Corporate Social Responsibility at Swisscom:

Empowering the Idea of Sustainability and Transforming Individuals' Realities

An Anthropological Study

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Abstract:

With corporate social responsibility becoming more important to powerful companies, analyzing how the idea of sustainability circulates in a company and influences actors is key to understanding the potential and limitations of corporate social responsibility as companies' strategic approach to sustainability. Individuals in a company act upon ideas and together form a shared reality. This thesis, based on six months of fieldwork, in-depth interviews and a focus group meeting with the corporate social responsibility team as primary mediator of sustainability, offers an ethnographic account on how sustainability is circulated and made powerful at Swisscom, a Swiss telecommunication company. From a social constructivist perspective, I will show that the team's, and with that the idea's significance, results from a dialectic relationship between the team, the remaining company and external actors. I will further show that the team, to enhance its significance inside and outside the company, employs strategies to approach other actors. Finally, this thesis suggests that, with regard to sustainability, more research is needed to better understand how ideas circulate and influence individuals in their actions.

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III. Abstract

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IV.   Preface

> History admits no rules; only outcomes.
> What precipitates outcomes? Vicious acts & virtuous acts.
> What precipitates acts? Belief.
> Belief is both prize & battlefield, within the mind & in the mind's mirror, the world. If we believe humanity is a ladder of tribes, a colosseum of confrontation, exploitation & bestiality, such a humanity is surely brought into being, & history's Horroxes, Boerhaaves & Gooses shall prevail. You & I, the moneyed, the privileged, the fortunate, shall not fare so badly in this world, provided our luck holds. What of it if our consciences itch? Why undermine the dominance of our race, our gunships, our heritage & our legacy? Why fight the "natural" (oh, weaselly word!) order of things? Why? Because of this: - one fine day, a purely predatory world shall consume itself. Yes, the devil shall take the hindmost until the foremost is the hindmost. In an individual, selfishness uglifies the soul. For the human species, selfishness is extinction.
> Is this the doom written within our nature?
> If we believe that humanity may transcend tooth & claw, if we believe divers races & creeds can share this world as peaceably as the orphans share their candlenut tree, if we believe that leaders must be just, violence muzzled, power accountable & the riches of the Earth & its Oceans shared equitably, such a world will come to pass. I am not deceived. It is the hardest of worlds to make real. Torturous advances won over generations can be lost by a single stroke of a myopic president's pen or a vainglorious general's sword. (Mitchell 2004, 528)

A specific context appears to individuals as riddle, as maze, with some elements as ephemeral as a blink of an eye and others as paramount as religious wars or devastating environmental degradation. However difficult as understanding possible connections, causalities and circumstances between the elements may seem, I choose to believe that understanding our actions and their underlying logic can influence our future and with that humanity's future evolution. That being said, I studied human ecology in Sweden because I wanted to study the concept of sustainability as a social issue and in light of the academic debate on issues such as sustainability, I wanted to understand why despite scientific evidence and a rising number of grassroot movements in every day life, business-as-usual continues and why some individuals and institutions either ignore or actively argue against sustainability issues. For that, I think it is useful to look at different actors, whether they are individuals or groups of individuals organized in institutions, and analyze their business-as-usual daily decision-making reality. Hence, having ventured out into the world led me right back to my origins. In my hometown I conducted fieldwork working for the CR team at Swisscom in Bern with the intention to study the team as such an actor. Despite my suspicions of corporations having the tendency to take advantage of sustainability being well regarded today, I met wonderful people at this

company with fascinating stories and a ceaseless motivation for not only making the company more responsible but also using the company's leverage to spread the idea of sustainability.

V.   Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

Climate change poses an ever-stronger threat to people's existence with changing hydrological and meteorological systems (IPCC 2014) and simultaneously rising social and economic inequalities on a global level (OECD 2011). Regardless of the urgency of these issues, however, some voices claim that not enough actions are taken in order to curtail human influence on the climate and environmental injustice (Singer 2010; Bruckmeier 2009). In addition to this, others discuss if actions, such as the strategy of building urban sustainability or employing corporate social responsibility (CSR) in certain contexts, are futile in promoting sustainability and are on the contrary conducive to greater social inequality and resource use (Singer 2010; Hornborg 2011; Hornborg 2015).

There are several reasons why climate change is a difficult topic to grasp and tackle and sustainability a difficult goal to achieve. One reason is that human behaviour that has caused problems related to sustainability is anchored in our culture and our way of perceiving the world (Miller 2010; Plumwood 2002; Welzer 2011; de Neve 2008), requiring a shift in culture. Also, the discrepancy between long-term sustainability and a powerful and lobbied short-term orientation to economic profit-making (Oreskes 2010; Klein 2014) further impedes a sustainable evolution.

Besides making sustainability difficult to grasp, said reasons also uncover the interplay and differences of rational decision-making versus emotional, instinctive behaviour (Anderson 1996; Sinek 2009). Even though natural and social sciences have gathered an abundant pool of facts and figures about ecological and environmental sustainability, rationale alone is insufficient to trigger a homogenous and widespread reaction of the human being. With respect to this, anthropological and psychological approaches to sustainability studies become important (i.e. Koger 2013; Weintrobe 2012) to investigate perspectives, actions and decision-taking of individual persons.

Regarding the topic of corporate social responsibility (CSR), the scope of scientific research encompasses applied research, which are studies discussing reasons and strategies to operationalize CSR. In applied research, studies that generally seem informed by a reformist perspective and claim that sustainability can be reached by altering organization and functions of today's capitalist society (Everett and Neu 2000; Adams 2009; Owen 1993). While some studies seek to understand CSR as a concept (Sahlin-Andersson 2006), others have investigated how CSR managers can employ stakeholder dialogue (Ayuso, Ángel Rodríguez,

and Enric Ricart 2006), why companies choose to employ CSR (Kubally and Hedestead 2012; Bansal and Roth 2000), and still others investigate the triple bottom line approach (Brown, Dillard, and Marshall 2006; Elkington 1997; Elkington 2004; Henriques and Richardson 2004) as well as challenges that CSR faces (Sanders and McClellan 2014; Shamir 2005).

In contrast, various opinions claim that reformist approaches such as CSR are futile in the endeavour to create a sustainable society, being "deeply sceptical about the motivations and effects of corporate action" (Deetz and Kuhn 2008, 173). Other opinions contend that rather than the corporation's power being limited, corporations abuse their power to make profit and enhance their power (Banerjee 2008; Bakan 2005; Dahl 2010; Smith 1998) using CSR activities to prevent the creation of a democratic society because they mollify citizens who might otherwise demand systemic change" (Deetz and Kuhn 2008, 174). Lastly, Orman Kubally and Philip Hedestead state that it is not clear whether CSR, under the bottom line, is successful (2012). Hence, critical views can be summarized by considering a company using CSR as powerless, inherently malicious or being sceptical of its success.

In general, though, these critical perspectives consider society as constant and with that neglect society's developmental potential in light of issues such as a sustainability crisis (Dove and Carpenter 2008; Deetz and Kuhn 2008). Hence, instead of arguing about what a corporation is or is not and what it can do, I argue it is important to analyze a company in its evolution, considering a company as an ensemble of people who act upon subjective realities.

Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to give an insight into the act of performing, envisioning and implementing CSR in the Swiss telecommunication company Swisscom by analyzing the company's CSR team as primary mediator of sustainability and by investigating the team, its internal dynamics and the circulation of sustainability as an idea. For this, I formulated the following research questions:

How is CSR performed at Swisscom?
    How has the CR team at Swisscom evolved?
    What is their motivation to work in this domain, what are their beliefs and views?
    How do the members of the CSR team perceive their role at Swisscom?
    How does the team define its vision for sustainability?
    What is the team's strategy?
    What are the team's challenges?

What happens to the concept of sustainability when brought into Swisscom as company?

How does CSR implement the idea of sustainability inside and outside the company?

How do ideas become powerful?

How does an idea influence actors?

The reason for focusing on a CSR team is twofold. On the one hand, CSR is a growing phenomenon and with that gaining in influence. Swisscom, for example, is the largest telecommunication provider in Switzerland and has a decentralised company structure. Because of this, collaborators can have much influence in business strategies and project realizations. In addition to this, the domain of corporate responsibility enjoys much attention and importance from CEO Urs Schaeppi and, as mediated by the CSR team, holds a high-ranking hierarchical place (see appendix 8.3.). With this, CSR at Swisscom is a powerful group of people in a powerful Swiss ICT company. Hence, in light of the sustainability debate it can be fruitful for academia to investigate that actor.

On the other hand, taking a small-scale approach and focusing the research on the CSR team can be considered as important as a systems approach (Moran 2010) because corporate decisions are carried out and influenced by the company's managers. This makes it important to investigate the internal dynamics on CSR in a company (Bolton, Kim, and O'Gorman 2011; Hemingway and Maclagan 2004), or more generally, CSR in its performance (Shamir 2005). Understanding who decides about the company's strategy, what their motivations and beliefs are thus helps understand the potential in CSR as strategy. Although investigating the internal dynamics of CSR at a company is perceived as important, however, few studies focus on this topic. This is why I conducted a field study on said topic and with that aim at furthering my understanding of CSR as it is performed in a company.

Based on the results of the fieldwork, this thesis suggests that regardless of sustainability implying humanity's future, the idea is not inherently powerful but becomes powerful depending on who advocates the idea and how. This implies that sustainability can be integrated into the company's subjective reality, meaning that a company can behave sustainably if the CR team as primary mediator objectifies that idea through specific strategies and shares it with other actors inside and outside the company, thereby transforming their subjective reality. To do so, the CR team acts as significant other, advocating sustainability and thus making the idea more powerful. The team's influence, however, results from a dialectic relationship between the CR team, the rest of the company and external actors. With that, CSR as a strategy has the potential to influence companies and other actors to become more sustainable.

In the methodology chapter (2), I describe and reflect on the methodology used to gather my data. Then, in the theory chapter (3), I present and define the theories and concepts used in this thesis. Following this, the ethnography chapter (4) outlines the results as deducted from my data, discussing and analyzing it along the way. In the discussion chapter (5) I then reflect on these findings and analyzes and formulate the key suggestions of this thesis and finally, the conclusion chapter (6) summarises these findings and discusses possible further studies.

2. Methodology

For this thesis, I have taken an exploratory approach in which I did organizational ethnography by doing six months of fieldwork, conducting qualitative interviews, as well as a focus-group discussion. I then analyzed the gathered data by means of coding and discourse analysis and embedded the results of these analyses into the broader theoretical discussion on the topics of CSR and sustainability.

2.1. Explorative Research

Since I was interested in investigating the topic of sustainability at Swisscom without a predefined hypothesis, I chose to approach the topic exploratively. Although exploratory research "is typically seen as messy, without direction, time consuming, and fraught with possible disappointment" (Stebbins 2001, viii), it allows for an inductive approach that investigates a topic without a predefined hypothesis. Rather, it lets the researcher explore when there is "little or no scientific knowledge about the group, process, activity, or situation [he or she] want to examine but nevertheless ha[s] reason to believe it contains elements worth discovering" (ibid., 6). In that sense, exploratory research allows for studies that start without a pre-defined hypothesis and is open to new aspects not thought of before while acknowledging that the "world does not arrange itself into chapters and subheadings for our convenience" (Neyland 2007, 127).

2.2. Participant Observation

Fieldwork and participant observation both come from a tradition of anthropology that has long focused on exotic and faraway places and has now also turned to settings familiar to the ethnographer and especially to organizational settings of companies (Jordan 2013). According to Bronislaw Malinowski, one classic method in anthropology consists of the participant observer pitching his/her tent in the field, learning the inhabitants' language and living with the human beings of interest (1922). The aim of participant observation is to create an understanding of studied culture[1] by participating in activities, talking to the people in the field and observing both emic and etic perspectives. As such, ethnography according to Dvora Yanow is a "tentative, open and partial interpretation" (2009, 158), apt to highlight aspects that may be left unnoticed by other methods.

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[1] For a definition of the term culture please see section 3.2.

2.3. Qualitative Interviews

Besides data gathered through informal conversations, I conducted seven one-person qualitative interviews and one focus group discussion. Furthermore, I drew data from interviews that I conducted for a work-related project that focused on teamwork in a digitalised environment. As I only occasionally drew information from these latter interviews, however, I will not go into further detail about them here but instead focus on the seven interviews from which most of my data originates.

The participants of the interviews all belong to the CR team at Swisscom, which includes 10-14 people. Some of them work temporarily for the team and others are permanent members of the team. I invited all of the members to participate in interviews but then chose a total of seven interviewees covering all essential categories of the group. One person was an apprentice, working for a short duration and in a specific project for CR; one person was an intern, an undergraduate anthropology and environmental studies student; one person had transferred to CR from another department and temporarily worked for CR; one was a fully employed manager that has been working for CR just about a year; then there were three managers that had been with the team for at least three years. Finally, I conducted an interview with the team leader, who had recently taken on this position but been with the company for a long time. From these interviewees, two were female and five male, and the age ranged from 18 to around 50 years. Three people had a background in social sciences, two in natural sciences and two in business related educations. Finally, the interviewees had been working for CR for different periods of time, which gave me insights into views with different levels of enculturation. With 'enculturation' I refer to "the process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values" (Merriam-Webster 2015), assuming that a person entering a new social environment starts as an outsider and then, with time, becomes an insider. By choosing this equal spread I could furthermore eliminate the danger of leaving radically different voices unheard.

For each interview I made an appointment with the interviewees and asked them to reserve two hours of their time. Each time, my goal was to make the participants feel relaxed and in a "coffee-break spirit". To ensure this, I made sure to meet outside of the office, either in a café or if no café was in proximity, in one of the cosier meeting rooms. This way, I hoped to make the participants feel more comfortable, and through the spatial distance to their desk, more prone to taking a step back and looking at CR, themselves and their work from some distance. Also, the walk to the place of interview allowed me to engage my interlocutors in

small talk and then slowly to the topic of my interviews. In this way, I made sure they were mentally present when the interview started – a state of mind that is difficult to reach in the very busy work style, where one meeting follows the other.

The interviews lasted between 40 and 120 minutes and were semi-structured. During each interview, I followed an outline of questions (see appendix 8.1.) that covered a basic investigation into the interlocutor's perception of his or her work and the personal view on CSR, Swisscom and sustainability. The length of interview allowed me to cover these questions in all but one cases and there was enough time to let the participants talk about what they felt was important. During these interviews, I adopted the role of a facilitator who asked further questions on a certain statement or challenged this statement to allow the participant to describe their view as thoroughly as possible.

In order to analyze the interviews in their entirety, I recorded every interview. Although this seemed to unsettle one interlocutor in the beginning, that interview turned out to be the longest one, which gives reasons to think that the person forgot about the recorder rather quickly. All the other participants did not express mistrust or suspicion regarding my request to record the discussion. I further transcribed the recordings in their original language (German and French). Due to my main interest in content and phrasing and because I will not publish the transcriptions in this thesis[2], I kept the level of detail average, meaning that I did not correct minor spelling mistakes and did not layout the transcriptions.

After transcription, and using MAXQDA11 software, I coded the content of the seven interviews, using content codes that allowed me to do an intratextual comparison and analysis. I based the coding process on Philipp Mayring who suggests creating a coding system in "dialectical relation between the theory (the research question) and the concrete material"[3] (2010, 59). Thus, I read through the texts a first time, coding the segments according to content. Then, I used literature, notes and theories that I had gathered during the time of my studies and fieldwork to determine how the material was applicable. Once I had determined my line of interpretation, I read through the texts again, creating new codes that helped me construct the ethnography and its interpretation.

Finally, I discussed preliminary findings and follow-up questions in a focus group consisting of three people. We discussed ideas and interpretations that I had drawn from the

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[2] One ambition of this thesis is to guarantee the anonymity of my informants and interlocutors. Therefore, transcriptions are not public.

[3] Own translation. Original: „in einem Wechselverhältnis zwischen der Theorie (der Fragestellung) und dem konkreten Material entwickelt"

gathered data, making sure that these were tenable. The discussion lasted one hour and, due to lack of time, I did not transcribe the recording but wrote down the most striking references.

2.4. Challenges Before the Field

Because doing fieldwork implies being in close contact with the other persons on the field, ethical questions are a recurrent topic of discussion within the anthropological discipline (Cassell and Jacobs 1987). In order to inform my interlocutors about ongoing study, I included a note in my automatic e-mail signature, which informed the recipient of the e-mail about the study and offered them a link to the Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association (2009) that I used as guideline. Since e-mails are a very important communication channel at Swisscom, every person I had contact with was thus informed about my role as participant observer. In addition to this general disclosure, I again mentioned ethics in the beginning of every official interview and agreed with all my interlocutors that their anonymity would be guaranteed in the thesis. This is why I will subsequently not reference the different quotes that emanated from interviews. I am aware that this gives an unclear picture of my informants. However, since for this study I am not interested in extensive biographical data or in analyzing specific personalities, I consider the level of disclosure fit for the scope of the thesis.

Besides ethical considerations and as the name suggests, doing fieldwork also implies having access to the right 'field'. Since this thesis is concerned with CSR and sustainability, I wanted to do fieldwork in a place where CSR was practiced. Therefore, it was fortunate for me that after some search, I found and an internship position at Swisscom. Between October 2014 and April 2015 I conducted fieldwork while working as an assistant in a project at the department of IT, Network and Innovation (INI), as well as a project manager in the department of Group Communications and Responsibility (GCR) where the CSR team is situated. Thanks to these two positions, I simultaneously had access to a department with staff function, GCR, and to a department with line function, INI. I worked on specific projects but sat in the same office as the other team members and took my coffee breaks and lunches with them. By doing so, I could observe the CR team and CSR at Swisscom, ask questions and analyze settings, behaviours, decisions while at the same time experiencing the culture of the setting myself. Also, thanks to the small size of the CR team, I got acquainted with each member quickly, diminishing a possible conversation barrier.

2.5. Challenges in The Field

From what I have experienced, the researcher's social position within the studied group plays an important role with regard to data creation. An informant will disclose different kinds of information depending on the position s/he attributes to the researcher in terms of trust, closeness, hierarchy, benevolence, etc. These different positions have been termed being an 'insider' or 'outsider' and there are advantages and inconveniences to both. As Marlize Rabe suggests,

> advocates for the outsider perspective generally argue that access to authentic knowledge is more obtainable because of the objectivity and scientific detachment with which on can approach one's investigation as a non-member of the group. … proponents of the insider perspective claim that group membership provides special insight into matters (otherwise obscure to others) based on one's knowledge of the language and one's intuitive sensitivity and empathy and understanding of the culture and its people. (2003, 149)

Thus, it is important to be conscious of these differences while in the field and to consider information given by informants in relation to the current position of the researcher. For example, I remember the moment when a couple of weeks into my fieldwork I was standing behind one of the employees, a notebook in my hand and with question in mind that was unrelated to my fieldwork. He turned around, looked at me and with a mixture of assertion, suspicion, and amusement asked "so, are you starting the observation with me?" Clearly, this team member's first association was still that of my position as an anthropology student. Similarly, while having coffee with one of my coworkers who had quickly become a friend, I was told about topics and views that had been discussed among the group during coffee breaks I had not taken part in and these views contrasted with what had been told to me previously. I couldn't tell if these differences were done on purpose, but it again reminded me of my perceived role as a researcher.

There are, of course, prerequisites that determine the researchers status when starting fieldwork (Yanow 2009). In my case being a native Swiss German speaker and a local to the city where I conducted my fieldwork, I started my research with more of a head start than anthropologist who studies distance cultures and needs to learn the language first.

The downside of this, however, is the threat of forgetting about the fieldwork while working. The researcher needs to keep in mind his/her own role with respect to his/her evolution and progressive integration into studied setting. As time in the field went by, it became more and more difficult to critically analyze events as a change in priorities had occurred. In my case, around Christmas time when everybody was especially busy, I realized

at some point that I had forgotten about my role as a researcher and had instead been engrossed with my projects at work and preparations for the Christmas holidays. Here I agree with Yanow who claims that "distance is equally as important as closeness" (2009, 101). For that, spending some time away from the field – during holidays, for example – can help in regaining distance.

2.6. Challenges After the Field

Once fieldwork is finished, the remaining process of writing the thesis is "essentially about fostering, preserving, cultivating, and conveying the surprises that the ethnographer experienced in the field" (Yanow 2009, 106). Here I agree with Yanow once again. When doing so, however, it proved important for me to remember that the context in which I write may have a biasing influence on what I write. My research is embedded in a triangular relation between myself, the human ecology division at Lund University, where the study will be handed in, as well as the CR team at Swisscom on whom the study focuses. The main identified influences in this relation are my strong personal interest for individual perception and construction of reality, which are very much influenced by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's majors work (1991), as well as my undergraduate studies in human geography, anthropology and English literature and linguistics which have left me with an interest in language, culture and an mode of analysis influenced by American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973).

Besides my personal influence, the fact that I am writing about Swisscom spurred my ambition to write a thesis that allows the CR team to self-reflect. In addition, it was demanded that they have permission to inspect my thesis before publication. If this will have influenced the outline of my thesis is difficult to judge while still being in the writing process. Lastly, it is important to consider the locus of study where the thesis will be defended. The human ecology division at Lund University is, in my understanding, a place where very critical views on capitalistic lifestyles with a revolutionary rather than reformative approach to change prevail. My topic being embedded in a reformative attitude, I have felt much unease since the beginning of my work, fearing that my thesis would be regarded as not critical enough and as being too much integrated in capitalist economy in its conceptual approach. During the initial phase of my study, this has driven me to always look for a way of pointing fingers and criticizing the strategy of CSR as such. After realizing this bias, however, I have been able to weaken this urge, focussing instead on the dynamics of CSR at Swisscom.

3. Theories and Concepts

In approaching the topic of this thesis, I draw from Berger and Luckmann's theory on the social construction of reality (1991) with a particular focus on how subjective realities are constructed, maintained and transformed. Furthermore, with regard to CSR theory, I use Wayne Visser's CSR 2.0 theory (2014), which has influenced me when choosing the questions discussed in the focus group meeting. Last but not least, I define the two concepts of 'culture' and 'sustainability' as I often use the concepts.

3.1. Berger and Luckmann's Social Construction Theory

According to Berger and Luckmann (1991), reality is a social construction that is shared among individuals. Individuals, despite the possibility of perceiving multiple realities, rely on an intersubjective reality, a singular reality that "sharply differentiates everyday life from other realities of which [the individual is] conscious" (ibid., 37). The individual maintains this singular reality by means of habitualisation making "it unnecessary for each situation to be defined 'anew" (ibid., 71).

Further, this reality, that is the individual's perceptions of the world, is shared with others through objectification, one case of objectification being language, or, more generally, signs. As such, "the language used in everyday life continuously provides [the individual] with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for [him/her]" (ibid., 34-35). For example, the words used to address a person of authority are one objectification that manifests a certain reality. Language thus reflects and participates in the construction of the subjective reality.

In turn, various individuals' reciprocal typification of a habitualized shared reality results in institutionalization. In Berger and Luckmann's theory, then, 'institutions' refer to the manifestation of "collectivities containing considerable numbers of people" (ibid., 73) who share a reality. An institution can be the institution of marriage, a company or any other collectivity. The term therefore differs in meaning from the 'institutions' we consider outside of Berger and Luckmann's theory.
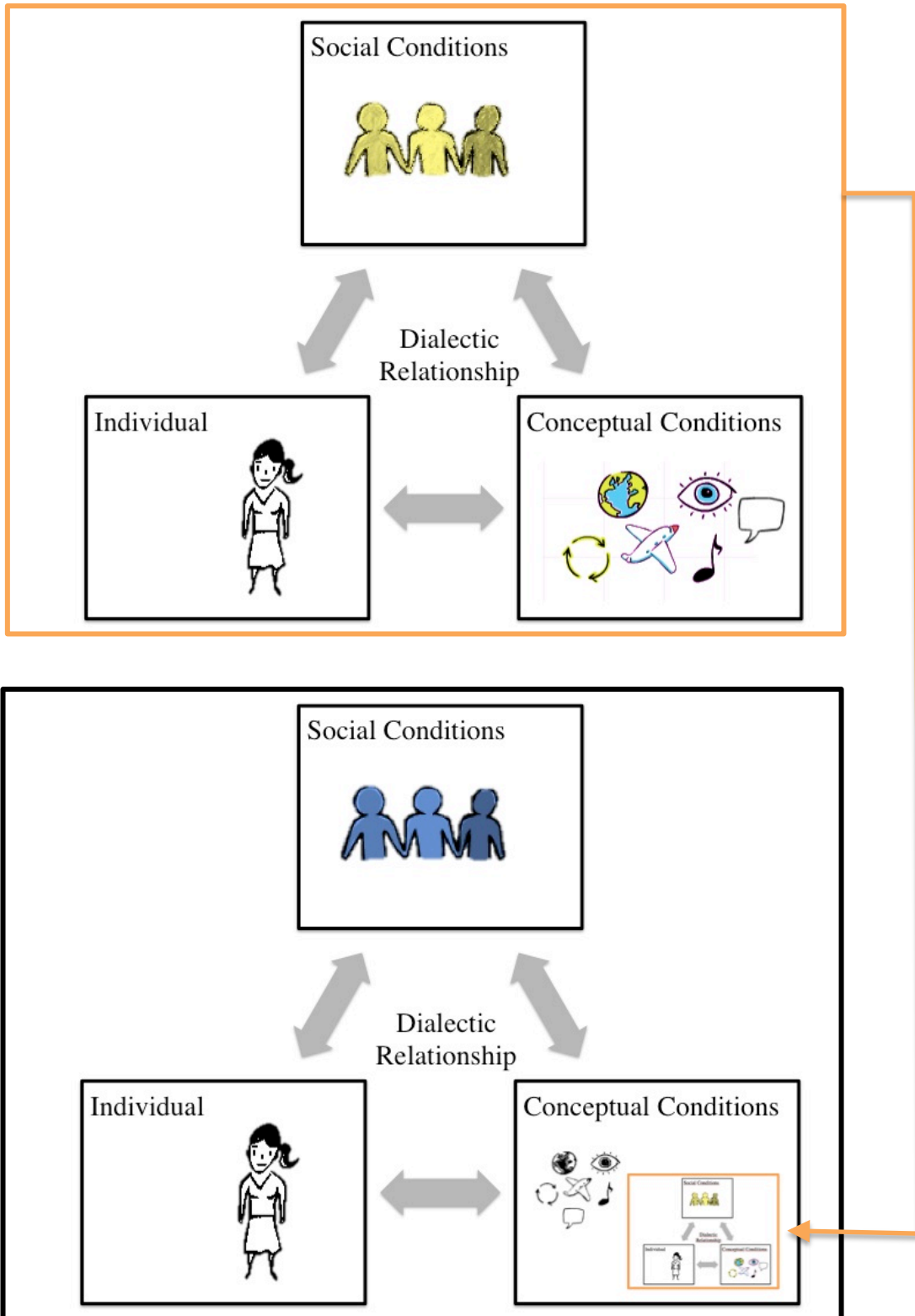
Figure 1: An individual's subjective reality and the transformation to a new subjective reality.

For the scope of this thesis, it is important to understand that subjective realities further result from a dialectic relationship between the individual, the social conditions (i.e. significant others) and, integrated into the social conditions, the conceptual conditions, as for example language, ideas, meaning, signs, symbols, etc, (see figure 1), meaning that while significant others and the order of objectifications, as symbolised by the icons, uphold and maintain the individuals' subjective reality, with his/her own conceptual conditions, the individual acts as significant other to the collectivity of an institution.

Berger and Luckmann further claim that, although individuals put effort into maintaining it, a subjective reality can be abandoned for another if the structure of the new reality's conditions is plausible. As was the case for the initial plausible structure, the new structure "will be mediated to the individual by means of significant others" (ibid., 177) and through objectification. This process is most apparent when a person converts to a new faith, displacing one plausible structure, that is, a religion, for another. Besides taking on a new plausible structure, the process of transforming the subjective reality also entails that "the old reality, as well as the collectivities and significant others that previously mediated it to the individual, must be reinterpreted within the legitimating apparatus of the new reality" (ibid., 179). As illustrated in figure 1, the former social and conceptual conditions must be integrated into the new conceptual conditions since the two subject realities otherwise stand in conflicts.

3.2. Culture

To analyze how people and societies see the world and act in it, anthropologists employ the concept of culture. According to Edward Burnett Tylor, culture can be seen as the "complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (1891, 1). Besides the material cultural expressions of a society – the arts and performances, for example, culture in anthropology studies thus encompasses systemic and less tacit aspects of a cultural group. As such, anthropology and other social sciences base their research on the theory that different societies make sense of the world differently, creating different actions and patterns of behaviour that with their own logic.

Further, Geertz explains that „culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviours, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be … described " (1973, 14). This being said, people are embedded in these contexts and at the same time the "holders" of the ideas emanating from the contexts (Dietz and Burns 1992, 188). Said differently, a person exists in a constant, dialectical

relationship between the personal worldview and the cultural context 'out-there', a relationship that is ever changing. They are, as Geertz claims, "animals suspended in webs of significance [they themselves have] spun" (Geertz 1973, 5). Thus, a people's cultures are constructions in which they realize themselves and based upon which they act.

3.3. Sustainability

The concept of sustainability, literally "the ability to sustain", refers to keeping a status at a certain level or rate (Oxford English Dictionary), be that a lifestyle or a company's developments. It is thus a rather ambivalent term. This is why I prefer the German term of "Zukunftsfähigkeit" (literally, the ability of having a future; coined by sociologist Harald Welzer (2011)), as it expresses better that the object worth sustaining is our future.

Another way of defining the concept of sustainability entails considering in what way society is currently unsustainable. An important number of academics (Marx 1887; Bauman 2005; Moran 2010; Crocker and Lehmann 2013; IPCC 2014; Plumwood 2002) contend that the primary cause of our current unsustainability lies in today's capitalist market economy. Seen in the constructivist light, capitalist economy and our current market logic are not natural but a constructed entity with its values, norms and discourse. Economic anthropologists have demonstrated how there are different ways in which persons in a society transact in different ways, and having different views and beliefs about these transactions (Carrier 2005). Richard Wilk distinguishes "three ways that societies integrate the economy into society - ... Reciprocity, redistribution, exchange" (1996, 7). Hence, Capitalist economy is one of numerous economies possible.

According to James G. Carrier based on Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (2001), the current market economy differs from other economies in that it is "disembedded from the social matrix" and „commercialise[s] and commoditise[s] all goods and services in terms of a single standard, money" (2005, 14). Further, as pointed out by Karl Marx, capitalism constitutes of its own internal dynamics creating power relations and inequalities (1887) thereby also affecting our reason and resulting in ecological denial (Plumwood 2002). Put differently, these opinions contend that the logic of market economy penetrates all aspects of society and will be detrimental to ecosystems, as well as resulting in climate change, poverty, inequality, corruption (Visser 2014).

Viewed in that light, "the debate about resource scarcity, biodiversity, population and ecological limits is ultimately a debate about the 'preservation of a particular social order rather than a debate about the preservation of nature per se'" (Harvey 1996, 148 in Banerjee

2008, 65). The concept of sustainability pinpoints a much larger issue connected to present economy and its effects on society.

3.4. Visser's CSR 2.0 Theory

In his book *The Stages of CSR* (2014) writer, speaker, academic and advisor Visser presents a theory that distinguishes two general phases of CSR, CSR 1.0 and CSR 2.0, claiming that CSR 1.0 has failed in its attempt to make progress with regard to sustainability issues. He further argues that this failure results from four flawed stages of CSR 1.0 that he identifies as being defensive, charitable, promotional and strategic CSR. Let me define them one after the other.

While defensive CSR describes a type of CSR "in which all corporate sustainability and responsibility practices—which are typically limited—are undertaken only if and when it can be shown that shareholder value will be protected as a result" (ibid., 9); charitable CSR uses philanthropy to enhance competitive context, to align social and economic goals and to improve a company's long-term business prospects. Addressing context enables a company not only to give money but also leverage its capabilities and relationships in support of charitable causes'" (ibid., 11); promotional CSR uses its activities solely to further the company's brand, trust, and reputation and is therefore often viewed as greenwashing by external parties (ibid., 2); and strategic CSR which „means relating CSR activities to the company's core business, often through adherence to CSR codes and implementation of social and environmental management systems, which typically involve cycles of CSR policy development, goal and target setting, programme implementation, auditing and reporting" (ibid., 14).

Because all four have the potential to limit the company in its CSR endeavour, Visser advocate to a shift from CSR 1.0 to CSR 2.0, which he qualifies as transformative. This transformative CSR encompasses in turn five principles: responsiveness, scalability, circularity, creativity and glocality. While, responsiveness is about moving beyond a stakeholder-driven approach, instead responding to issues that surpass stakeholders, such as for example global issues, scalability describes a CSR approach, where sustainability criteria are systematically taken into consideration in all processes and aspects of the company. Further, circularity takes a 'cradle-to-cradle' approach, by for instance taking into consideration supply chains and recycling of products and services. Creativity implies that CSR's obsession with standards and ratings limits the scope of possible, creative undertakings. Lastly, glocality refers to the notion of thinking global and acting local which

means that companies, while being conscious of global issues and systems, need to "tailor context-specific solutions" (ibid., 52).

In sum, Visser considers CSR to be a process that can have its flaws. As much as wrong intentions can constrain a company's CSR to be unsuccessful in its goals, CSR can also help a company transform itself to become more sustainable.

4. Ethnography

4.1. General Background

Although for my analysis I will not use all the material from this section, I think that it will help the reader situate the context of my fieldwork. By describing the company's history, its position in Swiss society as perceived by employees and my personal surrounding, I hope to give the reader a glimpse of life at Swisscom. For more information about the official picture communicated by the company, I advise to visit the company's website, which is translated to English.

Starting its operations in 1852 as the first telegraph service between Zurich and St. Gallen, Swisscom AG has had a long history marked with significant changes and is currently, before the companies Sunrise and Salt, Switzerland's biggest telecommunication company offering internet, phone and television services. In fact, the company's 2014 annual report presents the three aspects economy, ecology and society, stating that in 2014, Swissom had a net revenue of 11'703 million CHF, increased its energy efficiency by 26.4% and employed 21'125 full time positions (Swisscom Ltd 2014). It can be argued though, that the company owes its size and influence to its status as almost-federal telecommunication company, meaning that the Swiss confederation holds a majority of shares.

Although business at Swisscom is considered slow and bureaucratic by most its employees, during the years the company has administered several fundamental changes with success. On the level of operations, Swisscom entered the stock market in 1998 and the TV business in 2007, decisions that according to one of my informants were crucial to the company's survival. Furthermore, the company's culture saw a fundamental change a couple of years ago, as all company employees changed from addressing each other on a last-name-basis and with a formal "Sie" to interacting on a first-name-basis and informal "du". Being Swiss myself, I argue that this shift to informal address constitutes a fundamental change in the otherwise formal Swiss society.

With regard to infrastructure, there are three different categories of Swisscom buildings: the Swisscom shops, the telephone exchange centers, and the office buildings. The Swisscom shops, where customers can purchase products and services, are present in every Swiss city, sometimes in more than one location. In Bern, for example, four Swisscom shops offer their services to the 140'000 inhabitants and the additional 100'000 commuters.

The shops have undergone much change during the last years. For example, before, when entering the shop, the customer needed to retrieve a number from a machine and then wait until served. Nowadays, shop assistants welcome each customer, an Ipad in their hand, and redirect the persons depending on their needs. It is accompanied by a new interior design and new approach to exhibiting mobile devices. Instead of displaying devices with their price tag, more emphasis is put on the experience one can have with the device. The goal of this change was, as an employee told me, to make Swisscom more customer-oriented and to enhance shop-experience. With that, the company wanted to change from selling devices to selling experience.

Another category of Swisscom buildings consists of 900 telephone exchange centers spread across Switzerland. These centers were used to redirect phone calls in the past. Now that these operations are done electronically, much of the space has become superfluous. On average, from a building of three storeys only 1/3 is still in use, the rest having been emptied over the years. These surfaces are now being sold or rented out in order to reduce costs and free spatial resources.

Finally, Swisscom uses management offices in all linguistic parts of the country where much of the activities are happening in the German speaking cities of Zurich, Basel, and Bern, as well as in the French speaking Lausanne.

Even though headquarters are located in Worblaufen, near Bern, this status often goes unnoticed, maybe for its peripheral location and because I have never heard anyone refer to the building as headquarters. As I worked there during my fieldwork it is worth a description. The building itself is shaped like a grid structure. In order to enter the building every employee needs to cross tube-shaped plastic gates, considered overrated by most employees I talked to. In Switzerland, security is considered evident in public and official life. In fact, the seven federal council members – the Swiss equivalent to a country's president – move around Switzerland unguarded. Likewise, Swisscom's CEO Urs Schäppi, a down-to-earth, friendly looking man in his 50ies, meets his coworkers on a seemingly equal hierarchy level. One day, as he was having a presentation to a group of employees, I remember him taking the stairs instead of the elevator, together with a conglomerate of employees – myself amongst them – and up we went chitchatting along the way without any reminder that we were walking up the stairs with the CEO of a 20'000 people company. It must be noted, though, that this feeling was facilitated by the fact that Swisscom' policy of addressing everyone by their first name extends to him, as well.

Therefore, to come back to the entrance of the Worblaufen complex, still entering the three-storey building through a gate with double doors today gives me the queasy feeling of entering a security wing and not an office building.

The gates open to a long corridor closed by a glass wall on the left and cement, grey walls on the right from which four, identical looking corridors branch off. From these five corridors, office spaces and meeting rooms branch off again to both sides, creating a grid structure. While the corridors branching off from the first corridor are color-coded by means of non-descript light tubes and each attributed an alphabetic letter, the corridors off of these are number-coded. Thus, the first corridor after the gates is corridor A and red, the next B and blue, etc. And from these latter corridors, the first offices to either side hold the number 1, the second 2, etc. Because the letters and light codes are positioned in discreet locations, though, it is not unusual that external and internal employees are getting lost in the grid. In fact, one co-worker used to curse his way to the right meeting room, exclaiming how incapable Swisscom was at creating a logical numbering of meeting rooms.

The CSR team's office is located in D2, so at the far side of the building. The corporate responsibility team is situated in the same office as the communications team. The GCR-COM and GCR-CR teams together form the Group Communications and Responsibility (GCR). Here, let me note that each team at Swisscom is labelled with abbreviations that designate the team's hierarchical attribution. These abbreviations are mostly three letter abbreviations and put together, create long tales of personal identifiers. In my case, for example, while the identifier for my first work was INI-ON-GIM-PLG, my identifier at the CSR department was GCR-CR. Needless to say, that it takes much time until a fresh employee gets the grip on these abbreviations.

The GCR-CR office space consists of eight isles of six desks and another room with meeting rooms and additional isles of desks. The isles in the first room are formed in two lines with a corridor space between the long side and storage space on the broad side. The Corporate responsibility group occupies the first two isles. Because of Swisscom policy, in principle all desks are shared but an implicit order exists for half the desks, where the CR team members who have been with the company for a couple of years leave their things. However, because the different team members spend much time in meetings inside or outside the building, most desks are very often empty.

Because Swisscom and many of its teams are spread across the country, the company has been pushing its employees to use electronic communication solutions. A couple of years

ago, all landline connection to the collaborators' desks were replaced with a mobile connection called lync. During the transition period, and according to one of the employees, apprentices "went from team to team, explained how the new technology worked and gently took away the actual phone from people". This account made me realize to what extent people had been used to having their desk and their landline.

Alongside the digitalisation of the phone, the entire company is currently moving from local file storages to a unified cloud solution, where all files are stored remotely, thus being accessible from everywhere and – unless restricted access – to everyone. Like the shift from landlines to mobile voice over IP, this shift is also penetrative, which is why Swisscom has created a group called Future of Collaboration (FCO) to help change company culture from having localized knowledge and a behind-the-doors approach to a shared knowledge and open-access approach.

One reason for this shift to a more virtual form of collaboration is that Swisscom has been trying to reduce their travel costs. By using the electronic collaboration technologies, it is possible to attend online meetings from all parts of Switzerland, which has in turn facilitated contact with many different departments and teams of the company that would otherwise be geographically remote. I myself am in contact with coworkers that I have never met in person.

After describing the internal functioning of the company, let us turn to Swisscom as perceived employer. Swisscom, although often criticized for being too expensive by many of my friends, coworkers and the media (see for example Roos 2015), is perceived as a good employer. With its high salaries and attractive offers for continuing education, many employees have stayed with the company throughout their career. As one of my co-workers states: "Our working conditions are really excellent. I think it is not just the monetary remuneration, but also the human side, the fact that I feel valued as employee." The person later added, "at Swisscom it is really the human being who is in the center".

This is echoed in the Swisscom games, which have been taking place bi-annually, as well as the move! programme. While the Swisscom games, a sort of intra-company mini-Olympics, take place in different cities and offer a wide selection of sports and social activities, as well as celebration events and courses, move! is a platform run by collaborators for collaborators. There, everyone with an idea for an activity can organize an offer for his/her fellow employees. Swisscom supports this by having a team that coordinates the activities and by sponsoring parts of the cost.

However, others perceive Swisscom as merciless when it comes to letting people go. Like many other companies, Swisscom is influenced by the global economy and bows under the pressure of economical difficulties. After the crisis in 2008, for instance, Swisscom cut almost 500 full time positions (Swisscom Ltd 2009), which has left many people I personally know angry. In Switzerland, the employment-situation is considered secured by most people as the country has a current unemployment rate of 3.4% (Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaft SECO 2015, 4). Therefore, employees can consider loosing an employment as personal failure.

In sum, Swisscom is a company with a long history and has undergone much change both in its operations and work style. Today, a big part of the work is carried out electronically and coworkers are often mobile and working in different locations. With this general background in mind, let us now turn to the CR team and on how it implements sustainability in the company.

4.2. The CR Team

In order to better understand how CSR at Swisscom works, I analyzed the CR team, how it defined its goals, approach, tasks, motivations and the team's current projects, finding that Swisscom pursues ambitious CSR goals by means of a motivated team and through the approach of the triple bottom line, which, so far, has been carried out in successful projects.

While thoughts about sustainability did not exist in the company several decades ago – only indirectly through a couple of coworkers fascinated with making energy use more efficient – sustainability is now being pushed by means of a CSR team (from now on referred to by use of the emic term 'CR team') at Swisscom AG. Now, the CR consists of a team leader, seven sustainability managers, two interns and 4-6 temporary apprentices who all pursue various goals that are presented under a "3-2-1, let's get involved together" slogan. While the company's overall goal is "to be one of Switzerland's most sustainable companies" (Swisscom Ltd 2014) the team has defined six binding goals (see appendix 8.2. for details):

1. Media expertise
2. Works and Life
3. Networked Switzerland
4. Attractive Employer
5. Climate Protection
6. Fair Supply Chain

In order to achieve and legitimise these goals the team uses the triple bottom line (TBL) approach. The TBL approach was coined by academic John Elkington (1997) and encompasses a measuring of the company by looking at the company's economic, social and ecological impact. The TBL approach is deeply anchored in the team member's consciousness insofar as during the interviews, and without any exception, all interviewees made use independently of the TBL to define sustainability and explain how it was possible to achieve sustainability. Furthermore, most interviewees, when describing the TBL, did not refer to it by name but mentioned the importance of a balance between the ecological, economical and social aspects.

Another aspect that interested me in my research was the team member's personal motivation for working in the CR team. Different motivations came up. On the one hand, team members were motivated to change people's values and to motivate them for a more sustainable way of living; on the other hand, team members described how working for the CR team allowed them to further a topic of their interest, as well as offering them an

interesting and challenging work position. Interestingly, these two views differed according to gender. The female interview partners seemed to put more emphasis on helping others. One person told me that her primary motivation for working in the CR team was to get the feeling that she had "contributed to the well-being of society". For her, a successful project depended on happy and fulfilled people walking out of it. Another woman told me that she personally tried to live sustainably and that it distressed her to see other people being wasteful. In contrast, the male interviewees discussed their motivation with more emphasis on their gain. One person, for instance, had joined the team to practice his presentation skills. Another was happy about his position because it meant spending more time developing ideas with partners and coworkers instead of mainly working on the computer as he had done in his former position. Other factors mentioned were the work place and good payment but since they were not often discussed I will not develop this aspect. In general, though, my male interlocutors would not get into more detail about their motivation besides claiming that they were "convinced" about what they did or that they had an "affinity" for the topic.

Besides their motivation, it is interesting to note how the team members perceive their tasks. Agreeing with Dow Votaw (1973, quoted by Kubally and Hedestead 2012, 7) that "the term social responsibility is a brilliant one; it means something, but not always the same thing, to everybody", I was interested in learning how the team members defined their tasks. In summary, the answers to my question were that the main tasks of the CR team consist in convincing Swisscom about sensitizing the company to the topic of corporate responsibility and in influencing Swisscom's strategy and performance in society by means of projects, or using the emic term 'measures'. As one of my informants states:

> For me, corporate responsibility means that one bases its actions on the company's points of contact with interest groups, regardless of being direct or indirect. That one tries to minimize the negative effects on society, ecology and economy, while at the same time utilizing chances for society, the environment and economically.

In order to take responsibility of the company's effects on society, economy and ecology, however, the team members explained that much time and effort is put into convincing the teams and collaborators around them about the necessity of CSR. One informant explained that:

> Half of my personal activities consist of bringing people into the boat of sustainability, so half of it is awareness rising, to explain the relevance. Or to clarify the relevance. It is not like we know everything better and just need to explain it to others … the other half is project work, projects together with the

person in charge in the line, across country different projects. And then, there is the time I use to maintain relationships with partners, externs, and stakeholders.

Hence, the team's main tasks can be summarized as consisting of project work, as well as of persuasion and explanation work within the company.

In order to convince these other teams and people, the members of the CR team follow various strategies – or 'measures' as they call them. Each team member is responsible for several of these projects, which in sum creates a long list of activities and projects. Instead of listing all of these here, let me give you a couple of examples.

Some projects have their audience within the company. For instance, one project of awareness rising consists of sending apprentices to every team meeting of every team at Swisscom, pitching a presentation of half an hour called "hello future dialogue". During these presentations, the presenter first talks about the triple bottom line approach - the basis of the CR approach. Then, the team is asked to define themselves a measure that will lead to more sustainability. Beside this dialogue, lunch cinema sessions are held yearly at different Swisscom office buildings, showing extracts of a movie dealing with sustainability issues, afterwards motivating a discussion about the topic. The idea of this is, according to yet another informant, to have "100-200 collaborators, who engage in the topic of sustainability for one hour. With that you have already planted something again. And these people will infect other people in their surrounding, etc., etc.". For this person, then, having pitches in front of a couple of people, will trigger a ear-to-mouth reaction that will spread the idea of CSR across the company.

Furthermore, the CR team has achieved to build up a vast array of activities that support sustainability and help sensitize people outside of the company. Projects like "give and grow", a corporate volunteering project, "mobile aid", a project that collects old cellphones for sale and donates the money to the SOS Children's Village Foundation, and "Schools to the Web" which connects Swiss public schools to the internet for free, are used inside and outside the company to integrate sustainability ideas into the sphere of individuals' cognitions and views. With projects like these, Swisscom tries to take responsibility and use its network and leverage to support non-profit organizations, and to support the new generations in their education. These different projects have, according to my informants, been successful. Particularly one project, the installation of a new cooling system solution called 'Mistral', thanks to which energy use for cooling exchange centers can be reduced by 90-95%, has been very successful in the company. As I have been told, this achievement has played its part in promoting the CR team to now hold a high-standing position within the company.

In sum, the CR team is a motivated group of people that put their efforts both into projects and into sensitizing other people inside and outside the company about the importance of sustainability. With a triple bottom line approach, they pursue the goal of making Swisscom the most sustainable company in Switzerland.

4.3. CSR as Strategy

Besides the team's motivations and intentions, I was also interested to hear whether the team perceived CSR at a company as a successful strategy to reach sustainability. From various discussions, two reasons in favour of CSR emerged. Not only saw team members a potential in influencing the company's actions to be more sustainable; they also expressed that due to the company's size, big leverage was useful to have an impact in the world.

With regard to the first reason, one person told me that he had experienced the company's ability to influence other actors. To illustrate, he mentioned the example of the flat rates. A couple of years back, Swisscom decided to introduce flat rates in phone plans. The change of payment plans had deep impact on the issue of juvenile indebtedness. As I remember myself, in the 2000s teenagers would receive very high bills because of the number of text messages and calling minutes. "With the new flat rates", my informant explained, "we completely changed the user behaviour of this new technology. … As a result, teenage indebtedness has gone back".

Besides that practical example, team members also saw the possibility of the corporation to become an idol for sustainability by telling stories of inspiration and possibilities. Being sustainable, one person explained to me, does not necessarily mean abstinence. Rather "it is about intelligence and technology and not about having to renounce something. … It is about moving away from a 'you are not allowed to drive a car; you can only take the train' mentality. No. We just need to use cars in a smarter way as we do today". The way to influence people, he continues, is to

> create idols. It is the same as with children. They also need their idols and stories that are convincing. Children look up to sportsmen and singers and I think there is need for role models. [Sustainability] needs to become a status symbol, something that you want … well this is now not a good example for sustainability, but if you look at the influence of Apple. These are a few people, a few creative people in the lead of a strong company who can trigger a lot.

Another person explained it was about "infesting" people. "Like Apple and IPhone and stuff, it needs to address people's hearts".

Additionally, the CR team members see much potential in using a corporation to reach sustainability. In fact, most seem to be working on this topic not only because they believe in making a change for the better, but also because they believe that Swisscom, as a big company, has much leverage in the market, and is with that an important actor that can influence people's behaviour. One informant described his work at Swisscom as "taking part in the champions-league of CSR". Before the current position he had worked in a company with less financial resources and a weaker market position and he was intrigued by the challenge and possibilities of a national company with many resources, a big market share and much leverage. This resonates with Elizabeth Campbell's view on corporations as she states

> unlike that of other entities, corporate influence is better situated to penetrate all aspects of social, cultural, and political life through a wide variety of means. In addition to their power to influence the public through advertising and through the control and influence of the mainstream media, corporations have exceptional influence on public policy. (2009, 72)

Hence, seen in this light, corporation appear to be powerful and it can be argued that CSR is the company's enabling force to "emphasise (and protect) capitalism's inherent human and sustainable character" (de Neve 2008, 1).

4.4. On Becoming Significant

In order to fully achieve the above-mentioned impact and use the company's leverage, the team needs to grow in significance both to the company and other actors. Therefore, I investigated the team's development, finding that specific individuals but also external influences have affected the team's position.

In the beginning of CSR, the discussion mainly circled around the necessity of CSR altogether. One of my informants recalls:

> In the beginning, in the first five years, the question was always whether we need [CSR] at all. … My position almost got cancelled but then somehow they saved me. That was pretty strenuous.

With the years, however, the CR team has become more and more legitimate. One person told me how the former CEO Carsten Schloter had sensed that using CSR would be important for differentiation on the market and that himself had a tendency to regard thoughtful use of the environment important. According to one informant, the CEO "advocated the topic of CSR and positioned it every time he could".

Additionally, the former team manager, a young and ambitioned man, was successful at making the team renowned. Interestingly, this former team manager, in contrast to the current one, has often been described to me as ambitioned and very persuasive but very business oriented and without any special penchant for the topic of sustainability. As one person described him:

> He does it with any kind of team. And that is why he is also very good at what he does. He came with another motivation than many of us. … His motivation … was to develop the team regardless of the topic.

The context of this statement implies that the former manager was not a very sustainability-loving person. Rather was he interested in developing a team regardless of the nature of the team's activities.

Besides the importance of the team managers, one person described a general evolution of CR in a company:

> CR 1.0 was nice brochures, a few efficient vehicles and the NGOs as opponent. And this are NGOs as opponents who say, ok they tell us we should do less and less, or, they don't understand anything from our business. And that is CR 1.0, also from the NGOs' side. There, they claim … as long as they go to work by car and not by bike, they are a filthy company, if you look at it from an absolute point of view and if you take this as the moral bar to determine if you want to work for the company or not. … And then CR 2.0 is, when you work together with an NGO to reduce the distance driven to you customers from 70 mio to 50 mio kilometers per year.

Today, the team also has pitches in all board meetings, as well as higher up the hierarchy, where team members try to place the idea of CSR in the discussions about the company's strategy and 'roadmaps' consisting of the next steps and goals. Since this access is restricted, I myself was never allowed in one of these meetings, I argue that this depicts that the topic is regarded as important in the company.

In sum, CSR at Swisscom seems to be considered important. The company invests money into staff that drives CSR through numerous projects and allows them to systematically be part of the discussions about the company's strategies. However, besides some statements claiming that the CR teams hold a good position within Swisscom, other voices see problems in the team's current reputation and position.

4.5. Challenges and Apprehensions

The challenges and apprehensions discussed here both came up during the fieldwork and interviews from the informants and were raised by me as a result of my literature research. The main challenges that came up entailed the team's priorities, the commoditization of

sustainability as an idea and an alienation from intrinsic motivation, an experienced imbalance in the triple bottom line approach, and a lack of sustainability's integration into company operations.

4.5.1. Setting Priorities

There has been recurrent talk that the boss of group communications tends to forget the existence of the CR team. One person claimed that this is because the boss is "not very sustainable himself". Another person commented that the boss "constantly needed to make sure the topic was not forgotten on the corporate management level of the company hierarchy". This indicates that, with regard to sustainability, the GCR boss's intrinsic motivation is not very high.

Besides noticing a frustration due to lack of visibility, another discussion topic consisted of the fear for shifting the priorities from being a team of experts to being a communication and events team. According to an employee it is presumed that the CR team was affiliated to the communications team because the team had been struggling to communicate enough and therefore were to get the communications team's support. During one of the quarterly information meetings of the communication and responsibility group, however, it was communicated that the upcoming skills courses would focus on communicative skills such as presenting with visuals and writing article or scripts.

This focus on communication and neglect of CSR matters received much attention in a CR team workshop and during the following days. One person, for example, claimed that it was high time to remind the GCR boss of the nature of the CR team, that is that the CR team was a team of experts and not a communications team. On another occasion, another person exclaimed how ridiculous the thought was of having a physicist concerned with energy efficiency learn how to write a video script. Furthermore, during the workshop, another person described how he was starting to feel more of an event manager, when looking at his activities. Indeed, other team members agreed that the team had lately focused on organizing events and activities that would sensitize and communicate issues around sustainability and corporate responsibility. The team leader, after listening to the different opinions in the workshop, then concluded the matter by raising the question that has been widely discussed also in academic research on CSR. "So you are saying," he said, "we have started talk more and do less?"

4.5.2. Commoditizing Sustainability and Alienating From Intrinsic motivations

As the team expressed signs of troubles and challenges, I further investigated the idea of CSR at Swisscom by analyzing the team members' discourse, their TBL approach and the overall integration of CSR in the company.

Since language and discourse are an important aspect of culture (Geertz 1973), looking at discourse allowed me to analyze the dynamics between the the CR team and the company's other interests. Discourse entails linguistic elements as well as "(1) anything beyond the sentence, (2) language use, and (3) a broader range of social practice that includes non-linguistic and nonspecific instances of language" (Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton 2001, 1). Discourse, then, goes beyond the meaning of the words a person uses, encompassing also the analysis of the context in which the words are spoken and with that, discourse can tell us a lot about the context people are in. Regarding the CR team's discourse, I noticed that a commoditization of sustainable topics as well as a strong alienation of intrinsic personal conviction from the arguments used by the team member was present.

As the term commoditization suggests, the process turns things into commodities that can be sold and bought. In the CR team, instead of expressing moral and emotional attributes as sometimes connected to discourses about sustainability, the vocabulary and discourse employed by the CR team are consistent with the discourse of the company. According to one of my informants, Swisscom workers and Swiss people in general recurrently use words like "optimize" and "ameliorate". Furthermore, informants underlined on different occasions that in their work performance they were "relatively emotionless", that "in a company, in the end, one needs to sell sustainability for business. In most cases, self-motivation is restricted, especially if it costs something". One of my interlocutors also countered my vocabulary as I was talking to him about stakeholder partnerships. According to him, words like "help others" and "useful" were unfit for a successful discourse in topics connected to sustainability. He explained that he abstained from arguing with a "bloody resource heart", showing too much passion about the topic. He explained that it was better to use stakeholder groups with an affinity for sustainability as lever in the argument than personal conviction. Rather than out of motivation, it was important to find the external stakeholder, whom you can use as basis for your argument and "sell" the arguments to the company by showing how it can at the same time "make profit and further its reputation".

Besides this more personal and intrinsic approach to sustainability, acknowledging the topic as important for its own sake, most projects and topics undergo a commoditization while being integrated into the company. Let me give you an example. During one of the interviews, my interview partner brought up the topic of "added value" that enhanced a product with an ecological or social aspect. My understanding for this added value was that it added value for society. The product was sustainable which meant that buying the product instead of another would enhance sustainability. This, however, did not seem to be the case. My interlocutor uncovered the misunderstanding by explaining that the added value was to be attributed to sales chances. Having a product with added value meant that it would be easier to sell. Thus, crucial was not the attribute "more sustainable and good for society" but the "better chance of being sold and making profit".

When sharing these observations about commoditization and alienation to CR team members during the focus group meeting, however, one person contested my theories claiming that this 'business-like' talk had been a conscious choice on their part and that he saw this argumentative strategy as an advantage. He explained that while in the beginning, they used "sustainability talk", and with that "experienced much less success than once [they] started to use the "commercial talk"". According to him, it was easier to get into contact with the departments and they felt better understood in their ideas because they spoke the language of the company. This is echoed by Frank De Bakker, Peter Groenewege and Frank Den Hond's (2005) paper, suggesting that market logic recognizes certain terms and arguments, while discarding others for being irrelevant. At the same time, though, the group agreed that using commercial discourse impeded their sustainability engagement, because they had to adapt to the department's needs. It appears then, that complying with the dominant language not only brought them the advantage of being considered significant but also weakened the team's significance as being subservient to the departments.

Furthermore, when I asked my informants whether this alienation appeared conflicting to them, they all answered, that implementing sustainability practices into a company was not a picnic, that you had to be pragmatic about it and keep a professional stance toward the topic. Here I wonder, though, whether their responses, instead of being personal convictions, are excuses for not having to deal with that question?

4.5.3. Imbalanced Triple Bottom Line Approach

Besides the commoditization and alienation, another point of analysis is the imbalance in the TBL approach. While several interviewees told me that they thought the economic aspect

very often outweighed the social and ecological aspects and that this was something that needed to change in order to be "really sustainable", others, by contrasts, explained that the economic aspect was crucial in order to make social and ecological sustainability possible at all. To them, this premise not only legitimized that activities and decision taking prioritized the economic aspect but also made it a necessity. Either way, though, it is generally acknowledged in the CR team that the economic aspect outweighs both the ecological and social dimensions.

On one side, this imbalance is expressed by the fact that there are no designated environmental managers for the economic aspect. The different team members work either on ecological or on social issues, giving the impression that the economic aspect is represented by the rest of Swisscom. In this constellation, the team of around ten people seems to face a company of 20'000 employees. Needless to say, that this stance is unequal in terms of corpus proportion.

This inequality is furthermore echoed by the team's manner of expressing their position. While one person explained that she often feels like a bulldog[4], telling other people that they need to take sustainability factors into account and these people then feeling annoyed by yet another prescription. Likewise, I have often heard the team leader say that he "will try to protect the team", making sure that neither their claims get lost nor the team itself will be broken up. These metaphors of protection and defence express an underlying struggle within the company between the CR team and the rest of the company and, as a way of interpreting, could be equalled to the struggle between the social and ecological and the economic, in this case, the CR team standing for the social and ecological and the remaining company for the economic aspect.

4.5.4. Lack of Integration in the Company's Processes

When looking at the integration of CSR as an idea in the company's processes, some of the team members also criticized that, although sustainability thoughts may well be integrated into the mission statement, CR is still not fully implemented in the integrative strategy of the company. When a remitter launches a new project, this mandate is given to a project manager pool. The leaders of these pools take on the mandate and define the different work packages for the project. These work packages are then given to the project manager assigned to the specific project. For latter manager, the general conditions significant to his evaluation are time, budget and requirements.

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[4] Bulldog, as in the German word for „Wadenbeisser".

According to one of these managers, however, sustainability aspects are never part of the requirements. These sustainability aspects, according to the team leader of the managers, the person responsible for matching the right manager with the right project, only comes up in the checklist that a board called "quality circle" has to go through every project. There, in case a project is considered relevant for sustainability, this board is to contact the CR team for assistance.

However, the leader of the project pool explained to me that in case the verdict on relevance was wrong, nothing really happened. In almost all cases, it would even go unnoticed. He further emphasized how theory and practice were two different things, which leads me to think that sustainability theory is attributed marginal importance in the development sphere of the company. Overall, then, it is interesting to see how in the development processes nobody's success is bound to contributing to sustainability through their projects.

When I asked the CR team members about the integration of CSR factors in processes, they explained that CR would only influence the business model when it is integrate in all processes, which is why they had integrated CSR factors into the checklists. They had done so, because the time needed to oversee all projects had strained their time resources.

Further, he explained that they had put in a lot of effort into shaping the processes with the result that they had especially influenced the buying department while lacking in strength in departments like product development or human centered design services. Nevertheless, one informant claimed that in order to reach sustainability, sustainability as well as responsibility criteria would need to be a binding factor in every process of the company, regretting that sustainability was currently not a mandatory step.

4.6. Preliminary Discussion

The four challenges discussed above are also discussed elsewhere and in connection to views that consider these challenges to be inherent limitations that maintain the present economic logic. According to these views, the capitalist logic is autopoietic, meaning that the system maintains itself and that every characteristic of the system, also strategies to transform it, in the end reinforces the system.

The topics of commoditization and alienation, for example, are taken up in Marx's concept of alienation (1961), or Val Plumwood's concept of "remoteness" which she identifies to be one factor in the production of unsustainability (2002). Moreover, following

Welzer's argument, economic logic is no longer just attached to market economy as a sphere separate from other spheres but has been integrated into the private sphere and individuals' cognitions (2011). It seems then that the commoditization, process, once employed, also spreads to other domains of our lives and makes us think and act accordingly.

Welzer further claims that individuals are unconscious of this process:

Naturally, individuals involved in such processes are not aware of them – regulations of this kind take place in practice, not in the consciousness – but, for exactly that reason, they are all the more powerful. They manifest themselves in long-term behavioural changes, which also point to a reconstruction of the internal state of mind, of the psychology of individuals, over the course of the civilization process. (ibid., 14)

Thus, the alienation as noted in the discourse above, appears to self-justify itself. As much as corporations are "disembedded 'from any one culture and any one environment [and] owe no loyalty to any community, any government or any people anywhere in the world'" (The Ecologist 1994, 79, quoted by Bryant and Bailey 1997, 105), employees' behaviour in the workplace is disconnected from personal motivations and arguments. Or, according to Timothy R. Kuhn and Stanley Deetz (2008, 183), „moral concerns are relegated to the private domain".

Since these processes of alienation go unnoticed, we ought to wonder to what extent "[t]hese discourses also tend to shield themselves from serious critique, [as] they naturalize dichotomies, and they constitute themselves as cornerstones of rationality" (Everett and Neu 2000, 15). In adapting the strategy to the dominant discourse, every potential critique or other form of discourse is prevented. Even more so, the hegemony of economic discourse defies that there exists such a thing as other discourses.

To illustrate this, French philosopher Baudrillard in his work *The Consumer Society* (1998, 190) draws on the parable of the person who sells his shadow to the devil to show how this alienation results in the "human being is not merely a being diminished and impoverished but left intact in its essence: it is a being turned inside out, changed into something evil, into its own enemy, set against itself". He explains that "[a]lienation goes much deeper than [the reassuring fiction of the ‚inner-self']. There is a part of us, which gets away from us in this process, but we do not get away from it. The object (the soul, the shadow, the product of our labour become object) takes its revenge." (ibid., 189) To say this differently, alienation, to Baudrillard, is an active decision that has as result an impoverished state that seems intact but that in the end will be detrimental to us. This seemingly intact state that Plumwood calls a "sado-dispassionate form of … reason" (2002, 2) can therefore be seen as a Trojan horse that

nobody eyes critically. In case of Swisscom the question is whether the decision to commoditize sustainability topics will be detrimental to the cause of the CR team.

In sum, above paragraph show that while the CR team as mediator of sustainability consciously uses strategies to bring across their ideas, it seems that the team has not yet succeeded in all their goals. While Welzer seems to think that capitalist logic has spread to the private domains of individuals, making it inescapable to change one's reality, Baudrillard depicts an individual who is not fully aware of his or her decisions. These complications question the effectiveness of strategies like commoditization. If these strategies manifest the inherent limits to transforming realities, following question arises: Is the CSR endeavour futile?

4.7. On Becoming Transformative

Academics who are adherents of both a critical and reformist perspective, advocate the need for a fundamental change in order to shape a sustainable society. They believe in a holistic approach that shapes "not only corporate practices but also individuals' identities" (Deetz and Kuhn 2008, 180). Plumwood, for instance, argues that „[r]eason has been captured by power and made an instrument of oppression; it must be remade as a tool for liberation" (Plumwood 2002, 14). Further political scientist and sociologist Martin Jänicke claims:

> What is needed in the long term therefore is, firstly, a transition from incremental to radical innovations in which ecologically problematic procedures and products are substituted by unproblematic ones ... We also need, secondly, structural solutions, i.e. solutions of a non-technical nature, changes in the structure of demand and of industry, and, based on these, an ecological structural policy. (2000, 14)

According to these claims, a radical change is needed, one that tackles the problem of unsustainability by its roots, a view also shared by Visser. According to Visser, there is a need to shift to a transformative CSR that he calls CSR 2.0. That is, CSR needs to focus "on understanding the interconnections of the macro level system – society in ecosystems – and changing its strategy to optimise the outcomes for this larger human and ecological system" (2014, 16). Thus he broadens the view from a narrow look at how CSR influences the company's immediate surrounding to a global perspective on CSR's influence on the larger human and ecological system.

When applying Visser's theory on CSR at Swisscom; I argue that the company manifests numerous characteristics as a company in the phase of CSR 1.0, a form of CSR that has, according to Visser, failed to "turn the tide on the environmental, social and ethical crises

that we face" (ibid., 7). The CR team's priorities, the lack of CSR integration into the process, imbalance in the triple bottom line approach, as well as commodification and alienation strategies manifest that at Swisscom, CSR is peripheral to the company's core business and actions.

With regard to the team's perceived threat of simply being used as a communication team, Visser categorises this as being promotional CSR or greenwashing. By this he means "using marketing spin to create an image of responsibility, while failing to change the underlying negative impacts" (ibid., 12). Visser qualifies this promotional character as a potential flaw in CSR, also sometimes called greenwashing, defined as "the creation or propagation of an unfounded or misleading environmentalist image" (Oxford English Dictionary 2015). This description gives the impression that greenwashing is a deliberate choice that a company takes. In the case of Swisscom, though, it is interesting to note that the CR teams perceives greenwashing as threat emanating from forces in the company, as well as the GCR supervisor's low intrinsic motivation for the topic of sustainability other than its extrinsic advantages. Instead, the company's decision for or against greenwashing is rather the result of power dynamics within the company, between different actors.

> But how to make CSR transformative? Visser explains that
>
> transformative CSR is about identifying and tackling the root causes of our present unsustainability and irresponsibility, typically through innovating business models, revolutionising their processes, products and services and lobbying for progressive national and international policies. Practical steps for improving in this stage include conducting full life cycle social and environmental impact assessments for the organisation's products and services, and setting bold CSR targets to inspire action. (2014, 72)

To successfully implement CSR, he sees that changes are necessary on two different levels: the meta-level and the micro-level (ibid., 40). The meta-level consists of changes in "CSR's ontological assumptions or ways of seeing the world" (ibid). The focus group discussed two of these potential changes.

One of the changes discussed in the focus group meeting was how the company could use its political role, since with its significant market share as well as its role as a lobbyist in parliament; Swisscom has the potential to influence actions and opinions of other businesses, parliament as well as customers. The focus group agreed that at present and based on the lobbyist's opinion, Swisscom advocated sustainability in the political sphere when it helped them "make friends" with or benefit from the argument in some other way but stated that they are not interested in postulating a certain opinion that could potentially stir up a discussion.

To illustrate, one employee recalled a discussion with a co-worker about Swisscom's collection of donations for Nepal after the earthquake earlier this year. She wondered why Swisscom had not appealed for aid during the Syrian conflicts in 2014. Apparently, Swisscom chose not to get involved in order to avoid being seen as officially supporting one side in the political conflict.

Despite Swisscom's current disinclination to politically advocate for sustainability, the focus group agreed that there was not only a need for Swisscom to use its position to be a proponent for sustainability in parliament but also when in contact with customers. One person for example, felt the company should lobby for sustainable views in parliament as well as display it prominently in their retail outlets where visibility is currently limited to a mobile aid box off in an out-of-the-way corner.

In general, the group had the feeling that they had already put effort into encouraging Swisscom to advocate for sustainability but that they had had difficulties convincing the sales department to drop products that sold well one of the reasons being a lack of solid arguments. As the focus group explained, to them, "topics such as supply chain are … very difficult to investigate and it is difficult understand where the resources come from". Therefore, it was difficult to argue against using the products in question.

Nevertheless, the group saw this as step in the process and felt that despite their lack in success so far, there was hope for change, especially in light of a few past successes. One of these successes consists of the Swisscom TV service in which Swisscom takes a clear stance against pornographic material. The TV service decided against offering any channels or shows from the pornographic industry.

Besides getting Swisscom to take a political stance for sustainability, another potential development discussed was to get Swisscom to look at sustainability as a holistic and absolute rather than a relative concept. Almost all team members, when asked about the current situation of Swisscom, answered by comparing the company to other companies. Compared to other telecommunication companies or Swiss companies in general, they assured me, Swisscom was overall, a good company where employees were "spoiled".

Even though this comparative approach is essential to identity creation (Sahlin and Wedlin 2008, 223–224) and seems necessary to get team members to identify their work and achievement, some interlocutors noted limitations in that approach. A comparison to other companies, for instance, appeared to be limiting in the sense that it constrained the scope of

their efforts. "If we want to be the most sustainable company in Switzerland," he said, "we need to start comparing ourselves with a Migros or Coop."[5]

According to Visser, however, companies "will be judged on actual social, environmental and ethical performance, i.e. are things getting better on the ground in absolute, cumulative terms" (2014, 41). In light of that, Swisscom would need to define a vision considering their success regarding sustainability in absolute terms. Doing better than the other actors is not enough to ensure a sustainable future. If some "actors" in the world are really good in comparison to others but still have a bad influence, destroying environmental spheres and recreating social inequalities, a sustainable lifestyle is by no means assured.

The outcome of the discussions on this issue indicated that a major challenge was that the people outside of the team do not think holistically and that in the within management, a person with an affinity for sustainability was lacking. As a person stated,

> the problem is also that the others don't think holistically, they think of their market. I think the place where they think most holistically would be the higher boards and bodies. They probably do not only think for themselves.

To that, another responded, that that was not the case and that the CEO presented as pro-sustainability during one-on-one talks with the CSR team leader but that during meetings with top management he seemed more concerned with economic challenges and tended to forget about sustainability. When I asked him, why he believed this was so, my interlocutor contended that this was a question of character. Where the former CEO had been pro-sustainability, his successor was more of a team player and did not constitute the backbone for sustainability who actively championed the cause. Nevertheless, one person observed, that there were numerous managers who both supported and considered sustainability in everything they did and that these people were key in that their support gave the topic credibility in the eyes of other employees and managers.

In conclusion, both the team and Visser consider a transformative CSR possible if the right strategies are used that will make the idea of sustainability more significant. Although we discussed two possible strategies moving forward; using the company's leverage for making political statements and choosing a strategy in line with an ontological perception of sustainability as an absolute phenomenon, I am certain that many others exist that are

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[5] Migros and Coop are two food store chains with shops across Switzerland. They have actively been communicating to their customers about CSR and are considered sustainable by various rankings (i.e. Migros 2015).

deserving of further research. For the following discussion, however, the two points serve as good starting point.

5. Discussion

This thesis suggests that sustainability is integrated into the company's subjective reality. The CR team, as primary mediator, objectifies that idea and, as significant other, transforms the subjective reality of its recipients, that is, other employees in the company or external actors. Further, the thesis suggests that the team's significance results from a dialectic relationship between the CR team, the rest of the company and external actors.

The ethnographic data depicts how both conceptual and social conditions transform an actor's reality. Conceptual conditions consist of ideas and, as noted by Kerstin Sahlin and Linda Wedlin, it is "not so much a case of ideas flowing widely because they are powerful, but rather of ideas becoming powerful as they circulate" (2008, 221). A successful circulation of ideas thus depends on the cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986) of actors. "Ideas become legitimate, popular and even taken for granted as being effective and indispensable as a result of having been adopted by certain actors in the field" (Sahlin and Wedlin 2008, 221). What follows is the realization that "power is partly a matter of 'winning the battle of ideas'" (Schmink and Wood 1987, quoted by Bryant and Bailey 1997, 40).

Consequently, the analysis of CSR at Swisscom, the perceived challenges such as commoditization of sustainability, alienation from intrinsic motivation, the team's priorities, and the imbalance in the triple bottom line approach can be considered a necessary compromise to enable CSR as idea to 'enter the stage'. As Thomas Dietz and Tom R. Burns put it "new rules compatible with existing rules are more readily adopted than new rules that are not compatible" (1992, 190). Using arguments of profit and reputation that clearly belong to market economy, commoditizing sustainability projects and thoughts help the CR team to integrate it into the company's culture. Further, Elkington contends that „because SustainAbility [inc] mainly works, by choice, with business, … language [needs] resonate with business brains" (2004, 1). It is by using business logic, by emphasizing how CSR can help raise both profits and reputation, as well as by talking like the business community spreading the word among their peers, that a CSR team can start convincing a company to change its path.

However, the question remaining is, to what extent will compliance with the recipient's conceptual logic result in the transformation that the proponent, in this case the CR team, originally indented. The neglect of intrinsic motivation in sustainable actions, as well as the reduced picture in which, instead of considering sustainability in a holistic approach, actors

solely consider how sustainability can enhance profit and reputation, raise another question. Can this strategy succeed in transforming the recipient's reality in a lasting manner?

Circulating sustainability in consideration of extrinsic characteristics and not for its own sake also means that if these extrinsic characteristics are found elsewhere, the idea of sustainability may be discarded. For example, sustainability is at the moment a good way of addressing customers with interest in ecological aspects. It is a current buzzword with which products can be sold. If another idea expresses these benefits, companies will adopt that idea and forget about sustainability. By contrast, if sustainability is perceived for its intrinsic values, such as the implementation of a sustainable lifestyle, this is less likely to result. In this light, using extrinsic values as part of a strategy to convince other actors may bear the risk of weakening the importance of sustainability.

Similarly, evaluating the company's sustainability by comparison to other companies may be a good strategy to make the development measurable and may give the CR team members arguments with which they can further sustainability but it also reduces the view on what sustainability as goal entails. Restricting argumentation to a level that co-workers will understand, benefits for profit and reputation, equally restricts the possibility of making apparent how issues surrounding sustainability are interconnected, thereby contributing to what Plumwood calls "remoteness" (2002). Through comparison, actors focus on market advantage instead on a holistic view on sustainability with all its interconnections.

Besides these 'infiltration' strategies as part of the conceptual conditions, social conditions are an influential aspect when realities transform. Just as an idea does not have "intrinsic success criteria" (Sahlin and Wedlin 2008, 221) that will define whether that idea will be powerful, it can be deducted that, in analogy, a significant other is also not intrinsically significant to others. Instead, a 'significant other' becomes more influential when it is supported by other significant others, both inside and outside a company. Based on my research, I suggest that in their support, the former CEO and team leader made the team more powerful. The team often referred to these two people as having been good supporters in legitimizing CSR. According to the current team leader, having the CEO as active supporter, was advantageous in advocating sustainability criteria in company board meetings even in more difficult times. Now, by contrast, the team experiences a lack in supportive significant other. Team members are aware and somewhat worried that at the moment, "there is simply a sustainability freak missing in the higher levels of the company" and consider very recent budget cuts as direct result of this situation.

Furthermore, it seems that Swisscom's employees are still rather ambivalent in their support. While some seem to be interested in and considerate of sustainability issues and contact the team members with propositions on how to make the company more sustainable, others perceive the team as bulldogs that exist to make their job more strenuous and complicated.

In conclusion, the team's influence and position depends on the support of other actors or lack thereof, as well as on the strategy chosen. This dependency does not only go one way. It can be argued that the CR team's power, along with the idea of sustainability, results from a dialectic relationship between the team, other potential significant others, the company's employees and also external actors. While the CR team spreads the idea of sustainability in the company and to external actors, these other entities support or impede the CR team and each other, creating a triangular relationship in which the idea of sustainability circulates (see figure 2). Depending on who favours the idea and how they objectify it can have a disproportional effect on the idea's power on the subjective reality. This triggers a chain reaction that affects whether the idea becomes powerful weakens.
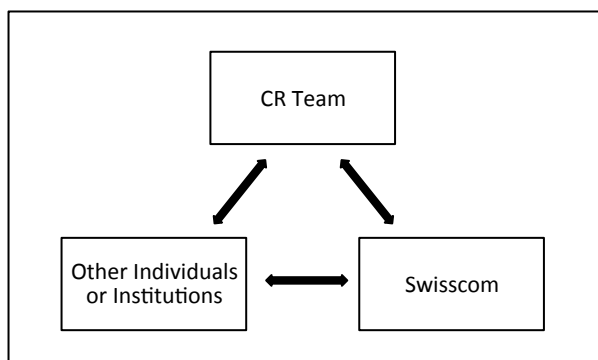

Figure 2: The dialectic relationship between the CR team, the company and other individuals or institutions.

I suggest that, when looking at the circulation of ideas, employees acting upon them results in what from the outside will be perceived as the company's actions. This suggests that a company is not a homogenous actor, inherently malicious as for example portrayed in Joel Bakan's *The Corporation* (2005), but a result of actions and a deliberate effort of communication and marketing specialists to make these multiple actions appear homogenous and emanating from a identifiable being or, put differently, it is a construct with painted face and administered behaviour.

Although I argue that a company can change its behaviour, I contend that these changes are often difficult to identify and evaluate. As such, the question posed by the Polish poet Stanislaw Lee and used by the economist Elkington illustrates the complexity of

understanding big changes like the one a company tries to achieve with CSR. "Is it progress" he asks in reference to sustainable capitalism "if a cannibal uses a fork?" (2004, vii) With this analogy, Elkington suggests that, in spite of appearing impossible, capitalism can become sustainable through a transformation.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Recapitulation and Further Studies

The CR team at Swisscom perceives CSR as good strategy to use the leverage of a large company to create role model stories that will influence other actors. The circulation of sustainability as an idea is the result of interactions between this CR team, the primary mediator of the idea, the rest of the company and external actors. As demonstrated, these relationships are of dialectic nature and thus experience a constant reconfiguration of power relations. We have also seen that influential individuals (i.e. the CEO) play an important part in supporting or impeding the team's position. Furthermore, the team's strategy of interacting with individuals and institutions deeply marks these individuals and institutions in their perception of the CR team as significant other. Thus, as Berger and Luckmann claim (1991), these social and conceptual conditions are key to the transformation of the individual's subjective reality, and, if studied, may therefore reveal invaluable information about how to successfully implement sustainability into the realities of institutions and hence, on their actions.

It is important to note, that above explanation on how CSR influences a company is simplistic. Just as there exists a dialectic relationship between team, company and other actors, these relationships shape and transform realities between each individual in the team, the company and the whole world. In light of the increasing speed of circulating ideas due to Internet and other global communication media, actors that in the past were less powerful now may become more influential in spreading or impeding the circulation of an idea. Therefore, more and contemporary research is needed to understand how ideas circulate on a worldwide scale. With regard to this, a good starting point, I think, would be to draw on existing media research (i.e. De Nies et al. 2012) but, in contrast to Berger and Luckmann's theory, take into consideration also power relations.

Furthermore, this thesis raises a question regarding the inherent logic of circulating ideas. According to the researchers I studied and according to the analysis of my ethnographic data, ideas become powerful depending the prestige of the circulator and the strategy employed. Hence, it would be interesting to investigate whether this logic applies to a capitalistic society only and differs in other cultures or if the logic of how ideas circulate can be considered universal. Likewise, both this thesis and Visser's theory neglect the question of whether the transformation will lead to an autopoietic system, that is, a system entailing CSR that recreates itself without external help.

Therefore, further studies on the circulation of ideas are needed. During my research I focused on the CR team while analyzing the circulation of the idea of sustainability. There are other potentially important actors outside the team, in other departments that could have been studied. Investigating other actors when analyzing the circulation of sustainability as an idea may therefore further our understanding of how power, culture and sustainability interact and shape each other.

6.2. Reflection on the Thesis

Geertz once stated that

> doing ethnography is like trying to read … a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behaviour. (1973, 10)

Geertz puts the finger on an aspect of science: It is more of an interpretation than many scholars care to admit. Likewise, this thesis is an interpretation of created data (de Sardan 1995) not of gathered data. Thus it is unique insofar as its results would have been different, had another person conducted the fieldwork and the analysis or had I conducted the fieldwork but at a different time. Similarly, my personal relationship to the informants as well as to the company could potentially have influenced the research. However, I curtailed that influence by reflecting on my position inside the company. Also, the specification of methodology, theory and created data make this thesis comprehensible and therefore employable both in academia and within the company I studied.

Nevertheless, looking back, there are a few things that I could have done differently. For example, I only conducted one focus group meeting near the end of my research. This meeting proved itself valuable. Instead of hearing one view from a person in a one-on-one interview, group discussions result in more nuanced and complex answers to questions, given that the interlocutors know each other and feel comfortable sharing their ideas. Therefore, more focus group meetings might have brought up additional and valuable aspects about CSR at Swisscom.

I delayed my academic research into CSR until some time into the fieldwork. My reason was to keep an open mind with regard to the topic without having other theories influencing my thoughts. In retrospect, bringing in theory earlier could have been beneficial, giving me more background, from which to dig deeper in into the topic. I still feel, however, that my interpretation of data benefitted from my fresh, uninfluenced approach.

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8. Appendix

8.1. Interview Questions

Personal Motivation

- Why do you work at GCR? What was your motivation to apply here?
- What are your tasks and projects?
- Do you think your work is useful for a more sustainable world?

Sustainability

1. How do you personally define sustainability?
2. Does sustainability influence you in your way of living? How?
3. Are we sustainable? Why? Why not?

CSR at Swisscom

- What do you think of CSR at Swisscom?
- Is CSR useful to become more sustainable?
- Do you identify with CSR at Swisscom? Is there something missing or superfluous?

Challenge with Radical Attitude

- In my studies, CSR is often criticized for not helping us become more sustainable but instead, making us consume more leading to more growth. What are your thoughts on that? How does that apply to Swisscom?

Perception of the Future

- Are you optimistic about the future of mankind? Why? Why not?
- What do you want to do in the future?

8.2. Swisscom's Six CR Goals

3 for our customers

Climate protection

Our goal: by 2020, we want, together with our customers, to save double the amount of CO2 that we generate through our entire operations and supply chain.

We aim to do this, for example, by using home offices to reduce commuter journeys, and our set-top box, which now uses 40% less electricity. For we envisage a Switzerland in which everyone is committed to working together to protect the climate.

Work and life

Our goal: by 2020, we want to support 1 million customers through our healthy living initiatives and to give an additional 1 million customers the opportunity to use mobile work models. We aim to achieve this, for example, through our health platform and our WorkAnywhere programme. For we envisage a Switzerland in which there is plenty of room

Media expertise

Our goal: by 2020, we want to lead the way in terms of data security and help 1 million people to use media more safely and more responsibly. We aim to do this, for example, by using our Stargate router, on which age-appropriate surfing times can be set. For we envisage a Switzerland in which curiosity on the Internet is harmless.

2 for our employees and partners

Attractive employer

Our goal: we believe responsibility goes way beyond the everyday working environment. We therefore offer our staff flexible work models as well as health-promoting initiatives and further training opportunities. Especially for the next generation. For we envisage a Switzerland in which people can exceed their potential.

Fair supply chain

Our goal: we aim to improve the working conditions of more than 2 million people. To this end, we have forged international partnerships that guarantee the implementation of measures in close cooperation with our suppliers. For we envisage a Switzerland that promotes fairness throughout the world.

1 for our country

Networked Switzerland

Our goal: We want to offer 85% ultra-fast broadband coverage. And 99% of the population should be able to enjoy mobile ultra-fast broadband. We therefore indirectly contribute around CHF 30 billion to GDP and to the creation and retention of around 100,000 jobs. For we envisage a Switzerland that is competitive."

8.3. Swisscom Company Structure

Swisscom Company structure

swisscom

Swisscom Board of Directors
Hansueli Loosli (Chairman of the Board)
Frank Esser
Barbara Frei
Hugo Gerber
Michel Gobet
Torsten G. Kreindl
Catherine Mühlemann
Theophil Schlatter
Hans Werder

CEO — Urs Schaeppi**

Division (head)	Media Relations	Public Affairs	Public Policy	Brand Strategy & Management	Corporate Responsibility	Internal Communications Consulting	Group Related Businesses	Enterprise Customers	IT, Network & Innovation	Residential Customers	Small & Medium Enterprises
Group Communications & Responsibility* (Stefan Nünlist)	Josef Huber	Stefan Kilchenmann	Ralf Koschmann	Sascha Weisshaupt	Res Witschi	Claudia Egli / Caroline Wälti	Armin Schädeli	Manuela Staub	Katja Reinhardt	Sabrina Hubacher	Damian Hostettler
Group Strategy & Board Services*	Corporate Strategy / Markus Messerer	Strategy RES / Marc Sier	Strategy SME / Jürgen Ziehlfreund	Strategy ENT / Iris Kornacker	Strategy INI / Wolfgang Knospe	Legal & Regulatory / Patrick Dehmer	CEO Office / Sibylle Baumgartner	Secretariat of the Board / Michael Betschart	Internal Audit / Klaus Rapp***	VR-Mandates & Projects / Ueli Dietiker***	
Group Security* (Martin Vögeli / Roger Halbheer)	Security Shared Services / Panos Zarkadakis	Security Delivery / Dusan Vuksanovic	Security Officer Swisscom Group	Security Officer INI / Manuel Häfliger	Security Officer ENT / Oliver Jäschke	Security Officer RES/SME / Balz Walther	Security Monitoring & Incident Response / Lorenz Inglin	Security Governance & Policies / Jörg Jungblut	Security Architecture / Christof Jungo	Physical Security & Safety / Bernhard Rüttimann	
Residential Customers (Marc Werner)	Sales / Pierre-Luc Maurilley	Customer Marketing / Stephan Mignot	Customer Support / Pascal Jaggi	Convergent & Wireline Experience / Dirk Wierzbitzki	Wireless Experience / Torsten Brodt	Third Brand Offering / Jean-Louis Mathez	Marketing / Jürg Pauli	New Business & Innovation / Daniel Gerber	CT Cinetrade AG / Stephan Sager	WinGo SA / Jean-Louis Mathez	
Small & Medium Enterprises	Distribution / Michael Treutner	Customer Experience Design / Thomas Bachofner	Customer Marketing / Carlo Capun	Customer Care / Hélia Burgunder	Online / Markus Eberhard	Local.ch Ltd / Jean-Louis Mathez	Directories Ltd / Eduard Bähler				
Enterprise Customers (Roger Wüthrich-Hasenböhler)	Banking / Marcel Walker	Customer Service / Peter Müller	Marketing & Sales / Urs Lehner	Business Development / Robert Gebel	Cloud & Data Center Services / Marcel Walker	Workspace & Collaboration / Andrej Golob	Business Process Solutions & Services / Sergio Chiandetti	Wireline Networks & Bundles / Adrian Bolliger	Mobility / Alexandra Reich		
IT, Network & Innovation (Christian Petit)	Transversal Product Development Projects	Innovation	Technical Strategy & Enterprise Architecture	Development	Operation	Rollout & Access	Wholesale	Big Data & Analytics	ALL IP / Beat Döös	Venturing / Dominique Mégret	Outpost / Ursula Oesterle
Group Business Steering (Heinz Herren)	Central Controlling / Erich Gebhardt	CFO Residential Customers / Small & Medium Enterprises / Egon Steinkasserer	CFO Enterprise Customers / Frank Dederichs	CFO IT Network & Innovation / John de Keijzer	Accounting / Wolfgang Eger	Supply Chain Management & Corporate Real Estate Management / Markus Reber	Treasury & Insurance / Daniel Staub	Taxes / Daniel Neuhaus	Investor Relations / Bart Morselt	CFO Beteiligungen / Eugen Stermetz	
Group Human Resources (Mario Rossi)	HR Residential Customers / Dominique Christen	HR Small & Medium Enterprises / Markus Jelk	HR Enterprise Customers / Patrick Dudli	HR IT Network & Innovation / Uli Schädler	HR Group Functions / Peter Burkhalter	Recruiting & Employability / Adrian Jungo	Development / Daniel Schwab	Employment Relations / Romana Giesen	Compensation & Benefits / Michael Bruggmann	Inhouse Consulting / Georges Schlegel	
Group Human Resources (Hans C. Werner)		Elena Folini	Andrea Bacca	Nadine Gilg	Guido Hasebaach	Alexander Senn	Esther Kühne / Adrian Bucher	Lisa Lamanna			

Fastweb S.p.A. — Alberto Calcagno

Legend:
* Guest of the Group Executive Board
** Leiter Swisscom Schweiz AG
*** Administrative support

- Group Functions
- Member of the Group Executive Board
- Group Companies