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CONSUMER EDUCATION IN THE 'NEW TIMES' -
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF A POLICY FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION IN GERMANY (2013)

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The interest in consumer education by international organizations as well as the German government has dramatically increased throughout the last ten years. At the same time the critical voices regarding the negative implications of consumption as a dominant cultural practice are getting louder. Here, the current economic consumption discourse as well as consumer education is argued to be colored by the neo-liberal ideology that contributes to social and environmental exploitation. As such critical research suggests that there is a need to engage more critically with the current promotion of consumer education that is predominantly educating students to function within the neo-liberal system instead of challenging it for the sake of collective well-being. Specifically for the German context different NGOs (foodwatch, LobbyControl) have pointed out to how the current promotion of consumer education in Germany is colored by economic argumentation.

The objective of this qualitative study was to question and challenge the hegemonic ways of thinking about consumption and consumer education and to contribute to a more critical discussion of consumer education and its implications for the society. As social transformations are increasingly manifested through and visible in discourse in the 'new times' this study, therefore, analysed a policy for consumer education as a product of the 'new times' that was published in 2013 in Germany. The goal was to investigate which discourses the policy is drawing from, how they are worked together in the policy and whether the text is doing ideological work in terms of sustaining the current economization of society. The two main research questions were:

1) What discourses are included into the policy for consumer education and how are they ordered?
2) Does the text do ideological work in terms of working towards the stabilization and spread of neo-liberalism and consumerism?

The study was conducted using Fairclough’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis that draws from postmodern, poststructuralist as well as neo-marxist theories. It combines critical social science with sociolinguistics and as such offered a suitable framework for critically studying the policy text. By applying this methodological framework it was possible to combine the analysis of language, discourse and the social environment which are considered to be dialogically related to each other.

This research showed that the education policy text draws on the neo-liberal, social-democrat and critical consumption discourse where it could be determined that the neo-liberal discourse is dominant and marginalises the other discourses. Furthermore, it could be shown how the policy text fosters ideological transformation by partially promoting an education that works towards the spread of neo-liberal ideology. This ideological work is majorly achieved through fostering a lack of imagination and acceptance of current changes instead of offering view-points that also challenge the current transformations in society. As a result the policy fosters a consumer education that educates students to function within the system instead of drawing from the critical pedagogy discourse that calls for emancipation and empowerment for the sake of collective well-being. However, the policy is not entirely dedicated to the neo-liberal project and together with the insights from this research gives space for a more critical interpretation and implementation.

Keywords: Consumer education, Consumption, Critical discourse analysis, Education policy, Fairclough, Ideology, Neo-liberalism
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Appendix
1 Introduction

The number of consumption related concepts and terminologies has dramatically increased throughout the last years (e.g., consumption society, consumerism, consumption culture, consumer capitalism, consumer education) and so also have the opinions about the role and related problems or chances for consumption in the economy, society, culture, politics and our daily life. As argued by Hedtke (2001), some are enthusiastic about the “beautiful and creative consumption world in the post modern society” and others warn of “an alienated commodity fetishism” that leads to the “ecological, environmental, natural resource, and cultural destruction across the planet” (p.9). This research takes a critical stance towards the current predominance of consumerism and economic argumentation in society and investigates a policy for consumer education in Germany that was published in 2013 by drawing from critical social science and linguistic studies. Using Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodology this study investigates the policy in terms of how social transformations have shaped the included argumentation, however, also how these argumentations then again have the potential to steer societal transformations towards certain directions. By looking at the policy document as a discursive practice this research aims to uncover which discourses are included and whether the policy is leading ideological work in terms of contributing to the neo-liberal project and consumerism. Doing so, I am hoping to contribute to the critical discussion around consumer education policy, hence, encourage researchers and educators who will be teaching consumer education or will integrate the policy into curricula to consider the complexity of consumption related challenges. As Rear states “by exposing the processes by which [...] hegemonic practices are achieved within texts, critical discourse researchers may, as producers of texts themselves, contribute to the dissolution of those same hegemonic practices” (Rear, p.14).

Thus, the research questions are:

1. What discourses are included into the policy for consumer education and how are they ordered?
2. Does the text do ideological work in terms of working towards the stabilization and spread of neo-liberalism and consumerism?

The necessity to critically study the currently published consumer education policy in Germany with regard to consumerism and neo-liberalism becomes clear when
looking at related research. In general critical scholars across these fields have drawn attention to the increasing predominance of consumerism (Denzin, 2010, pp.xiii) and neo-liberalism (Fairclough, 2010, p.12) in the ‘new times’ and relate them to many of today’s environmental and societal misfortunes. ‘New times’ here refers to the last 30 years where we have experienced a “restructuring of capitalism which emerged in response to the crisis in 'Fordist' economies and 'welfare states' in the 1970s” and that has led to an increasing spread of neo-liberalism (Fairclough, 2010, p.11). The policy for consumer education can be considered one communicative event in these ‘new times’ and as such it is important to analyze whether it is contributing or challenging the current transformations that lead to these misfortunes. This is also important as in critical economic studies it is argued that the social and environmental implications of consumption as a political practice are so far underestimated and not conceptualized enough (Hedtke, 2001, p.122). This seems also be reflected in the current practice of consumer education. Critical pedagogy scholars argue that consumer education so far predominantly teaches students to function within the system and that the far-reaching social struggles that consumption produces are underestimated (Denzin, 2010, p.xiii-xiv). They argue that research with regard to “learning and education involved in the process of becoming both consumer literate and also a living commodity” is so far lacking (Denzin, 2010, p. xvii). Furthermore, education policy itself is argued to become a site that is “increasingly shaped by economic reasoning and at the same time shapes society to fit the needs of 'new capitalism'” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.60). Hence, there is a need for an increasingly critical approach to education policy, consumption and consumer education that draws attention to the many facets and implications of consumption in society. This is also relevant in the German context, where education policy during the last ten years appears to be increasingly influenced by neo-liberal ideals (Banks, 2010, pp.193), where consumer policy works towards the de-politicization of consumption matters (Janning, 2004, pp.158), where consumer education is argued to be influenced by companies (LobbyControl, foodwatch) and where consumer education research is in general lacking (Schlegel-Matthies, 2004, p.6). As such this research can contribute to a more critical and comprehensive approach to consumer education that includes the implications of consumer education for current societal transformations in Germany.

In order to investigate the policy with regard to its societal implications this research uses Fairclough’s approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. This also has implications as to how this research is designed. Chapter 2 contributes to the construction of the
topic of this research (consumer education) by introducing the relevant theoretical concepts: consumption, consumer education and the neo-liberal ideology in the ‘new times’. Furthermore, relevant research for the German context is introduced. The chapter discusses the neo-liberal impact on education policy as well as consumer education and consumer policy in Germany. Following, the research methodology itself is introduced. Critical Discourse Analysis fits well to this research as it provides a valuable framework for studying social transformations in texts (here the policy). As argued in chapter 3 social transformations are made visible by including a linguistic, discursive and social analysis. This is based on the assumption that discourse as one aspect of social organization contributes to shaping social reality.

Chapter 4 then gives a more detailed description of the policy document and locates it within a chain of event that has contributed to its creation. In chapter 5 it is explained how Critical Discourse Analysis is actually carried out. Here, first the genre and then different narratives are determined. Then it is investigated how these different narratives are represented through different discourses and how these discourses are worked together or ideological work is pursued. Chapter 6 then discusses the findings by relating them more broadly to relevant theory. In 5.1. the discussion refers to how the policy can be considered to foster a lack of imagination that works towards the acceptance of neo-liberal and consumerist transformations. Chapter 5.2. locates the policy within the current research of consumption and consumer education and argues why this policy also with regard to these concepts can be considered to be uncritical. Furthermore, it is elaborated whether Germany needs an uncritical consumer education and how it can be overcome. The final chapter 8 summarizes the findings and suggests future research that can be done in order to better understand German consumer education policy and to contribute to change.
2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Consumption

In this research the concept of consumption subsumes the purchase, the actual act of consuming (e.g. eating, using), and the disposal of any goods or services (see Yates, 2011, p.192). This study aims to determine the underlying discourses in the policy for consumer education. Hence, it is necessary to explain which beliefs and theoretical concepts influence the consumption discourse these days. This is important for the investigation of how the policy for consumer education understands consumption, how the role of the student as a consumer is defined and how consumption-related problems can be improved.

The neo-classical economic theory as well as the related belief of consumerism has a major influence on the discourse of consumption. Both are argued to be highly influential still today and closely connected to neo-liberalism (Hedtke, 2001, p.19-20). However, their underlying belief systems are increasingly criticized for de-politicizing consumption and naturalizing concepts such as the need for growth, individual well-being and the rational consumer and ignore that these are actually influenced by the society (Hedtke, 2001, p.52). They are argued to promote consumption as the root for well-being while understating its negative implications for the social sphere and the environment (Pérez & Esposito, 2010, p.84; Tienken, 2013, p.303). Furthermore, they ignore the recursiveness between society and structure, where individuals are embedded into social systems and as such are also shaped by them (Antoni-Komar, 2011, p.238). This more holistic interpretation of consumptions is, however, essential as consumption, especially in terms of symbolic materials, plays an ever-increasing role in society (Cortina, 2006, p.91; Denzin, 2010, p.xiii-xv; Hedtke, 2001, p.119-120). However, the ignorance towards the political implications of consumption is also visible in practiced consumer policy. It often concentrates too much on patronizing consumers and in a neo-classical manner providing them with the perfect information for a competitive market (Janning, 2004, pp.154). Instead, as argued by critical scholars, consumer policy should acknowledge the political implications of the concept of consumption and as such also promote the active participation of citizens in consumption related matters (Janning, 2004, pp.154). Apart from the political implications the consumption discourse is also increasingly informed by a sustainability discourse. Sustainable consumption is articulated as
a major goal in the international arena, however, as argued here economic benefits are usually prioritized and it is regarded more as a hobby of the rich (Andersson & Eriksson, 2010; Billen, 2001).

In the following paragraph, the concept of consumption is presented from a neo-classical economic point of view. Hedtke (2001) argues that up until today the consumption discourse has been predominantly influenced by the neo-classical economic theory that draws from the ideas of Adam Smith and Keynes. Here, the purchase of goods is considered to be the driving force of the economic system which is controlled by the consumer and his/her consumption decisions (p.19-20). Furthermore, consumers are considered to be well-informed rational individuals, who always purchase the goods or services that are the most beneficial (e.g. price, interest) for them (ibid, p.23). As competition and the individual maximization interests are considered to be beneficial for all in the end (trickle-down effect), it is not necessary to engage in discussions about social or even ecological justice or to regulate markets accordingly (Pienkowski, 2011, p.192). Furthermore, the need that people today feel to purchase more and more is argued to be a natural desire instead of being created through social processes (Hedtke, 2001, p.18). The task of the market is to make it possible that the ever increasing needs can be met and as such there is the necessity to foster growth instead of modifying and criticizing it (ibid). Although standard economics over the time increasingly acknowledged that people are influenced by social and institutional structures, behavior incentives and often do not have full information about the market, standard economic theories around consumption are still highly influenced by the above mentioned ideas of a rational consumer (ibid, p.55). As such, the neo-classical economic view as present until today nurtures the consumption discourse by portraying informed consumers as the driving force of the economic system, naturalizing their increasing needs and arguing for the necessity to meet these needs with economic growth. Furthermore, individual profit maximization is argued to be beneficial for all in the end. Consequently, consumption does not have to be critically discussed in terms of its negative implications for social life and the environment.

This neo-classical economic theory is sometimes referred to as the ‘Trojan horse’ that pushes the neo-liberal political project into society (Bockman, 2012, p.9). Of specific relevance for the consumption discourse is here that neo-liberalism (informed by the neo-classical economic theory) “has glorified insatiable consumerism as a natural tendency” that should not be restrained (Pérez & Esposito, 2010, p.84). According to Velben
(1994), in consumerism the purchase of goods and services and as such also the accumulation of possessions (materialism) is highly valued (as cited in Tienken, 2013, p.303). This is because consumerism is linked to the perception “that consumption of goods and services relates positively to the overall well-being of a society” (ibid). In the post-modern society consumption is sometimes even promoted as a “patriotic duty” (Cortina, 2006, p.113). The concept of national success is related to idea that growth (e.g., fostered through consumption) is important and that much is in danger if it does not occur (Irmen, 2011, p.21). From this point of view, Velben (1994) argues, it holds that “the more goods and services [...] people in a society consume, the more developed that society must be” (as cited in Tienken, 2013, p.303). As such consumerism fosters an increase in consumption of goods, which is related to economic growth and economic growth in return is associated with national well-being.

Consumerisms as well as the neo-classical economic theory in which it is embedded are increasingly criticized within the consumption discourse. Criticism directly posed at the belief of consumerism is that economic growth does not necessarily mean that there is an improvement of welfare or a well-distributed economic well-being in society (Diefenbacher & Zieschank, 2011, p.46). It is argued that the focus on economic growth ignores the rather costly side effects caused by production and consumption (e.g., social and environmental destruction) that actually decrease social welfare (Diefenbacher & Zieschank, 2011, p.42). As such an increasing accumulation of goods does not necessarily lead to more quality of life. Critics of the neo-classical approach, furthermore, distance themselves from naturalizing the idea of a rational and powerful consumer and never ending needs. They argue that consumption is not the expression of the consumer’s sovereignty but rather ideologically, economically, technically, historically and socially embedded into the context of the respective culture's consumption and production methods [...]. (Antoni-Komar, 2011, p.238)

Antoni-Komar (2011) concludes that consumers are not rational persons by nature but are influenced by cultural routines that they are embedded in (p.239). Hence, also neither the idea of never ending needs or scarcity nor the idea of constant economic growth is natural phenomena but they are created by society (Hedtke, 2001, p.52). At the moment, where the
increasing need for consumption in society is portrayed as something natural, there also exists the danger that the often occurring manipulation of the demand through the (manipulating) offers is ignored (Koslowski & Priddat, 2006, p.7). As such the market itself creates needs that otherwise would not exist. Critical research argues that it needs a comprehensive consumption theory that takes into account, for instance “the economic (and political) regulation of consumption and needs” as well as the “produced good culture including its symbolic representation in commercials, income- and wealth-distribution” (Hedtke, 2001, p.122, own translation). Hence, we need to think outside a framework which is based on the rationalization and naturalization of needs, scarcity and economic growth. We need to allow for a more comprehensive approach that understands consumption as a process that is influenced by and at the same time influences various societal spheres (economic, political, cultural) and as such also acknowledges its various functions in society.

Scholars argue that this more comprehensive approach is urgently necessary as the significance of consumption in and for society is evermore increasing. Sometimes it is even stated that “consumption might become the ideology of this era” (Koslowski & Priddat, 2006, p.7, own translation). What is different from earlier times is that the concept of consumption today evolved from being a practical-utilitarian practice to an increasing imaginative-symbolic practice (Hedtke, 2001, p.119-120). That means that after having met the basic needs (e.g. nutrition, housing) it is getting increasingly important to accumulate more goods and services which are not necessary to survive but are perceived as being the safest way to personal happiness and social status (materialism) (Cortina, 2006, p.91). However, today it is becoming increasingly visible that this symbolic significance of consumption can be related to many of today's social (political) struggles as, for instance, unequal chances and lacking integration (e.g. status struggle, discrimination, stereotyping) or psychological problems (e.g. compensation for other problems, identity crises, shopping-addiction) (Janning, 2004, p.164). Hence, there is a need to further investigate consumption as “a site where power, ideology, gender and social class circulate and shape one another” (Denzin, 2010, p.xiii - xiv). It is important to locate the current increasing importance of symbolic goods within the neo-liberal capitalist ideology and to be aware of the manipulative power that derives from this system, whose goal it is to promote increasing consumption not for personal or environmental well-being but in the first place for economic growth.

Due to the increasing significance of consumption for the societal organization, the consumption discourse is also driven by a discussion about how consumers as citizens
should be integrated into decisions about consumption matters. Here it is argued that currently due to the de-politicization of consumption, the significance of political citizen participation in consumption matters has been pushed to the margins of politics (Belz & Bilharz, 2007, p.41). This is because governments that embrace the neo-classical theory do not consider a critical participation to be important. Based on the ideas of consumer sovereignty and competition theory the overall goal of consumer policy is to make sure that the rational consumer gets the perfect information (ibid). A modified version is a regulative consumer policy. The idea of consumer sovereignty where the consumer dominates the market and leads to prosperity (need for market-liberal politics) is combined with producer sovereignty where the producers are considered to manipulate and deceive helpless consumers (need for interventional-regulative politics) (Janning, 2003, p.158). As such the idea of the powerful consumer is only half way applied as the regulative consumer policy, on the one hand, strives for providing the consumer with the perfect information to be able to control the market, however, on the other hand, does not give the consumer the power to decide for him/herself what products he/she wants to buy or how to influence the market.

Opponents of these two approaches to consumer policy criticize the lack of consumer participation and patronization by the government. They argue that “all consumers are more or less critical consumers, able to defend themselves against a total industrial colonization of their conscious” (Hedtke, 2001, p.132, own translation). They suggest a more participatory approach where the government is less dominating and patronizing and consumers have the chance to contribute in a democratic manner to consumption related problems organized in, for instance, consumer cooperatives (associative consumer protection) (Janning, 2003, p.154). It is argued that changes often start from individuals or small groups, however, need to mobilize a majority in a democratic society (Gottwald, 1995, p.11). So far, however, consumers even though often being ecologically and socially interested underestimate the “necessity of far-reaching political changes that accompany their efforts” (Heidbrink, Schmidt, & Ahaus, 2011, p.11, own translation). As already seen in the other chapters, the connection between consumption and its political implications first have to be established and so also the more political role of consumers.

Another concept that is informing the discourse of consumption is sustainability. It can be considered as one of the most recent attempts to address social and ecological injustices related to consumption especially on a global level and is based on the understanding that “the consumption and production patterns, especially in industrial nations are not
sustainable” - neither ecologically nor socially (Belz, Karg, & Witt, 2007, p.16, own translation). Belz & Bilharz define three different conflict arenas with regard to sustainability: inter-systemic conflicts (ecology, economy, social, cultural), intergenerational conflicts (generations), intra-generational conflicts (poor and wealthy) (Belz & Bilharz, 2007, p.25). Depending, on how these different conflict zones are balanced and how much importance is assigned to their elements (e.g. ecology should be the most important versus all are similar important) the discourse of sustainability is represented from a stronger definition (well balanced) or weaker definition (unbalanced) of sustainability (Andersson & Eriksson, 2010, pp.17). One overreaching challenge that was formulated for consumption is “the right to a sustainable lifestyle and access to education for sustainable development and consumption as a universal right for all people on this planet” (Wachowiak, 2011, p.109, own translation). However, as argued by many critical scholars, the concept of sustainable development is often only used as a trend word with no honest conviction and the actual implementation usually commits to a weaker form of interpretation that in a neo-liberal manner prioritizes economic growth and that is not affordable for everyone (Andersson & Eriksson, 2010). So far as argued by Billen (2001), sustainable consumption is only “the hobby of the upper middle class, but it should become the basis melody of the wide mass” (p.433, own translation). Regarding sustainability it becomes visible how the neo-classical theory is governing society and how consumption is related to social struggles. Hence, it is important to make these societal and environmental implications of consumption visible and to educate consumers that are able to critically engage with the topic of consumption.

2.2 Consumer Education

In this research the focus is on formal consumer education as it is promoted by the presented policy for consumer education. As discussed in the following paragraphs, there is not one form of consumer education, but it varies in its scope (providing consumers with information up to helping them to contribute to change), formal regulation (e.g., legally defined, guidelines) and implementation (e.g., integration into other subjects, single subject) (Ueno, Olczak, & Takahashi, 2009, p.9-13). The attention towards consumer education has rapidly increased throughout the last years, which becomes visible due to the rising number of publications by internationally big players such as the OECD, UNESCO or the EU (Nordisk Ministerråd, 2009, p.15). Their publications give suggestions for the implementation of consumer education, however, also relate consumer education to consumer policy,
sustainable development and economics. Critical research calls for caution with regard to the current implementation of consumer education. They especially draw attention to the misuse of the term ‘consumer empowerment’ and argue that consumer education so far predominantly focuses on educating consumers in such a way that they are only able to function within the neo-liberal economic system. Here, the focus is on individual benefits instead of change for collective well-being (Sandlin & McLaren, 2010b). Collective well-being is closely related to teaching for sustainable consumption. De Haan & Harenberg (1998), argue here that also consumer education needs to be participatory and it should motivate students to become active in promoting a sustainable future (p.42). On this subject, but also with regard to the idea of consumer empowerment it is important to keep in mind that students are embedded in societal structures. Therefore, if the society does not support certain ideas, such as in this case consumer participation or emancipation, it might be difficult for students to apply what they have learned in schools.

The scope of consumer education and its implementation in curriculum design differs across nations. The OECD distinguishes between different areas that consumer education can be located within: consumer protection, consumer skills and protection of the public interest. The first area is dedicated to providing consumers with the information they need in order to be able “to ensure their welfare”, the second area focuses on skills that help consumers to” make more informed decisions” and the third area is about “promoting democratic change” (Ueno, Olczak, & Takahashi, 2009, p.9-13). Apart from the different areas consumer education can embrace, consumer education also differs with regard to how it is structured in a formal education setting. Here OECD scholars argue that “in most countries consumer education is integrated into the school curriculum in an interdisciplinary way” (ibid, p. 13). This can also be said about Germany where consumer education is most commonly, but varying across the nation, integrated into the school subjects home economics, economics and techniques or partly also in social science, biology, chemistry, ethics and religious studies (Schlegel-Matthies, 2004, p.11). Regulations for the implementation of consumer education also differ. Whereas in some countries consumer education is legally defined either in consumer policy or education policy and fostered through direct guidelines, regulative frameworks in other countries are missing (Ueno et al., 2009, pp.9). Hence, it can be said that the actual implementation in terms of the scope and structural organization as well as the legal status and related guidelines for consumer education can be very different and that there is not one major way to implement it.
The international interest in consumer education has increased and spread rapidly throughout the last 10 years. Here the need to focus on consumer education is often related to changes in the ‘new times’ such as that “consumers operate in an increasingly complex market place and are faced with increasing amounts of information and an expanding choice of complex products and services” (Ueno et al., 2009, p.7) but also related to questions of justice (environmental, societal) and empowerment (Sandlin & McLaren, 2009, p.xiii-xv). Big global players such as the UNEP, UNESCO and OECD increasingly published suggestions for consumer education policy and its implementation. The UNESCO relates education to sustainable consumption, promoting “responsible citizenship and fights against the social and resource impacts of unsustainable lifestyle consumption habits” (UNESCO, 2010). In 2008, the OECD and UNEP as well as the United Nations Marrakesh Task force on Education for Sustainable Consumption (UNMTF) came together in order to define “good practices in consumer education” (Nordisk Ministerråd, 2009, p.15). The final report “Consumer Education: Policy Recommendations of the OECD's Committee on Consumer Policy” was published in 2009 and includes national studies with recommendations for the implementation and development of consumer policy (ibid). The EU included consumer education already in 1997 into its general objectives for consumer protection, making consumer education “a right of European consumers and an objective to be achieved jointly by the European Community and the Member States” (ibid). Consequently, this promotion for more consumer education is accompanied by studies provided by big players who give suggestions as well as rank a country's performance in this regard. Furthermore, the publications show the connection of consumer education with sustainability (UNESCO), consumer policy (EU) and economics (OECD). This also implicates different motivations for the implementation of consumer education.

Critical research calls for caution in regard to the current implementation and promotion of consumer education. Especially scholars from North America draw attention to the misusage of the term ‘consumer empowerment’. McGregor (2005) states that consumer education, regardless of the approach, is usually argued to have the “purpose of empowering people in their consumer role” (p.437). However, as argued by critical pedagogues most approaches are far from empowering consumers (ibid, p.440). They criticize that consumer empowerment today is predominantly related to having “access to information and competition” (ibid, p.437). In such an interpretation student-consumers are merely educated to 'function' within a “neo-liberal capitalist economic-consumption system” where they
know how to “buy, wear, eat, watch [and] drink” (Denzin, 2010. p. xiii). Hence, I infer that also current consumer education policy seems to be ignorant towards the political implications of consumption as present in the neo-classical theory. McGregor (2005) argues that one big challenge of consumer education is to make students aware of the “oppressive power of materialism and consumerism and that there are alternatives to this lifestyle” (p.442). An empowered citizen for critical pedagogues is someone “who has found his/her inner voice, his/her inner power to advocate for others and the environment, as well as for him/herself” (ibid, p.440). Hence, the current focus on consumer education for individual benefits needs to be extended to an “empowerment approach for mutual interest” (McGregor, 2005, p.440-441). In such an interpretation, consumer education is not merely about teaching students how to adjust and cope with the system, but to be sensitive in regard to “power relations and social inequalities” as well as seeking ways “that point to new possibilities for thought and action rather than reinforcing the status quo” (McGregor, 2003; Hart, 1990, as cited in McGregor, 2005, p.442). As consumer education is increasingly promoted by big global players such as the OECD, which have a big influence on national policy making and are accused for defining “education primarily in terms of its economic value and learners as human resources” it is essential to closely observe where consumer education is heading to (Moutsios, 2009, p.10). There is a need to critically engage with the concept of consumption in consumer education and to contribute to the education of citizens who are capable of critically engaging with their role as consumers not just for individual but also for collective well-being.

The goal of collective well-being is to some degree integrated into the discussion about consumer education for sustainable consumption. Here it is especially stressed that the determination of what sustainable consumption is and how it should be pursued should not be decided top down but be achieved through communication and participation. As argued by different scholars (Künzli & Kaufmann-Hayouz, 2008; Haan & Harenberg, 1998) education for sustainable consumption should not be about teaching “concrete guidelines for consumption behavior” but promoting the regulative idea of sustainability (as cited in Fischer, 2011, p.439, own translation). According to Haan & Harenberg (1998), it would be wrong to implement objectives that “were not supported and developed together in a participatory process” but promoted by certain organizations etc. (p.42, own translation). I infer that it is especially relevant in the light of the current overstatement of economic well-being in the sustainability discourse of today. In Germany, competences for sustainable development in the school context are subsumed under the term *Gestaltungskompetenz* (competency...
to shape). It is about teaching students to be able to participate in the development of a sustainable future (De Haan & Harenberg, 1998, p.42). Fischer (2011) suggests here to talk about sustainable development rather than about sustainability and argues in favor of Bildung instead of Erziehung for sustainable development (p.458). As such also in regard to consumer education the participatory element, similar to consumer policy, seems to become increasingly relevant.

After having raised the awareness for participation as well as consumer empowerment in consumer education it is also important to locate consumer education within the society in terms of how far consumer education in a school setting can contribute to change in society. As Biesta (2011) argues, “while teaching definitely has a role to play, it is far from the only factor that matters in the ongoing formation of democratic citizens” (p.11). It needs to be considered that education is embedded within societal processes and as such competences acquired in school do not necessarily lead to transformations in society when they are not supported by that society (ibid). Furthermore, much of today's consumer education takes place informally and is influenced by commercials or the social environment (Fischer, 2011, p.454). Another important aspect is here is that the opportunity for empowered consumer behavior might be unequal. Research has shown that consumers/students depending on, for instance, their socio-economic background and have “limited scopes for action” as they “are embedded within existing, consumption relevant infrastructures and have to act within given institutional conditions” (Wimmer, 2001, p.79). As such, depending, on how the role of consumers and consumption is defined in a society (e.g., as a purely rational economic act or socially constructed multifaceted process) and whether political consumer participation is desired, also consumer education might be defined differently. Fischer (2011) argues that it is not enough to develop the student’s Gestaltungskompetenz but that also schools need to be reformed holistically as institutions so that they can in a comprehensive manner promote the process of sustainability (p.458). In summary, when talking about the impact of education and the idea of teaching empowerment, we need to be aware that (1) students are restricted by their environment (e.g. perception of education and consumption) and their means (e.g., socio-economically, previous education) and (2) education needs to be considered as one sphere of society that cannot transform it alone but with support by other spheres. As these spheres are increasingly influenced by economical profit thinking promoted through neo-liberalism, it might need even more effort to promote change in favor of a co-responsible social organization.
2.3 Neo-liberalism in the ‘new times’

Neo-liberalism is considered to nurture many societal transformations in the ‘new times’ (Fairlough, 2003, p.5). Consumer education as a product of the ‘new times’ can be linked to these neo-liberal transformations: First, the consumption discourse and as such and also consumer policy and consumerism is informed by the neo-classical economic theory which is the center piece of the neo-liberal beliefs (Bockmann, 2012, p.9). Second, current consumer education practices are being criticized for working towards the sustentation of the neo-liberal capitalist consumption system (Denzin, 2010, p.xiii). Third, education policy in general is argued to be a site that is used to spread neo-liberal believes (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.60; Moutsios, 2009, p.10). Here, language is considered to play an evermore important role in these ‘new times’ where socio-economic changes are argued to be increasingly 'discourse-driven' (Fairclough, 2001; Luke, 2002; Kress, 1985, as cited in Taylor, 2004, p.9-11).

Neo-liberalism can be associated with … neo-classical economics and notions of the autonomous subject, a moral dimension founded in notions of competition and personal responsibility and an idiom which speaks of enterprise effort and accountability. (Harris, 2006, p.9)

The social implications of these components of neo-liberalism are multifarious. The focus in this research is on how the neo-liberal ideology is used to economize the organization of social life in order to promote economic growth (Fairclough, 2003, p.4). I have argued before that this focus on economic well-being is also present in consumerism and as such important to keep in mind for consumer education policy. The overstatement of economic growth has deep reaching implications for the welfare state (Fairclough, 2010, p.12) and the ideas of corporate responsibility that are also argued to be underestimated in the current consumption and consumer education discourse (Sandlin & McLaren, 2010b, p.14). Furthermore, neo-liberalism promotes the perception that people are autonomous and egoistic individuals who have a need for self-realization, free choice and action, however, as a result of such, are also self-responsible for whatever misfortune they experience (Rose, 1996, p.57-59). Another aspect that is important in terms of education policy is that education is increasingly approached within a business metaphor where the ultimate goal is to make schools and the people’s working and learning within them economically efficient in order to foster economic growth (Bank, 2012, p.195; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.78 -79).
This paragraph introduces neo-liberalism as a socio-political project that has contributed to the overstatement of economics in society. Fairclough (2003) refers to the current social transformations informed by the neo-liberal ideology as the “re-structuring of the relation between the economic, political and social domain” (p.4). Here it is argued that the restructuring is visible as the “economic sub-system apparently is in the lead and receives more attention than any of the other sub-systems or people themselves” (Bank, 2012, p.195). However, we do not only find an increasing importance of the economic sector itself, but the economic sector also infiltrates former economic external domains. It does so by evaluating other domains of social life according to their utility for the society from a purely economic perspective and redesigns these other domains according to the needs of the economy (Fairclough, 2003, p.4). These neo-liberal transformations are often presented as the fastest way to (economic) well-being. In fact it has been argued that the neo-liberal era has pulled “millions of people out of absolute poverty” (Fairclough, 2011, p.12). Furthermore, it is promoted that we “must bow to the emerging logic of a globalizing knowledge-driven economy”, which is portrayed as an automatism and a fact instead of something that is created and as such can also be changed (Fairclough, 2003, p.4). The critical voices are getting louder and it becomes visible that the neo-liberal project has “led to an increasing gap in income and wealth between rich and poor, increasing economic insecurity and stress, […] an intensification of the exploitation of labour” as well as environmental destruction (ibid, p.12). Hence, neo-liberalism can be described as the increasing economization of the social organization which is argued to be necessary in order to foster (economic) well-being, however, the overstatement of economics has rather led to much social misfortune and as such needs to be regarded with concern.

The focus on economic growth instead of questions of environmental and social justice has implications for national policy making, especially with regard to the concept of co-responsibility. Here we find a decrease of market regulations, social welfare and protection for citizens against the negative effects of markets (Fairclough, 2011, p.11-12). Proponents of the neo-liberal ideology blame these measures for the crisis in ‘Fordist’ countries and use this as an argumentation against them (Fairclough, 2011, p.11). Instead of promoting a co-responsible welfare system, the neo-liberal ideology promotes competitive individualism. Here, Miller and Rose (1988) argue that citizens strive for ‘self-realization, self-direction, self-presentation and self-management” (as cited in Harris, 2006, p.8), however, are also self-responsible. Individuals as “choice-making customer[s]” are considered to have a
free will and choice and as such, if they do not succeed in society are blamed themselves for their misfortune (Rose, 1996, p.57-59). By strengthening the “egoistic motives of a homo economicus” (rational, profit-oriented people) and promoting the concept of self-responsibility neo-liberalism contributes to the diminishment of social welfare and the idea of co-responsibility (Becker, 1976, as cited in Bank, 2012, p.195). As argued in the critical discourse of consumer education, the idea of acting in a common interest is, however, essential in order to promote a just society and sustainable consumption patterns.

The neo-liberal transformations also have an increasing impact on education. Here, schools are increasingly approached with a business metaphor in a way that they and the people working and learning in them are “judged by their efficiency” (Bank, 2012, p.195). However, as argued by critiques, efficiency in neo-liberalism is not related to a holistic development according to individual needs, but concerned with the instrumental role of education in terms of “developing workers able to contribute to the economic productivity of nations and corporations alike” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.78). This social efficiency approach strives “to producing workers with knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to increasing productivity within the knowledge economy” (ibid). In such a view education is increasingly defined in “terms of its economic value and learners as human resources” (Moutsios, 2009, p.10). Furthermore, knowledge is considered to be the most valuable capital (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.79). Due to the proposed economic relevance, education is evermore influenced by international economic organizations such as the OECD that implement quantitative studies such as PISA to measure educative efficiency. The increasing standardized testing and reliance on control data can be easily used and misused by politicians to “justify whatever policy and avoid difficult debates on pedagogical issues of education and schooling which might put their ideological goals at risk” (Bank, 2012, p.208). As such there is exists the danger that education is being increasingly governed by economic instead of pedagogic argumentation.

As indicated above, researchers relate the recent neo-liberal transformation in the ‘new times’ to “the increasing importance of language in social life in late modernity or late capitalism” (Hall, 1996, as cited in Taylor, 2004, p.1). More than before, language is argued to be used in such a way that it makes certain socio-economic transformations sound inevitable, that it represents desires as facts and as such has the power “to bring into being the very realities it describes” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2001, as cited in Fairclough 2010,
As such, when discussing transformations informed by neo-liberalism and consumerism it is also important to look at the texts that are produced in these ‘new times’. This is also why Critical Discourse Analysis as a study of language and discourse has increasingly focused on “how these transformations impact on politics, education, artistic production, and many other areas of social life” (Fairclough, 2003, p.4). The impact of these ideologies is also visible in the German context as outlined in the following.

2.4 Education and consumer policy and the neo-liberal project in Germany

In order to conduct a Critical Discourse Analysis it is important to also include research regarding the German context. As consumer education as a distinct theory is just a recent concept in Germany there exists only little research in this regard (Schlegel-Matthies, 2004, p.6-7). In the following, I outline research that addresses the increasing impact of neo-liberalism on education policy as well research concerning consumer education as both can give valuable insights for this research. As research on education policy in Germany showed, we can observe how the neo-liberal ideology is also present in Germany and shapes education policy according to its demands. This is an important insight as it supports the importance to focus on the recent transformations of neo-liberalism in the current policy for consumer education. In particular it is saying,

the latest shift in education policy in many countries derives its external impact from the economic system, not from the political one. Far-reaching policy changes occurred particularly in the Federal Republic of Germany […] The political pressure that led to these and further changes - not only in Germany - was generated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and its international comparative study programmes, most prominently the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). (Bank, 2012, p.193)

Germany before PISA had shown a rather lethargy position when it came to improving education and also the economic situation has never given reason to question common educational practices. The average PISA scores of German students has, however, transformed such lethargy and led to increasing education policy reforms on the national level through the Kultusministerkonferenz and on the federal state level through the respective education ministries (Bank, 2012, p.198). Education policy in Germany is usually coordinated by each
state separately. The *Kultusministerkonferenz*, the Conference of the Ministers of Education of the 16 federal states “is an institution charged to strive for a minimum of co-ordination between the regional school policies” (Bank, 2012, p.206). Their motivation for improvement is argued to be colored by the “fear of economic failure in the future” instead of pedagogic argumentation (Bank, 2012, p.207). Furthermore, the importance of “other restrictive factors outside school”, which need to be changed in order to provide for more equal chances are ignored (ibid, p. 206). This focus on blaming individuals and ignoring the importance of societal structures that shape an individual’s life journey fits into the concept of personal responsibility present in neo-liberalism. Here it is also an important observation that the OECD as an economic organization has a big impact on German policy making. The apparently increasing economization of education policy raises caution towards the currently published consumer education policy.

Critical research on consumer education with post-modern/post-critical lenses in Germany is scarce. Much of the research stems from North America (e.g., Sandlin & McLaren, 2010; McGregor). It gives valuable insights into the discussion around consumer education and how it can be approached, however, it is not possible to draw conclusion from this research as to what is specifically going wrong in the context of German consumer education. In Germany, there was a big decline of consumer education research in the 80s in Germany which is now increasing again. This increasing interest is said to be associated with recent food scandals and reports concerning the lacking financial knowledge of German citizens (Schlegel-Matthies, 2004, p.6-7). Current research usually takes form as “single publications with different research foci regarding consumer education” (e.g. home economics) and is as such scattered over different education areas (ibid, p.6, own translation). This is because consumer education as a separate educational concept has so far not existed. It usually takes place in upper secondary (grade 5-11) and is most commonly integrated into different school subjects (ibid, p.11). Nevertheless, Schlegel-Matthies (2004) argues that also in the German context there are overarching aspects (sustainability, health, social responsibility) that should concern consumer education across the curriculum and which are so far not comprehensively conceptualized and institutionalized (p. 6). I infer that the policy under investigation may be the first move into this direction on a national level. As such, up until now, there is not much literature dealing specifically with a general concept of consumer education and at the same time not much related post-modern/post-structural research in the German context.
One study that was conducted and is often cited in regard to consumer education policy is called “REVIS - A Modern Consumer Education Approach in Germany”. In a nationwide analysis of consumer education it came to the following conclusions:

Our nationwide analysis and evaluation has demonstrated that the resulting demands for education in the German states are inadequately met by existing curricula. Institutionalisation and curricular definition of consumer education on one side, and education, training and assignment of teachers, as well as didactical conceptions on the other, differ considerably in their quality and quantity. They often do not fulfil the standards necessary for the acquisition of a basic qualification. The current educational discussion requires close revision of educational goals and standards, the curriculum, the educational materials and the training programs in consumer education. (Schlegel-Matthies & Leutnant,)

This statement does not say much about the content of consumer education, however, refers to its implementation which is so far not comprehensively institutionalized. The study can be described as a literature review that draws attention to consumer education and related challenges in general so they can be implemented in Germany in the future. Without stating how consumer education is done now, German scholars argue that there is a need for a change in consumer education “from a protected to an informed and responsible consumer” (Kotisaari & Schuh, 2000, p.140, own translation). Here Schlegel-Matthies (2004) also mentions that structural restrictions (e.g., economic, social, education) in regard to consumption limit consumption possibilities and decision-making (p.7-10). She argues in favor of enabling student for responsible action and at the same time for providing assistance and political framework conditions in order to take pressure off the consumers in their daily action and decision-making process (ibid, p.7-10). The REVIS study further engages in discussing a framework that they consider to be important in consumer education, also integrating aspects such as consumer literacy and citizenship education (ibid, p.19-22). This is a hint that these concepts are discussed in the German context, however, it does not give detailed insights into how consumer education is currently practiced or discussed in public/politics and what might be good or bad about it.

A more critical approach to actually practiced consumer education can be found in a research done by a NGO called LobbyControl. They published a study in 2012,
arguing that education and more specifically consumer education is influenced by companies and industry associations that promote a positive view of certain financial practices, companies and the economization of society. LobbyControl argues that companies have access to schools by offering free teaching materials and influencing education policy through their contacts to politicians (LobbyControl, 2012, p. 4-5). They warn that teachers often happily accept these teaching materials that are up-to date and often do not critically analyze the intention behind them. Another difficulty here is that even programs which are certified by the government are not necessarily free of economic interest (ibid, p. 13). The study also draws attention to different companies that are specialized in influencing children in their consumption decisions (cobra youth communications GmbH) or have the goal to bring economic interests of commercial enterprises and the pedagogical mandate into harmony so that commercials can be accepted at school (German School-Marketing Agency) (ibid, p.5). One company that is especially active is, for instance, INSM. Their goal is to promote the view that education should be directed towards market interests (ibid). It is alarming that politicians as well as entrepreneurs increasingly promote the idea that an “entrepreneurial world view” is the solution to social problems (ibid, p. 5, own translation). As such it is important to engage more critically with consumer education in Germany as it currently seems to be increasingly influenced by economic thinking.
3 Research Methodology

This research aims to decipher the underlying political and societal implications that are communicated in a policy for consumer education and how they contribute to shaping the social-political sphere. Policy texts are produced in a political context and “they are often aimed at achieving the hegemony of a particular point of view with the explicit aim of creating change within other (i.e. non-discursive) aspects of social practice” (Rear, p.14). Hence, when analyzing consumer education it is necessary to “become aware of naturalizations, hegemony, learn how to challenge the status of existing structures” and to “understand how power and ideology operate through and across systems of discourse, cultural commodities and cultural texts” (Denzin, 2010, p.xv). For education policy this is important as Rizvi and Lingard (2010) state that education policies are increasingly shaped by economic reasoning and at the same time shape society to fit the needs of capitalism (p.60). Rizvi and Lingard (2010), furthermore, point to the interrelatedness of language and social processes related to policies. They argue that as much as language use in policy is shaped by the context of production (ibid, p.14) and influenced by surrounding discourses, it also shapes discourses and steers “social formation in particular directions” (ibid, p.1). As a result policies can be considered text and discourse at the same time. Fairclough points also to the observation that “the commands of contemporary policy are often implied in, disguised as or buried under piles of ostensibly value free, objective, pseudo-scientific facts” (Graham, 2001, as cited in Fairclough, 2003, p.115). Critical Discourse Analysis, as outlined below, offers a comprehensive framework that combines “social analysis (the external relations of the text) [...] with semiotic/linguistic analysis (the internal relations of the text)” which helps to analyze policies as text and discourse (Taylor, 2004, p.5). It helps to decipher carefully crafted policy language and detect different discourses, dominating ideologies or naturalized concepts that might not be obvious at first sight.

3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

This research is based on Fairclough’s school of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth, CDA), here, I mostly draw from his recent works (Choulaiaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 2001b; Fairclough, 2003). It is an interdisciplinary methodology that combines critical social science with sociolinguistic studies (Fairclough, 2001b, p.230). The critical focus in this research is on transformations related to consumerism and neo-liberalism.
Critical social science contributes to making these transformations visible by integrating an explanatory and normative critique that in this research is combined with the motivation to reimagining the social world and to contribute to change (Fairclough, Graham, Lemke, & Wodak, 2004, p.5). In addition to critical social science CDA includes the analysis of language within the framework of analysis (Wodak, 2000, p.145). Here discourse is argued to be influenced by different discourses and genres that control what and how language is used in social life (Fairclough, 2003, p.215). This is also important in regard to ideologies and hegemonic struggle that is configured through discourse. As much as discourse is argued to contribute to hegemony it is also presented as an element that can contribute to its diminishment (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In order to decipher discourse and to study social transformations it is, therefore, necessary to combine linguistic with discursive and social analysis. As argued in CDA all three elements shape each other and even though they are separate they need to be constantly related to one another - in order to relocate it within and around the other two (Janks, 1997, p.330). As such in epistemological/ontological terms CDA relies on observable structures and relations, however, it acknowledges that the boundaries are shifting during the process of analysis (Fairclough, 2003, p.14). Furthermore, realities cannot be reduced to knowledge which is a vivid concept and open for change (ibid, p.14). Respectively, also researchers as subjects contribute to shaping the outcomes of the research according to their understanding of the world.

Critical social science is one of the major components of this research. It combines social science with the element of critique. Social science aims to contribute to an “awareness of what is, how it has come to be, and what it might become, on the basis of which people may be able to make and remake their lives” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p.4). Scholars in this field argue that change in favor of human well-being can only be achieved if we understand how current social problems have come to be the way they are and how they can be transformed for the better. The goal is to achieve “enlightenment and emancipation […] create awareness in agents of their own needs and interests […] and 'demystify' discourses by deciphering ideologies” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p.10). In order to do so, critical social science incorporates an explanatory critique and normative critique that not only describes but also evaluates “the extent to which they [social realities] match up to various values, which are taken […] to be fundamental for just or decent societies” and, furthermore, seeks to explain how realities are the “effects of structures and mechanisms” (Fairclough, 2010, p.9). It is important to study and understand these changes so they can be
inflected, resisted and alternatives can be developed for the sake of human and, I infer, environmental well-being. Hence, in addition to an explanatory and normative critique it also incorporates a 'strategic critique' which emphasizes how discourse “figures within the strategies pursued by groups of social agents to change societies in particular directions” (Fairclough et al., 2004, p.5). However, as Rogers et.al. (2005) add, CDA also goes a step further towards re-imagining the social world (p.376). In that sense this research is furthermore, politically critical as it aims to contribute to social political change.

Different from traditional critical social science, which does not include a focus on Discourse to study social transformations, CDA stresses the “strong relation between linguistic and social structure” (Wodak, 2000, p.145). As discourse has two different meanings their definition and correlation are outlined in the following. Discourse (with a capital ‘D’) refers here to language in broader terms as it encompasses any kind of “communication in a meaning-making sense” such as, for instance, also images that convey a message visually or body language (Fairclough, 2003, p.26). Furthermore, Fairclough (2003) argues that Discourse as one social element dialogically relates with other social elements (e.g. persons, material world, social relations) and as such contributes to shaping the organization of social life (p.215). However, there is also a second definition of discourse in CDA that describes discourse(s) (lower case ‘d’) as certain specific “ways of representing aspects of the world” that aim to change the world towards specific directions (e.g., neo-liberal or social-democrat discourse) (ibid, p.215). These types of discourse shape Discourse (language) in the sense that they provide the content (e.g. political believes, assumptions about the world) for the messages that are communicated through language.

Another element that defines Discourses is genre and genres worked together with discourses determine the ‘order of discourse’ as discussed in the following. Genre can be understood as “different ways of (inter)-acting discoursally” (Fairclough, 2003, p.26). It can, for instance, be distinguished between different genre-types such as policies, speeches or news-paper articles where each genre type has a specific text design and linguistic specificities (e.g., degree of abstraction, persuasive) (ibid, p.26). One text can draw from different genres and discourses. They influence each other and mingled together have an impact on how and what kind of messages are conveyed through Discourse (language) (ibid, p.220). The configuration of discourses (influenced by the genre) determines the ‘order of discourse’ in a text (Wodak, 2000, p.148). Discourses (lowercase ‘d’) can, for instance, be ordered in such a ways that some are dominant, marginal or absent in the text. The ‘order of discourse’
controls “linguistic variability” as it includes and/or excludes certain vocabulary, formulations (grammar) or representations of reality (Fairclough, 2003, p.24). Doing so it also shapes how messages are conveyed and as such also steers social transformations to specific directions, this what makes it important to also include linguistic analysis. Language, even in its most abstract linguistic features is connected to the organization of social life.

As Discourse is part of social transformations it can also be associated with ideology and hegemonic struggle within society. These “causal effects of texts inculcating and sustaining or changing ideologies” are of central concern for CDA (Fairclough, 2003, p.9). An important influence on language and ideology has been here Mikhail Bakhtin who is related to linguistic theories of ideology, which “claim that all linguistic signs […] are the material of ideology, and that all language use is ideological” (Fairclough, 2001, p.232). In this research concern is directed toward the neo-liberal ideology and consumerism, where ideologies are “representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation” (Fairclough, 2003, p.9). Neo-liberalism is such a belief-system according to which, for instance, politicians in line with certain assumptions design their political programs, argue for certain necessary measures and in a way create reality (ibid, p.45). Discourse (capital ‘D’) and other elements of social practices are shaped by ideologies to a lesser or greater degree and in the latter case used to do ideological work in order to maintain or transform power relations (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

When ideology becomes “part of the legitimizing common sense which sustains relations of domination” then we speak of ideological domination or also hegemony (Fairclough, 2001a, p.2). However, people are usually positioned between different ideologies and hegemony is not only dominancy but also a result of hegemonic struggle where different 'meaning potentials' first have to be negotiated, written or orally (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Hence, hegemony is based on consensus or acquiescence. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) argue from a post-marxist perspective that this hegemonic struggle in political settings can be considered “as partly a contention over claims of [...] particular visions and representations of the world to having a universal status” (as cited in Fairclough, 2003, p.45). Discourse (capital ‘D’) is, therefore, part of this “hegemonic struggle that contributes to the reproduction and transformation of the order of Discourse of which it is part (and consequently of the existing power relations)” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Hence, Dis-
course can contribute to maintaining power or also challenge hegemony. As such it is necessary to include critical language studies into social analysis. It contributes to decipher discourse in social transformations and makes ideological work visible.

In order to understand Discourse and how it contributes to current transformations in society one can look at moments of Discourse such as a specific text and locate it within the social environment. More precisely, based on the arguments above, it is necessary to look at texts from a textual/linguistic, discursive (including discourses and genre) and from a social perspective (see figure below):

![Figure 1: Three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis according to Fairclough (1992, p.73)](image)

Janks (1997) suggests that these three dimensions (text, discursive practice, social practice) should be considered as three boxes that are “nesting one inside the other” (p.330). The boxes shape each other and as such the focus on one box automatically requires relating it to the others - in a way to relocate it within/around the other two (ibid, p.330). The interdiscursive analysis focuses on which genres and discourses are drawn upon and the linguistic analysis contributes to determine how the discourses are “worked together [...] and what articular work is done” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p.63). However, also linguistic analysis by itself can provide evidence for certain texts (intertextuality) or discourses (interdiscoursivity) that are integrated into the text (Fairclough, 1995, p.61). Here, it is also essential to refer to what is left out of the debate, more specifically which voices are excluded from the argumentation (ibid, p.41). Drawing from Bakhtin, Fairclough (2001) calls the presence or absence of different voices in text the “dialogical properties of texts” (dialocalitiy)
(p.233). As a text is produced within a certain context and for a certain context it is, furthermore, necessary to locate it within this social context. Texts are “oriented to (and anticipate) particular sorts of receptions and responses, and are therefore also interactive” (Bakhtin, 1986, as cited in Fairclough, 2001, p.240). Even though some findings from the interdiscursive and linguistic analysis might make sense by themselves they might be interpreted differently when related to the specific social context and respective predominant social order. It is important to investigate by which social developments the included discourses are informed and whether they reproduce or challenge the existing social order of the policy context (Taylor, 2004, p.5). As such the combination of a discursive, linguistic and social analysis is necessary in order to be able to determine the text’s order of discourse and the ideological work that is done in the text. Consequently all these elements can contribute to decipher social transformations and to contribute to change.

By regarding abstract social structures such as neo-liberalism as well as concrete social events such as policy texts as parts of social reality, CDA can be located within a ‘critical realist ontology’ (Fairclough, 2003, p.14). It is based on the assumption that there are “objective relations and structures” that can be studied, but also refers to the “practical dispositions of subjects engaged in practices” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p.30). The social word is considered to be pre-constructed and as such it cannot be precluded that there are “aspects of which human beings have no or limited or mistaken knowledge of” (Fairclough, 2010, p.355). Hence, in epistemological terms “reality (the potential, the actual) cannot be reduced to our knowledge of reality, which is contingent, shifting and partial” (Fairclough, 2003, p.14). Also the “emancipatory research interest” of CDA scholars and their historical and social positioning is considered to have an impact on how the object of study is approached (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p.29).

3.2 Validity & Reliability

According to Rogers et al. (2005) the three main critiques posed at CDA are that “political and social ideologies are read into the data; that there is an imbalance between social theory, on the one hand, and linguistic theory and method, on the other; and that CDA is often divorced from social contexts” (p.327). These issues are closely related to the validity and reliability of this research and will, therefore, be discussed here at length.
The first critique is related to aspects of reliability as CDA as a politically motivated research is often accused of being biased due to the researcher's political position. Here, however, I want to refer to Haig (2004) who argues that “even non-critical, dyed-in-the-wool orthodox applied linguistics […] have ideological commitments […] but they conform to the hegemonic norm rather than the explicitly oppositional stance that CDA espouses and thus tend to attract less attention” (p.142). CDA theorists are aware that “reflexivity is an important aspect of any critical work” and consider it to be essential that researchers make their approach to the research topic visible (Rogers et al., 2005, p.382). I do so by locating this research within critical social science with a focus on challenging the increasing impact of economic domination and I will further contribute to transparency in the following part concerning the researcher's positionality. Nevertheless, it should also be considered that policy documents are highly political/ideology laden and I will, therefore, not simply read ideologies into the text but extract them. In the research the goal is to raise the public’s awareness for one possible interpretation, however, depending on the researcher and the choices he/she makes this interpretation might vary. As the research does not include any hard data analysis, aspects of reliability and validity are closely connected to the strength and logic of the argumentation (rhetoric). The argumentation thread is supported by including a detailed introduction of theoretical concepts and methodological considerations which are related to and integrated into the analysis of the object of research.

Related to the second criticism I want to emphasize that this research is based on Fairclough's school of thought whose analytical framework includes a detailed linguistic as well as social analysis. In chapter 3.1 I have elaborated how linguistic characteristics are essential for studying social transformations in texts. Furthermore, as described in the analysis (3.5.) linguistic features of texts in this research received the same attention as discourses and the social environment as these three levels are all interconnected and shape each other (Janks, 1997, p.330). As such this research pays considers all three level to be equally important.

With regard to the third criticism CDA scholars increasingly discuss that a combination with ethnography would be beneficial as it addresses “what is happening in reality on the ground” (Rogers, 2004, p.15). I do agree that such an immersion would contribute to a closer connection to the social context. Nevertheless, even without ethnography, CDA connects the policy to its social context as it is studied as a product of the social context
that it is embedded into it. Although, an integration of ethnography can be beneficial for research on policies, I argue that it is not as important for the context of this research. This is because the underlying policy was just recently published and is just in the process of being implemented/interpreted. Hence, this research focuses more on contributing to a reflected implementation than on studying how it is actually consumed at the moment.

3.3 The Researcher’s positionality

I chose the policy for consumer education because I take a critical stance towards the current economization of education and here specifically consumer education. Drawing from neo-marxist criticism, that focuses on changes in capitalism which are argued to “led to the perpetuation of oppressive structures by ideological means” (Breeze, 2013, p.496), I think it is important to point to the negative impact capitalism has on social equality and environmental destruction. In regard to this research I specifically take a critical stance towards the neo-liberal political project and non-reflective consumerism. I believe that it is important to make these transformations visible, to show how they foster discrimination and exploitation so that change can be promoted. By looking at the policy through post-modern/post-structural ‘lenses’ I want to draw attention to how current economic transformation are based on claims of truth, objectivity and neutrality. I believe it is important to deconstruct these claims and to make societal processes visible. CDA incorporates these ideas and is as such the most suitable methodology for this research and my political motivation. Furthermore, during my time as a teacher I have established certain believes concerning education that have an impact on how I approach the policy for consumer education. I value the ideas of critical pedagogy as I consider it to be important that people are equipped “with the tools to better themselves and strengthen democracy, to create a more egalitarian and just society, and thus to deploy education in a process of progressive social change” (Kellner, 2000, pp.200). Here, I believe that consumer education is going to be evermore important in the future due to the increasing environmental exploitation and social inequality and discrimination that stand in correlation with current consumption behavior.
3.4 Description and Context of the Data

3.4.1 Context of the policy

The interest in consumer education has not only on an international, but also on a national scale increased and can be locate within a chain of events. In Germany consumer education was especially promoted during the last years (2011-2014). One big player in this regard was/is, the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (now Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL)) which launches consumer education related initiatives (e.g. idea competitions for teachers, online teaching material, conferences). The public's awareness for the current lack of consumer education was raised in March 2013 when the German Foundation for Consumer Protection (DSV) founded the Buendnis fuer Verbraucherschutz (Alliance for Consumer Education) stating that there is a pressing need to “foster consumption and everyday competences of children, young adults and adults” (Deutsche Stiftung Verbraucherschutz, 2013). It was, however, not the goal that caught the public's attention but the controversial members and fund holders of this alliance. Industrial associations and companies such as, for instance, McDonalds or the Commerce Bank make up for 1/3rd of the funding. As such it was argued that these companies actually are “not part of the solution, but the source of the problem” (foodwatch, 2013b). Different newspapers (Sueddeutsche, SpiegelOnline, TAZ) questioned the promoted neutrality of this program and advised the public to exercise caution. Half a year later (September 2013) the Kultusministerkonferenz published the underlying policy for consumer education, which received acknowledgments by the DSV and BMEL, however, did not receive as much public attention in the media. The connection between the events becomes clear as certain formulations in the policy equal to those in the Alliance for Consumer Education. Furthermore, the ministry took advice from the respective consumer association in Germany (Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz, personal communication, February, 19, 2014)

Context is also important in regard to societal processes the policy is embedded in. Here I concentrate on aspects that are important for the analysis of the policy. German citizens have a rather high environmental consciousness and think a healthy and sustainable lifestyle is important, however, often do not act accordingly (Bundesministerium fur Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktorsicherheit, 2012). So far, Germany’s consumption be-
behavior is not sustainable (Eckert, Karg, & Zängler, 2007). This lack of sustainable consumption could also be related to the widely spread idea in Germany that growth is a necessity. In 2009 Merkel, the governing chancellor, emphasized in the coalition agreement how growth is essential for employment, education and help for the poor (Merkel, 2009, p.11). However, as argued by Diefenbacher & Zieschank (2011), the economic growth in Germany has so far not resulted in an improvement of welfare or a well-distributed economic well-being in society (p.42). On the contrary, the gap between rich and poor is rapidly increasing. However, it is not neo-liberalism that is blamed for this development, on the contrary, the Federal President just recently gave a speech, defending neo-liberalism as a political project in Germany (Spiegel, 2014).

With regard to German consumer politics scholar argue that they commonly portray consumers as *casual consumers* who react with only limited critically towards commercials (Janning, 2004, p.158). German consumer policy is designed according to this perception that the state regulates all consumer related aspects (regulative consumer protection policy). Even though consumer associations do exist, it is argued that they are mainly state funded and influenced by the government. They are used as instruments to spread a government closed consumer policy.

The state strongly influences the organization and programmatic direction of the consumer associations and supports a centralist form of organization of their representatives. (Janning, 2003, p.161, own translation)

Participants are usually other associations (unions, church groups...) but not private citizens. Eckert, Karg and Zängler (2007) analyzed, German consumer policy in 2007 and came to the conclusion that the situation is slightly improving (p.161). According to them consumer policy is increasingly moving towards more participation. They observed an opening towards “more cooperation, also with companies and associations” and conclude that the government, especially at the federal level, has recognized the necessity of an inter-actor cooperation (Eckert et al., 2007, p.161, own translation). The importance of direct citizen inclusion and participation is, however, not discussed in this work. Despite these slight changes, the idea of a participatory consumer democracy is not yet part of the common sense- neither in the society nor in the scientific world (Lamla, 2011, p.93). As such German consumer policy is still too patronizing and based on providing consumers with information and as such also curbs opportunities for consumer participation.
3.4.2 Document

The policy for consumer education with the title “Consumer Education at Schools” includes 6 pages and can be found online at the webpage of the KMK at http://www.kmk.org/presse-und-aktuelles/meldung/kultusministerkonferenz-verbraucher-bildung-an-schulen-steht-kuenftig-noch-staerker-im-mittelpunkt.html (Kultusministerkonferenz, 2013). The document was made available there in September 2013 when the policy was also published to the public. The policy is in German only and that is also why the following citations are (personal) translations. As it was published by the KMK, it can be concluded that different parties from different political directions (Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and the Green party) took part in the process of negotiation as they all hold education ministries in the different federal states. Furthermore, the process of implementation is not top-down from the federal level but was agreed upon by the ministries of the Länder themselves. Whether teacher organizations, parents or children were integrated into the process of negation is unclear.

The document itself is a 'one-way' mediated discursive activity (one written text printed on paper) (Fairclough, 2003, p.70-77). It is not a promotional product in its design (e.g. no colors or catchy headings), but rather simple with black ink and standard font. The headings of each chapter and sub-chapter are printed bold and so are the different areas of consumer education. Each chapter is started with some introductory sentences and then structured with bullet-point listings. These lists sometimes present ideas in whole sentences or in one or two words. However, apart from the preliminary marks there is not much coherent text, but rather single sentences.

The chapters include: (0.) General preliminary remarks and explanations as to why consumer education is increasingly important today, (1.) Goals and general principles (goals 1.1, general principles 1.2), (2.) Measures for education administration and politics, (3.) Remarks concerning its implementation in school, (4.) Support and consultation systems, (5.) Hints for the cooperation with school-external partners, (6.) References for further readings.

For this research chapters 0. and 1. are of the greatest relevance as they are directly related to consumption, society and education. In chapter (0.) there are the most coherent text parts that argue why there is a need for consumer education. As such this chap-
ter is a rather relevant entry point to analyze how the policy conceptualizes consumer education, consumption and the social organization. In chapter (1.) the policy states the goals of consumer education and as such gives insight into what consumer education does or what it is implemented for. The following chapters move away from an argumentation for consumer education and the related concepts of consumption and societal organization. They are more technically referring to how the implementation of the policy should be supported by education administration and politics (2.) or how consumer education on a more general level should be integrated into the school (e.g. cross-curricular, for all grades, projects, school-external partners, areas of consumer education) (3.). Chapter 4. gives examples of institutions that can give assistance for the implementation and chapter 5 promotes caution in regard to the cooperation with school-external partners and chapter 6 links this policy to other related policies. Even though these chapters are less relevant for achieving the goals of this research that does not mean that they are ignored. When relevant they will be included into the analysis.

3.5 Analysis

Fairclough’s writings 'Textual Analysis for Social Research' (2003) and ‘The Discourse of New Labor: Critical Discourse Analysis’ (Fairclough, 2001b) can be considered the major sources for the analysis. As argued in chapter 3, CDA combines linguistic, discourse and social analysis. Here text, discourses as well as social structures shape each other, where the focus on one aspect automatically requires it to relate it to the others. As suggested by Janks (1997), this implies that the process of analysis is “not always tidily linear” but rather happens simultaneously (p.330). Fairclough does not prescribe how CDA should be done in one specific way and as such I will outline my approach to the analysis in the following. For this research I emphasize the investigation of which discourses and genres the policy draws from, how they are linguistically and semantically worked together and whether the text does ideological work in relating, representing and identifying.

I approached the analysis in this research in two steps. First, I identified the genre of the text so I could integrate it later into the discursive analysis. In a second step I went deeper into the linguistic, discursive and social analysis where the points of entry were the discourses. Here I first determined narratives and then investigated how they were represented through discourses (influenced by genre). Furthermore, I looked at how these dis-
Step 1: Genre

In this first step of analysis I looked at the policy and how it can be located within different genres. In the case for the policy of consumer education, the policy genre was of relevance, because it is a policy. Other genre types I identified by looking at the closer context of the policy, which is education, and how the policy can be compared to other genres in the field of education. I looked specifically at the purpose of the text (e.g., implications for the practice) and investigated how the purpose is manifested within linguistic structures. Fairclough (2003) refers to this as the specification of the policy text as an activity in social life (p. 70-71). Linguistic as well as semiotic characteristics are elaborated in this part on a more general level and are later more specifically integrated into the process of the following discursive, linguistic and social analysis.

Step 2: Analysis of different themes in the policy

In the second stage I conducted the analysis by applying the three dimensional framework (see Figure 1, p.25). This research starts from the level of discursive practice and from there spreads out to the other levels of the framework, which are all equally important. For the discursive analysis, Fairclough (2003) suggests to first identify the major narratives in the text (p. 99). In this research I determined the narratives by grouping related text internal (e.g., words, grammar) and/or semantically related text external (e.g., theoretical concepts, theories, discourses) elements that were present in the policy. I marked the narratives
in the policy text so that they could later be analyzed with regard to the context of the policy, but also in regard to how they are structured form a linguistic perspective. The number of themes was large and as such I had to prioritize. In this research I gave priority to those themes, which were strongly present in terms of quantity (e.g. repetition of related expressions, vocabulary, grammar) and/or relevant within the theoretical framework of this research in a sense that a closer investigation of their representation could give valuable insights into consumer education related discourses and ideologies as discussed in chapter 2. As themes often did not have clear cut boundaries I sometimes had to cross-refer in order to underpin the argumentation.

In order to determine how these narratives were represented I investigated the following internal relations of the text for each narrative: whole-text language organization, clause combination, clauses and words (Fairclough, 2001, p.241-242). At the same time I related these findings of text internal relations to the external relations of the text by going back and forth between relevant theory and research regarding the German context. I looked at specific words, argumentations and how they in theory and in the German context can be assigned to a specific discourse that consequently can be said to be present in the narrative. For the investigation of discourses, I also specifically studied how the text reduces difference by excluding certain voices and assuming a common ground (ibid, p.41). I did so by taking a closer look at the assumptions that the text uses as a basis for argumentation (presuppositions), which discourses these assumptions nurture/serve and whether they really are as incontestable in social life as presented.

The same internal relations from above I also used to look at how different discourses were worked together linguistically and semantically (e.g., additive statements, sense of urgency). This gave insights into whether the text gave preference to some over other discourses. It gave, furthermore, insights into the ideological work of the text as the combination of linguistic, discursive and social characteristics showed how certain discourses informed by certain ideologies became dominant in the process of argumentation. Also in this regard it was important to investigate the underlying assumptions as they showed how certain developments become normalized instead of being presented as contestable. The genre characteristics helped to understand the purpose of the policy and its power to spread certain beliefs as a social activity. These potentials for ideological work I then again related to the context of the policy, which gave insights into whether this ideological potential as manifested in the text (also in relation to the current social order in Germany) served to foster current hegemonic ideological transformations in society.
4 Findings

In this chapter the genre as well as the different narratives and their representation are presented so that the research questions about the included discourses, their ordering as well as the ideological work of the text can be answered.

4.1 Genre analysis: policy and curriculum genre

The analysis in terms of genre showed that the policy mostly draws from the policy as well as curriculum genre. This conclusion can be drawn by looking at the purpose of the policy as well as textual features of the policy document. When looking at the purpose of the policy it became visible that it is located within a network of social practices that links politics with education. On the one hand, the policy suggests implicit goals (1.1) and (1.2) principles for the implementation of consumer education in schools and, on the other hand, has a political dimension as the ministries of the Länder signed the policy and agreed upon promoting consumer education in their respective federal states through political and administrative measures (2.). As such the purpose is to implement policies in school and to accompany the spread of consumer education with more politically and legally binding measures. Furthermore, as it will be shown in more detailed in 4.2 the policy is not value free but can be related to different political believes, which are implicitly going to be nurtured in society through the implementation of the policy.

As typical for the policy genre, the text moves from problems in chapter 0. (e.g., debt, lack of knowledge) towards measures for overcoming these problems in chapter 0. -6. (e.g., more consumer education (0.), specific educative measures (1.), help to implement consumer education (3.)) and as such fits into “problem-solution” scheme (Fairclough, 2003, p.91). The genre of this policy is informed by the characteristics of rational policies (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.9). Similar to the description of rational policies by Rizvi and Lingard (2010), this policy does not build on previous policies for consumer education and partially correlates with respective phases such as “problem definition, clarification of values, […], developing and implementations strategy” (p.9-10). Furthermore, the policy is rather prescriptive as it predetermines the Goals (1.1), General Principles (1.2.), Measures for education administration and politics (2.) and Implementation in school (3.).
This also has implications for the language use in the policy. The text is not dialogical as it does not include the “process of negotiation” (e.g. as a chapter or in its argumentation) or offers different view-points, but rather presents a final consensus expressed in declarative sentences as to what the problems are and how they can be addressed (Fairclough, 2003, p.91). The use of bullet points can here, on the one hand, be interpreted as being ‘reader-friendly’ but also “‘reader-directive’ and therefore part of the promotional character of the document: it pre-structures reader expectations” (Fairclough, 2001b, p.259). Here I assign the preliminary remarks a certain importance as they can be considered the mission statement of the policy that combines education, society, politics and consumption in its argumentation for consumer education.

The curriculum genre is visible as it determines different educational areas that need to be included as done in curricula to guide the implementation (P 8, P 37-40). Furthermore, especially in P 9-14, P 15-25 and P 32-34 the policy uses expressions and principles (educational jargon and keywords) that are typically integrated into the formulation of education curricula and lesson planning in Germany: integration of student’s life world experiences (P11), captures societal developments (P12), continual competence acquisition and respective degree of abstraction (all grades)(P13), action-oriented (P16), oriented towards the social conditions of the life-world school (schulische Lebenswelt) (P 17). Also curricula can be described as un-dialogical as they include declarative statements listed in bullet-point lists that present education as it should be. Different from the mission statement in the preliminary it is not elaborated anymore why certain things are important but they are just paratactically listed.

4.2 Major narratives and their representation

I could identify four different narratives in the policy that are of major relevance for this research. The first is ‘Change’ in the preliminary remarks, where it can be distinguished between the subcategories economic change, change of media importance and change of consumption patterns that have an influence on social acknowledgement. The second narrative is ‘Education for well-being’ with the subcategories collective and individual well-being. Subsequently, the third narrative of “Education as a contribution to change” is presented and followed by fourth narrative of ‘The role of the consumer’ with the subcategories of an informed and participatory consumer role. In the following subchapters (4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3,
4.2.4) each narrative will be first shortly introduced, the respective findings first summarized (grey box) and then further justified.

4.2.1 Change

The first narrative that could be identified in the Preliminary Remarks (P1-P6) is ‘Change’. Change refers here to the promotion in the policy text that life today is different than before and that we, therefore, need to have more consumer education. This change is indicated through verbs such as (increase (P2), grow (P6)) and adverbs (increasingly (P3), continually (P3)) related to an upward change as well as markers of time (current and future (P1), today, nowadays (5) and tense (has increased, increases). The policy does, however, not only refer to change in general but distinguishes between different thematic sub-narratives of change: economic change, change of media importance and change of consumption patterns with regard to social acknowledgement.

In summary, for the narrative of ‘Change’ it became visible how the policy draws from the neo-liberal discourse as it is increasingly present in the order of discourse in education and politics in the German society. Economic changes and related challenges receive more attention (e.g., sense of urgency, quantity) than other challenges and the negative environmental and social implications are expressed as things that should not be forgotten, however, not presented as the major challenges that consumer education has to address. The textual specialties of the policy genre such as the blurring of fact and prediction, an un-dialogical presentation of challenges as well as the use of categorical assertions that are based on assumptions which are contestable in the context of Germany contribute to the normalization of current transformations in society that can be related to the neo-liberal project. The policy implicitly promotes for more private provision, the acceptance of materialism and that children are target groups of companies and commercials. With regard to the subcategory of ‘change of consumption patterns that have an influence on social acknowledgement’ the critical consumption discourse could be argued to be included. However, the need to engage more critically with consumption is presented rather abstractly as it only refers to the global connectivity and, furthermore, blames peer pressure for materialism instead of referring to the pressure that is build up in a materialistic society as a whole. As such it is only marginally present.
Now I justify more detailed what I have summarized above by looking at the narrative of ‘Change’ or more explicitly at its different sub-categories:

The subcategory ‘economic change’ can be found in the following statements:

- increasing purchasing power of children (target audience of companies) (P2);
- demands for knowledge about economic and private provision increase; increasing insolvencies, indebtedness, over-indebtedness (P3)

In the first bullet point (P2) the text refers to the increasing demands for knowledge about economic action and private provision. By using the present tense in connection with a verb of upward movement (increase = more than before) the text is stating that children today and with an increasing tendency also in the future will need to know more about private provision than it was necessary in the past. Hence, a tendency towards the state's withdrawal from the provision of pensions is indicated. This development to less public provision is a phenomena of the 'modern times' and arguments in its favor can be assigned to the neo-liberal political discourse that is increasingly influencing the discussion around welfare in Germany (Fairclough, 2010, p.12). Graham (2001) argues that this tense component is often used in policies to “portray future and imagined states as if they already existed in the here and now” (as cited in Fairclough, 2003, p.115).

The neo-liberal ideological work in this text is pursued, by portraying this shift to less public provision “as an unquestioned and unavoidable reality” (Fairclough, 2003). Here the argumentation with its blurred distinction between “factual statements and prediction” is typical for policies (ibid, p.43). Similar as in the neo-liberal discourse of economic change and globalization, change is presented “as a fact which demands 'adjustments' and 'reforms’” (ibid, p.128). Hence, in terms of modality there is a strong commitment to truth. There is a need for more economic education (reforms) and the policy promotes adjustment in form of teaching for adaptability and flexibility instead of critical engagement (see discussion further down). As such it can be argued that the policy works ideologically in a way that it implicitly aims at pursuing or stabilizing neo-liberal political strategies of the current societal order of discourse.
It is, furthermore, important to investigate the categorical assertions (un-modalized statements of facts) about transformations. As argued by Graham (2001) "commands of contemporary policy are often implied in, disguised as or buried under piles of ostensibly value free, objective, pseudo-scientific facts" (as cited in Fairclough, 2003, p.115). This is visible in the statement that there is a steadily increasing number (P3) of people living in debt and private insolvency. Data in this regard shows that there is a decrease since 2010 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2013). Nevertheless, the policy uses this statement to prove that there is a necessity for more financial education. By using the words prove and necessity the authors in a way prescribe the need for financial education. However, this call for more financial education needs to be treated with caution as the correlation between a lack of financial knowledge and insolvency is not so obvious. As statistical inquiries in Germany have shown, only 15% of all private insolvencies are directly related to uneconomic household management, but rather to often incalculable changes in life such as unemployment, divorce, death and disease (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2013). And even though, one has to be careful with drawing generalizing conclusions from statistical data, these findings still raise the awareness for the diverse reasons that can lead to financial problems. This simplification of the complexity of society and the overstatement of the importance of economic knowledge can be assigned to the neo-classical economic discourse that is closely related to neo-liberalism.

Here it is also necessary to refer to how the text normalizes certain changes. For instance, with regard to the justification of advertisement for products ‘relevant’ for children or advertisement in general:

children are today a preferred target group of companies and their product marketing, especially as the companies hope for a long-term affinity to the respected brand (P2)

The text portrays this correlation (where money is companies install their product-marketing) as it is increasingly the case for children in Germany and as such addresses an issue that children have to deal with today. What is salient is that the policy does not criticize this correlation, but rather presents it as a normal development by delivering further justification for the company’s actions. This is indicated through the sentence adverbial especially as. The policy does not say that it is a good trend either, however, there is a danger of the normalization of this trend of economic manipulation of the social sphere for economic benefits.
In the postmodern discourse it is argued that “the promotion of a culture of consumerism” is required to “sustain sufficient buoyancy of demand in consumer markets to keep capitalist production profitable” (Harvey, 1989, p.61). In the food advertisement sector, the German government, instead of implementing more strict measures which are argued to limit economic growth, is “trying to persuade the food and advertising industry to voluntarily restrict their activities by ‘responsible’ self-regulation” (Matthews, 2008, p.10). According to foodwatch (2013a), the regulations for German companies that joined this program do not significantly limit these companies and as such these measures are useless. As such a critical engagement outside the economic growth argumentation seems to be marginal in society and also absent here.

The subcategory ‘change in media presence’ is visible here:

*Media plays nowadays an integral part in the life of children (P5)*

Different from economic transformations, the argumentation for media education points out that the lack of reflected communication behavior does not apply for children in general (*correlates not necessarily* (P5)). The same can be said about the field of health & nutrition (P4) where, it is said that children possess knowledge to a *varying degree*. This makes these transformations sound less urgent than the economic ones, which talk about a general increase in, for instance, debt or purchasing power. This “sense of urgency” regarding economic education is, furthermore, strengthened by calling it a *necessity* in order to prevent debt (Taylor, 2004, p.9). With regard to media, less urgent vocabulary is used and the consequences (*→ some students can't take factual and independent decisions (4)) are more abstract and not related to direct societal risks such as debt. The same applies for health and nutrition. Without health & nutrition education, children (*to a varying degree (P4)) cannot *take health-oriented decisions about nutrition and life-style that combine ecological dimensions with ecological challenges*. Again this is very abstract and long wordy. To support this argumentation here, it should be mentioned that there are also transformations regarding media as well as health & nutrition that could have been mentioned to express urgency (manipulation through media, increasing child obesity, environmental destruction). However, these kind of urgent statements accompanied by threat were only used for economic transformations (insolvency, children as target groups of companies).
There are further proofs why economic transformations can be considered to be more dominant than others. First of all, in terms of whole text organization they are the first transformations that are mentioned and this not only in the preliminary remarks (see Goals (P8) and Implementation (P37-40)). Furthermore, economic transformations take up two of five bullet points. Here, the first four sentences do not show any relative markers. However, they are content-wise closely connected and could be summarized (economic action & middle- and long-term finance planning). As two instead of one bullet point were used, it can only be assumed that the authors wanted to distribute the text equally so it is more reader-friendly or that the economic dominance should be disguised. If we relate this policy to the social context and other texts of the chain of events, we find similar priorities. It is always mentioned first that children need to know how to deal with money (e.g. cell-phone contracts) and as such this policy works in the framework of the dominating order in society. Furthermore, it contributes to an understanding of education as a tool for the economy as present in the human capital theory.

The subcategory ‘change of consumption patterns that have an influence on social acknowledgement’ can be identified here:

social acknowledgment by peers based on life-style has an increasing influence on the children’s consumption behavior; [they] must realize the global connection of their consumer behavior and resource and energy use as well as social questions in a global context (P6)

Here there is also a sense of urgency as children must (necessity) realize the global connection of their consumer behavior and resource and energy use as well as social questions. However, seeing this argumentation in the context of Germany it seems less urgent as people already realize these connections. The real challenge in Germany at the moment is to make people act accordingly (Bundesministerium fur Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktorsicherheit, 2012). As such the current failure to comprehensively address the issue of sustainable consumption with political measures, societal engagement and education for action is continued in this text (see chapter 2). Furthermore, the required aspects that need to be considered are formulated rather abstractly as they are not connected to more tangible challenges for people in everyday life, but only pushed to the global level (abstraction of space). Whereas there is a differentiation of ecological challenges there are no elab-
orations as to what social questions are. Furthermore, the text is only referring to consumption for social acknowledgement due to peer pressure. The pressure that children also experience with adults, commercials etc. is ignored. In a critical consumerism discourse, the policy would point to how multifarious social challenges are also with regard to the close environment and would draw attention to the materialistic society as a whole that is contributing to the increasing importance of materials connected to social acknowledgement and lifestyle as discussed in chapter 2.

Furthermore, the word increase indicates that this trend of materialism will get more important in the future (see elaborations in regard to private provision). Here it is not clear whether the importance that children realize the global interconnectivity is stated because the authors want to change it or because children need to learn to act within this system and find a balance between social status/materialism, ecology and social questions. The two sentences are not connected through a conjunction and as such the argumentation thread unclear. When this aspect is related to the society’s order of discourse it can be argued that it is understandable that this development is not explicitly criticized. Germany has a strong focus on growth and consumption is one measure to increase it. According to the Federal Statistical Office the private consumption expenditure is steadily increasing (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2014). Also the Society for Consumer Research (GfK) referred to the “economic boost of Germany” that is fostered by an increasing consumption (GfK, 2013). Here the negative effect of consumption for the German society in terms of the increasing importance of social acknowledgement due to life-style are absent or strongly marginalized. Consumption is mostly related to growth and economic well-being. In the frame of this context it might become clearer why an explicit correlation up to a criticism of this change is left vague. A criticism of the consumer society itself would also require a critical engagement with the concept of growth and consumption and this is only a marginal part in the society’s order of discourse. As such even though there is a touch of critical consumption discourse it is disguised and not clearly enough stated to be heard within the context of the policy.
4.2.2 Education as a contribution to change

The second narrative that could be identified is ‘Education as a contribution to change’. It refers the optimism in the ‘new times’ that education (here consumer education) has the power to “influence the well-being of individuals and nations” (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough, & Halsey, 2006, p.1). This potential of education to contribute to change in the policy is indicated through vocabulary such as strengthen (P9 and P10) and opens possibilities (P14), but also through a sentence structure that moves from a situation (e.g. media is increasingly important (P5), children have different knowledge about healthy nutrition (P4)) and/or a current challenge (e.g., economic action and private provision (P2), increasing debt (P3)) to the conclusion that education/teaching is necessary to improve the student’s competences or social misfortunes (e.g., have to be learned step-wise (P5), to equip them with competences to take along (P3). In this narrative, the crucial point for analysis is about what voices are left out of the debate.

In summary, the narrative of ‘Education as a contribution to change’ is informed by the discourse of neo-liberalism that has the tendency to put the individual in the center of attention while at the same time ignoring the societal structures people are embedded in. The policy excludes a critical pedagogy discourse that would promote education not only as a tool to adapt to the results of the current socio-economic order but to foster improvement by getting to the roots of the problem. This would also draw attention towards the critical consumption discourse which is also not voiced. Here, I referred explicitly to the critique of materialism that is located within a critical consumption discourse. It is not included and as a result the relation between materialism and financial mismanagement is missing. Another aspect is here that the policy downplays the limitations students might experience in applying their education for improving their own or national well-being. With the reduction of difference in terms of ignoring the oppressing structures of consumption the policy works in favor of those that embrace an uncritical consumer education as a means of strengthening their power. Although the policy includes a social-democrat discourse that aims to reduce inequality through education (e.g., diminish knowledge difference) this intention is based on categorical assumptions that are at the same time ignoring inequality (not everyone has the socio-economic means to implement their wishes). Ideological work is indirectly done, by fostering the perception that the individual is to blame for personal mischief and not the society or the political system that at the moment is presented as well-functioning in the societal order of discourse.
The findings as presented in the policy are now further justified:

The perception that education plays a role in improving society cannot be assigned to one specific discourse but is present in many different discourses based on different believe systems. However, it is the absence of the voices that refer to the societal structures the individual is embedded and at the same time the promotion of individual responsibility in financial matters that points to the neo-liberal discourse (Rose, 1996, p. 57-59). This is present in the policy especially in regard to financial education, which is argued to be the necessary for private provision and debt prevention (P2-3). That there is no doubt becomes visible as the declarative statements these words are embedded in do not leave room for a discussion (curriculum genre). The analysis has shown before, that financial education in this regard is overstated as many other things can be the causes for debt apart from a lack of financial knowledge (see 4.2.1). As such this policy puts much emphasis on financial education instead of also drawing from the critical pedagogy discourse that would promote to engage more critically with the current economic system and the idea of collective-responsibility. As argued in critical research neo-liberalism creates a framework where solidarity, security and welfare are increasingly “turned into questions about the subject’s individual ‘free choice’ and self-realisation” (Buckingham & Tingstad, 2007, p.53). Hence, also individuals should get the freedom to do financial planning including private provision for themselves and at the same time get blamed for the choices they made, or how critical research would argue, the choices they made informed by the societal structures they are embedded in.

This also draws attention to the absence of the voices included in the critical consumption discourse that would draw attention to the correlation between financial skills, debt and consumption behavior. As argued by different scholars, there is a correlation between a materialistic society and financial problems (Garðarsdóttir & Dittmar, 2012, p.749-480; Watson, 2003, p.735 -736). Without wanting to conclude that materialism in any case is the only root of financial problems, research has shown that it can nevertheless be closely related to financial mismanagement. People who have a high level of materialism also tend to spend/borrow more money and experience debt (ibid). Hence, one has to be careful with overestimating the individual’s rational free will in financial planning and assigning to much responsibility to the single person and his/her financial skills. Materialism is a development
that is deeply rooted in society and as a stable cultural routine (Antoni-Komar, 2011, p.238-239) it is not easy to withdraw from it.

The ideological work in regard to promoting current challenges as personal failures that are not caused by the political system reflects also the current situation in Germany. According to the Joint Welfare Association the current government is spreading the view that poverty is stopped and that the gap between rich in poor is closing. However, the association denounces these claims and argues that actually the opposite is happening at the moment. The wealthy are profiting from the growing economy in Germany, poverty is increasing and wages for the majority are kept low (Schneider, Stilling, Woltering, & Krause, 2013, p.1-12).

This ignorance towards limiting social structures becomes also visible when investigating for whom this policy is designed or how it addresses unequal framework conditions of students. On the one hand, one can find a social democrat discourse that strives to foster equality through education and such explicitly refers to inequality in society. Here it is, for instance, addressed that knowledge of students varies by different degrees (P4) and is not necessarily (P5) present. Furthermore, in order to foster improvement the policy wants to equal out knowledge discrepancies about healthy nutrition (fundamental-, structural- and orientation knowledge (P4)) and the discrepancy between media action and reflected communication behavior (P5). On the other hand, the policy only voices challenges that people face who have the financial means to act differently. Hence, it ignores, for instance, those that do not have the money nor the environment to choose healthy food or make sound choices in ecological and social terms. Furthermore, the policy text uses the increasing purchasing power of children (P2) as an argument for consumer education. This categorical assertion as typical for the policy genre legitimizes financial consumer education and ignores that it is not increasing for all children. As the United Nations Fund just recently published in a study, child poverty in Germany is despite of the growing economy steadily increasing (Adamson, 2013). However, the policy does not voice those challenges that poorer students have to face within a consumption society. They have very “different possibilities for access” for the construction of self-identity “according to class, gender, race and age or generation” (Lury in Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p.126). The ignorance towards difference and also the limited possibilities for some can also be referred to as the ‘tyranny of the universal’, which Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), based on Lytard, defined as the “sweeping away
of difference in the name of a spurious ‘universal’ which in fact is the tyranny of the powerful” (p.133). By ignoring these challenges as if they were non-existent the policy contributes to the sustentation of the current system in which those children are deprived. The critical pedagogy discourse is not included here as it would draw attention to these oppressive potentials of consumption.

4.2.3 Education for well-being

The third narrative that can be identified in the policy is ‘Education for well-being’. Here the policy text refers to that consumer education is aiming to contribute to well-being. Within this narrative it can be distinguished between improvement for the sake of individual well-being and collective well-being. Individual well-being is indicated as students need to be prepared for contemporary and future challenges in private and working life (P1), private provision (P1) and indebtedness, over-indebtedness and private insolvency. Collective well-being is addressed through integrating the concept of sustainable development (e.g., consumer education follows consistently and above all Education for Sustainable Development (P1); combines economic with ecological challenges (P4); impact on resource and energy usage and social question in a global context (P6))

In summary, in the narrative of ‘Education for well-being’ the critical consumption discourse is present as it relates consumption to social and environmental injustices. However, at the same time it is downgraded as sustainability is not comprehensively promoted in terms of a strong interpretation of sustainability. Here, especially social justice is marginalized. This can be further supported as the text only once refers to social justice and there in a global context. Also the Goals and General Principles (1.) never directly refer to a necessity to approach the topic of improvement more holistically (e.g., collective well-being). This overstatement of individual well-being (e.g., healthy diet, stable private provision, media usage) in combination with a tendency towards the marginalization of ecological and social justice serves the neo-liberal discourse where individual success and economic growth have priority over social and ecological justice. Here, there is a tendency to do neo-liberal ideological work by promoting the development of a materialistic society as a change without agent and as such silencing the critical discussion that would be necessary to improve the current social order.
The policy states that it promotes sustainability, it is, however, not clearly stated how the policy conceptualizes sustainable development – whether it pays equal attention to the social, the economic and environmental dimension. Note here that in P45 and 46 the policy refers to a different education policy that deals with this issue in particular. It is not possible to further investigate this other policy in the frame of this research, however, it is important to keep in mind that one might find further elaborations there. Nevertheless, as discussed in chapter 2.2 sustainability and consumption should be central in consumer education and as such also visible in this policy. In order to understand to what extent the policy commits to collective well-being when talking about sustainability, it is important to investigate how the idea of sustainable development is conceptualized within the entire policy text. It is necessary to “go beyond ‘surface’ appearances to ‘underlying’ realities” and understand the commitment to sustainable development and collective well-being (Fairclough, 2003, p.88). Here it is worthwhile to investigate the social process of classification between sustainability and the other elements of consumer education. This means that it needs to be investigated how sustainability in the policy is related to the other areas of consumer education and whether “differences between them are collapse by ‘texturing’ relations of equivalence [or dominance] between them” (ibid). Even though mentioned last, sustainability is included into the areas of consumer education and as such listed as an additive and equivalent element. It is also introduced as an important (above all, consistently (P1)) aspect in the preliminary remarks that should be included into all of the other areas. Hence, it could even be argued that it is even more important than the others. However, there are indications that the claimed priority of sustainability shifts towards becoming a side issue:

- With reference to nutrition & health education the text argues that children need to learn how to follow a health oriented diet and lifestyle that combines economic with ecological challenges (P4). There is an implicit correlation here that environmentally friendly decisions have to be weighed up with economic possibilities and ignored that not everyone can make these decisions because of, for instance, a lack of money or social restrictions. Here the discourse of social justice that would call for equal opportunities in regard to affordable ecologically friendly goods and collective well-being is marginalized and as such also environmentally friendly consumption patterns are only in so far promoted in that they can be financed by those who have the choice.
• In the last bullet point the policy argues that students need to realize that, for instance, mobility and free-time activities have an impact on resource and energy usage and social question in a global context (P6). Here environmental justice and social justice are included and as such it could be argued that the critical consumption discourse is present. However, there are a few things that leave doubt to a true commitment to sustainability. First, the text does not directly refer to problems in regard to environmental destruction or social exploitation but just refers to social and environmental questions (P6). It is left vague what these questions are and they could be related to many things. Second, these questions are referring to the global context and as such the policy leaves them vague and distracts from the social problems that are present in Germany due to an increasingly materialistic society. Fourth, from a linguistic perspective there are no markers of judgment in the factual statement that consumption has an increasing impact on social acknowledgement and as such it could be interpreted as a neutral observation and not one that is criticizing. Fifth, the policy argues that children need to learn how to realize connections of consumption to other areas of life, but does not argue that children need to critically engage with the concept of materialism itself. Here again it is necessary to raise the awareness for a possible ideological work (ideology of consumerism) in a sense that this development is simply accepted. As such it can be argued that the policy, if it at all was intending to be more critical with the inclusion of this discussion, failed to express this more clearly. This is especially important as materialism critique is not something that is practiced a lot by the government or the society in general.

• The discussion around economic well-being (private provision (P2), financial planning to prevent private debt (P3)) leaves aspects of sustainability out entirely. The policy stresses individual economic well-being without referring to social injustices or environmental destruction (e.g. investment of banks) that are related to economic action. This is especially alarming as economic transformation in terms of individual challenges are expressed with a bigger urgency than the others. The overstatement of individual economic well-being and the exclusion of ethics of economics in sustainable development is typical for the neo-classical/neo-liberal economic discourse.
4.2.4 The role of the consumer

The 4th narrative that could be detected is the ‘The role of the consumer’, which refers to how the policy by promoting a certain consumer education also promotes a certain consumer role. Here it can be distinguished between a consumer that should learn how to make informed decisions and a consumer that contributes to shaping the concept of consumption in society through participation.

In the representation of this theme the policy draws from the neo-liberal discourse and social-democrat discourse. Here the consumer’s role and the education he/she needs is predominantly presented from the perspective of an informed consumer which can be located within the neo-liberal/neo-classical economic discourse. The role of consumers as participants can be assigned to the social-democrat discourse. It is, however, marginal as it, different from the informed decision making, is not integrated as one challenge of consumer education in the preliminary remarks and also kept vague in other parts of the policy. The critical pedagogy discourse is absent as it would also integrate a promotion of empowerment, where consumers are equipped with critical literacy skills to be able to better understand the oppressing structures of consumerism and to eventually contribute to change (see chapter 2.2). As informed decision-making is overstated throughout the policy, there is a tendency to foster the perception of consumption as an unpolitical practice, which is nurturing the neo-liberal ideology that needs an increasing consumption as the driving force of the economy.

The most obvious statement about the role of the consumer is the following:

*Consumer education aims at the development of responsible consumer behavior, through informing about consumption related contents and the acquisition of competences in the sense of a reflected and self-determined consumption behavior. Doing so, it is particularly/above all concerned to build upon establishing an attitude, to use and adduce the acquired competences in connection with consumption decisions as mature consumers (P7).*

As indicated through the adverbial expression particularly/above all that is referring to consumption decisions consumer education is primarily presented as providing the means for consumption related decision making. Here knowledge in terms of information but also competences in terms of being able to reflect information and in terms of being self-determined
are considered necessary to establish an attitude and to make decision based on this attitude. Note here that it is left vague what *responsible consumer behavior* is. However, as I have argued above, there is a tendency towards a more narrow interpretation of responsibility. The Goal chapter continues with *competences* for a (P9). It wants to *strengthen the knowledge and skills* for *daily life competences* (P10).

This focus on decision-making, information and related competences is also present in the preliminary remarks. Here students need *knowledge about economic action and private provision* (P1-P2), but also specific economic competences (*financial planning* (P2)). They need to improve their *basis-, structure- and orientation- knowledge [...] to make informed decisions in everyday life* (P4). *A critical reflection of own media action and media contents is important to make independent and fact true decisions* (P5). Finally, children have to *realize* (P6) (know about), the connectivity of the world. Note here that decision-making in the Goals and Preliminary remarks is related to challenges within the societal/political system, but not referred to as a means to challenge the system itself.

The promotion of an active political participation of consumers is marginalized although not absent. It can be assigned to the social-democratic discourse where citizens are encouraged to actively participate in society. In the Goals chapter it is not included into the introduction (P7) but in the following elaborations it is stated that consumer education should open *concrete handling options that are possible within the school environment* (P14). This statement is, however, declarative and does not give further elaborations on what *handling options* are. In the curriculum genre in Germany this is a common phrase and as such it is more a general statement that does not have a specific meaning for consumer education. Further down in the General Principles it is said that consumer education should be *participatory* (P3), however what this means is left vague again. Here again the curriculum genre comes into play as it often includes phrases that are not closer defined but considered to be common knowledge. As a participatory consumer role is not part of the common knowledge in Germany (Janning, 2004, p.161) and it is not further elaborated in the Preliminary remarks or in the other chapters this statement does not have much weight in terms of promoting more participation.

A rather concrete suggestion for participation is related to the field of economics where it is argued that consumer education should teach what kind of *opportunities* students have *to influence* (P20) the market. Relating these aspects to the Preliminary Remarks
and the described changes and improvements they, however, seem to be less relevant because the missing political interpretation of consumption and such also the need for more consumer related participation is not concerned to be a major challenge that needs to be addressed with consumer education. Furthermore, it is unclear for what reasons the market should be influenced.

Another concept that is mentioned in the policy is Gestaltungskompetenz (P9), which can be assigned to the social-democrat discourse and sustainability discourse. It is about teaching students, for instance, to be able to participate, to promote change and justice (see also chapter 2.2). The concept itself plays an important role in the promotion of strong sustainability, however, in the frame of this policy it loses its strength as it is located within a discourse of consumer education that emphasizes individual well-being over collective well-being and informed consumers over participatory consumers. As the concept and its significance for consumer education is not further elaborated, it is not possible to draw conclusions about its representation.

This focus on information and decision-making as well as the marginalization of a political consumption discourse in a more participatory manner can be assigned to the neo-classical consumer discourse that is based on the ideas of consumer sovereignty and competition theory (Belz & Bilharz, 2007, p.41). This policy reflects the society’s order of discourse, because, as argued by Lamla, a participatory consumer democracy is not yet part of the common sense- neither in the society nor in the scientific world (Lamla, 2011, p.93). As such there is the danger that the policy by focusing on information instead of participation further strengthens the idea of consumption as an essential but at the same time nonpolitical practice. This work towards the increasing spread of consumerism and as such also supports the neo-liberal project.
5 Discussion

5.1 The ‘void of imagination’ as a contribution to the acceptance of neo-liberal transformations

In this part I refer back to the findings in chapter 4 and discuss how Discourse across these narratives fosters the acceptance of some neo-liberal ideas through hiding other possible approaches to social organization. Discourse (capital ‘D’) in all narratives fosters neo-liberal transformations. This is not done through giving arguments as to why related social transformations are necessary and good, but by creating a void of imagination that fosters a blind acceptance of these transformations.

The findings for each narrative showed how “boundaries and flows of orders of discourse are shifting in late modern societies”, here in a German context (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p.116). The shift refers here to the colonization of education policy by economic argumentation, which Fairclough (2010) refers to as the “technologization of discourse” (p.137). He argues that this technologization “is a process of intervention in the sphere of discourse practices with the objective of constructing new ways of hegemony” (ibid). The findings of this research show that education cannot be separated from political and economic argumentation, which use education as a means to steer societal organization towards certain political goals. As I have presented above, the policy does this ideological work as it educates through a neo-liberal worldview in which it is, for instance, important to provide for pensions privately, where economic education plays an essential part in consumer education and where individual well-being and responsibility is stressed. The same can be said about consumerism as the policy does not promote an education that questions the current importance of materialism, but rather educates for acceptance of it. Note here, that the ideological work is not done by arguing that these new forms of societal organization are good, but rather by educating towards these changes through normalizing them.

The ‘undialogized language’ in the policy is based on consensus, ignores difference and as such also contributes to the “normalization and acceptance of differences of power” instead of fostering a critical engagement with society (Fairclough, 2003, p.42). The policy does not refer to different opinions about consumer education but instead, as outlined above, provides many categorical assertions (statements of fact and predictions) that are used to argue for only one way of consumer education. Consequently, the language in the policy
“is promotional rather than analytical, concerned more to persuade people [...] than to open up dialogue” (ibid, p. 99). Changes and challenges are presented as inevitable, without agents and as such produce the impression that they were not provoked through human action but happened without any interference, hence, can also not be changed. As argued by Yeatman (1990), “this is a common feature of policy documents where sources of power and authority are often difficult to detect” (as cited in Taylor, 2004, p. 441). The policy does not encourage a more critical engagement with changes in society and as such assigns consumer education the role to enable students to act within a framework of ‘power and authority’, but not to enable them to also reimagine it, to see its flaws and potential for exploitation and discrimination.

The lack of opposition contributes to a lack of imagination with regard to the organization of society. Smart (2003) refers to this phenomena as ‘the paralysis of criticism in a society lacking opposition’ (p.46). Rizvi and Lingard (2010) argue that opposition these days is not absent, however, the arguments are often valued less (p.79). Ampuja (2012) claims “that such a massive denial of social alternatives creates a void of imagination” (p.16). This ‘void of imagination’ and with it the hegemonic stabilization of the current system can be seen in many of the policy’s statements about current challenges and how they have to be addressed. Especially, in the context of the German context, this is crucial as the trend towards a neoliberal mind-set becomes increasingly visible as, for instance, in the speech of Federal President Gauck, who recently promoted the neo-liberal project in a public speech (Spiegel, 2014) or the increasing hints for how the Social State is secretly dismantled (Butterwegge, 2014, p.387). The policy of consumer education, with the tendency towards a prioritization of economic well-being fits into this picture. Hence, it is important to closely observe the developments in the political and educational sphere and to make sure that the policy in practice is fostering an increasing neo-liberal system, which, as argued by Fairclough (2010), has so far failed to address if not contributed to many of today’s social and environmental problems (p.11-12). This comes especially relevant as current initiatives for consumer education have been heavily criticized for including big companies that are actually considered to be the reason why increasing consumer education is necessary (foodwatch, 2013b)

Nevertheless, it also needs to be discussed that the policy in terms of political views and the presentation of consumption is not entirely dedicated to the neo-liberal project and the promotion of consumerism. It has a tendency to do so, however, certain aspects of a
more neo-liberal interpretation of and approach to consumer education are not voiced even though they are promoted in the international arena. With regard to consumer education this becomes visible as, for instance, a standardization and measurement of consumer skills is not promoted. The OECD as one of the driving forces of neo-liberal education policy argues in favor of such a focus where “developing benchmarks for the measurement of consumer knowledge levels” and the concept of life-long learning are essential parts in consumer education (Ueno et al., 2009, p.181). Another aspect in political terms that is that the policy, does not argue that, for instance, the reduction of private pension is necessary for a more efficient economy or the idea of competitive consumers/citizens. Often the reduction of welfare for the sake of competitive efficiency is correlated in the neo-liberal discourse (Taylor, 2004, p.8). Hence, it can be concluded that in the representation of the different narratives there is a tendency towards the overstatement of economics and understatement of critical consumption values. However, by including other discourses and not dedicating itself to the neo-liberal project entirely it opens up spaces for a critical engagement with consumer education in Germany. The same observation can be made when we look more specifically at how the policy is located within current research on consumption and consumer education as in discussed in chapter 2.1 and 2.2.

5.2 An uncritical consumer education despite the acknowledgement of some critical voices

After having referred to the lack of reference with regard to the societal organization in the policy, I now move away from the ideological work though Discourse and relate the findings for all narratives to the theoretical consumption and consumer education discourse. On the subject of the discourse of consumer education the policy can be regarded as the result of an increasing demand of the conceptualization of consumer education as a distinct theory. In its goal to integrate consumer education across the country within different subject and across all grades the policy conforms to what studies/researchers across different research paradigms have suggested (Sandlin & McLaren, 2010a; Schlegel-Matthies, 2004; Ueno et al., 2009). However, the promotion of acceptance instead of a critical engagement with consumer education as discussed in chapter 5.1 and the findings in chapter 4 clearly indicate the direction of this policy where ideas such as emancipation and empowerment as suggested by critical pedagogues are marginal if not excluded. As such it can be concluded that this policy is uncritical in that sense that it works more towards educating consumer
students that are able to function within the current system instead of understanding the far-reaching implications of consumption and their role as consumer citizens in the promotion of collective well-being.

On the subject of the discourse of consumption the policy can be located within a more traditional approach to consumer policy and the role of consumers, while much of the current critical consumption research argues in favor of a more political understanding of consumption and the role of the consumer (Hedtke, 2011, p.122). In the policy this shift is not presented as one of the major challenges that consumer education has to face. The participatory element is marginal and if mentioned, is not related to the political significance of consumption, but rather as an empty statement without further elaboration. The ignorance towards consumption as a political cultural practice also becomes visible as the complex structures of society in which consumers are embedded within, and which lead to political problems even in their close environment (e.g. status struggle, discrimination, purchase addiction) are not problematized as suggested in critical consumption research (Janning, 2004, p.164). The same can be said with regard to consumerism and materialism. The policy does not take a critical stance towards their current significance in society that Koslowski & Priddat (2006) have even referred to as the ‘ideology of this era’ (p.7). Hence, the dominance of consumerism and materialism as well as political participation is a side issue in the policy and as such does not reflect a critical approach to the concept of consumption as in critical consumption research.

Furthermore, the interpretation of sustainability as presented in the policy is weak and for the field of economics even ignores aspects of social and environmental justice. As such the policy, even though it argues to be dedicated to Education for Sustainable Development, does not integrate it thoroughly into the argumentation for consumer education. Hence, from the critical consumption perspective the policy does not holistically contribute to change the unsustainable consumption patterns in Germany. This is also a major criticism by Andersson & Eriksson (2010) who argue that the sustainability discourse is often governed by economic preferences and not approached holistically in such a way that it encourages to really reconsider the current luxurious consumption behavior in industrial nations (pp.17). A more critical approach to consumer education should show the deep interconnectedness of consumption, issues of sustainability and consumer democracy. As such as the
policy only scratches on the surface of these issues and marginalizes them it is a predominantly uncritical policy for consumer education.

5.3 Possible ways past an uncritical consumer education

In this part I move away from the normative, explanatory and strategic critique concerning the policy for consumer education and move towards re-imagining how the policy despite its uncritical tenor can be used to promote change for collective well-being and the implementation of critical consumer education. As argued by Fairclough (2010), “a critically oriented discourse analysis can systematize awareness of critique of ideology” and “[f]rom awareness and critique arise possibilities of empowerment and change” (p.68). This research can be understood as a means for “talking back to public discourse, for disrupting its speech acts, breaking its narrative chains and questioning it constructions of power and agency” (Luke, 1997, as cited in Taylor, 2004, p. 16). As the policy was just recently published, this research can contribute to an awareness of the critical limitations and shortcomings of the policy and contribute to a more reflected discussion about and implementation of this policy in school curricula and lessons. Hence, create a more dialogical discourse of consumer education. Then the current promotion of consumer competences and maintenance of neo-liberal goals can be challenged, and changed by agents of consumer education.

Here I also want to refer to some opportunities for reinterpretation and imagination that are not communicated within the policy, however, still possible. During the research process it became clear that especially the preliminary remarks can be considered as a mission statement that delivers reasons for consumer education and elaborates on the importance of it for society. Chapter 1. in the policy, on the other hand, draws more from the curriculum genre and as such expresses those aspects that need to be included more vaguely with just a few words. There it is not argued why and for what each component (e.g., participation) is necessary. Hence, these more “empty” expressions can be filled with more critical ideas. Furthermore, even though concepts such as strong sustainability, social and ecological justice and collective well-being are marginalized, they can be moved into the center of the own interpretation and as such reshape consumer education in the process of implementation in, for instance, curriculum design and teaching. However, as McGregor (2005) has pointed out, a critical implementation of consumer education also needs educators and educational leaders that have a critical mindset (McGregor, 2005, p.442).
Another aspect that I want to draw attention to is that this re-imagining of consumer education should not be considered as an ideological promotion of anti-consumerism. Instead, I want to clarify that a critical consumer education for me does not mean to embrace the critical consumption discourse unquestioned and promote anti-consumerism so it in the end might also create a system of domination and exploitation. As Fairclough argues ideology critique itself is not “automatically immune from” becoming an ideology (p.68). A critical discourse analysis has to be aware that the “critique of certain practices” might help to “naturalise other equally but differently ideological practices” (p.68). For this research that means that the focus is on opening up the current discussion around consumer education by bringing in different voices and at the same time contributing to the dissolution of the current hegemonic promotion of consumer education. I want to encourage people working in education to closely observe the ever-increasing guidelines for consumer education and respective teaching materials and raise their awareness of hidden ideological work.
6 Conclusion

This research was set out to critically analyze a policy for consumer education in the ‘new times’ by using CDA. Times, where critical researchers argue that the neo-liberal project as well as consumerism is contributing to many of today’s social and environmental problems (Sandlin & McLaren, 2010a, p.xvii -xxiii). In the light of these transformations the social spheres and as such also education policies are argued to be ‘colonized’ by economic thinking and argumentation Moutsios, 2009, p.10). Also consumer education, as discussed by critical pedagogues, is failing to promote a more emancipatory approach to consumer education and is contributing to the stabilization of the increasing economization (McGregor, 2005, p.437 -438). This research showed that the policy for consumer education as one discursive moment in the midst of these transformations has a tendency to work towards these transformations instead of challenging them. This conclusion can be drawn by looking at the answers to the underlying research questions.

The first research question asks for the included discourses and their ordering. In this policy the neo-liberal discourse, social-democrat discourse, and the critical consumption discourse could be identified. The critical pedagogy discourse is excluded. Even though the policy represents consumer education, consumption and the society from different political point of views, the discourse of neo-liberalism is dominating. This could be determined as all four narratives were influenced if not dominated by economic or neo-liberal argumentation. This also had implications for the ideological work. By downplaying other views and not engaging critically with consumer education, the policy as it is at the moment contributes to stabilizing the discriminating forces that derive from consumerism and neo-liberalism. The major ideological work does not take place because the policy argues that current societal changes (e.g., the need for more private pension) are necessary and beneficial for all. It rather takes place because the policy strives to educate towards these changes and accepts them as being unavoidable. Hence, there exist the danger that it ‘produces’ citizens that only learn to function and react to these changes and not to eventually challenge them.

By applying CDA it was possible to deconstruct the policy and to make social transformations and their possible impact on the present and future societal organization visible. This insight, if approached by critical educators and educational researchers, can be used to reimagine consumer education. The increasing advancement of neo-liberal ideas in Germany makes this critical engagement with consumer education essential as it, the way it
is promoted at the moment, does sustain a system of authority and power where the already privileged are the winners and the environment is increasingly exploited. We can increasingly observe how “collectivity is replaced through politics of consumption that celebrates singularities of individuals by valorizing the desire to obtain and consume objects of pleasure” (Sandlin & McLaren, 2010b, p.14). I do agree with critical consumption research that the significance of consumption in society and its impact, especially on social inequality, is too marginally addressed. As such I argue in line with with Denzin and Sherry, that “critical pedagogy and critical interpretive consumer research has ‘a vital role to play in the ‘new millenium’” (Sherry, 2000, in Denzin, 2010, p.xv). Only if consumption is recognized as one of the driving forces that lead to social wrongs in the ‘new times’, then change can be thoroughly promoted.

6.1 Limitations and future research

One limitation of this research concerns language and context as the policy for consumer education is in German and related to the German context. I used English as well as German sources and had to be careful with regard to comparing terminologies and how they are conceptualized in different languages. Furthermore, I had to translate some of the sources from German into English, which bears the risk of slightly changing the original meaning. Also for the presentation of the findings I had to use own translations in order to document my analysis clearly in this English research report. Being aware of this issue, I tried to be rather careful, however, consider it to be necessary to draw attention to it here.

Another limitation that leads to suggestions for further research is the fact that the consumer policy is just one moment of the current debate of consumer education in Germany and on a global scale. Furthermore, it is a rather short document with seven pages and not much coherent text. In order to make societal transformations and trends with regard to consumer education more visible and provide further substantial arguments, it would be beneficial to widen the scope of this research and to also include other data that was published during the last ten years of increasing promotion for consumer education. Furthermore, it would have also been interesting to closer investigate the other policies that the underlying policy is referring to, which do not deal with consumer education specifically, but with related concepts such as sustainability and global citizenship education. As outlined above,
consumer education is a transdisciplinary field and separating it from the others bears the danger of weakening the ideal of integrity that is so far only marginally communicated.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to closer analyze the actual consumption or implementation of the policy. This was not possible in this research as the policy was just currently published. It would be beneficial to observe how the discourses and their ordering as well as ideological work is operationalized in, for instance, curriculum development and teaching in schools. However, also a closer investigation of the production process should be considered for future research. Even through this research includes a thorough linguistic, discursive and social analysis it is lacking the inclusion of those who actually produced the text and that could give valuable insights into this research. As Fairclough (2004) suggests, we “have to move into an ethnographic way of working that is trying to get some close touch with insider perspectives and experiences in particular localities or companies or government offices” (as cited in Rogers, 2004).
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Appendix
Verbraucherbildung an Schulen

(Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 12.09.2013)
0. Vorbemerkungen


- Die Kaufkraft von Kindern und Jugendlichen ist in den letzten Jahren zunehmend gestiegen. Sie sind heute eine bevorzugte Zielgruppe für Unternehmen und ihre Produktvermarktung, zumal die Unternehmen auf eine langfristige Verbundenheit der jungen Kundinnen und Kunden zur jeweiligen Marke hoffen. Gleichzeitig steigen die Anforderungen an Kinder und Jugendliche, was Kenntnisse des wirtschaftlichen Handelns und der privaten Vorsorge anbelangt.

- Ein stets steigender hoher Anteil an überschuldeten sowie hoch verschuldeten Haushalten und die große Zahl an Privatinsolvenzen belegen die Notwendigkeit, Kindern und Jugendlichen im Zusammenhang mit Konsumententscheidungen Kompetenzen für eine mittel- und langfristige Finanzplanung mit auf den Weg zu geben, damit sie sich auch bei rasch wechselnden Rahmenbedingungen zurecht finden können.

- Kinder und Jugendliche verfügen über unterschiedlich ausgeprägtes Basis-, Struktur- und Orientierungswissen zu Ernährung und Gesundheit, um im Alltag bewusste Entscheidungen für eine gesundheitsorientierte Ernährung und Lebensweise fallen zu können, die ökonomische Dimensionen mit ökologischen Herausforderungen verknüpft.


1. Ziele und allgemeine Grundsätze

1.1 Ziele

Die Verbraucherbildung spielt insbesondere in folgenden Bereichen eine Rolle:

- Finanzen, Marktgesehene und Verbraucherrecht
- Ernährung und Gesundheit
- Medien und Information
- Nachhaltiger Konsum und Globalisierung

Die Verbraucherbildung an Schulen

- stärkt die Gestaltungskompetenz der Kinder und Jugendlichen und eröffnet ihnen die Möglichkeit, Kompetenzen für eine bewusste und differenzierte Urteilsbildung bei Konsumentenscheidungen zu entwickeln.
- stärkt die Kenntnisse und Fertigkeiten im Bereich der Alltagskompetenzen – auch in Bezug auf die Haushaltsführung.
- bezieht die lebensweltlichen Erfahrungen der Kinder und Jugendlichen sowie ihrer Familien mit ein.
- greift aktuelle gesellschaftliche Rahmenbedingungen und Entwicklungen sowie Themen auf.
- wird als Fragestellung für alle Jahrgangsstufen und Ausbildungsrichtungen im Sinne eines kontinuierlichen Kompetenzerwerbs in altersangemessenem Abstraktionsgrad verstanden.
- eröffnet konkrete Handlungsoptionen im Rahmen der in und im Umfeld der Schule gegebenen Möglichkeiten.

1.2 Allgemeine Grundsätze

Die Verbraucherbildung weist zahlreiche Anknüpfungspunkte zu bereits etablierten Schulfächern und Lerninhalten auf und ermöglicht in besonderer Weise handlungsorientiertes, interdisziplinäres und vernetzendes Lernen. Dieses Lernen soll durch die Einbindung außerunterrichtlicher Aktivitäten bzw. außerschulischer Lernorte ergänzt werden.

Generell ist darauf zu achten, dass die Verbraucherbildung an Schulen

- handlungsorientiert ist und damit den Kompetenzerwerb unterstützt.
- verhältnisorientiert ist und die räumlichen sowie sozialen Bedingungen der Lebenswelt „Schule“ berücksichtigt.
- partizipativ angelegt ist und die konkreten Berührungspunkte der Verbraucherbildung im Leben der Kinder und Jugendlichen aufgreift.
- über Verbraucherrechte und -pflichten informiert.
- die Verflechtungen und Mechanismen des Marktes unter Berücksichtigung verschiedener Perspektiven und die Einflussmöglichkeiten von Konsumentinnen und Konsumenten darlegt.
- die Fähigkeit der Kinder und Jugendlichen schult, Informationen und Materialangebote zu beschaffen, kritisch zu bewerten und angemessen zu nutzen.
- frei von wirtschaftlichen Interessen ist und unternehmensunabhängig den Erwerb der Kompetenzen ermöglicht, die für das Treffen von kritisch reflektierten und selbstbestimmten Marktentcheidungen der Verbraucherinnen und Verbraucher erforderlich sind.
Kinder und Jugendliche frühzeitig in ihren Alltagskompetenzen stärkt und sie dabei unter-
stützt, als Verbraucherin und Verbraucher reflektierte und verantwortungsbewusste Entschei-
dungen zu treffen.

Wechselbeziehungen zwischen den oben genannten unterschiedlichen Bereichen der Ver-
braucherbildung sichtbar macht.

Die Verbraucherbildung berücksichtigt in diesem Rahmen, dass Kinder und Jugendliche ihr Wis-
sen über Grundlagen und Folgen ihres Verhaltens als Verbraucherinnen und Verbraucher nicht
nur in der Schule, sondern an vielen anderen Orten erwerben, im Elternhaus, in ihrem sozialen
und kulturellen Umfeld.

2. Maßnahmen in der Bildungsverwaltung/-politik

Die Vorgaben der Länder (beispielsweise die Lehr- und Bildungspläne, Curricula, Konzepte für
die Aus- und Fortbildung von Lehrkräften sowie anderen in der Schule tätigen pädagogischen
Fachkräften) berücksichtigen die Ziele und Grundsätze dieser Empfehlung zur Verbraucherbil-
dung an Schulen. Die Vereinbarungen der Kultusministerkonferenz zur Lehrerbildung berück-
sichtigen Aspekte der Verbraucherbildung.

Die Bildungsverwaltung bzw. die Bildungspolitik der Länder

unterstützt die übergreifende Vernetzung und Kooperation aller Expertinnen und Experten
der Verbraucherbildung und des Verbraucherschutzes zum Wohle einer umfassenden und
multiperspektivischen Bildung der Kinder und Jugendlichen.

stärkt langfristig eine fachlich und didaktisch qualifizierte Fortbildung von Lehrkräften in den
Themenfeldern der Verbraucherbildung.

eröffnet Schulen Gestaltungsspielräume, um Aspekte der Verbraucherbildung z. B. in Form
von Projekten, Wettbewerben oder regelmäßigen Aktionen auf vielfältige Art und Weise fä-
cherübergreifend oder im Rahmen des Schulprogramms in den schulischen Lernprozess zu
integrieren.

bezieht Ergebnisse aus aktuellen Studien zur wirtschaftlichen, sozioökonomischen, ökologi-
schen und gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung mit Bezügen zur Verbraucherbildung in ihre schu-
lische Qualitätsentwicklung und Qualitätssicherung mit ein.

unterstützt die Einbeziehung außerschulischer Partner.

3. Umsetzung in der Schule

Handlungsfelder in der Schule sind in folgenden Bereichen zu sehen:

Die Verbraucherbildung ist in den Unterricht eines oder mehrerer Unterrichtsfächer inte-
griert. Die Behandlung verbraucherrelevanter Themen erfolgt unter Berücksichtigung des
Bildungsgangs während der gesamten Schulzeit der Kinder und Jugendlichen.

Die Verbraucherbildung kann außerunterrichtliche Aktivitäten einschließen, etwa in Form
von Projekten, Wettbewerben, Ausstellungen oder den Besuch außerschulischer Lernorte
bzw. im Rahmen von Ganztagsangeboten.

Die Verbraucherbildung kann in Zusammenarbeit mit außerschulischen Partnern (z. B. öf-
fentlichen Einrichtungen, Verbänden oder Unternehmen) erfolgen.
Voraussetzung für eine wirksame Verbraucherbildung kann deren Umsetzung im Rahmen von Schulentwicklung bzw. der Entwicklung eines eigenen Schulprofils sein.

Folgende Themen und Handlungsfelder zur Verbraucherbildung werden alters- und zielgruppenspezifisch sowie schulform- bzw. schulstufenspezifisch in den schulischen Bildungs- und Erziehungsprozess integriert. Die inhaltliche Verflechtung der Themenbereiche erfordert eine Behandlung im Kontext; d. h. die bloße Aneinanderreihung von Unterrichtsthemen kann der Herausforderung der Verbraucherbildung nicht gerecht werden.

**Finanzen, Marktgesehene und Verbraucherrecht, z. B.:**
- Bewusster Umgang mit Geld
- Finanzprodukte, Geldanlage, Kreditformen
- Private Absicherung und Altersvorsorge
- Werbung und Konsum

**Ernährung und Gesundheit, z. B.:**
- Gesunde Lebensführung
- Nahrungsmittelkette vom Anbau bis zum Konsum
- Qualitäten von Lebensmitteln und ihre Kennzeichnung
- Wertschätzung von Lebensmitteln/Vermeidung von Lebensmittelverschwendung

**Medien und Information, z. B.:**
- Informationsbeschaffung und -bewertung
- Datenschutz und Urheberrechte
- Mediennutzung

**Nachhaltiger Konsum, z. B.:**
- Fairer Handel und Produktkennzeichnungen
- Klima, Energie und Ressourcen
- Mobilität und Wohnen
- Lebensstile
- Globalisierung

4. **Unterstützungs- und Beratungssysteme**

Für eine kontextbezogene Verbraucherbildung ist die Zusammenarbeit mit den Unterstützungs- und Beratungssystemen und mit außerschulischen Partnern sinnvoll.

Kontakte sind beispielsweise mit folgenden Institutionen denkbar:
- Pädagogische Landesinstitute
- Verbraucherministerien
Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung und Landeszentralen für politische Bildung
Hochschulen
Verbraucherzentralen
Einrichtungen der Weiterbildung
Arbeitnehmer- und Arbeitgeberorganisationen
Industrie- und Handelskammern sowie Handwerkskammern
Träger der öffentlichen und freien Wohlfahrtspflege
Deutsche Rentenversicherung
Nicht-Regierungsorganisationen

5. Hinweise für eine Zusammenarbeit mit außerschulischen Partnern

Zu Themen der Verbraucherbildung werden an die Schulen vielfältige Angebote herangetragen.
Wichtig für die Nutzung dieser außerschulischen Angebote durch die Schulen bzw. Lehrkräfte
ist, dass sich diese inhaltlich am schulischen Bildungs- und Erziehungsauftrag orientieren, den
Gegebenheiten der einzelnen Schule gerecht werden und damit die Schulqualität fördern.

Das Gebot der Neutralität ist zu beachten. Grundlagen des Unterrichts in Fragen der Verbrauch-
erbildung sind im Sinne des Beutelsbacher Konsenses die Prinzipien des Überwältigungsverbo-
tes, des Kontroversitätsgebotes und der Schülerorientierung.

6. Verweise

Ergänzend wird auf folgende Empfehlungen der Kultusministerkonferenz verwiesen:

- Empfehlung „Bildung für nachhaltige Entwicklung in der Schule“ (Empfehlung der Ständi-
gen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (KMK)
und der Deutschen UNESCO-Kommission (DUK) vom 15.06.2007)

- „Orientierungsrahmen für den Lernbereich Globale Entwicklung im Rahmen der Bildung für
nachhaltige Entwicklung“ (Ergebnis des gemeinsamen Projekts der Kultusministerkonferenz
und des Bundesministeriums für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung; Stand:
Juni 2007)

- „Medienbildung in der Schule“ (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 08.03.2012)

- „Empfehlung zur Mobilitäts- und Verkehrserziehung in der Schule“ (Beschluss der KMK
vom 07.07.1972 i.d.F. vom 10.05.2012)

- „Empfehlung zur Gesundheitsförderung und Prävention in der Schule“ (Beschluss der Kul-
tusministerkonferenz vom 15.11.2012)