way of manufacturing, cooperation and creating of

communities with stakeholders, or particular approaches they have implemented which are often in accordance with the corporate social responsibility. In other words, they all have been striving for sustainability and have been successful in it as their doings due to the fact that they all are holders of various third party eco-labels and certifications which serve as their proof. (see the summary below)

COMPANY	GREEN MARKETING TOOLS					
	Marketing Mix - Product	Sustainability approaches	Eco-labelling	Marketing mix - place	Pro-activeness	Overall
method	non-toxic, disclosed ingredients, recyclable and recycled materials	health, community, environment related implications	Cradle-to-Cradle, TerraCycle, LeapingBunny, B Corp certification	US EPA Smartway program, retail and online stores	volunteering, educating, recycling, refillable poaches, engaging stakeholders	connect business, ecology, social effects, greener alternative, community - people against dirty, striving for zero waste - C2C, high credibility - B Corp
Seventh Generation	concentrated products, recycled and recyclable materials, disclosed ingredients	approaches to environment, governance, community, workers	B Corp certification, Leaping Bunny, USDA Certified Biobased	retail and online stores, strategic logistics and distribution	employees - carpooling, switching to cold water washing, volunteering, engaging stakeholders	connect business, ecology, social effects, greener alternative, community - education, making pro-active stakeholders, high credibility - B Corp, CSR
Ecover	renewable materials, plant-plastic and recyclable packaging, disclosed ingredients	Diamond Model - Vincotte Environmental auditor	ISO 14001, EU eco-label, Leaping Bunny	piggy packaging - saves transport, available in retail stores, supermarkets, online stores,	engage stakeholders, special training, special bonus - carpooling	Diamond Model, plant-astic bottles, ISO certification, disclose information, merged with <i>method</i> , community

Table no. 3: Green Marketing Tools

5.1.3 Print Advertisements – Similarities and Differences

The semiotic analyses was conducted in order to find out if the analysed companies, when promoting their products with the help of the print advertising, employ the similar or different signs. All companies have the tendency to choose colours which have some connection to the nature (green, brown, blue and yellow) and cleanliness (white) as it is the basic element which the cleaning products are made for. However, the brands facing the accusation of the greenwashing (Green Works, Sunlight Green Clean, and Mountain Green) employ the green colour on a bigger scale than the sustainable ones. In all three cases, green is the most dominant colour and is often used in combination with white and yellow colour of the textual signs. As for the sustainable businesses, they also use the green colour, but it is not the most ruling colour, quite the opposite. *method* uses a combination of brown and blue with white and brown textual signs. The most dominant colour of Seventh Generation is brown with white and green textual signs and Ecover's ad is in white and silver with blue and green text. With regard to the natural imagery, greenwashing companies tend to use them on a bigger scale and they are often the most dominant visual signs of the adverts. The most common natural imagery of greenwashing brands is some kind of a plant, more specifically plant's leaves. As for the green companies, only Seventh Generation uses the natural imagery explicitly for it uses a growing plant in a field.

Concerning the similarities of both the phenomena in terms of print advertising, all companies somehow try to link the product to nature. Greenwashing companies do it more explicitly as they combine green colour with natural imagery and often those elements are stressed with green claims. On the other hand, green companies link the product to the nature with a help of colours and claims, and in case of Seventh Generation also with nature imagery. Moreover, all analysed brands put strong emphasis on green claims as they are usually in bold or capitalized and placed in the upper part of the advert. The rest of the informative message is in a smaller font size, thus, not as important as the claims. However, the most important element of analysed adverts is the product itself. It is often more prominent than the remaining elements (except Mountain Green, Ecover), centred (Green Works, Sunlight, Seventh Generation, *method*), contains green colour either its packaging or label (except Seventh Generation), but also contains white colour underlining the element of cleanliness for it is the basic aspect of cleaning products.

Moreover, the greenwashing companies should try to use other natural colours than green as do the green companies and limit the use of natural imagery in order to convey the message of the print advertisement in a straightforward way. The product itself should be the most important element of the whole campaign and its qualities should be underlined by its characteristics, eco-labelling or other visual signs and links as in case of method or Seventh Generation. On the other hand, it can be assumed that a combination of green and natural imagery fulfils its aim perfectly as it tries to evoke positive feelings in consumers and make them think that the product is green and tries to persuade them to buy it.

Put differently, the greenwashing companies employ various tools (green colour, nature imagery and green claims) to persuade consumers that the marketed product is “really” green, but in reality the promoting brands were accused of greenwashing since they were claiming the product is greener than it really is. On the contrary, the green companies implemented more straightforward and neat promotion for they do not need to try to hide anything behind the green colour and nature imagery, but try to convey their message with help of colour meanings and clear claims. For more details see the table below.

COMPANY	SIGNS						
	Natural Imagery	Colours	Claims	Link between Product and Nature	Visual Symbols	Emphasis Placed on	Overall
method		brown, blue, green, white	baby-proof, non-toxic, family friendly	brown colour, brown floor	baby's dummy	baby's dummy shaped product, baby-proof claim	clear link between the product and claim, brown colour
Seventh Generation	roots	brown, green, black, yellow, white	home grown for a healthy relationship, safe for you and the	brown and green colour, field, roots	spray	a spray-shaped bottle (product), claim home grown for a healthy	natural element of the product important, brown colour
Ecover		white, silver, green, blue	feel good cleaning, plant-based ingredients		kitchen, mop	claim - feel good cleaning	white colour, claims supported by visual signs
Green Works	a leaf branch, sunflower	green, white, yellow, blue	a new kind of clean, clean with a conscience, natural cleaning	green colour, leaf branch, claims	sunflower	claim - a new kind of clean, a line of products	many references to the nature - nature imagery, green colour, claims
Sunlight Canada	a plant leaf	green, white, yellow	don't have to choose between green and clean, green that really cleans	a green plant leaf	product's bottle	product wrapped in the leaf, claim - don't have to choose between green and clean	green colour, nature imagery, strong green claims
Moutain Green	lavender field	green, yellow, purple, black, white	natural laundry detergent, environmentally friendly, plant-based,	green colour, lavender field, claims	lavender field	informative message	informative message important, green colour

Table no. 4: Semiotic Analyses of Print Adverts

CONCLUSION

The aim of this diploma thesis was to find similarities and differences of companies producing household cleaning and laundry detergents when promoting their products. Green claims and print advertisements served as the groundwork for the analyses. The second objective was to evaluate the use of green marketing instruments to promote the sustainability. The thesis discovered that without a deeper scrutinizing of green claims the consumers can hardly detect if the product really is green as it claims, or if it is a greenwashed product since at first sight the claims look alike. The worrying fact about the above statement is that unless consumers start to care whether the product is what it claims, the greenwashing will continue to boom and consumers misled. On the other hand, there are instances that have started to combat the greenwashing and so have the consumers started to be more informed and aware of the evil traits of greenwashing. Nevertheless, the greenwashing incidence is still very alarming as the Terra Choice's report informs for its drivers are so diverse that new initiatives should be undertaken to minimize the occurrence, for instance stricter regulations could help to solve it. With regard to the other findings, it was found out that the print advertisements of greenwashing companies tend to use such a combination of tools that really try to portray the product as a green one, be it the green colour or natural imagery. Hence, it can be argued that without knowing the greenwashing signs and sins it is hard to tell if the product is green or not. For that reason, research dealing with consumer's perception of claims and advertisements could follow to see how those elements influence their purchasing behaviour. Concerning the important concept of the sustainability, it was detected that companies striving for minimal negative impact on the environment and zero waste have taken the concept responsibly and implemented it into every aspect of the company's structure. Green marketing tools have helped them to promote the necessity of the sustainability, have tried to make their stakeholders proactive and at the same time the companies have managed to offer consumers such products which are in harmony with the nature and manage to satisfy consumer's needs and desires as well as being credible thanks to various certifications. Hopefully, the trend of greenwashing will start rapidly to decrease and the sustainability and presence of truly green products increase as the consumers will realise the necessity to protect the environment and become well-informed to be able to recognize the traps of greenwashing and distinguish green products from the greenwashing ones. Nevertheless, the future will tell if it comes true.

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LIST OF TABLES AND PICTURES

List of Tables

Table no. 1: Grid with Titles.....	14
Table no. 2: Green Marketing Firms vs. Greenwashing firms – Green Claims.....	86
Table no. 3: Green Marketing Tools.....	88
Table no. 4: Semiotic Analyses of Print Adverts.....	90

List of Pictures

Picture no. 1: Types of Greenwashing	29
Picture no. 2: Occurrence of Individual Sins	33
Picture no. 3: Green Works Print Advertisement	63
Picture no. 4: Method Print Advert.....	68
Picture no. 5 Mountain Green Print Advert.....	71
Picture no. 6: Seventh Generation Print Advert.....	74
Picture no. 7: Sunlight Green Clean Print Ad.....	77
Picture no. 8: Print Advert of Ecover.....	80