Sustainability as an entrepreneurial opportunity? A typology of sustainability-driven entrepreneurs

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Abstract
In light of multiple crises and the necessity of a socio-ecological transformation, transformative processes at multiple levels play a crucial role. One important component in this context are alternative business models and, more particularly, entrepreneurs. Specifically, research into sustainability-driven entrepreneurship distinguishes the former from profit-driven entrepreneurship through a change of values and the manner in which opportunities are discovered and exploited – moving from personal to socio-ecological gain. In this paper, we operationalize this different understanding of entrepreneurship through the notion of a changing habitus – that is, (new) values, behaviours, routines and motivations. The empirical study, conducted in Vienna, critically evaluates how this habitus is illustrated in the three categories of knowledge systems, self-perception and metrics of success; ultimately providing a typology of habitus in sustainability-driven entrepreneurship.

1. Introduction
In light of multiple crises and the necessity of a socio-ecological transformation, transformative processes at multiple levels play a crucial role. One important component in this context are alternative business models and, more particularly, entrepreneurs. Our starting point is the conventional understanding of the entrepreneur as a change agent based on creative destruction. Entrepreneurship “is concerned with the discovery and exploitation of profitable opportunities” (Shane and Ventkataraman 2000:217). Entrepreneurship research identifies a number of components that provide entrepreneurs with opportunities and that foster exploitation: the expected value added of the new venture, the expected demand, technology under development, the number of competitors and learning opportunities (Shane and Venkataraman 2000: 223). These components, however, are based on a very specific understanding of entrepreneurs; namely that of a profit-driven endeavour.

In contrast, research into sustainability-driven entrepreneurship distinguishes the former from profit-driven entrepreneurship through a change of values. Profit, for example, becomes a means rather than an end (Parrish 2010). Sustainability-driven entrepreneurs

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exploit “sustainable development opportunities”; that is it is “the discovery, creation and exploitation of opportunities to create future goods and services that sustain the natural and/or communal environment and provide development gain for others” (Patzelt and Shepherd 2011: 631). We argue that these approaches to entrepreneurship can be analysed through the concept of habitus to specifically understand the motivations and values underlying the prevalence of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. Essentially, entrepreneurship is understood as a specific social practice, based on the understanding of the ability to not only recognize but also exploit entrepreneurial opportunities. This also constitutes a break with “the strongly positivist tradition in entrepreneurship scholarship that as largely treated entrepreneurs as fixed entities” (De Clercq and Voronov 2009: 395). The notion of habitus is employed to analyse the relations between “social positions […], dispositions (or habitus), and position-taking” (Bourdieu 1998). Entrepreneurship is thus considered “an unfolding of everyday practices” (De Clercq and Voronov 2009:395). This also sheds light on how a specific habitus can be sustained or changed in times of crises (Crossley 2003), such as the multiple crises responded to by sustainability-driven entrepreneurs. In summary, the research objective of the paper is to critically evaluate why entrepreneurs exploit sustainable alternatives and specifically which (new) values, behaviours, routines and motivations, in short, what habitus, underlies this process.

First, the conceptual foundation is provided through the discussion of entrepreneurship and the concept of Bourdieu’s habitus. The specific notion of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship is also discussed. Second, research design and methods are described. In the next section, the data analysis is presented through the typology. Next, the results are discussed, offering a deeper understanding of the tensions encountered by the types as well as exploring similarities and the starkest differences. The final section concludes.

2. Conceptual foundations

Sustainability (or sustainable development, used interchangeably in this paper) is “an important shift in understanding relationships of humanity with nature and between people” (Hopwood et al., 2005:38). It has arisen out of the awareness that economic growth and the single objective of the pursuit of profit might not have the desired outcome – improving human well-being. Sustainability thus seeks to address the mismatch between growing wealth and growing poverty by acknowledging the links between “mounting environmental problems, socio-economic issues to do with poverty and inequality and concerns about a healthy future for humanity” (Jackson, 2009:39). Multiple crises, characterised by the decoupling of environmental from socio-economic issues and especially economic production and financial markets, is addressed (Jackson, 2009: 38). Research streams within the economic sciences thus suggest that we are in the need for a systemic transformation towards
a more sustainable socio-ecological economy (Daly, 1991; Ayres, 2008; Victor, 2008; Beddoe et al., 2009; Jackson, 2009; Costanza et al., 2012). The key questions are related to how we create an economy that puts basic needs first and respects ecological limits and which societal and political structures are necessary. Within this paper, we aim our analysis at the role of business, specifically entrepreneurs. The present section contrasts the conventional and the sustainability-driven approach to entrepreneurship (Sections 2.1. and 2.2.) and conceptualises their differences through a change in the entrepreneurial habitus (Section 2.3.) – a concept that summarizes the interaction between agent and structure through routines, behaviours, norms and motivations.

2.1. Entrepreneurship – discovery and exploitation of opportunities

The key concept in this paper is that of the entrepreneurial habitus. We specifically aim to highlight the concept of an entrepreneur led by the idea of sustainability. This is contrasted with a ‘conventional’ entrepreneur, as understood in academic literature, grounded in the notions of rationality and homo oeconomicus. We adhere to Bradley Parrish’s (2010) as well as De Clercq and Voronov’s (2011) distinction between conventional/profitability-oriented and the sustainability-driven entrepreneurs. Pacheco et al. (2010) highlight that a complete understanding of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship requires embracing both the discovery and creation of exploitable sustainability opportunities. That is, it is necessary to account for the ability of entrepreneurs to alter the economic institutions that provide incentives for sustainable behaviour. The role and ability of entrepreneurs to bring about (systemic) change stems from Schumpeter (1934) and the concept of creative destruction. Following an Schumpeterian approach to entrepreneurship, it “is concerned with the discovery and exploitation of profitable opportunities” (Shane and Ventkataraman 2000:217).

The economy is characterized by disequilibria, which occur in the distribution of (material) resources and knowledge as well as the ability to recognize and exploit opportunities. Exploiting opportunities is the key to creative destruction; that is systemic change induced through the innovative actions of entrepreneurs.

However, this assessment of what constitutes entrepreneurial opportunity and exploitation is fundamentally rooted in a neoclassical understanding of profit maximization, a very specific form of wealth creation (Tilley and Young 2009) and puts the focus almost exclusively on “personal economic gain – financial profit for the entrepreneur” (Patzelt and Shepherd 2011:632, emphasis: our own). Calls for a methodologically integrative research approach have been made (Tatli et al. 2014), especially critiquing the narrow, neoclassical notion of entrepreneurship as the exploitation of market failures and subsequent wealth accumulation. Tatli et al. (2014), for example, also employ the notion of ‘social drivers’ for entrepreneurial actions, listing social welfare goals as one motivator. Patzelt and Shepherd
offer a concise definition of how sustainability-driven entrepreneurs differ in their opportunity discovery and subsequent exploitation:

“...entrepreneurs who recognize opportunities that promote both sustainability and development likely attend to different aspects of their environment than entrepreneurs who recognize opportunities that deliver solely (or mostly) economic gain to them” (2011:632).

2.2. Sustainability-driven Entrepreneurship – an alternative business model?

The discussion on the role of the sustainability-driven entrepreneurship in complementing and potentially driving a socio-ecological transformation has been intensifying (Dean and McMullen, 2007; Parrish and Foxon, 2009; York and Venkataraman, 2010). We agree with De Clercq and Voronov on the crucial role of success or failure of newcomers: While successful new ventures can change the field, failure can lead to the innovation being “deemed ‘unworkable’, and the structure of the field will be reinforced rather than transformed” (De Clercq and Voronov 2009:406). However, one needs to take care to not be overly optimistic and prescriptive (Hall et al. 2010).

A consolidated definition would describe sustainability-driven entrepreneurship as an activity that aims to combine “economic, social and environmental value creation” (Hockerts and Wüstenhagen, 2010:482). Sustainability-driven entrepreneurship holistically integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions of wealth generation into their organization and innovation processes. As such it is also concerned with social innovation within firms to tackle challenges such as an aging work population and stress and work activity induced health issues (Young and Tilley, 2006). Parrish also highlights the dissonance between different management logics: sustainability-driven entrepreneurs follow a different logic than what is currently the norm and “the importance of prevailing management logics should not be underestimated” (Parrish 2007:857). Parrish (2010) tackles this issue by deriving five heuristic generative rules from in-depth case studies of successful sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. Here, he differentiates five areas of organizational design requirements: purpose, efficiency, trade-offs, decision-making criteria, and inducements. He further shows that an organization built on principles of “perpetual reasoning” is different in its approach to organization design requirements than organizations that follow principles of “exploitative reasoning”. Perpetual reasoning, for example, considers sustaining resources rather than resource exploitation as its main purpose. These heuristic rules shall by no means be taken as absolute. They may however infer some reflective guidance for the empirical research that is presented in this paper.

2.3. The entrepreneurial habitus
In this paper, to enable a holistic understanding of the actions and behaviours of micro-entrepreneurial agents, Bourdieu’s notion of habitus is employed. Entrepreneurship is thus considered “an unfolding of everyday practices” (De Clercq and Voronov 2009:395). It follows that entrepreneurship is understood as a specific social practice, based on the understanding of the ability to not only recognize but also exploit entrepreneurial opportunities as a specific habitus. Habitus refers to “a subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class and constituting the precondition for all objectification and apperception […]” (Bourdieu 1977:86). The habitus thus structures the field in which it is enacted and is simultaneously structured by the field – each agent thus produces and reproduces meaning (Bourdieu 1977). This makes the habitus relatively durable as one effect “is the production of a commonsense world endowed with objectivity secured by consensus on the meaning (sense) of practices and the world” (Bourdieu 1977:80). The experience of individual agents is thus constantly reinforced. In relation to entrepreneurship, adopting a specific habitus is considered a pre-requisite for legitimacy – any newcomer has to convince the existing fields of their ability to fit in. De Clercq and Voronov specifically argue that the notion of entrepreneurial legitimacy is crucial in the realm of sustainability because of “the uncertainty surrounding the role and meaning of sustainable practices for business” (2011:323). This, however, does not mean the perfect adoption of an existing habitus but something that is “compatible” (De Clercq and Voronov 2011:323).

The habitus can be considered a historical product, brought about by a specific environment. It enables agents to understand the “the rules of the game” (Tatli et al. 2014:623); the habitus is thus constituted of “the cognitive and somatic structures actors use to make sense of and enact their positions in the field” (Tatli et al. 2014:623). However, the key question in regards to sustainability is how a relatively stable concept such as a profitability-driven habitus can change to make room for a (more) sustainable approach to a new form of wealth creation. Bourdieu states that when a habitus is sufficiently established, “the stabler the objective structures and the more fully they reproduce themselves in agents’ dispositions” (Bourdieu 1977:165). Only in the times of crises, “when the social world loses its character as a natural phenomenon” (Bourdieu 1977:169), that is, when agents experience a form of cognitive dissonance between what is expected and what they experience, can the question of change and transformation be raised. It is “in moments of crises […] that the assumptions and habits of everyday life are suspended, giving way to more critical and innovative forms of praxis” (Crossley 2003:48). Therefore, to understand how entrepreneurs can contribute, both the enterprise but also its network and surrounding landscape need to be analysed (Parrish 2007). It is here that the notion of habitus and its field-structuring attributes
can provide a bridge. Conceptualising a societal reorganisation through a change in habitus, we propose an understanding of entrepreneurship which not only exploits profitable opportunities, whereby profit refers to financial metrics, but opportunities that help tackle the grand challenges of our time, namely the multiple crises (ecological, social, financial, economic). This paper is thus guided by the following research questions:

1. How is the habitus of sustainability-driven entrepreneurs constituted?
2. Which factors influence the prevalence of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship?
3. Which values, motivations, behaviours underlie sustainability-driven entrepreneurship?

3. Methodology
Guided by the research questions, this project started from an interest in the approach taken by entrepreneurs to integrating sustainability into their business models. In this research, we aim to understand how these approaches differ and what commonalities prevail. Our initial research objective was to construct a typology of entrepreneurial habitus. It is important to recognize that any theory and associated methodology can never be divorced from the point in time and space when it was created; both are always historical and therefore always subject to adjustments. Reflecting our methodological approach, we use an inductive theory building-approach, focusing on the subjective understandings of entrepreneurs themselves uncovered through interviews and supplemented by expert interviews in surrounding institutions.

3.1. Method: research design and data collection
For this project, we employed inductive category building to build an empirically-grounded typology based on Mayring (2014) and Kluge (2000). The challenges of identifying and gaining access to sustainability-driven entrepreneurs limited the number of available interview partners. We focused on the region of Vienna, Austria and theoretical purposeful sampling was performed to identify those enterprises that were able to reveal the kind of information necessary to study the phenomenon at hand.

3.1.1. Regional specificities: entrepreneurship in Vienna and Austria
The regional level in the east of Austria is particularly interesting for several different reasons. The region in and around Vienna can be described as the hot spot for innovative business models and sustainability-driven entrepreneurship because of the prevalence of private bottom-up initiatives and public policy schemes, representing the top down approach. In addition to manifold educational institutions such as universities, academies and other
training centres, the national entities for research and development funding are also located in the capital area of Vienna.

However, a study conducted in Austria, amongst other countries, showed that “there is a jungle out there in Austrian Entrepreneurship policy” (Fink et al., 2012:16) The authors were unable to “identify a joint agenda in Entrepreneurship policy to which all funding institutions commit themselves and coordinate their activities” (Fink et al., 2012:16). They also found significant differences between locations in Austria. Overall, however, they stated that “the late stage of the start-up process enjoys the most support from entrepreneurship policy measures” (Fink et al., 2012:16). Incidentally, this was also highlighted by a study conducted for the BMVIT in 2008: Especially in the first phase of founding a business or implementing a new idea in an existing business, support is crucial. At this stage, networks are the most important. (Pelikan et al., 2008). External barriers were also highlighted. Especially missing legal frameworks and the lack of external financial support hinder entrepreneurial activities. Each of the support structures, such as networks, legal frameworks, financial support but also research, further education and consulting, depends on the developmental stage of the business idea or project (Pelikan et al., 2008). Starting a successful business, then, depends significantly on the founders’ initial motivation and how self-driven they are.

3.1.2 Sampling process and cases

Enterprises were selected on basis of ecological and social criteria as both had to be included in the companies’ mission statements. Following De Clercq and Voronov, we argue that “sustainability logic” ultimately “manifests itself in missions and strategies, which guide the focus of the entrepreneur” (2011: 324).

We adhered to Parrish’s (2010) and Alter’s (2004, updated 2007) selection criteria to enable minimum comparability between empirical studies of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship: the enterprise has to be mission centric in social and ecological regards, “meaning he beneficial environmental and social activities were ‘one and the same’ with business activities” (Parrish 2010: 514). Economic sustainability, while crucial in the current economic system, was of secondary concern. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. In total, seven mission statements were analysed in more detail and seven interviews were conducted with the (co-)founders of the enterprises. In addition, five expert interviews were conducted with policy makers and heads of funding agencies for start-ups in Vienna (see Table 1 below). All interviews were conducted in person, audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. As this study takes an exploratory approach, interviews were transcribed in their entirety. The transcripts were mined for data through gradual abstraction.
Following Mayring (2014), individual interviews were analysed line-by-line to form inductive categories, and define the types. Kluge’s (2000) procedure for constructing empirically-grounded types was followed. The transcripts were coded with the assistance of MaxQDA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company or Institution</th>
<th>Short description</th>
<th>Position of interview partner</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company A</td>
<td>Organic and fairtrade fashion label with production based in developing countries</td>
<td>Co-founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company B</td>
<td>Local food cooperative</td>
<td>Co-founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company C</td>
<td>Upcycling fashion label with local production in Vienna</td>
<td>Founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company D</td>
<td>Upcycling design with emphasis on reintegration of former addicts into the labour market</td>
<td>Management and Accounting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company E</td>
<td>Cradle-to-cradle printing company</td>
<td>Environmental Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company F</td>
<td>Sustainability consulting company</td>
<td>Co-founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company G</td>
<td>Social business in development work</td>
<td>Co-founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution H</td>
<td>Austrian Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Sustainability Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution I</td>
<td>Funding institution with focus on university spin-offs</td>
<td>Managing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution K</td>
<td>Austrian Ministry</td>
<td>Sustainability and Environmental Officer</td>
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*Table 1: Overview of interview partners*

4. Findings

4.1. Data analysis

Different interviews are interwoven with each other as well as insights from literature. To illustrate the approaches taken by our interview partners, we will use fragments of the narratives to illustrate theoretical analysis. The following section provides an overview of the results of the data interrogation in the form of an empirically-grounded typology (Kluge 2000). Essentially, during data interrogation we uncovered two general types of entrepreneurial habitus – the pragmatic-hybrid logic and the idealist logic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company or Institution</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company A</td>
<td>Idealist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company B</td>
<td>Idealist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company C</td>
<td>Pragmatist-hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company D</td>
<td>Pragmatist-hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company E</td>
<td>Pragmatist-hybrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company F</td>
<td>Idealist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company G</td>
<td>Idealist</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Table 2: Overview of types*

The general notion of developing alternative business models is key: “We develop business subcultures. Sustainability is often a subculture in the general business culture” (Company F). The question is on what end of the spectrum of alternative business models these entrepreneurs lie. To shed light on this, both types of logic are analysed in three overarching categories, uncovered through the qualitative data analysis based on theoretical background and the empirical data itself. The three categories and their main sub-codes are: (1) **knowledge systems**: innovation, stakeholder and knowledge networks; (2) **self-perception**: self-understanding, awareness raising and pioneers; (3) **metrics of success**: profit and non-financial wealth creation as well as trade-offs and benefit distribution. Expert interviews were coded subsequently with these codes as the most relevant ones: economic sustainability, holistic, responsibility (this included specifically mentioning Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as well as responsibility in a more colloquial sense) and crisis. The following sections will elaborate on how what underlying motivations, behaviours and values are characteristic for the pragmatist and idealist habitus respectively. It should be noted that these are not definite categories and that interview partners fluctuate between the two. However, the categorization is based on the approach that dominates. A short overview of the two logics is provided in Table 2 below.
4.2. *Pragmatist-hybrid logic*

The pragmatic entrepreneur is characterised by a very clear idea of what the world ‘out there’ is like, how the economy functions and what is expected of them. In a way, they have not entirely shed the conventional entrepreneurial habitus but present something along the lines of a hybrid model. They fit into the notion expressed by De Clercq and Voronov (2009:397) of ‘standing out’ while ‘fitting in’. In the interviews, the reasons mentioned for following a pragmatist-hybrid logic were, firstly, a lack of resources (referring to finances, time and personal energy), secondly, an unwillingness to exploit oneself and, thirdly, that sustainability is only a ‘zeitgeist’ phenomenon.

4.2.1. *Knowledge systems: ‘Innovation (technological and social) is key’*

Innovation is key here. This is not limited to, but to a large extent, includes technological change. The combination of sustainability and innovation means creating and keeping market access in the future. Entrepreneurs referred to this as not only finding a niche but also creating a market for oneself. Social innovations include, for example, decentralised production to ensure local production in the sense that production takes place in the same location as ultimate consumption. This means that, “in a best case scenario, I don’t have to do everything myself. It is more important to combine the right type of people” (*Company C*).

4.2.2. *Self-perception: ‘Not opposition to the status quo, but creating something better’*

The idea is not create a model opposing the status quo per se but “something better” (*Company E*). There is not necessarily a legal framework, rather there is an individual commitment to, for example, 100% local production, to lead by example. In addition,
transparency is key. Certain interviewees also highlighted that sustainability was not only a technical question but also referred to a philosophy of doing things. In light of this, the necessity of cultural change was highlighted – moving from low to high quality. However, the notion of ‘being stuck in a sustainability bubble’ shows that the concept was viewed critically. This was further exemplified as seeing it as a fashion fad, a zeitgeist phenomenon that would lose in importance again.

4.2.3. Metrics of success: ‘Sustainability is good but economic viability takes precedence’

When it comes to measuring success, the conventional measure of profit is still a high priority: “Having a mission is wonderful, but if it is not economically viable, it is over” (Company D). The profit motive is thus not questioned but rather interpreted as a cornerstone of any business undertaking. One interviewee describes his company as “driven by turnover” (Company E). However, the amount of profit is not necessarily high: “if profit is distributed evenly and fair, not much is left over at the end” (Company C). Interestingly, these entrepreneurs were not interested in growing fast or a lot but rather emphasized a slow and solid pace. This was also mentioned when it came to the amount of production. One interviewee said that she explicitly chose to produce less and that was her way of steering profit-making. Another interviewee stated that with more efficiency, the economic side of things could run more smoothly – this efficiency, however, was not implemented in their enterprise.

4.3. Idealist logic

The entrepreneurs following the idealist logic are not putting significant emphasis on fitting in. Their main focus is standing out; in one case the ultimate goal is to function completely outside of the system. The individuals following this logic are characterised by a relatively precarious living situation, regarding both their wages as well as work-life-balance – they deliberately sacrifice these for the greater good. Additionally, they are willing to take risks but rely on sympathetic and solidary movements. It is not surprising that they show a strong identification with their work and find fulfilment in doing something that is one-of-a-kind.

4.3.1. Knowledge systems: ‘Networks and knowledge exchange are the road to success’

The long-term cooperation and creation of networks is key. Self-organisation is an expression used by all interviewees – there is no reliance on institutional or legal changes from top down. One interviewee referred to her “voluntary engagement” in the business scene in changing
how sustainability is approached (*Company A*). Through these types of networks more clout and more solidarity amongst alternative business models is achieved. The recognition of an entrepreneurial activity relies on the previous market knowledge of an entrepreneur.

4.3.2. Self-perception: ‘As pioneers, we are responsible for raising awareness’

“Form follows function” – whatever an enterprise aims to achieve should be reflected in its organizational structure, both in- and outwards (*Company F*). The entrepreneurs perceived themselves to be pioneers and their task was to inform the general public and raise awareness, not only in regards to their products and services but also in regards to sustainability. This attitude is reflected in the emphasis on cooperation and the lack of conventional advertisements. The entrepreneurs largely rely on word of mouth and networks. Additionally, the importance of responsibility and trust was highlighted again and again. Flat hierarchies and self-governance were key terms in this sense, although it needs to be noted that the interviewees did not shy away from acknowledging that this could lead to conflicts that would need to be resolved in an equitable and just manner.

4.3.3. Metrics of success: ‘Fulfilling demands of sustainability is difficult – be reflexive’

“100 percent is impossible, it doesn’t exist anywhere” (*Company A*) – there is a very clear acknowledgement that working in the realm of sustainability; trade-offs are to be expected. However, decisions regarding trade-offs should not be taken lightly but in a reflexive manner. The key question here is at what ‘price’ profit is achieved, i.e. what the trade-off is. Value is interpreted differently, for example the fulfilment of human needs takes centre stage rather than capital. Redistribution was very important – in the cooperative, for example, societally more advantaged members would pay more in membership fees to enable the participation of less advantaged members. Current economic models are criticized starkly: “We are building economic systems that are illusions, complete illusions” (*Company F*). While price, both when buying and selling, is a criterion, it is not the most important one. One interviewee stated that their profit margins were not all they could be in, for example, a conventional enterprise: “At the upper limit, our customers won’t pay more and at the lower limit we don’t want to push for lower production costs” (*Company A*). One problem was the discrepancy of costs associated to work and resources where the former is much more expensive in the production process. Overall, it was emphasized that growth, if it occurred, had to be slow and ensured to be solid through the re-investment of profits rather than loans and credits.

5. Discussion
To appreciate the significance of the two types of habitus uncovered in this empirical study, this section provides an overview of the tensions between conventional entrepreneurship, defined through its focus on personal financial gain, pragmatic-hybrid sustainability-driven entrepreneurship and idealist sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. First of all, it is important to note that the logics presented in this paper do not present absolutes. They merely function as heuristics to understand the potential development of alternative types of entrepreneurial habitus and the subsequent development of alternative business models. After all, it is not yet determined if “the logics of sustainability and profitability are complementary or conflicting” (De Clercq and Voronov 2011: 325). Rather, the focus lies on understanding how the entrepreneurs themselves make sense of this and how they deal with the tensions surrounding sustainability-driven business ventures. This includes both their personal understanding and their institutional surroundings.

5.1. Institutional setting

In the literature, sustainability-driven entrepreneurs are often considered drivers of change and have been understood to alter economic institutions towards a more sustainable direction (Pacheco et al. 2010; McMullen 2011). These institutions, referring to organizations, other, conventional entrepreneurs, but also the structure of the field sustainability-driven entrepreneurs operate in, limit the “legitimate options” that they can choose from “when coping with both environmental and economic demands”. How they deal with these tensions is “an outcome of interactions between institutional arrangements and individual actions” (De Clercq and Voronov 2011: 325-26).

Pragmatists ‘make do’ with the system they function in. Innovation, for example, is usually limited to the setting of their individual venture. The concept of a niche, in this sense, refers to carving out a space for themselves and, ideally, retaining it for future market access. Idealists, however, aim at significant systemic change, although one can debate how successful their attempts are. Specifically, the voluntary engagement within the business world and the building up of bottom-up solidarity movements are key examples of the idealist habitus. The belief in one’s capacity to bring about positive change is a characteristic readily expressed of proponents of the idealist habitus.

In the expert interviews, the notion of ‘fitting in’ was also prevalent, especially since sustainability is not considered to be an accepted general principle. The main argument is that economically, the focus still lies on competition and securing the business location. The main funding institution almost exclusively means economic sustainability when referring to sustainability at all. In policy-making, this general institutional image is reinforced: change is slow, mainly because there are no incentives to foster cross-sectoral work. Success is defined
by success in one’s department. This, in turn, is reflected in the business environment as was discussed in the pragmatist habitus: carving out a niche for oneself rather than cooperation was considered success.

5.2. Commonalities and differences

The rationale for uncovering the habitus underlying different types of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship is to understand where the main commonalities and differences for these types of ‘management logics’ lie (Parrish 2007). Following the path set out in the previous section, especially the tension between profitability and sustainability divides the two types. Overall, the pragmatists value profitability over sustainability. As long as the economic situation allows for it, sustainability is part of the business venture. However, without guaranteed economic viability, sustainability is relegated to second-chair status. This refers back to the “legitimate options” mentioned by De Clercq and Voronov (2011:325) – the entrepreneurs adhering to a pragmatic logic are institutionally restrained by the quest for profit.

Profit remains the ultimate measure of entrepreneurial success. This is confirmed by the expert interviews, especially when discussing funding opportunities for start-ups: “They (start-ups) have to be growth-oriented, the speed is not relevant but it is the ultimate goal” (Institution I), as well as in policy: “It’s not economically sustainable if you’re in the red” (Institution H). Tension are unearthed especially by the idealists and the expert interviews, the pragmatists offer more of a can-do attitude. This might also be interpreted as a ‘we can have it all’-attitude, meaning that profit and sustainability are not mutually exclusive. Referring back to the tension of profitability and sustainability, the mismatch between long-term sustainability parameters and short-term financial indicators is mentioned. Idealists show somewhat more reflexivity regarding the role of profit. This is not to say the importance of profit is not recognized. The main difference lies in the attitude – idealists are willing to engage with the dissonance between their attitude and systemic demands. Thus, they recognize the mismatch between their own belief system and what is expected of them (Crossley 2003).

The reflection upon trade-offs is more prevalent in the ideal habitus. There is a clear understanding that ‘it isn’t easy being green’, to invoke that dictum; however, that is not considered a barrier, only something to consider. This reflexive behaviour is echoed in the expert interviews: “That’s always the problem with sustainability, the pure sustainable product, in the end it just does not exist” (Institution H). However, sustainability also opens up possibilities for innovation – it requires a certain willingness to take risk. This characteristic is expressed both in the idealist logic as well as the expert interviews. However,
in a more pragmatic outlook, innovation is considered a pure necessity to survive in the market.

5.3. Limitations and areas for future research
We acknowledge that our typology is limited by the availability of empirical data as well as regionally specific. For future research, empirical studies with a similar aim and a larger, less regionally based sample could provide interesting results. Other topics for future research projects include the further exploration of the transformative potential of sustainability-driven entrepreneurs and whether they really do drive (systemic) change towards sustainability. The scaling-up of these ventures, once they have left the start-up phase and become more consolidated, as well as the limitation of such a process could be analysed further. In addition, throughout our research project, the theme of a transparent supply chain and the tension between local, regional and international production and consumption was touched upon a number of times, both in literature and the interviews. Herein lays a potential further research area in the field of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. What seems to be most prevalent, however, is the tension between profitability and sustainability – both within the literature as well as in the empirical data. Exploring this tension and developing alternative, potentially non-financial metrics of success and how to institutionalise these, is considered a very important next step.

6. Conclusion
This empirical study aims at a better understanding of the type of habitus – that is, values, motivations and routines – underlying the social practice of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship. Sustainability-driven Entrepreneurship is still a rather theoretical and academic construct. However, the empirical study conducted has found encouraging examples of entrepreneurial pioneers that strive not only to provide new ways of doing business but also of thinking and impetus for change. Considering the two types of habitus uncovered in the empirical study, one can see two ends of the spectrum ranging from a pragmatist orientation to a rather radical one. Additionally, it is important to note that these types of habitus differ significantly from the conventional understanding of entrepreneurship. Moving from personal to socio-ecological gain constitutes a rather stark transformation of the entrepreneurial habitus. From an academic perspective, this implies further research into these non-conventional understandings of entrepreneurship. By operationalizing sustainability-driven entrepreneurship through the habitus, we make a first contribution to the increasing calls for a different type of entrepreneurship research. Especially in the realm of sustainability and socio-ecological transformation, a new type of entrepreneurship – and an associated
radical habitus change – provides a better understanding of what could potentially enable a new type of business.

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