Master Thesis

The routines of three Dutch cultural organisations pertaining to the practice of strategic sustainability communication

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Abstract

Cultural organisations are increasingly said to have a stake in overcoming the challenges in communicating on sustainability issues, through acting as gatekeepers of culture and engaging publics. Despite such claims, research on cultural organisations in relation to sustainability is limited and has predominantly focused on museums and cultural organisations in an operational or organisational sense. It is therefore not known how cultural organisations position themselves, communicate on, and understand their role in relation to sustainability challenges. This thesis sought to empirically explore the sustainability communication of diverse cultural organisations, beyond engagement in an operational sense. Practice theory, which understands routines as consisting of meanings, motivations, actions, and materials, was used as a theoretical lens. Applying practice theory, a framework was presented to understand the practice of strategic sustainability communication as an organisational routine consisting of meanings, motivations, actions, and materials.

The routines of three cultural organisations in the Netherlands were examined through analysing the organisations' website and most recent annual report available, and interviewing a representative of each organisation. The routines were found to be both coherent and comprehensive, indicating that practice theory is a useful approach for studying the communication of organisations. The routines of these cultural organisations were also shown to be diverse, whilst having common components. The research suggests that the routines which form the organisations' practice of strategic sustainability communication are diverse because of their inherent fluidity, and should be understood as snapshots on an organisation's pathway. The novel application of the concepts of routines and pathways in tandem appear to be useful in understanding organisation practices and why they occur. This is relevant to the broader field of research in which organisations are the focal point.

The organisations examined were found to understand sustainability holistically from a construct, relative, and dynamic perspective. The complexity of their understanding is suggested as indicative of the motivation to engage in sustainability communication, which mainly stemmed from moral legitimacy, reputational benefits, and securing partnerships. The organisations were found to employ an emergent strategy, suggesting that organisations who are flexible in decision-making are more likely to engage in sustainability communication.

This research also found that the organisations appeared to engage in the types of sustainability communication following a distinct pattern. As a theoretical innovation of research, the suggestion was made that engagement in the types of sustainability

communication can be understood as conditional. This finding encourages further research into this mechanism and has widespread relevance, of concern for research on sustainability communication, organisations, and working towards societal transformation. The main form and medium which the cultural organisations examined were found to engage in these types of sustainability communication was through their cultural productions. As an underexplored area of research, this thesis provides further empirical evidence of such centrality of cultural productions to an organisation's practice of strategic sustainability communication. On the basis of the study's findings recommendations are presented in order to help support and encourage cultural organisations to partake in tackling sustainability challenges.

Keywords: cultural organisation, sustainability, strategic communication, sustainability communication, routine, practice

Acknowledgements

Dedication

To Sammie,

Even when you were at your weakest,

You showed me your immense strength.

Even when I was filled with sadness,

You gave me gratitude.

For I had been lucky enough to have known you,

Your kindest heart, open nature, and undying loyalty,

To have loved you for so many years.

I still miss you every day.

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1. Introduction

Globally we continue to experience challenges to sustainability which threaten our survival. This includes challenges like climate change, resource scarcity, and rapid urbanisation, all of which have been linked to human activity (Hulme, 2015; IPCC, 2015; Lang et al., 2012). Such complex issues therefore have an inherent social component. A common theme and debate within the broad field of sustainability related research is regarding responsibility, actors, and responses to sustainability issues. Within this field research addresses questions such as: how do we move forward in addressing sustainability issues? Who is responsible for doing so? How do we engage relevant actors to tackle such issues? From such questions it is clear that communication, and communication on sustainability issues has an important role to play in the conversation around this topic, which is playing out both at an academic and societal level.

Research has recognised that communicating about sustainability is vital in responding to sustainability challenges (Hulme, 2015; Lang et al, 2012; Moser, 2010). Through constructing and conveying meaning communication can influence what is known and how people engage with a topic (Hollo, 2014). Accordingly, an abundance of research on how to communicate effectively on these issues has emerged in parallel to the evolving scientific research on the causes, impacts, and solutions regarding sustainability issues. Communication on these issues has progressed beyond the arenas of science and policy, and is now part of public discourse (Moser, 2010).

Despite the fact that scientific consensus is increasingly reached and that there is a high level of public awareness of sustainability issues in most developed countries, communication on sustainability issues still faces challenges (Martens, McEvoy and Ting Chang, 2016; Moser, 2010). One of such challenges is in engaging publics, who are understood to be key actors in addressing sustainability challenges. Having reviewed research on the communication of climate change Moser (2010) reasons that the sustainability issue of climate change is notoriously difficult to communicate because its traits present inherent difficulties in engaging publics. These traits are said to be i) invisible causes of climate change, ii) distant impacts of climate change, iii) a difficulty to notice the changes in environment, iv) lags which make the link between action and benefits hard to see, v) a human tendency to focus on the present in favour of considering long-term implications, vi) complexity and uncertainty, vii) inadequate signals to indicate the need to change, and viii) human self-interest.

Moser (2010) then describes three categories of purposes which climate change communication may follow, in progressively deeper levels, i) to inform and educate individuals about climate change, ii) to achieve some type and level of social engagement and action, and iii) to bring about changes in social norms and cultural values. Although each of these types of communication has a purpose and role to play in communicating on sustainability issues, the already high level of public awareness and scientific consensus suggests that it is at the deeper level of social norms and cultural values where communicating is less effective. This is concerning as it is here where the behaviour change needed lies.

Research has increasingly recognised that alternative ways in communicating and producing knowledge on sustainability issues are needed to overcome communication challenges as these issues, influenced by human factors, are not just scientific or technical but also cultural issues (Hollo, 2014; Lang et al., 2012; Lineberry and Wiek, 2016). Culture, "the deepest layer influencing and inhibiting change", mediates and shapes the meaning given to these issues in society, thereby also mediating and shaping the way in which we respond to these issues (Hollo, 2014, p.34; Hulme, 2015). Culture therefore is presented as having a crucial role to play in these alternative ways of communicating and producing knowledge.

The term culture "has been described as one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (Eriksen, 2001, p.3), and is used to denote different concepts. In anthropology culture has been depicted as "both as an integrated whole, as a puzzle where all the pieces were at hand, and as a system of meanings that was largely shared by a population." (ibid.). Taking such a structuralist perspective, culture can be understood to be a system of systems, of meanings, of language, of norms, and of values, each which allow distinct historical identities to emerge. Simultaneously, culture is also understood to be the domain of cultural organisations. What cultural organisations offer – including their site, space, activities, and perspective – can also all be understood to constitute culture. Although this conception of culture differs from the anthropological sense, cultural organisations are frequently understood as organisations who both *bring* culture, and who are innately connected *to* culture, in the anthropological sense. In this thesis culture is understood and intended to denote the cultural offering of cultural organisations.

Actors have recognised that culture may make communicating on sustainability issues and instigating change possible. "Culture can help because it is a softer, stickier pathway into engagement, and therefore capable of meeting people where their concerns already lie, in opening a door in a way that is more inviting and less overwhelming and more intelligible"

(Julie's Bicycle, 2019). Cultural organisations are positioned as gatekeepers of this door, with the key to provide the space to connect and influence how culture is in engaged with. Acting as translators between the science of sustainability issues and the imagination of publics, cultural organisations are thought to be well positioned to help communicate the full complexity and diverse perspectives on these sustainability challenges, offering the space for productive dialogue to take place (Cameron and Neilson, 2015; Julie's Bicycle, 2010). Actors across society then increasingly implore for an increased recognition of the role which the arts and culture sector can play in responding to sustainability issues.

The term cultural organisations is understood as collectively referring to the heterogeneous organisations which exist whose purpose is to enrich the cultural field, working to engage or educate publics through their medium. A strength commonly attributed to these organisations, most often museums, is their ability to allow "dangerous ideas to circulate in safe spaces: places where people are allowed to disagree […] but to do so in ways which are agnostic and not antagonistic." (Hulme, 2015, p.14). By welcoming such dialogic communication cultural organisations are thought to function as a space of experimentation, facilitating public participation in the co-creation of narratives around sustainability issues (Cameron, Hodge and Salazar, 2015; Lineberry and Wiek, 2016). This is thought to be a vital element in effectively communicating on challenges, as through dialogic communication people give meaning to the sustainability challenges and are more open to change (Moser, 2010).

Although research on cultural organisations in relation to sustainability issues is emerging it remains limited in many ways. Empirical research remains scarce, in favour of an abundance of academic as well as grey literature making claims to the importance of culture, cultural organisations, and their medium in responding to sustainability challenges (e.g. Cameron, Hodge and Salazar, 2015; Cameron and Neilson, 2015; Galafassi et al., 2018; Hollo, 2014; Hulme, 2015; Kagan and Kirchberg, 2016; Julie's Bicycle, 2010; Julie's Bicycle, 2019; Lineberry and Wiek, 2016; Salazar, 2011; Sison, 2013). Research on cultural organisations, even in empirical cases, has also predominantly focused on sustainability in an operational or organisational sense (e.g. Byers, 2008; Wickham and Lehman, 2015), and to an even more limited degree the effect which their medium has on engagement (e.g. Sutter, 2008). Consequently, research does not reveal how cultural organisations *perceive* their potential role, how they *feel* about this attribution, or how they even may *function* as a node in responding to sustainability challenges. Exploring this is of upmost importance in order to

support and encourage these organisations to play the role they are attributed in tackling sustainability challenges.

In an effort to help bridge the aforementioned knowledge gaps, this research seeks to empirically understand how cultural organisations position themselves, communicate on, and understand their role in relation to sustainability challenges.

2. Conceptual Framework

2.1. Introduction

This thesis seeks to fulfil its research objective by employing a conceptual framework in which how cultural organisations position themselves, communicate on, and understand their role in relation to sustainability challenges is understood as constituting the practice of strategic sustainability communication. By adopting a practice perspective as the overarching theory in the conceptual framework, research is guided to examine and interpret the components which constitute the practice of strategic sustainability communication. The framework considers and reflects upon three concepts which are perceived as essential to the practice of strategic sustainability communication: strategic communication, sustainability, and sustainability communication. Each of these concepts provides insight into the components of the practice of strategic communication and therefore merit attention. Together these insights provide the theoretical foundation upon which research can be conducted. Building upon ideas, the conceptual framework concludes with a model of the practice of strategic sustainability communication and its components which are revealed throughout.

2.2. Sustainability

This section explores the concept of sustainability through presenting and reflecting upon the ambiguity and various interpretations which exist surrounding sustainability. Next, three aspects are presented which enable an interpretation of the way in which organisations understand sustainability. Following this, the typical characterisation of sustainability as a triptych is discussed, and the importance of considering the way in which the concept of sustainability is understood and given meaning is argued. Concluding, this section connects these forms of understanding which organisations exhibit to the components of the practice of strategic sustainability communication.

2.2.1. 'Sustainability' and 'sustainable development'

As an open concept 'sustainability' is interpreted in many different ways, bound to specific contexts and interests (Michelsen et al., 2016; Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018). What is then implied or understood by the use of the term 'sustainability' cannot be inferred without considering the context which also shapes its meaning. This is further complicated by the widespread use of competing language when discussing 'sustainability', including within the fields of academic, politics, and business (Dresden, 2008; Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018). As a result, the extent to which the term 'sustainability' has become intertwined with 'sustainable development' has made it difficult to distinguish between these.

Although the concept 'sustainable development', like 'sustainability', has differing interpretations, there is a dominant way in which it is defined and understood to have emerged (Dresden, 2008; Heinrichs et al., 2018; Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018). With the environmental movement of the 1960s and 1970s which saw the publication of influential works like Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* and the Club of Rome's controversial *Limits to Growth*, there was a growing awareness of environmental problems and the role humanity played in them. This awareness continued to grow throughout the 1980s with the increasing number of reports documenting alarming rates of environmental degradation, ecological disaster, and mounting political turmoil.

In response to this, the World Commission on the Environment and Development (WCED) was founded by the UN General Assembly in 1983, a pivotal event for the dominant modern understanding of 'sustainable development'. In 1987, the WCED, also referred to as the Brundtland Commission, published the report *Our Common Future*, urging immediate international action. One of the most lasting contributions the WCED is credited

with is the definition it gave to 'sustainable development' in the report, "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (WCED, 1987 cited in Dresden, 2008, p.34). This remains the most widely used, accepted and best known definition of sustainable development to date. It is also a definition which "has been repeated, misquoted and rewritten countless times since" (Dresden, 2008, p.34). With so many different interpretations, not least of the dominant definition, reaching consensus on the concept 'sustainable development' becomes increasingly complicated (Michelsen et al., 2016).

Furthermore, as Purvis, Mao and Robinson's (2018) review of the historical emergence of the concept 'sustainability' shows, the concept 'sustainable development' is laden with "historical baggage". This baggage owes to the roots of 'sustainable development' in the critique of the notion 'economic development' from both a social and ecological perspective, which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. This association of 'sustainable development' with 'economic development' and other related notions like 'progress' and 'modernisation' of developing economies, is also partially why 'sustainable development' can be such a contested and problematic concept (Michelsen et al., 2016; Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018).

'Sustainability' on the other hand, as a concept, is free of such historical associations and the burden of a dominant definition which is continuously (mis)interpreted. Although 'sustainability' is sometimes regarded as a buzzword, and like 'sustainable development' lacks consensus on what it means and clarity on its conceptual foundation, the concept retains an openness and "prompts conceptual questions, such as for whom and of what" (Faber, Jorna and van Engelen, 2005; Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018, p.691). By prompting such questions, 'sustainability' lends itself to inquiring about how the concept and competing as well as related language is understood. To navigate the conceptual complexity surrounding this field, this thesis then uses the term sustainability to denote both the concepts 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development'.

2.2.2. Interpreting how sustainability is understood: a framework
To help appreciate the context-dependent and highly heterogeneous way in which sustainability is understood a framework can be used to identify what aspects of sustainability are contained within a specific understanding of the concept. In their study into the conceptual foundations of sustainability, Faber, Jorna and van Engelen (2005) present the

following framework, which considers three aspects of the way in which sustainability is described: focal artefact, goal-orientation and behavioural interaction.

Focal artefact refers to what the focus of the sustainability is on, the 'what'. They highlight that when speaking of sustainability, it is always in reference to something. What differs is the tangibility, whether the focal artefact is concrete or abstract. Concrete artefacts further more are described as entities, for example such as a car, whereas abstract artefacts are thought to be constructs, for instance a health care system.

Goal-orientation concerns the reference point in the line of reasoning that attributes sustainability to the focal artefact. In thinking about a continuum between sustainable and non-sustainable, two possible orientations are described: absolute and relative. In an absolute approach the focus is the ultimate form of sustainability, with the goal of achieving 'the good'. In a relative approach the focus is on the present state, with the goal of achieving 'the less worse' or 'the better'. Faber, Jorna and van Engelen (2005) liken this to the difference between the goals of a utopian and a pragmatist. The utopian has an absolute goal-orientation, focused on achieving an ultimate situation. The pragmatist has a relative goal-orientation, focused on the problems at hand to achieve incremental change.

Behavioural interaction concerns whether the dynamics of the artefact and the environment are considered in attributing sustainability to the focal artefact. The reasoning that Faber, Jorna and van Engelen (2005) give is that "artefacts and their environments experience changes of their component parts and internal structure, caused by exogenous forces resulting from their interactions and endogenous forces originating from within." (p.9). In attributing sustainability to the focal artefact, two perspectives can be distinguished on the interaction of the focal artefact and environment, and the change they undergo: dynamic or static. From a static perspective, the focal artefact itself is dynamic and the environment is static, and their interaction remains unchanged. The focal artefact remains sustainable, although its internal structure and components parts may however change in the interaction. The example given is asbestos, which was previously perceived as sustainable whereas presently the danger of processing asbestos prevents it use. From a dynamic perspective, the focal artefact and the environment both experience exogenous and endogenous forces, changing their interaction. The focal artefact does not have the status sustainable but is pursuing it through constantly adapting to changes in the environment in order for the equilibrium between the focal artefact and the environment to remain intact. The example given is an organisation, which constantly needs to adapt to both the exogenous and endogenous forces it is subjected to, and which affect its ability to be sustainable.

In applying the framework Faber, Jorna and van Engelen (2005) found that over time definitions gradually shifted from an entity, absolute, and static perspective on sustainability to a construct, relative, and dynamic perspective.

Figure 1: Visualisation of three aspects of sustainability (Source: author, based on Faber, Jorna and van Engelen (2005))

The three aspects of sustainability which Faber, Jorna and van Engelen (2005) present can be visualised as shown in figure 1. The three aspects are categorical by nature and so are mutually exclusive. Although no value is attributed as to make a categorisation more preferable, the categorisations have been grouped in the concentric circles to reflect the progression of dominant conceptualisations of sustainability over time. Although Faber, Jorna and van Engelen (2005) show that dominant definitions continue to maintain an entity perspective on sustainability, the grouping of the visualisation suggests that over time dominant definitions may shift to favour a construct perspective. The construct perspective arguably reflects the more complex and systemic conceptualisation of sustainability which is presented to holistically attend to the following dimensions often attributed to sustainability.

2.2.3. A tripartite understanding of sustainability

Although sustainability is an open concept and remains context-specific, there is a dominant interpretation of its elements, and as such we can speak of a paradigm (Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018). The prevailing consensus is that sustainability can be characterised as a triptych of environmental, social, and economic dimensions, or some variant thereof (Kagan, 2010; Michelsen et al., 2016; Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018). In this tripartite view sustainability is "typically realised as the balancing of trade-offs between seemingly equally desirable goals within these three categorisations" (Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018, p.685). This is frequently illustrated with figures of three pillars, intersecting circles or concentric circles (see figure 2). As Purvis, Mao and Robinson (2018) found in their review of the conceptual origins of the tripartite characterisation, such pictorial depictions of sustainability have become 'common view' since 2001.

Figure 2: Typical pictorial depiction of sustainability as a triptych (Source: Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018, p.682)

Although viewing sustainability as triptych is a paradigm, how this characterisation arose remains unclear and the accompanying pictorial depictions also frequently lack any theoretical foundation (Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018). In addition, "the meaning conveyed by these diagrams and the wider 'pillar' conception itself is often unclear, hampering its ability to be coherently operationalised." (Purvis, Mao and Robinson, 2018, p.682). As the tripartite view of sustainability also has no clear origins, it suggests that its paradigmatic status may have occurred through the characterisation becoming subject to replication with the justification of it being 'common view'. Although this in itself is not necessarily problematic, if the characterisation is replicated or applied without critical

reflection on the theoretical basis it is questionable whether sustainability still retains meaning considering the context-specific nature of the concept.

Examining the motivation and reasoning behind why a certain conceptualisation of sustainability has been adopted then is important in discovering the nature of an actor's, organisation's or other body's engagement. If it reveals a lack of critical reflection it could be argued that the engagement with 'sustainability' is superficial and unfounded. Alternatively, if it is revealed that there is a high level of critical reflection it could be argued that the engagement with 'sustainability' is deep and rooted. This is interesting considering that whilst increasingly organisations are elevating sustainability to become a strategic priority, research also increasingly shows that sustainability can act as a 'legitimising characteristic' for organisations who address sustainability in some way (Sroufe, 2017; Wickham and Lehman, 2015). Communicating on sustainability therefore could pose a strategic advantage for such organisations and so also the motivation to do so, regardless of whether their engagement is deep and rooted, or superficial and unfounded.

The focus of the thesis therefore will also be on the way in which cultural organisations understand the concept of sustainability and give meaning to it. Although sustainability is understood as a context-bound and open concept, as a working characterisation this thesis broadly understands sustainability as holistically attending to the relationship between environmental, social, and economic dimensions, with the aim and focus on securing a future in which all forms of life may prosper.

2.2.4. Conclusion

This section explored the concept of sustainability. Having discussed the debate on the concept of sustainability and sustainability, the ambiguity and various interpretations which surround sustainability are shown. A framework consisting of three aspects is presented which enables understanding how organisations interpret and understand sustainability. These three aspects are focal artefact, goal-orientation, and behavioural interaction, and for each aspect the two possible dimensions are described. Following this, the typical tripartite characterisation of sustainability as consisting of environmental, social, and economic dimensions is discussed. Reflecting on this, the importance and need to consider the way in which the concept of sustainability is understood and how meaning is given to it is reiterated. How sustainability is understood and given meaning by organisations can be understood as forming the component of meanings in the practice of strategic sustainability communication.

Both the framework of the three aspects and tripartite characterisation provide a means through which this component can be examined.

2.3. Strategic communication

This section explores the concept of strategic communication through appreciating the strategic value which sustainability communication can present for organisations, and the consequent motivations organisations exhibit in engaging in sustainability communication. Next the field of strategic communication and its developments are discussed, including the prevailing discussion on the need to shift towards focusing on practice. Practice theory is then introduced as the overarching conceptual framework of research which will be built upon in the ensuing sections on sustainability and sustainability communication. To conclude, this section presents three perspectives which organisations can take on the practice of strategic sustainability communication.

2.3.1. The strategic value of sustainability communication

Organisations are increasingly becoming interested in sustainability and engaging in sustainability communication, recognising sustainability as having strategic value (Garnett et al., 2015; Siano et al., 2016; Sroufe, 2017). In part this strategic value for organisations arises from the ambiguity of the concept sustainability. Allen (2016) notes that for organisations this ambiguity

> "can be used to encourage creativity, minimize conflict, and facilitate change. Such ambiguity creates conditions where organizations can change their operations over time in response to changing environmental conditions. It can be used to build cohesiveness within groups around sustainability initiatives and allow employees to protect their private opinions, beliefs, and feelings, while maintaining their relationships." (Allen, 2016, p.4)

Here ambiguity is perceived as constructive, providing organisations with the opportunity to create positive changes to their internal and external environments. Acknowledging such instrumental uses of sustainability by organisations Allen (2016) suggests that sustainability is subject to a particular kind of ambiguity, 'strategic ambiguity', where ambiguous messages are intentionally designed. This is reflected by the manner in which organisations have been found to employ sustainability as a 'narrative construct', engaging in sustainability communication as "part of a deliberate strategy to cultivate an image" (Garnett et al., 2015, p.304; Siano et al., 2016).

Organisations may have various motivations to do so, with research suggesting that as a result of engaging in such communication organisations may reap significant reputational benefits, including being granted legitimacy (Ott, Wang and Bortree, 2016; Wickham and

Lehman, 2015). Allen (2016) argues that legitimacy is a 'critical resource' for organisations as it is linked to improvements in reputation, and can lead to securing a more advantageous position. Therefore, it can also be perceived as highly desirable for organisations to obtain. There are three types of legitimacy which organisations may experience by engaging in sustainability communication: pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy (Allen, 2016). Pragmatic legitimacy exists when stakeholders come to envision the effect which an organisation's actions will have on them personally and whether these will be beneficial. Moral legitimacy exists when stakeholders come to assess whether the organisation's actions are or are not the 'right' thing to do and how these may contribute to societal wellbeing. Lastly, cognitive legitimacy exists when stakeholders come to see the organisation's actions as understandable or not.

Benefits organisations may gain from sustainability communication are not just limited to reputation or providing a source of legitimacy. As Ki and Shin (2015) describe, scholars have also found organisations to experience increases in their sales, receive positive social media coverage, experience positive impacts on their stock price, and also experience impacts in the way stakeholders behave. Such effects have also been noted by scholars elsewhere (e.g. Genç, 2017). Table 1 provides an overview of these potential benefits of sustainability communication for organisations.

Table 1: Overview of some of the benefits for organisations who engage in sustainability communication according to research (Source: author)

Benefits of sustainability communication for organisations
Enhanced reputation (Ott, Wang and Bortree, 2016)
Source of legitimacy (Allen, 2006; Wickham and Lehman, 2015)   - Pragmatic   - Moral   - Cognitive
Increase in sales (Ki and Shin, 2015)
Positive social media coverage (Ki and Shin, 2015; Reilly and Hynan, 2014)
Improved stakeholder relationships (Genç, 2017; Ki and Shin, 2015)
Appreciation in stock price (Ki and Shin, 2015)

The strategic advantages which sustainability communication offers organisations may thus be closely linked to an organisation's motivation to engage in such practices. Increasingly this motivation is called into question, driven by the perception that organisations only engage in symbolic support of sustainability, sometimes even in concealment of the ways they support unsustainability (Genç, 2017). Research has also noted that organisations sometimes practice "overt reporting on sustainability issues [which] may either exaggerate or emit real activity." (Garnett et al., 2015, p.298). Seen as 'cosmetic communication', such practices may be employed by organisations to conceal gaps in the commitments of an organisation and their ability to achieve them, a form of 'greenwash' (Siano et al., 2016).

Although no consensus exists on what greenwashing constitutes, a review found that broadly speaking, "notions of greenwash reflect concern with communication that misleads people into holding overly positive beliefs about an organization's environmental performance, practices, or products." (Lyon and Montgomery, 2015, p.225). Contentions of greenwashing may not always be easily determined as valid, and even then, research suggests that many different drivers and mechanisms of misleading behaviour can be at play that may lead to an organisation becoming involved in such practices. Adding to this complexity, even the perspective on communication may affect whether greenwashing is occurring or not. If communication is understood as an interactive process in which a receiver constructs meaning, then in some instances greenwashing may not per se be deliberate (Lyon and Montgomery, 2015). There is a growing field of research conducted on determining such greenwashing practices and the motivation behind engaging in sustainability communication in general, likely stimulated by the increasing public discourse around greenwashing and sustainability communication. With research and surveys consistently showing that there is a gap between the intent and implementation of sustainability in the activities of organisations, such attention is arguably warranted (Sroufe, 2017; Siano et al., 2016).

2.3.2. The field of strategic communication and a turn to practice

With its strategic value to organisations, sustainability communication can be understood to be part of an organisation's strategic communication. Strategic communication in organisations has been a subject examined in research from various and diverse disciplines and strands of thinking, and it is only recently that a field of research has been established which centres around studying strategic communication, respectively titled the field of

strategic communication (Hallahan et al., 2007). In the foundational text of the field, Hallahan et al. (2007) reflect on the constitutive terms of the field, strategy and communication, emphasising that processes of communication should be the central focus of study, and that for communicative activities to be considered they must be strategic, or purposeful.

As the field has matured, the study of strategic communication has been perceived as deviating from this direction initially envisaged (Hallahan et al., 2007). Although the field is widely accepted as "the study of how organizations use communication purposefully to fulfill their overall missions", it has been argued that there is an absence of scholars addressing communication as a pillar of the field (Heide et al., 2018, p.452; van Ruler, 2018). This runs contrary to the initiation proposition which Hallahan et al. (2007) made, namely that processes of communication should be central to the study of strategic communication. This becomes even more problematic considering there is little consensus in the field on what communication actually is, its role, and how it operates in strategic communication (van Ruler, 2018). This persistent evasion of communication processes seems to stem further back, with Hallahan et al. (2007) already noting in their prefatory text to the field of strategic communication that perhaps "the reluctance to focus on communication lies in the increased difficulty of assessing communications today." (p.26).

In an effort to bridge this gap of scholars addressing communication as a pillar, van Ruler (2018) proposes that strategic communication should be understood as managing the "*amalgam of continuous communication processes in order to build, define, present, realize, and rebuild strategy*" (p.378; emphasis in original). In this perspective processes of communication are placed at the centre of study, alongside strategy which is considered to be the context in which communication takes place. This perspective on strategic communication is in line with what Heide et al. (2018) argue, that it is the everyday formal and informal communication processes that determine an organisation's ability to communicate strategically and which form actual practice. Reiterating the importance of examining actual practices and not taking rhetoric for granted, Heide et al. (2018) emphasise that "[m]any studies hitherto reveal what practitioners say what they do when they work with strategic communication, but there is not much knowledge about what practitioners *actually do* when strategic communication is materialized" (p.464; emphasis in original). Such assertions suggest that the field of strategic communication could turn to using practice theory as a lens to interpret strategic communication. Thereby the field would follow other

closely related fields, such as organizational studies, which already are employing practice theory as a heuristic device (Reckwitz, 2002).

Adopting practice theory may provide insight into why gaps between intention and practice occur and respond to the call for more critical perspectives on strategic communication itself (Heide et al., 2018; Sroufe, 2017). Doing so would also recognise that "within any organization, the norms about what sustainability is and how it is symbolized and discussed are continually being created, challenged, and recreated through human interaction", and provide a lens to understand how and why this occurs (Allen, 2006, p.12). Above all, a focus on practice would pay homage to the way in which the field of strategic communication was initially envisioned, as also "examining how an organization presents itself in society as a social actor in the creation of public culture and in the discussion of public issues." (Hallahan et al., 2007, p.27). Sustainability is undoubtedly such an issue.

2.3.3. Practice theory and practices as routines

Adopting practice theory as a 'system of interpretation' to examine strategic sustainability communication means understanding strategic sustainability communication as a practice. This means research then not only explores the activities which are conducted, or said to be conducted by organisations, but also looking at other phenomenon such as the particular ways in which organisations think and talk in relation to those activities, as these too are part of practice (Craig, 2006; Reckwitz, 2002).

Although practice theory has been conceptualised in different ways by scholars, Reckwitz (2002) presents a useful idealised model of practice theory. This model conceives of practice as "a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge." (ibid., p.249). In essence this model understands practices as routines which consist of four components: motivations, meanings, actions, and materials. Through the nexus of these components a practice occurs, and so to understand a practice necessitates examining the components which form it. Adopting practice theory then, strategic sustainability communication can be understood as a routine of organisational behaviour which consists of actions, materials, meanings and motivations. By understanding and examining the form which these components take the practice of strategic sustainability communication can be fully appreciated. This conceptual framework then seeks to present

what is already understood about these components in the literature in order to enable empirical research.

The routine of which practice exists can itself be interpreted in different ways. As strategy is perceived as contextual in the field of strategic communication, how an organisation understands strategy and the subsequent process through which they make decisions indicates the nature of this routine. Hendry (2000) presents three perspectives on the strategic decision making of organisations which can be applied to understand the kind of routine organisations employ: rational, action, and interpretative. An overview of these three perspectives is provided in table 2.

Following a rational perspective, the organisation understands strategy as rational in an instrumental sense. Their decision to engage in sustainability communication is made on the basis of an intentional choice and plan, following which it is implemented. This perspective thus assumes a linear as well as rational relationship between the decision to engage in sustainability communication and any resulting sustainability communication.

Adopting an action perspective, the organisation rejects the rational perspective's assumption that such decisions are made with intention. Instead it views strategy as emergent and as occurring through behaviour. The decision to engage in sustainability communication is understood as an ongoing process, in which this decision may change, be adapted, or even abandoned over time. Decisions then do not always necessarily result in sustainability communication. The focus is not on the decisions which were intended but rather the activities which take place.

Employing an interpretive perspective, the organisation also rejects the assertion that the decision is made with rational intentions. Similar to the action perspective, strategy is viewed as emergent, occurring through behaviour, or alternatively as occurring through a shared framework of understanding within the organisation. The decision to engage in sustainability communication is then retrospectively attributed, after the activities have taken place.

This framework of perspectives enables understanding how organisations interpret their context and the nature of the routine they subsequently take, which is at the heart of the practice of strategic sustainability communication.

Table 2: Three perspectives on strategic decision making (Source: Hendry, 2000, p.958; adapted)

Perspective	Rational	Action	Interpretive
Conceptualisation of strategy	Rational-instrumental (strategy realised as enacted plan)	Emergent (strategy realised as pattern of behaviour)	Emergent (strategy realised as pattern of behaviour) or cognitive (strategy as shared cognitive schemas)
Conceptualisation of decision making	Rational intentional choice	Decisions are decisive acts, intentions are irrelevant	Interpretive
Key assumptions	Objective view of reality. Intentional decisions are made, exist, precede and provide primary context for decisive acts of implementation	Objective view of reality. Reject rationalism of traditional perspective but without offering anything in its place	Social constructionist view of reality. Apparent intentional decisions are retrospective rationalisations of prior actions, necessary for individuals and collective sense-making and/or legitimation
Focus	Intentional decisions, as identified retrospectively by actors and researchers	Decisive acts (e.g. commitments of resources)	Decision statements as outcomes of cognitive processes

2.3.4. Conclusion

This section explored the concept of strategic communication. Having discussed the field of strategic communication and a possible development towards focusing on practice, practice theory was introduced as an overarching theoretical framework. Following practice theory, it was argued that strategic sustainability communication, as a practice, can be understood as a routine which consists of actions, materials, meanings, and motivations. Having highlighted the strategic value of sustainability communication it was shown that there are various benefits for organisations to engage in strategic sustainability communication. This can be understood as forming the component of motivations. Lastly, a framework of three perspectives was introduced through which the nature of the routine that forms practice can be understood, either as rational, action, or interpretive.

2.4. Strategic communication on sustainability

This section explores the concept of strategic communication on sustainability. Starting from the ways in which sustainability communication have been defined, two models of communication are presented which lie at the core of this. Following this, three types of sustainability communication are presented and connected to the models of communication. The various mediums through which organisations have been shown to engage in sustainability communication are then discussed, again connecting this to the models of communication. Concluding, this section connects these types of sustainability communication and types of mediums used by organisations to engage in such communication to the components of the practice of strategic sustainability communication.

2.4.1. Sustainability communication and models of communication

Sustainability communication has been defined in a multitude of ways, yet an aspect which definitions frequently share is viewing sustainability communication as an *ongoing activity* or *process*. Allen (2016) defines sustainability communication as occurring "when sustainability-related issues are conceived, defined, discussed, planned, initiated within and between organizations, modified, and, perhaps, terminated" (p.12), informed by the perspective that "within any organization, the norms about what sustainability is and how it is symbolized and discussed are continually being created, challenged, and recreated through human interaction." (ibid.). Ki and Shin (2015) prefer the term 'organization sustainability communication', referring to "an organization's voluntary, planned, and strategic communication efforts for working towards a balance of economic, social and environmental goals and values in order to achieve the long-term goals of an organization and its stakeholders." (p.37). From such perspectives, when organisations communicate sustainability this is linked to both the organisation's internal and external organisational environment, occurring through processes of communication (Genç, 2017).

The process of communication itself has been conceptualised in various ways, with two models of communication dominating academic discussion: the transmission and the interactive model (Hallahan et al., 2007). In the transmission model, communication is viewed as a one-way transmission of information from a sender to a receiver. More recently the interactive model emerged, responding to critique that the transmission model takes an overly simplistic view of communication. Recognising that the process of communication is comprised of more than just transmission, in the interactive model, communication is viewed

as a two-way process in which meaning is created and exchanged between those partaking in the activity. Although the interactive model has become the prevailing paradigm, both models of communication may be useful when understanding an organisation's sustainability communication.

2.4.2. Types of sustainability communication

Different forms of sustainability communication exist, each employing a different kind of communication model. Genç (2017) describes three different types of sustainability communication which organisations may be engaged in: Communication *of* Sustainability, Communication *about* Sustainability, and Communication *for* Sustainability. As Genç (2017) notes, "[a]lthough the boundaries between these different types of communication are ambiguous, they can be considered as useful analytical tools" (p.516). Each type of sustainability communication then can be perceived to differ in the model of communication which they are based on, in their function(s), and subsequently also in the indicators which can be examined to assess their effectiveness or quality, as shown in the overview provided by table 3.

Communication *of* Sustainability occurs when organisations "provide information about the issues with respect to sustainability" (Genç, 2017, p.515). Employing the transmission model of communication, Communication *of* Sustainability is focused on informing or educating actors or publics in order to reach specific objective(s), which sometimes includes value or behaviour change. Communication *of* Sustainability can also be used with the aim of creating (greater) social engagement around sustainability. Generally perceived of as instrumental, Communication *of* Sustainability makes a distinction between the knowledge and capacity which the sender and receiver of information possess. In order to see whether Communication *of* Sustainability has been effective various things can be evaluated. As the focus is on information transfer, whether the message has reached the intended recipients and if the message has been understood are important indicators for Communication *of* Sustainability's effectiveness. An additional check is whether any consequent value or behaviour change has occurred following the communication. Similar to the transmission model of communication, Communication *of* Sustainability increasingly is criticised in favour of types of sustainability communication which facilitate and promote dialogue.

Table 3: Overview of three types of sustainability communication (Source: author, based on Genç, 2017)

Type of sustainability communication	Model of communication	Function(s)	Indicator(s) of effectiveness or quality
Communication *of* Sustainability	Transmission	Inform and educate with specific objective, sometimes to create social engagement	Message has been reached, understood, and/or led to change(s) in the behaviour(s) or value(s) intended recipients
Communication *about* Sustainability	Interactive	Framing and structuring the issue through establishing a common understanding of the issue, goals, and actors who are to take action	Quantity of mass media attention, structural conditions and design of communication process, and potential for communication exchange
Communication *for* Sustainability	Interactive	Establish societal transformation	Measurable action towards sustainability

One such type of sustainability communication is Communication *about* Sustainability, which occurs when "processes where information, interpretations, and opinions with respect to the sustainability issues are exchanged and discussed." (Genç, 2017, p.514). Aligned with the interactive model of communication, the focus of Communication *about* Sustainability is on "framing concerns and structuring facts, arguments, and claims through establishing a common understanding of the issue at stake, of the goals which required to be accomplished, and of who should take action" (ibid.). As such Communication *about* Sustainability views sustainability communication as a complex and interactive process which takes place amongst multiple and potentially competing ideas, interpretations, and agendas which continually influence each other. In line with this complexity, determining the effectiveness of Communication *about* Sustainability is more challenging as it may be hard to attribute an effect to the specific communication.

The indicators of effectiveness or quality then also relate to the conditions surrounding sustainability communication which Communication *about* Sustainability works to create. Indicators thus include the quantity of mass media attention for the problem which is the focus of Communication *about* Sustainability. Additionally, determining the structural conditions and design of the process of communication may also reveal information about who and how the discourse surrounding the issue in focus is accessed, and how this impacts the process of framing and structuring surrounding the issue. The final indicator of the effectiveness and quality of Communication *about* Sustainability is "the potential for communication exchange between spheres, or subsystems of communication" (Genç, 2017, p.515). Although Communication *of* Sustainability can also be perceived as contributing to creating the conditions needed to tackle sustainability issues, for example through scientists providing policy makers with information or recommendations, Communication *about* Sustainability is arguably more apt at doing so with its focus on creating dialogue. As Moser (2010) notes specifically for climate change communication, communication that goes beyond an instrumental focus on informing or elitist nature has helped open up the issue and create public discourse in a way in which the issue now penetrates society more deeply.

This moves towards the third type of sustainability communication, Communication *for* Sustainability, in which the objective "is to establish societal transformation on the basis of the normative goals of sustainable development." (Genç, 2017, p.515). Similar to Communication *about* Sustainability, Communication *for* Sustainability views communication as interactive, in which meaning is created, exchanged, and negotiated. Sustainability communication in general also tends to be viewed in an interactive way, favoured over a sender-oriented perspective, because it "also includes processes of dialogue and discourse and the normative aspect of sustainable development." (Siano et al., 2016).

Demonstrating the ambiguity that may exist surrounding the types of sustainability communication, "[Communication *for* Sustainability] may share elements of [Communication *of* Sustainability] and [Communication *about* Sustainability], including the knowledge generation (or social) learning and collaboratively developing solutions for sustainability issues, in terms of direction and senders." (ibid.). Communication *for* Sustainability is the broadest and most abstract type of sustainability communication, and in turn also the most difficult to measure in its effectiveness. Although it is even more challenging to attribute an effect to Communication *for* Sustainability alone than for Communication *about* Sustainability, in theory the impact of Communication *for* Sustainability can be seen in terms of measurable action towards sustainability.

Communication *for* Sustainability is arguably also the most complex form of sustainability communication to achieve, having "counterparts in that communication related to sustainability may in fact neglect or even inhibit sustainable development. Since no one is openly against sustainability, this is generally done by symbolically seem to be supporting sustainability despite following hidden non-sustainable agendas." (Genç, 2017, p.515). Such symbolic and superficial support may be motivated by the benefits organisations communicating sustainability can reap.

2.4.3. Mediums and forms used for sustainability communication

Organisations can use a variety of mediums for and forms of sustainability communication. The main mediums and forms through which organisations have been found to engage in sustainability communication are 'mission' and/or 'vision' statements, official reports, websites, and social media (Garnett et al., 2015; Ki and Shin, 2015; Ott, Wang and Bortree, 2016; Reilly and Hynan, 2014; Siano et al., 2016; Wickham and Lehman, 2015). Similar to the types of sustainability communication, the mediums and forms used by organisations for sustainability communication may be understood to have varying functions and differ in the communication model upon which they are based. Table 4 provides an overview of these four mediums and forms, the way in which they understand communication, and some of the functions which have been attributed to them in the literature. Organisations have often been found to use a combination of mediums and forms, with some of their functions overlapping (Garnett et al., 2015; Wickham and Lehman, 2015).

Table 4: Overview of mediums and forms used by organisations for sustainability communication (Source: author)

Mediums and forms of sustainability communication	Model of communication	Function(s)
Mission and/or vision statement	Transmission	• Present strategic priorities and purpose of organisation (Garnett et al., 2015; Siano et al., 2016) • Reflect internal and external organisational environment (Wickham and Lehman, 2015)

Report	Transmission	• Convey information on and frame organisational activities (Wickham and Lehman, 2015)
		• Address priorities of salient stakeholders (Wickham and Lehman, 2015)
Website	Transmission	• Communicate organisational purpose and positioning to stakeholders (Ki and Shin, 2015)
		• Convey information on commitment to sustainability (Siano et al., 2016)
		• Offer stakeholders a way to access a mission and/or vision statement, and/or report (Ott, Wang and Bortree, 2016; Siano et al., 2016)
Social media	Interactive	• Conduct dialogue both internally and externally (Reilly and Hynan, 2014)
		• Formally communicating information (Reilly and Hynan, 2014)
		• Enable both the organisation and stakeholders to react and respond with each other (Reilly and Hynan, 2014)
		• Reach a wider range of stakeholders (Reilly and Hynan, 2014)
Cultural productions	Transmission and/or interactive	• Educate to provoke action; instigate a change in a visitor/spectator's thoughts and behaviour (Byers, 2008)
		• Promote civic dialogue (Byers, 2008; Cameron, Hodge and Salazar, 2015)
		• Elicit an emotional response (Sutter, 2008)
		• Empower publics (Sison, 2013)

Organisational mission and vision statements are central components of an organisation's communication, intended to present strategic priorities and core areas of interest which reflect the organisation's philosophy and culture (Garnett et al., 2015; Wickham and Lehman, 2015). In theory, these statements thus also act as a reflection of the kind of internal and external environment of the organisation. By engaging in sustainability communication through such statements organisations then explicitly link sustainability to their purpose (Siano et al., 2016). Conveying such information, these statements can be understood as following the transmission model of communication in which the focus is on communication as a one-way process, from the organisation to the receiver.

Reports too can be understood as a medium through which an organisation engages in a one-way process, with the focus on transmitting information. In these reports organisations convey information on and frame their activities, with the intention of also addressing the priorities of salient stakeholders (Wickham and Lehman, 2015). Although the medium itself is one-way, as an important source of information for an organisation's stakeholders, it may help stimulate a two-way process of communication between stakeholders and the organisation.

Websites are another form of and medium through which organisations can engage in sustainability communication, and are seen as one of the most important mediums to do so (Ki and Shin, 2015; Siano et al., 2016). They have become the "primary channel for organizations to communicate what they stand for to their stakeholders" and "their proactive positions regarding organizational [sustainability] issues" (Ki and Shin, 2015, p.36). How organisations use websites in sustainability communication however varies. It is common for organisations to publish their mission and vision statements on their website, and to also either publish or make their reports accessible there (Ott, Wang and Bortree, 2016; Siano et al., 2016). These mediums and forms have also been found to exhibit a high level of consistency in their messaging, and so taken individually may potentially also indicate the way in which sustainability is perceived by the organisation across the other mediums (Garnett et al., 2015).

Increasingly websites have been found to have a landing page dedicated to sustainability. Despite this, certain sectors of organisations seem to engage in more explicit sustainability communication on their website. In a content analysis of the websites of 300 top-ranking organisations, Ott, Wang and Bortree (2016) found that of a sample of 100 organisations in the sector, 93 colleges/universities had dedicated sustainability landing pages compared to only 4 non-profits. They suggest that some sectors may face challenges in

engaging in sustainability communication through websites, perhaps signalling resource constraints, lack of interest or a lack of focus on sustainability. Elsewhere scholars have raised queries regarding the extent to which inter- and intra-sectoral differences exist that affect the ability of organisations to engage in sustainability communication (Wickham and Lehman, 2015). Irrespective of sector, research has found that the overwhelming majority of organisations do not define sustainability, which is concerning as "[o]rganizations should be clear in their communication about what sustainability means to them and how they define it." (Ott, Wang and Bortree, 2016, p.683). This is significant as like vision and mission statements and reports, websites also can be understood as following the transmission model of information. Thus, if organisations are not providing information through these mediums and forms, in theory recipients will not receive them. This is where more interactive mediums and forms of sustainability communication such as social media can be beneficial if recipients want to enter into dialogue with the organisation.

Helping enable dialogue, organisations increasingly use social media, "technology-facilitated dialogue conducted through platforms including blogs, wikis, content sharing, social networking, and social bookmarking", in both their internal and external sustainability communication (Reilly and Hynan, 2014, p.749). Although social media are also used for formal communications, similar to the other mediums and forms described which focus on transmitting information, it differs in that it enables organisations and stakeholders to react and respond, thereby creating a two-way process of communication. Research has found that although the majority of large organisations engage in social media for their organisational communication and tend to have more resources, a higher percentage of smaller organisations use social media (Reilly and Hynan, 2014). This is theorised to be because social media is relatively accessible in that it does not necessarily present a high cost to the organisation, whilst enabling the organisation to reach a wider range of stakeholders. Research comparing the sustainability communication of top-ranked 'green' and 'not green' organisations through social media found that 'green' organisations were consistently more likely to engage in more sustainability communication and maintain a greater presence (Reilly and Hynan, 2014). This suggests that organisations who engage in sustainability communication are more likely to be organisations whose strategic priorities, purpose, activities, and/or environment is linked to sustainability in some way.

A medium and form specific to cultural organisations which remains underexplored but which can be used for sustainability communication may be termed 'cultural productions'. As an umbrella term for the mediums and forms which cultural organisations

produce, cultural productions present arguably one of the most important mediums and forms through which cultural organisations can engage in sustainability communication. For museums, cultural productions may be exhibitions. For theatres, this may be a performance or play. For a cinema, this may be a film viewing. For a cultural events organisation, this may be a festival. These are just some examples to provide a sense of what is meant by the term cultural productions, and are not intended to be exhaustive of the different types of cultural productions. Although research is extremely limited on how cultural productions are used as a medium and form by organisations, some studies have indicated that the cultural production exhibits have been used for sustainability communication.

Byers (2008) describes how museums may use their exhibits in order to educate with the goal to provoke action, and instigate a change in the visitor/spectator's thoughts and behaviour. In addition, Byers (2008) also shows that museums may use their cultural productions with the aim to promote public dialogue, echoed by the theorising of Cameron, Hodge, and Salazar (2015). In one of the few experimental studies in the field, Sutter (2008) demonstrates that cultural productions may elicit an emotional response in those who view, experience, and partake. A last preliminary function of cultural productions is provided by Sison (2013), who shows that cultural productions events may be used to empower publics. Despite the limited amount of evidence and research on cultural productions, they can be theorised to be important forms of and mediums for cultural organisation to engage in sustainability communication. As the examples given show, the focus may both lie in transmitting information and/or creating a two-way process of communication, depending on its design.

2.4.4. Conclusion

This section explored the concept of strategic communication on sustainability. Having discussed the ways in which sustainability communication has been defined and understood, the central importance of processes of communication are demonstrated. The two models of communication which dominate academic discussion are then described. Connected to this, a framework which distinguishes between three types of sustainability communication is discussed. The three types of sustainability communication that can be characterised are communication *of* Sustainability, communication *about* Sustainability, and communication *for* Sustainability. The types of sustainability communication can be understood as forming the component of actions in the practice of strategic sustainability communication.

Concluding, the different types of mediums which organisations use to engage in sustainability communication are discussed and presented in an overview, again connected to the models of communication. The types of mediums which organisations use to engage in sustainability communication can be understood as forming the component of materials in the practice of strategic sustainability communication. Both the framework of the three types of sustainability communication and the overview of the different types of mediums organisations use to engage in sustainability communication then provide a means through which the components of actions and materials respectively can be examined.

2.5. The practice of strategic sustainability communication: an overview

The conceptual framework presented seeks to enable research to ultimately fulfil its objective of understanding how cultural organisations position themselves, communicate on, and understand their role in relation to sustainability challenges. Through employing practice theory as a 'system of interpretation' research is guided to understand strategic sustainability communication as a practice. In essence, it is argued that practices are routines consisting of four components: motivations, meanings, actions, and materials. To gain insight into these routines and components the conceptual framework synthesises and reflects upon literature concerning three concepts which are perceived as essential to the practice of strategic sustainability communication: sustainability, strategic communication, and strategic communication on sustainability. A conceptual model can be created on the basis of these insights, which encompasses the different frameworks and characterisations to understand these routines and components presented throughout. The model provides the means through which strategic sustainability communication can be understood, operationalising theory and guiding empirical research. Figure 3 depicts the model of strategic sustainability communication as a practice.

The model understands practices of strategic sustainability communication as routines. These routines can be understood as either rational, action or interpretive. Routines occur through the nexus of four components: motivations, meanings, actions, and materials. Meanings can be understood as the way in which organisations understand sustainability. Two interpretations of this understanding are the three aspects of sustainability (focal artefact, goal-orientation, and behavioural interaction) and the tripartite understanding of sustainability (balance of environmental, social, and economic dimensions attributed). Materials can be understood as the mediums used by organisations for sustainability communication. These include a mission and/or vision statement, report, website, social media, and cultural productions. Actions can be understood as the types of sustainability communication organisations can engage in. These are Communication *of* Sustainability, Communication *about* Sustainability, and Communication *for* Sustainability. Lastly, motivations can be understood as the benefits of sustainability communication for organisations. These include enhanced reputation, source of legitimacy (pragmatic, moral, cognitive), increase in sales, positive social media coverage, improved stakeholder relationships, and an appreciation in stock price.

Meanings	**Actions**

• Three aspects of sustainability
  • *Focal artefact, goal-orientation, and behavioural interaction*
• Tripartite understanding of sustainability
  • *Balance of environmental, social, and economic dimensions attributed*
	• Types of sustainability communication
	  • *Communication of Sustainability*
	  • *Communication about Sustainability*
	  • *Communication for Sustainability*

Routines
Rational, action, interpretive

Materials	**Motivations**

• Mediums and forms of sustainability communication
  • *Mission and/or vision statement*
  • *Report*
  • *Website*
  • *Social media*
  • *Cultural productions*
	• Benefits of sustainability communication for organisations
	  • *Enhanced reputation*
	  • *Source of legitimacy (pragmatic, moral, cognitive)*
	  • *Increase in sales*
	  • *Positive social media coverage*
	  • *Improved stakeholder relationships*
	  • *Appreciation in stock price*

Figure 3: Conceptual model of the practice of strategic sustainability communication to guide research (Source: author)

Examining the routines and its nexus of components which form the practice of strategic sustainability communication by following this model should provide insight into how cultural organisations position themselves, communicate on, and understand their role in relation to sustainability challenges. On the basis of this model research questions that guide such research can be derived.

2.6. Research questions

Reflecting on the conceptual framework and model the following research questions were identified.

2.6.1. Main research question

What kind of routines pertaining to strategic sustainability communication exist in cultural organisations?

2.6.2. Specific research questions

How do they understand sustainability in terms of focal artefact, goal-orientation, and behavioural interaction? To what extent does their understanding address economic, societal, or environmental sustainability issues?

Do they engage in communication *of*, *about*, and *for* sustainability? And which mediums and forms – vision and/or mission statement, report, website, social media, cultural productions – do they use for sustainability communication?

Do they engage in sustainability communication to obtain the benefits – enhanced reputation, source of legitimacy (pragmatic, moral, cognitive), increase in sales, positive social media coverage, improved stakeholder relationships, and an appreciation in stock price – which may occur for doing so?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

A qualitative research design was chosen to examine the routines pertaining to strategic sustainability communication which exist in cultural organisations. Through its exploratory nature, qualitative research allowed for an in-depth appreciation of the subject matter.

3.2. Methods and research

3.2.1. Literature review

Preceding the research phase relevant research and literature on strategic communication, sustainability, and strategic sustainability communication was reviewed and synthesised. To identify relevant research for the review, Scopus, Google Scholar, and the Wageningen University Library database were utilised. The abstracts of articles and research were first read to identify its relevance before it was included. The review resulted in the conceptual framework which guided research.

3.2.2. Sampling procedure

A purposive sampling procedure was chosen to allow creating a sample which was anticipated to give the richest data, following others such as Byers (2008). Through the review and synthesis of literature a research gap was identified, tied to the sample of participants. To bridge this gap the focus of the purposive sampling was on cultural organisations who focused on sustainability beyond an operational sense. Additionally, as existing research was found to almost exclusively focus on museums, different kinds of cultural organisations were targeted in the process. The aim was to find between three to five cultural organisations to participate in the study, whose routines would be explored in small case studies. For practical research purposes, potential participants had to be located in the Netherlands. Before contacting the organisations, a search was conducted to identify a specific employee whose role was relevant to the subject matter. If their direct contact details were retrievable they were directly contacted, either through email or preferably phone. If no specific employee or details could be found then the organisation was contacted through phone to find out how the relevant contact person should be contacted. Following initial contact and if an organisation expressed interest, the organisation was sent a participant information sheet with more information about the aim of research and what it entailed. This participant information sheet is shown in appendix I.

3.2.3. Changes to initial plans

During the sampling and research phase difficulties were encountered which resulted in a change of the initial research plan. Initially the intention was to use a combination of semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews and informal conversations, as well as observations during research to build the case studies. This was chosen to reflect the apparent need to examine both the formal and informal processes which form practice that arose from the literature review. Interviews were also intended to be conducted with people in different functions or levels in the organisation, recognising that practice is constructed by processes throughout the entirety of the organisation.

Due to the circumstances this was not feasible. Many of the cultural organisations which were contacted were unable to participate due to resource constraints such as time, availability of staff, and other commitments. Some organisations maintained hard policies on not working with student projects. Due to the resource constraints of organisations the participating organisations were only available for one interview with the representative contacted, and observations were not possible. To still collect enough data about the organisations and their routines for the case studies, their websites and most recent annual reports which were available were used as additional data sources instead of the initially planned multiple interviews and observations. Together these three sources of data formed the basis of the case studies on the organisations' routines.

3.2.4. Sample and participants

The cultural organisations available to participate in the research period and selected for research were De Ceuvel, Movies that Matter, and Pakhuis de Zwijger. A fourth organisation was initially included in research however the representative did not show up for the interview and so the organisation was excluded from research due to insufficient time to reschedule. All three of the participating organisations were based in Amsterdam. Although the sample was not considered representative of the diversity of cultural sector, it was reasoned that under the circumstances and within the constraints of research this was not feasible. The insights gained from their participation however may still provide insights into routines which may apply to other organisations within the sector and create a basis for further research.

3.2.5. Semi-structured interviews

One semi-structured interview was conducted with a representative of each organisation at the site of the organisation. The length of interview was pre-agreed to be 30 minutes, and depending on the further time availability of the organisation at the time of interview this could be extended. The interview with De Ceuvel lasted 31 minutes, the interview with Movies that Matter lasted 68 minutes, and the interview with Pakhuis de Zwijger lasted 34 minutes. The interviews took place during September and October 2019.

The representatives were either head of communication, marketing and/or public relations, or a senior programmer there, and were considered most knowledgeable on the organisation and its sustainability communication. The interviews were conducted in Dutch at all organisations, as per the preference of participants. With the participants' permission, the interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. All quotations used from the interviews were translated into English.

The format of a semi-structured interview was chosen for both the flexibility and guidance it gives during an interview. Guided by specific questions formulated on the subject matter an in-depth appreciation can be gained. Simultaneously this format allows for more freedom in the interview to respond to the dynamic and conversation, with not every question needing to be asked, or necessarily in order. The interview guide created for the interviewing process is shown in appendix II. Questions pertained to a variety of topics related to an organisation's routine of strategic sustainability communication.

3.2.6. Additional data sources: websites and annual reports

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, the organisations' website and most recent annual report available were chosen as data sources. As identified in the literature, although both websites and annual reports are important forms of sustainability communication, they simultaneously are primary means through which an organisation can engage *in* sustainability communication and *about* forms of sustainability communication. As a result, both websites and annual reports were thought to be useful and significant data sources when identifying an organisation's strategic sustainability communication routine. When examining a website, the focus of research was information about the organisation, its mission, vision, activities, and any additional sustainability related information. The most recent annual report available was examined in full for each organisation.

3.2.7. Data analysis

To analyse the data from the interviews, websites, and annual reports the program Atlas.ti Cloud was used. The interview transcripts and annual reports were imported in full. For the websites, the selected information for analysis was imported. All of the data was then coded using an open coding method that allowed for both deductive coding, on the basis of the literature review, and inductive coding, identifying new codes emerging from the empirical research. The open coding process generated 54 codes. Following the open coding process a thematic analysis was conducted to organise these codes into the five themes that had been identified by the literature review as components of the routine that forms the practice of strategic sustainability communication. A coding tree was created to represent this, and is shown in appendix III along with the indicators for the encoding themes. The results of the analysis provided the basis for the case studies and ensuing discussion.

3.2.8. Confidentiality

As agreed to by the participating organisations, research was not anonymous. Individual representatives with whom interviews were conducted are not be named however it cannot be guaranteed they cannot be identifiable. Non-anonymised data in the form of audio recordings were collected and retained as part of the research process.

4. Results

4.1. Introduction

This section presents the insights and results of the conducted research: the routines pertaining to the practice of strategic sustainability communication of De Ceuvel, Movies that Matter, and Pakhuis de Zwijger. Though examining each organisation respectively, and the routine and its components which form their practice as well as the nature thereof, this thesis seeks to answer the identified research questions. The routines are then compared and their diversity is reflected upon in light of that the routines share many common components. To interpret and explain this diversity the idea of pathways is suggested to be fruitful, as suggested by the use of 'routines' in organizational studies.

4.2. De Ceuvel

De Ceuvel is the first organisation whose routine pertaining to strategic sustainability communication is examined. De Ceuvel is a small cultural organisation based in Amsterdam. The organisation was established in 2012, developed by a small consultancy who won a bid from the municipality to transform the former shipyard which was heavily contaminated and in disuse. The organisation focuses on supporting and experimenting new and sustainable technologies and innovations which are applied to the site of the organisation. The organisation seeks to showcase this openly and offers a diverse cultural programme to the public.

4.2.1. Meanings assigned to the concept of sustainability

De Ceuvel understands sustainability as a concept which is connected to experimentation. For De Ceuvel the focus of sustainability then is on presenting and inspiring alternative lifestyles and approaches to those dominant in society. The organisation expresses the intention to act as,

> "a sort of symbol, a showcase place, a parade horse, to show the world 'it can also be done like this. And this is a way of working, and this is a way of living and of consuming and of producing and of working together which is green, which is CO_2 neutral, which produces as little rubbish possible and where as much as possible is done with remnants.' And we want to show that to everybody, in as many ways as possible, so yes, that is the core of the story." (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019)

Although it seeks to showcase such lifestyles and approaches in a tangible way, the focus of sustainability remains abstract. It is not these approaches themselves which are the focus but the principle behind them, offering a substitute which is thought to enable a reconnection with locales and "bring us back in touch with our basic needs." (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.18). As such these alternative lifestyles remain constructs, signifying the systemic difference which underpins sustainability.

The goal-orientation which characterises this understanding of sustainability is relative, as the focus of De Ceuvel is on showcasing multiple methods, techniques and innovations which can contribute to achieving incremental change. These methods often have an experimental character and can be future-oriented, like employing phytoremediation or their previous attempts to create the first 'biogas boat', but the organisation is always focused

on the present process of change rather than an ultimate state of sustainability. De Ceuvel then seeks to stretch and play with the boundaries on what is possible in the present, thereby constantly changing what sustainability can mean.

As these lifestyles and methods are in a process of evolving in response to their environment, such as new insights or forms of knowledge, what sustainability signifies for De Ceuvel also changes. As both the focus of sustainability and the environment are dynamic, in their interaction they influence and shape each other, redefining and adapting the kind of alternative lifestyles which are understood to be the focus of sustainability.

The perspective which De Ceuvel's understanding of sustainability takes further addresses economic, societal, and environmental sustainability issues in a holistic way. Environmental issues are at the core of the choices made in the activities, technologies, and techniques on display at De Ceuvel. This includes topics ranging from the health of the soil to plastic soup, and from nature to agriculture. It is in tackling these issues that the importance of societal and economic systems and transformation comes into play. For De Ceuvel sustainability is linked societal issues which uphold beliefs and practices that cause and exacerbate environmental issues, such as the disconnect in local material streams and cycles. The way in which society views waste is also problematized as it tends towards disregarding environmental resources which still hold value.

Similarly, De Ceuvel also problematizes the economic system maintaining these practices. Circularity in economic terms then is also understood to be important for reconciling the environmental issues at hand. One initiative there which seeks to overhaul this system is the experiment in which a local market in their own currency 'De Ceuvel' is created, usable in the local economy at De Ceuvel in which exchange is based on the generation of renewable energy. This is just one way in which De Ceuvel claims to be "testing the economy of the future here. One in which there is a lot of collaboration, a lot is shared, where we do not just look at the technical side, but also at the social side of sustainability." (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.2; translated). At the Ceuvel sustainability then is understood holistically, attending to economic, societal, and environmental issues through focusing on alternative lifestyles which push the boundaries of what is thought possible, and in the process thereof allows for evolving ideas as to what these lifestyles and boundaries are.

4.2.2. Materials used for sustainability communication

De Ceuvel uses a variety of forms and mediums in their sustainability communication. One of the core ways in which it links sustainability to its organisation and communicates on this is through their mission and vision statement: "to plant seeds in the hearts and minds of our visitors that will grow into more involvement with sustainability, innovation and the role of culture and art in that movement." (De Ceuvel, 2019a). With this statement, De Ceuvel does not just communicate outwards their commitment to sustainability but they also reflect the purpose guiding the choices they make in their organisation's direction and subsequent activities. Although De Ceuvel produces annual reports, mediums which are often used to convey such information and strategic priories, this statement is only to be found on their website.

The annual report of the Ceuvel instead focuses on other strategic aspects of the organisation, such as administrative and operational reporting. Although these aspects may be considered less connected to sustainability communication, De Ceuvel also reports on specific sustainability communication activities and has a specific section in the report titled sustainability which communicates on their operational sustainability.

For De Ceuvel operational sustainability is itself also a form of sustainability communication. Closely linked to the way in which it understands sustainability, De Ceuvel implements the alternative techniques and lifestyles on display in their own operations. This is one of the most important mediums through which De Ceuvel can be seen to carry out their mission, characterising themselves as an "experiment in which we make sustainability creative, accessible and fun for everyone." (De Ceuvel, 2019b). Consequently, the physical place itself, which also exhibits these experimental techniques, can be understood to be a medium of sustainability communication through which also the form of operational sustainability is communicated.

The physical place of De Ceuvel then can be perceived to be an important type of cultural production. Through exhibiting their own organisational site and the innovative techniques aimed at promoting sustainability, "the place is very much a symbol for sustainability. So, if you say Ceuvel, you are also really saying sustainability. In that way, we show a lot on sustainability." (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019). Asides from exhibiting sustainability through operational sustainability and the physical place itself, De Ceuvel engages in other types of cultural productions which communicate on sustainability.

De Ceuvel has a diverse cultural programme hosting various workshops, film screenings, music evenings, exhibitions, lectures, and festivals. The majority of these cultural

productions communicate on sustainability as "the basis of the programme should be about sustainability and or the circular economy" (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019). On the other hand, sustainability is not a strict criterion for programming cultural productions as "sometimes someone has an idea to just have a good music evening or you just feel like having a party, and that's ok. It doesn't have to be entirely about that, and people who work in the sustainability world, well they also sometimes want to just go out in the evening, and that comes with it too." (ibid.).

This flexibility in their cultural programming also extends to include others outside of their organisation as De Ceuvel also offers itself as a platform for others to communicate on sustainability. De Ceuvel embraces input from outside the organisation, "people come to us with ideas all the time, for events, but also sometimes 'hey, we want to place a beehive and host a series of lectures around it', well great" (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019). By acting as a platform and event space for others De Ceuvel also supports the production of sustainability communication beyond its own organisation, aware that such cultural productions are not just specific to de Ceuvel.

In addition to this cultural programme De Ceuvel also offers an educational programme on range of topics related to sustainability, targeted at pupils, students, and professionals. Like the cultural programme this involves diverse cultural productions, varying from workshops, lectures, and guided tours, to even a treasure hunt amongst De Ceuvel's grounds. The available options are tailored to the target audience, with topics including "plastic soup, the food cycle, urban agriculture, circular economy and upcycling" (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.11; translated).

Both De Ceuvel's website and social media are used as mediums to support the promotion of the other mediums and forms they use for sustainability communication, rather than engage in sustainability communication per se. Social media channels such as Facebook and newsletters help keep their audience informed on activities such as volunteering days. The website is intended to provide more in-depth information on the operational sustainability, with a dedicated section on sustainability, and also on the cultural productions on offer at De Ceuvel. The medium of the website is perceived to have an important supportive role as

> "people want to know more about 'what it is, how does it work', or they've been here
> once and then they want to know more and then they start to read more on 'how does
> it work, what does it look like, wat do they actually do there, yes I understood they
> did something with plants there, how does that work exactly'. And then you do to the

website and then you see that there is also an events programme and you suddenly see that there are lectures and documentaries and you think 'oh wow that's pretty cool, I'll go look there sometime'." (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019).

Through using a variety of mediums and forms for sustainability communication which can support and help expand the reach of the organisation's other mediums and forms means De Ceuvel is able to continue working towards their mission, inspiring and encouraging visitors to get more involved in sustainability.

4.2.3. Actions carried out through sustainability communication

De Ceuvel can be seen as engaging in each type of sustainability communication, although to varying extent. One of the main types of sustainability communication which De Ceuvel exhibits is Communication *of* Sustainability. Stating that "[w]e want to transfer knowledge on sustainability, nature, and the circular economy to a broad audience" (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.11; translated), De Ceuvel prioritises the spread of knowledge on sustainability related topics and issues. Through informing and educating publics on sustainability De Ceuvel aims to inspire and create social engagement. Through making sustainability "tangible on a small scale, and then showing people" (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019), it is hoped that their audience is inspired to also implement changes in their own lives and behaviour to become more sustainable. To help achieve this knowledge transfer De Ceuvel is also focused on ensuring that their activities remain accessible for a large audience.

Alongside informing and educating people on sustainability, a priority for De Ceuvel is also to act as "a network organisation in a place where conversations can take place, about business, about science, about art, about activism." (De Ceuvel representative, personal communication 2019, September 24, 2019). Through connecting people and facilitating dialogue De Ceuvel can be seen to engage in Communication *about* Sustainability. One of the characteristics which De Ceuvel uses to define itself is its role as a 'breeding ground', "a hub for a sort of do-it-yourself, how do you say that, grassroots sustainability movement." (ibid.). In addition to its cultural programme De Ceuvel also offers start-ups or small and innovative businesses or companies whose work is related to sustainability the opportunity to rent a working space in its grounds. In doing so, it is hoped that this will facilitate knowledge transfer between people, working to establish a common understanding on sustainability issues, goals, and opportunities.

De Ceuvel seeks to make connections beyond its function as a business incubator, and create a large network of people,

> "we very much try to connect that intellectual level and scientific level of sustainability, and in which sustainability professionals operate, to that layer of activists and residents who are cleaning up trash or making a park bigger or so, you know, so it has very much both those aspects and yes those two worlds link together here" (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019).

By bringing together people from different domains the potential for communication exchange increases, facilitating greater structuring of the issues and potentially contributing to a movement. This network is limited to those who are already actively engaged with sustainability in some way, such as "like-minded individuals" (De Ceuvel, 2019a), active residents, or businesses in the field of sustainability. Although De Ceuvel is focused on accessibility, with "the more people who are involved here, the better it gets, the more people also take other people with them or say 'oh yes, my friends should also see this, my mother needs to also see this, my neighbour has to also come here'" (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019), this is limited to Communication *of* Sustainability as Communication *about* Sustainability is focused on those actors already primed to take action.

Communication *for* Sustainability on the other hand, which seeks to establish societal transformation, is not specifically targeted at actors actively engaged in sustainability. At De Ceuvel engaging in Communication *for* Sustainability is limited to aspiration, reflecting the complexity of achieving and detecting measurable action towards sustainability. This instead guides their other types of communication, with the aim to "plant seeds of transformation…stimulate and be a catalyst in another kind of thinking: creative, sustainable and innovative." (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.8; translated). For the Ceuvel achieving societal transformation and "the transition to a circular economy and society is not only a technical transition, it is also a cultural transition: people have to learn new modes of thought and how to apply new techniques and technologies" (De Ceuvel, 2019a). With this belief, De Ceuvel seeks to achieve not only transformation, but transformation on the basis of normative goals: encouraging specific modes of thought which are perceived to lead towards sustainability.

Unlike in De Ceuvel's Communication *about* Sustainability, the societal transformation targeted in Communication *for* Sustainability seeks to engage all people. De Ceuvel's ambition is then "[t]o be a place where a generation of children has grown up with the cultural activities at De Ceuvel whereby they implement sustainability and culture as a

given in their life." (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.8; translated). De Ceuvel can then be seen to engage in all types of sustainability communication, although the extent of this and the actors targeted by the communication differs.

4.2.4. Motivations for engaging in sustainability communication

De Ceuvel experiences various benefits from engaging in sustainability communication. Reputational benefits are one of the most significant types of benefits which work to motivate and support De Ceuvel to engage in sustainability communication. One of the core organisational objectives and ambitions is to become an important, relevant, and recognised actor in the area of sustainability. Through De Ceuvel's sustainability activities it is hoped that it can secure itself a reputation as "the vanguard and a symbol of the social transition to a contemporary circular lifestyle" (De Ceuvel, 2019a) and "an important hub in the network of sustainable, social and creative projects and the green movement in Amsterdam and the Netherlands" (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.8; translated).

Although this may also in part be considered instrumental, it is further stated that they want to use this reputation and power "to achieve behaviour change and together with other transformative platforms and organisations make the movement towards a circular city possible." (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.8; translated). This suggests that De Ceuvel seeks to reap reputational benefits in order to increase and widen its impact in terms of sustainability. This can be understood to relate to moral legitimacy, as by engaging in sustainability communication and widening the impact thereof, the organisation aims to contribute to societal wellbeing.

Moral legitimacy is also a motivational benefit for De Ceuvel in the sense that engaging in sustainability is understood to be the 'right' thing to do in order to do place and concept of De Ceuvel justice. Although the cultural programme and sustainability communication at De Ceuvel often does not provide any significant revenue or financial support for the organisation, "we do it because it belongs to the place, and you want that to take place here, you want people to have those kinds of experiences here" (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019). This cultural programme is thought to be part of De Ceuvel's essence, and one of the reasons why it is felt to be a unique place.

Sustainability communication then also provides De Ceuvel with a source of differentiation which can help further secure their reputation. Reflecting upon its

sustainability communication and why visitors come to De Ceuvel it is felt that "well actually a lot of what we offer is special or different…in that sense we are very distinctive compared to other places because we have a unique character…I mean there aren't many organisations that programme sustainability content" (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019). The cultural programme at De Ceuvel then fills a gap in the cultural sector. Due to this gap through engaging in sustainability communication and becoming a site for experimentation in the field of sustainability De Ceuvel has become "one of the most sustainable and unique urban developments in Europe." (De Ceuvel, 2019a). This reputation as unique and innovative in the field of sustainability is a source of pride for the organisation.

It is also something they seek to continually secure through further ventures and ideas, such as experimenting with the first block chain energy exchange system in the Netherlands and starting a café "with the idea to become the most sustainable restaurant facility in the Netherlands" (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019). Although the core motivation could in part be to grow and contribute to a sustainability movement, De Ceuvel has also won numerous prizes through engaging in sustainability communication and activities.

De Ceuvel also seeks positive recognition from media, specifically seeking to make it into the papers. With their reputation, they are able to achieve it, being "well loved by the press, also the international press, so that also helps us reach a lot of people." (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019). Again, this supports them in their organisational mission by growing their audience. Growing their audience is also a benefit which is crucial to keeping De Ceuvel's organisation running, as there is also an awareness that it needs to be financially viable, as "everything which you put time into has to also be earned back again as salaries still need to be paid" (ibid.). To support its sustainability communication De Ceuvel then also seeks financial support from other partner organisations and subsidies or grants from the council and government either tied to specific sustainability communication activities or the organisation's mission.

All of the benefits which De Ceuvel experiences as a result of its sustainability communication enable and support the organisation to engage in sustainability communication in order to achieve its mission, to grow involvement in sustainability.

4.2.5. Strategy and decision-making regarding sustainability communication

The nature of De Ceuvel's practice of strategic sustainability communication – a routine composed of the meanings, actions, materials, and motivations explored – can be understood through examining the way in which the organisation views strategy and decision-making. As a concept the organisation De Ceuvel gradually developed as a result of council subsidies for the building of new breeding places in the city, in combination with the vision of a small sustainability consultancy sited there at the time who made the development possible. The organisation itself was set-up "as a breeding place for commercial and non-commercial activities in the field of culture, agriculture, building, sustainability and water." (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.12; translated).

As De Ceuvel is situated on the grounds of a former shipyard where the ground was extremely contaminated, innovative ideas and techniques were necessary to overcome the challenges this brought with it in order to realise the idea of a cultural breeding place at that location. The sustainability consultancy was critical to overcoming these challenges,

"then they came with the idea of houseboats, and there they connect, or place compost toilets and put water filters in for the kitchens, and because they are not living spaces but workspaces you can get away with those water filters as people don't shower there or do extensive cooking. At the time, that whole plan, that was completely developed and fabricated by a sustainable start-up consultancy organisation who had a deposit. Then with a subsidy all those technologies were built, and a masterplan was made for the circular material flow of De Ceuvel…it became this big collaboration thing in which everyone was working with sustainability…that clicked so well together that the whole sustainability theme, that masterplan, became the strategy of this place, and the sort of core for which you did it." (De Ceuvel representative 2019, personal communication, September 24, 2019).

Although it was challenging to achieve the vision for De Ceuvel, the success of making this 'wild idea' a reality is attributed to the community around and members of the organisation (De Ceuvel, 2018).

Sustainability as a strategy for De Ceuvel can then be considered both emergent and cognitive. Whilst this strategy emerged with De Ceuvel's own development, it also originated from a collective understanding amongst actors that sustainability was to become the core theme and idea of the place. Engaging in sustainability communication through De Ceuvel and its activities then are attributed retrospectively, guided by the emergent strategy. There is a self-awareness that the organisation "is never finished and is in a perpetual state of development" (De Ceuvel, 2019a) and that "the working with new technical partners,

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research institutes, and councils will further steer us to an educational environment for a new, circular city." (De Ceuvel, 2018, p.17; translated). In this process of adapting and growing the organisation engages in new or different forms and types of sustainability communication.

Focusing on sense-making through emergent and shared strategy, De Ceuvel can be understood to adopt an interpretive perspective on strategic decision making. This means that the nature of the routine which forms De Ceuvel's practice of strategic sustainability communication is also interpretive.

4.2.6. De Ceuvel's routine: just experiment

De Ceuvel's practice of strategic sustainability communication – a routine composed of the meanings, actions, materials, and motivations explored that take place in the context of strategy – can be understood as a coherent routine. The components can be perceived of as supportive and also anticipative each other. For De Ceuvel strategic sustainability communication is active and applied, and can be represented by the notion *just experiment*.

De Ceuvel seeks to encourage experimentation around sustainability and a more hands-on open approach. This is reflected in the flexibility of its understanding of sustainability. The organisation understands sustainability holistically from a construct, relative, and dynamic perspective. The way in which it perceives sustainability is primarily as something which can change and although the organisation does not necessarily have a concept of what the ultimate form of sustainability is, it is able to differentiate between different approaches to sustainability.

The forms and mediums it uses for sustainability communication also functions to assist this, with the diverse cultural programme also remaining open to the ideas of other and to act as a showcase of those different experimental approaches and perspectives on sustainability. This is thus also primarily aimed at educating, inspiring and connecting people with each other so that they may even implement changes in their own lives. Central to this is that sustainability remains interesting and also actionable. This approach to strategic sustainability communication which De Ceuvel takes can then be understood as *just experiment*, in which getting hands-on will help achieve sustainability.

4.3. Movies that Matter

Movies that Matter is the second organisation whose routine pertaining to strategic sustainability communication is examined. Movies that Matter is a small cultural organisation based in Amsterdam. The organisation was established in 2006 as an independent spin-off from Amnesty International Film Festival. The organisation focuses on hosting and supporting the screening of films and documentaries on subject matter that primarily concern human rights issues. The organisation seeks to create awareness of and stimulate dialogue on these issues through its activities.

4.3.1. Meanings assigned to the concept of sustainability

Movies that Matter perceives sustainability as a term inherently connected to human rights, the core theme which is the focus of the organisation's activities. The organisation understands the focus of sustainability to be a responsible attitude and way of life, one which promotes both human and planetary wellbeing, "being kind to the planet in all ways, so also for yourself and your own life, thinking about what is happening to others, and what consequences your actions have" (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). Although this evokes a certain kind of philosophy that should guide a person in their decision-making and treatment of others when adopting a responsible attitude and way of life, what this precisely entails is not explicated. Instead this attitude and way of life remains abstract, and therefore the focus of sustainability can be considered to be a construct.

The goal-orientation which characterises Movies that Matter's perception of sustainability is relative, with the organisation's focus on increasing consciousness with a responsible attitude and way of life to achieve incremental change. There is a distinct awareness that sustainability is a tricky term because it encompasses many different topics, "which is very complicated as when you think of sustainability you might not think about a climate refugee or sad pigs at all, you might think more about good energy suppliers" (Movies that Matter representative, personal communication, October 2, 2019). Movies that Matter then is aware that the term sustainability may present difficulties in achieving sustainability as there is not a universal meaning or understanding amongst people.

For the organisation, the experience of sustainability issues and capability to engage in this is also thought to differ, with people having diverse circumstances and access to different resources, "because when you live here and you have money, then it is all very

terrible but then you don't really, well maybe your garden floods now and then, but you don't really suffer from it you know, not so far in that your lifestyle would be affected." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). Although Movies that Matter exhibits an awareness of the ultimate goal of sustainability, that both humankind and the world thrive, the focus they place on sustainability is arguably in support of incremental change and taking steps which will eventually also lead to that ultimate goal.

The behavioural interaction which characterizes this understanding is dynamic, as the responsible attitudes and way of life as well as their environment influence each other, and change in their interaction. As the result of different sustainability issues emerging, what these responsible attitudes and ways of life are may change in the process. To work towards sustainability then a more flexible and open approach is needed that enables adapting to the circumstances.

In line with this perspective on sustainability, Movies that Matter's understanding of sustainability is holistic, and addresses economic, societal, and environmental dimensions. From the organisation's perspective viewing sustainability issues and associated thematic in a holistic way is essential as "it is just super important that we do something about it together and that we don't see it as separate from each other because we are all responsible for the planet, for everything that thrives and grows, and everything and everyone, humans and animals and plants inclusive." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019).

Although the organisation's roots lie in human rights, sustainability has also become an important thematic for the organisation as "you can't really see those things as separate from each other anymore" (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019), "in the first instance that has very little to do with sustainability but if you look a bit further then it all links into each other." (ibid.). For Movies that Matter societal issues, such as human rights issues, are then inherently connected to sustainability. This is especially heightened in light of the environmental issues that are felt to amplify such social issues, "there are lots of communities around the world who because of climate change are being directly affected, those are already whole areas where people cannot work because it is too hot during the day, above forty degrees, and those are precisely often people who already worked in very barren conditions." (ibid.). Such environmental issues then are perceived to threaten the livelihood of people who live in countries facing severe climate change, especially those which are considered low income.

Alongside these environmental and societal dimensions, Movies that Matter then also understands sustainability to be related to an economic dimension. The economic system itself is also problematized by the organisation as it supports unsustainable business models of actors such as "the clothing industry, the food industry, those are such big killers, so also as a consumer you need to be very sharp in how do I live and of course you can't do everything but yes that you are conscious of everything you do is an important step." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). The organisation thereby perceives this economic issue as also a societal and environmental issue, in that it sustains habits which are damaging to the environment as well. Movies that Matter thus attends to sustainability in holistic way, recognising connections between economic, societal, and environmental issues.

4.3.2. Materials used for sustainability communication

Movies that Matter uses a variety of mediums for and forms of sustainability communication. Regardless of the kind of medium or form of this sustainability communication, the guiding thread in any of their sustainability communication is that they use or are related to film in some way,

> "[f]ilms form the core of all of Movies that Matter's activities. But what makes a film to a *movie that matters*? ... In the first instance, we select films on the basis of artistic quality. The film has to use the possibilities of the medium in a stimulating or refreshing way. We also value the vision of the maker. With a unique vision he or she can give us an innovative view of reality. We do not limit ourselves to a form or genre." (Movies that Matter, 2019a, p.3; translated, emphasis original)

As a medium then film is considered to be the most important way in which the organisation is able to carry out its activities, communicate, and fulfil its mission.

The organisation's mission and vision statement then also functions to guide these activities and internal direction, as well as communicating the organisation's purpose externally. Although Movies that Matter is predominantly said to be focused on human rights issues, originating from Amnesty International, its mission statement makes a crucial link between its purpose and sustainability, stating that "[o]ur mission is to open eyes to human rights. We use film to stir the debate on human rights, sustainability and the fight against injustice." (Movies that Matter, 2019b). This statement is shown on both the organisation's website and in its annual reports.

These annual reports are used to report on more in-depth organizational and administrative information as well as activities carried out in the past year. Although Movies that Matter is aware of operational sustainability, "we are more conscious of it, not printing too much, we have recycling bins, we separate our waste properly, we try to use cups more often, not getting a new one for each drink, that awareness is a lot more present in the organisation than it used to be" (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019), this is not formally addressed anywhere in their report or website. The annual report can be understood to be a medium which mainly functions as a secondary form of sustainability communication, playing a supportive role for the organisation's main activities. The website too plays a mainly supportive role in promoting these activities rather than engaging in sustainability communication, providing little content about sustainability.

The use of social media also has limited engagement in sustainability communication. Although the organisation recognizes the medium as having interactive potential, also for sustainability communication, it limits the use of it in an interactive way, "we try to create some more engagement on social [media], by asking critical questions now and then, but we always also need to be a bit careful in that." (Movies that Matter representative, personal communication 2019, October 2, 2019). Social media then too is mainly used as a supportive medium in sustainability communication, "really it is mainly about bringing attention to all of the programmes that we have" (ibid.).

Movies that Matter primarily engages in sustainability communication through its main activities, an annual international film and debate festival, a spin-off tour thereof, supporting other organisations and people to host film screenings, and the educational programme and support they provide. Each of these can be considered to be a medium and form of cultural production, and can include the use of additional forms of sustainability communication.

The annual film and debate festival is the organisation's largest project and event, which takes place around the end of March in The Hague. The physical place chosen to host the festival is also felt to be symbolic of their mission, "it is a very logical city for us because The Hague is the city of peace and justice." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). Spread across nine days the festival usually presents around seventy films and features an extensive debating programme. Films are selected by a special selection committee and the "common denominator of these films is that they act on situations in which human worthiness is at issue. In the selection, we also

consider the thematic urgency and the way in which the film can contribute to the knowledge and the formation of opinions of our audience." (Movies that Matter, 2019a, p.3; translated).

The festival further presents these films within a range of themes, with "a section on sustainability, a section on refugees, a section on LGBTQ+, and then also supplementary themes, like this year freedom for 75 years, which is very current and which we also have a special programme for. Sometimes also about freedom, democracy, rule of law, and liberation also maybe from war. Like that we actually have container themes, each with different films" (Movies that Matter representative, personal communication, October 2, 2019). Although sustainability thematic is sometimes addressed in films of other categories, since a couple of years the organisation has a dedicated sustainability section. This section is currently called *Earth that Matters* and was previously known as *Save the Planet*. With this section, the organisation asks "attention for the consequences of pollution and climate change…with films about how climate change influences living conditions" (Movies that Matter, 2019a, p.15; translated).

In addition to film screenings, "comprehensive expansion programmes with debates, interviews, masterclasses, lectures, and Q&A's" (Movies that Matter, 2019a, p.8; translated) take place at the festival. Sometimes this is also in the form of panel discussions and talk shows. For the majority of films shown such additional activities are offered, to go into further detail into the film and thematic topic. Movies that Matter also offers an extensive side programme which includes activities such as workshops, theatre, music, and exhibitions. All such activities at the festival can also to an extent be considered a form of cultural production and medium through which the organisation engages in sustainability communication, as they also content-wise are sometimes related to sustainability.

To help promote the festival Movies that Matter has partnerships with media outlets who also have an active interest in sustainability, such as Trouw. The organisation has "a festival newspaper that appears each year as a supplement with *Trouw*, they also are committed to sustainability and feel it is an important topic" (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). This serves to support their sustainability communication activities like the festival. *Trouw*, along with other media outlets such as *De Correspondent* and *De Groene Amsterdammer* have also been used by the organisation as an online platform to provide access to selected documentaries for a larger public and enabling their sustainability communication.

Film screenings are an important medium in which the organisation engages in sustainability communication. In addition to those hosted at the annual festival, Movies that

Matter also hosts a spin-off touring festival with screenings of films from the festival throughout the Netherlands, often accompanied with an expansion programme. Another form of film screening which the organisation facilitates is *MtM à la Carte*, through which "people can host free film screenings with an after-programme" (Movies that Matter, 2019a, p.28; translated). The organisation itself also hosts additional film screenings for specific audiences, including ministries like the ministry of foreign affairs, and Dutch embassies around the world.

An important way in which the organisation also engages in sustainability communication is through their educational programme. This programme consists of different components and options for schools. One option is that schools and teachers can freely request one of the films from their database to use in their lesson with accompanying lesson material. To help support teachers in this the organisation also occasionally offers free workshops. A different option is that schools can view one of the organisation's films in a cinema or theatre, where schools are provided "a very extensive programme and a film and a follow-up discussion and everything. And then to prepare for that we have lesson materials which are online, which children can do at home or at school before so they are already a bit prepared and have an idea of what they will experience on such an occasion" (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). Through these educational programmes, Movies that Matter facilitates the viewing and discussion of human rights and sustainability films amongst students, thereby engaging in sustainability communication.

The last core way in which the organisation engages in sustainability communication is through the international support they provide to other film festivals and organisations. This can be in the form of providing trainings or workshops but can also be "advice and also money, in countries where freedom of press is a thing, so where it really matters in terms of human rights and sustainability" (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). The organisation then functions as an expertise centre, supporting the sustainability communication of other actors or organisations in other countries.

Movies that Matter engages in sustainability communication through a variety of mediums and forms. The core medium through which this is done, and also the main form used and supported by other mediums and activities, is film. Through its activities, Movies that Matter pursues its mission, and stir debate on topics like sustainability, to create a more just and sustainable world.

4.3.3. Actions carried out through sustainability communication

Movies that Matter can be considered to engage in all types of sustainability communication, although the degree to which this is done varies. The organisation uses Communication *of* Sustainability as the basis of their activities, focusing on informing their audiences with the hope to create social engagement and lead to behaviour change. In selecting films the organisation deliberately considers films on the basis that it "can contribute to the knowledge and the formation of opinions of our audience." (Movies that Matter, 2019a, p.3; translated). Such informing and educating of audiences through film is perceived as fundamental to their mission, also because in "developing countries and countries where freedom of press is limited, film screenings can increase awareness about human rights and stir discussion about it." (Movies that Matter, 2019a, p.30; translated).

In addition to audiences in countries which face human rights issues, pupils are another target audience which Movies that Matter focus their efforts in Communication *of* Sustainability on. For the organisation's most recent annual festival a special VR-film programme was created in which pupils attending the event could act before a green screen and consequently see themselves in a film. The idea behind this was that "you would then see yourself for example sailing through the plastic soup and then you could fish plastic out of the water. So, it was a film whereby youth could get in touch with that in a more accessible way." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). Often these VR films include specific sustainability films and are targeted at making the topic accessible and understandable, hoping to help create potential engagement on the issue.

Although Communication *of* Sustainability forms a basis to the organisation's mission, opening eyes to human rights, Movies that Matter most often aims to employ this in combination with Communication *about* Sustainability. This can be seen in the frequent combination of hosting film screenings and accompanying expansive or after- programmes. The organisation's aim is to engage in both Communication *of* Sustainability and Communication *about* Sustainability, "so that you give information, you give interpretation, but the public always also has a role, can also talk, discuss, and also with a problem or films which need it, we try to give an action perspective." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). The organisation often sees that audiences appreciate having the opportunity to discuss any experiences, feelings or thoughts after watching the film or the chance to ask questions, especially with films that have difficult thematic.

These accompanying programmes vary in form, including Q&A's, panel discussions with experts, talk shows, and debates. A common aim however is to stir discussion amongst the audience and stimulate as well as display different perspectives, "we try to you know, well get people with interesting opinions on stage and really have a debate so that there aren't just people sitting there who agree with each other, otherwise there isn't much point" (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). Sometimes such guest speakers can include experiential experts who can share something about what they have gone through as a result of the problematic shown in the film. These opportunities which Movies that Matter designs, in which audiences can discuss experiences and meet people with different perspectives, can be considered a form of Communication *about* Sustainability.

Beyond the informative nature of these programmes, they are also interactive and are intended to be inspirational for audiences and give them an action perspective. The emphasis in conversations following a film often lies on "well what can you do as an individual, we see lots of industries who are ruining it for us and governments, you are almost overwhelmed by 'what does it even matter anymore', and well then there's someone sitting there who says it does matter because if we all make a fist then governments and businesses can't ignore us anymore." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019).

Providing such an action perspective, especially on the topic of sustainability, is felt to be crucial as if "you only communicate misery and misery and misery to people and don't give hope, well no person will come to your festival, and then that whole thing about opening people's eyes, well you've achieved opening people's eyes but whether they consequently also act differently…because acting differently is really what you are searching for." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). The festival then is felt to also provide comfort at some level, 'a moment of enlightenment', both for the audience and participants regarding 'heavy' thematic. These moments are thought to create connections between people who may not otherwise cross paths. This is an important component in how the organisation seeks to create potential for communication exchange and help instigate action through Communication *about* Sustainability.

In engaging in Communication *about* Sustainability an important target group for Movies that Matter is pupils. From the organisation's perspective, "opening the eyes of youth is actually the most important thing of all because they are the future, they are going to form society" (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019).

By focusing organisational efforts on an audience who is perceived to be important for the future direction of society Movies that Matter exhibits an aspiration to engage in Communication *for* Sustainability, to establish societal transformation. Communication *for* Sustainability however remains an implicit and underlying goal as the organisation is conscious that assessing measureable action towards sustainability is complex, "we can't have that as a mission because you just can't measure it, you can't trace it, but you hoop that people in their lives will vote differently, think differently, think different about their fellow human beings, that has to be in there." (ibid.).

Even though such transformation change is not part of the official mission which guides Movies that Matter's activities and choices, the organisation still feels it has engaged in Communication *for* Sustainability and has felt the impact of this. The sustainability films which the organisation plays often handle difficult topics, and address the normative goals of sustainable development, hoping to inspire change and help shape meaning. After the screening of the film *Anthropocene* and the follow-up discussion the beginning of a transformation was felt to be tangible,

> "you noticed it in the hall, a sort of, sometimes you have that with a screening, all those people have felt something, something is happening there, and afterwards people went to a café to further discuss it and something really had formed, so I know for sure that after watching that film at least two people ended their contract with an energy supplier and went to *Green Choice*, or decided 'oh man I'm really going to do it differently' or 'I'm not going to eat meat anymore', I know for sure because it was so impactful, there really was a buzz." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019).

There is an awareness that the organisation cannot know whether there are any impacts and what ripple effects their activities have in terms of Communication *for* Sustainability, but it remains one of the core reasons why it engages in any type of sustainability communication. Movies that Matter then engages in all types of sustainability communication to an extent, even though Communication for Sustainability is aspirational the organisation seeks to create the conditions for this through engaging in both Communication *of* Sustainability and Communication *about* Sustainability.

4.3.4. Motivations for engaging in sustainability communication

Movies that Matter experiences and perceives a variety of benefits from engaging in sustainability communication. The main source of motivation to engage in sustainability communication is the source of legitimacy it provides the organisation. This legitimacy is both moral and cognitive in nature. Through attending to and incorporating sustainability as a thematic in their activities the organisation feels that they are helping instigate a movement which seeks to tackle sustainability issues and contribute to societal wellbeing. It is then felt that "if you ask 'what's in it for you?', well we're contributing to that, that we're contributing to that movement, a movement that is making a fist towards companies, governments, and also to ourselves as consumers because that's what we are, and saying we are aware not, we know the situation, we have to take action." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). Engaging in sustainability communication then provides the organisation moral legitimacy because they feel it contributes to societal wellbeing, and is just the 'right' thing to do.

Asides from the moral legitimacy which sustainability communication gives the organisation, it also derives cognitive legitimacy from engaging in it. With the perceived mainstreaming of sustainability as a thematic and issue in society,

> "you can't avoid it anymore. You can't take yourself seriously as an organisation like ours this day and age if you don't give attention to that. The newspapers are full of it, politics is busy with it, thank god it really is on the table, it really has been put on the agenda now. You would have to have fallen on your head if you also didn't do something with it, because you have to take yourself seriously and you also have to serve your audience." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019).

Communicating on sustainability then is regarded as not only the 'right' thing to do, but also necessary for Movies that Matter to even operate as an organisation. Sustainability communication then provides the organisation a 'social license', as their stakeholders expect it to do so. If the organisation did not engage in sustainability communication stakeholders would not understand why or be able to take the organisation "seriously". Communicating on sustainability then provides the organisation with a source of cognitive legitimacy.

The perceived importance of the sustainability thematic also means that through engaging in sustainability communication the organisation also has a larger audience, "it's a really popular topic, so asides from that it is very important it is also a very good crowd puller. People are attracted to that because they find that interesting." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). As a result of larger

audiences, the organisation is both able to secure its reputation as owners of a leading event and sell more tickets for the festival which helps support the organisation financially, who primarily rely on partnerships, sponsors, and subsidies to carry out its activities. Sustainability communication also provides Movies that Matter with media coverage through such partnerships. The organisation's media partner *Trouw*, who is also active and focused on sustainability thematic, distributes the festival newspaper as a supplement.

Movies that Matter limits the use of social media for sustainability communication. Perhaps also because there is an awareness that communicating about sustainability can also bring critique from others in regards to operational sustainability. From the organisation's perspective "you would actually want to adhere to what you preach right to the core, but with a festival that is impossible, because you also need to fly in interesting guests from somewhere else in the world, otherwise you don't have a purposeful festival anymore. So those are bottlenecks, things which clash with each other. But we are continuously trying to handle that better, we try to, well if people are coming from Europe then if they can travel by train, we also compensate CO_2 emissions." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019). In that way sustainability communication also presents the organisation with increased scrutiny.

The benefits which Movies that Matter receives from engaging in sustainability communication make it an important component in achieving their organisational goals, creating a more just and sustainable society.

4.3.5. Strategy and decision-making regarding sustainability communication

The nature of Movies that Matter's practice of strategic sustainability communication – a routine composed of the meanings, actions, materials, and motivations explored – can be understood through examining the way in which the organisation views strategy and decision-making. Originating from Amnesty International Film Festival, the organisation's main focus is still on human rights thematic. The broadening of scope to include sustainability is reasoned as important because the organisation increasingly feels that sustainability and human rights cannot be seen as separate issues. Although the organisation feels there is still more space to expand their focus on sustainability, it is also aware of its progression in engaging in sustainability communication. It is only in recent years then that it has become seen as possible and relevant to screen sustainability films at a festival that was

originally focused on only human rights, mainly related to the sustainability thematic gaining traction.

Movies that Matter then also engaged in sustainability communication in a gradual process,

> "looking back, it was really put on the table by the team…it went organically, but at a given moment there was a decision yes this dilemma, that word 'sustainability' really has to be added to our vision and mission. First it wasn't in there, we had Movies that Matter want to open eyes to human rights and a just society, and now it says Movies that Matter wants to open eyes to human rights, a just society and a sustainable world. That was consciously added, and is also consciously programmed on." (Movies that Matter representative 2019, personal communication, October 2, 2019).

The decision to engage in sustainability communication then was born out of a shared understanding of its relevance and will to address it amongst employees. The strategy behind engaging in sustainability communication can then be considered emergent, with a cognitive element as it emerged from a collective awareness. Despite this element that suggests an interpretive perspective, Movies that Matter can be understood to exhibit an action perspective. This is because engaging in sustainability communication was a decisive act through which resources were also committed to create a specific sustainability programme at the annual festival. With the organisation's opinion that there is space to further expand its sustainability communication there is an awareness that engagement is an ongoing process, and may change over time, as new kinds of sustainability activities develop as a result of committed resources.

Focusing on the activities that take place as a result of decisive acts through emergent strategy, Movies that Matter can be understood to adopt an action perspective on strategic decision making. This means that the nature of the routine which forms Movies that Matter's practice of strategic sustainability communication is also action.

4.3.6. Movies that Matter's routine: be conscious

Movies that Matter's practice of strategic sustainability communication – a routine composed of the meanings, actions, materials, and motivations explored that take place in the context of strategy – can be understood as a coherent routine. The components can be perceived of as supportive and also anticipative of each other. For Movies that Matter strategic sustainability communication is ideological and illustrative, and can be represented by the notion *be conscious*.

Movies that Matter seeks to create awareness around primarily human rights issues and also sustainability issues. This is reflected in the clear way in which the organisation perceives sustainability. Although sustainability is understood holistically from a construct, relative, and dynamic perspective it has a clear understanding of what it sees as sustainable and not sustainable. It seeks to communicate on this through primarily the medium of film and follow-up discussion but also engages in other forms and mediums of sustainability communication to convey this understanding.

Sustainability communication thus aims at educating on such issues but also creating a shared understanding amongst its public. Central to this is that people become more conscious of sustainability and related issues so they bring about changes in their own lives. This approach to strategic sustainability communication which Movies that Matter takes then can be understood as *be conscious*, with the belief that being aware of the reality of issues will help achieve sustainability.

4.4. Pakhuis de Zwijger

Pakhuis de Zwijger is the third and final organisation whose routine pertaining to strategic sustainability communication is examined.

Pakhuis de Zwijger is a small cultural organisation based in Amsterdam. The organisation was established in 2006 in a former cooling house as a harbour for the creative industry. The organisation focuses on discussing societal challenges, also in relation to urban environments and in particular its home city Amsterdam. The organisation seeks to stimulate discussion on societal issues and help facilitate the creation of solutions.

4.4.1. Meanings assigned to the concept of sustainability

Pakhuis de Zwijger chooses to use an "urban lens" from which to operate as an organisation, with the rationale that cities are where the issues and solutions of our time are focused. This perspective is further extended to the way in which Pakhuis de Zwijger perceives sustainability and the sustainability problematic, as undeniably connected to cities and urban sites. The organisation understands the focus of sustainability to be on finding societal solutions which respond to sustainability issues, especially that of climate change, "that's just the way it is, and now it's about which routes you choose, which solutions you choose." (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019). These societal solutions are perceived as complex decisions regarding the way in which systems in society function and the way of life this upholds. It is the process of finding solutions rather than the problematic per se which is considered key, thereby remaining abstract and as a result the focus of sustainability can be understood to be a construct.

The goal-orientation which further characterises Pakhuis de Zwijger's understanding of sustainability is relative, as such solutions and processes of solution-finding are focused on achieve incremental change. From the organisation's perspective, regarding possible solutions for the sustainability problem,

> "the speed and methods vary, but why it is so important to talk about this? Because those speeds and methods, to reduce the speed, in those different routes can still be chosen and people need to also go into conversation to see whether it is achievable in the end because when you turn one button it also often has an effect on the other. If you say all social housing in Amsterdam has to be made more sustainable within a given time, well that costs a lot of money, who is going to pay that, you know the housing corporations would probably have to do it, they don't have money, so then

they would have to get it from their renters, and those renters also often don't have money, so it's really a thing. If you say the livestock has to be halved, like that whole farmer discussion recently, then you can claim that but it also means that those farmers lose their livelihood and you need to find a solution for that. So that's why it is all related to each other." (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019).

The organisation takes a pragmatic approach, reasoning that the focus should be on the present issues at hand. It further also displays a distinct awareness that change should be focused on 'the better' or 'less worse' as the utopian 'the good' within the sustainability problematic is seen as unrealistic with the inevitable trade-offs that occur.

What these solutions to achieve incremental change are and concern then are not stable, also emerging and responding to the issue at hand. The environment around which solutions emerge experience forces can also experience change in this process, such as the physical environment, actors, thoughts, opinions, and decisions which are made as a result of solutions. The behavioural interaction that can then be understood to characterise the organisation's understanding of sustainability is dynamic.

In addition to this perspective Pakhuis de Zwijger also exhibits a holistic perspective of sustainability, understanding it as

"really all-encompassing and we try to also look at it in that way, in any case with everything we do. We see it from a holistic perspective, you see, sustainability is already in our hands of course, when we design a city you already need to consider that. But also in education you have to consider it, how you give teachers and students the right tools and the right insights and knowledge to lead a sustainable life. So, it's in everything and that's how we also look at it and that's how we also deal with it" (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019).

The organisation understands sustainability as connective and as affecting and addressing economic, societal, and environmental dimensions, all of which are interconnected.

Describing a specific sustainability issue the organisation links these dimensions together, stating that "there are a lot of climate refugees who are already a victim of climate change, and the amount is only getting higher, also because of the water problematic for example, who well don't have a leg to stand on, literally, and who also don't have the power and instruments so therefore are dependent on the West, big companies, and rich countries who can change something, but meanwhile they are already victims of it." (Pakhuis de

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Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019). The issue of climate refugees thus is understood to be rooted in problems which are simultaneously economic (disparity in wealth), societal (systems of power and politics), and environmental (climate change and water scarcity) in nature. Pakhuis de Zwijger then perceives sustainability as holistic, with connections between economic, societal, and environmental issues.

4.4.2. Materials used for sustainability communication

Pakhuis de Zwijger uses a range of mediums and forms of sustainability communication. The core way in which the organisation engages in sustainability communication is through their cultural productions, the programmes which they host and also mainly produce. Each year the organisation offers more than 600 of these cultural programmes which are "categorised under the themes creative industry, the city and global trends. The topics of our programmes vary from European politics and culture to neighbourhood communities and city farming, from care and work, to design and photography. All with inspiring and interesting guest speakers." (Pakhuis de Zwijger, 2019a; translated). The organisation has two permanent sustainability programmers who specifically programme on the topic sustainability as well as "also [on] circularity, climate, energy, water, actually on all themes around the big theme of sustainability, that's what they programme on" (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative, personal communication 2019, October 11, 2019).

The kind of cultural productions that are part of Pakhuis de Zwijger's cultural programme varies hugely, including forms such as festivals, events, documentary screenings, workshops, lectures, panel discussions, and even conferences. The content of these programmes and the specific topic it addresses vary enormously. Although they can sometimes be a single event, some of these cultural productions are part of a series of programmes held on a specific topic or as part of a collaboration. An ongoing sustainability series is *Nature's Narrative*, a series of programmes that address climate justice and inclusivity within the sustainability problematic. The organisation also recently hosted the *Trouw Sustainable 100* festival on behalf of *Trouw*, which announced the annual "list of 100 organisations or people who stand out in the area of sustainability and who are brought to the attention by *Trouw*." (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019). In engaging in sustainability communication Pakhuis de Zwijger then frequently collaborates with other organisations such as *Trouw* and many others such as the

department of *Environmental Protection*, *One World*, and *De Goede Zaak*, to both host and produce cultural productions.

Pakhuis de Zwijger aims to make its programme as accessible as possible using a variety of other mediums. The organisation maintains a 'pay as you like' concept for its cultural programme,

> "so if you thought it was a good programme you can make a donation, but actually it is free for everyone, and yes, we hope that everybody comes but we also realise that there are a lot of people who do not live in Amsterdam, or who do not live in the neighbourhood, or you know, have limited time, or children, or who are disabled, or whatever the reason is, and who can't come here, or have never heard of us or have other things to do" (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019).

Although the cultural programmes are for the majority free the organisation further provides an option to watch programmes online via a livestream on the social media platform YouTube. Other forms of social media, such as Twitter and the *Pakhuis de Zwijger Community*, are also primarily used to play a supportive role for the programming rather than to engage in sustainability communication

In addition to this livestream the organisation also has a weekly podcast in support of the programmes where speakers in upcoming events are interviewed. Although this is done as promotion for their programmes, Pakhuis de Zwijger feels that

> "we also have so many interesting speakers that is also nice to build a sort of database, an archive of conversations, with those interesting speakers. And we also see that people who can't come, because they live far away, abroad, don't have time, that they still can come into contact with Pakhuis through the podcast. So, we can also tell our story with that in the big world outside of the walls of this building" (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019).

Through its podcast the organisation is able to increase the accessibility and reach of its programming. Pakhuis de Zwijger can therefore be understood to engage in and promote its sustainability communication through a variety of mediums and forms.

4.4.3. Actions carried out through sustainability communication

Pakhuis de Zwijger can be understood to engage in all types of sustainability communication, although the focus placed on the types differs. From the organisation's perspective, it

"functions as a home for the creative industry and for people who in their own way make the city to what she is. Citymakers we call them, an honorary title. They are central in the stories that are told and shared daily in the programmes. The goal with this is always: informing, inspiring, and creating." (Pakhuis de Zwijger, 2019a; translated). As a type of Communication *of* Sustainability, informing and educating the audience is central to this function, and precedes any of the social engagement which the organisation strives to create.

Communication *of* Sustainability however remains the basis as Pakhuis de Zwijger instead focuses its efforts more extensively on Communication *about* Sustainability. Most of the programmes the organisation offers include and are focused on discussion and dialogue on specific topics and problematic. Especially in relation to sustainability issues Pakhuis de Zwijger feels that the focus should lie on finding solutions through dialogue, saying

> "debate as a form is very interesting but often has very opposed standpoints or visions, opinions, that are put against each other…what is very interesting itself, but actually we see dialogue as the departure point for all of our programmes. Dialogue is different, it is about equality, it is also about collectively looking for a constructive solution, not so much you say 'A' and the other person says 'B' and that stays like that, it's more about bringing 'A' and 'B' to 'C', the solution. So, an action perspective is crucial in all of our programmes, and is in principle the idea." (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019).

In this way, the organisation is focused on framing and structuring the sustainability issue, establishing a common understanding amongst its audience through dialogue and discussion. Many of its programmes also have a moderator to help guide this discussion.

The organisation encourages and contributes to creating potential for communication exchange through acting as a network organisation and platform. Doing so, Pakhuis de Zwijger also has the aspiration to "try to create a better society through our programmes, trying to bring people together who don't know each other or don't often meet, and with that go towards solutions. So, we strive for a sustainable and just society for everyone and a healthy planet as well." (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019). The organisation then also seeks to contribute to establishing a societal transformation through facilitating the creation, exchange and negotiation of meaning, thereby also exhibiting a willingness to engage in Communication *for* Sustainability.

Pakhuis de Zwijger can then be understood to engage in all three types of sustainability communication. Although Communication *of* Sustainability provides the basis for their programmes, the focus lies on providing and facilitating the conditions in which

Communication *about* Sustainability can take place, with the aspiration that this will move towards Communication *for* Sustainability.

4.4.4. Motivations for engaging in sustainability communication

Pakhuis de Zwijger is able to obtain various benefits from engaging in sustainability communication. One of the core benefits for the organisation is that it provides them with moral legitimacy, which is also linked to their credibility and reputation. The organisation then expressed frustration that some actors still call the existence of sustainability issues into question,

> "and then you can have someone, with all sorts of nonsense call a whole climate issue in discussion whilst we have actually proven it in all kinds of possible ways, and all kinds of scientists and all kinds of big research, the UN, everyone is in agreement, that something is needed to reach those climate goals very quickly because otherwise lasting damage will be done." (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019).

By focusing on helping create solutions for issues including those linked to sustainability the organisation then can be understood to engage in contributing to societal wellbeing. As it feels that the focus should be on possible routes and solutions to sustainability issues the organisation then is also engaging in the 'right' thing to do from its perspective.

For Pakhuis de Zwijger this solution-oriented programming and the action perspective they aim to bring "also differentiates us from other organisations because it gives that typical Pakhuis twist in that it's concrete, that it's about questions of design and that it's about solutions." (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019). Addressing complex issues with this approach then also has become part of the organisation's identity, a "twist" and "trademark". This also extends to their reputation, "as a unique cultural organisation with a topical programme on the city and contemporary societal debates" (Pakhuis de Zwijger, 2019b; translated).

Through engaging in sustainability communication, Pakhuis de Zwijger also feels it has been able to secure a role as an important actor,

> "in stimulating the conversation and the bringing together of people who are busy with this theme, in collaborating with the right partners, also bringing them together, so yes, we definitely have a place, I mean we definitely have played a role, it's not for nothing that the *Trouw Sustainable 100* is in Pakhuis de Zwijger of all the places you

could have it in the Netherlands" (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019).

As an important actor in the field of sustainability the organisation then is able to host events and create partnerships which are felt to be important. Partnerships, such as with *Trouw* on this particular festival, are also in part important for the organisation's financial viability. The organisation's focus on partnerships however is not instrumental, rather it is focused on collaborating to make something "that together becomes something really great and cool" (ibid.). For Pakhuis de Zwijger the benefits they experience from engaging in sustainability communication and the approach that they take in doing so then support the organisation in its aim to function as a platform and home for such complex societal discussions.

4.4.5. Strategy and decision-making regarding sustainability communication

The nature of Pakhuis de Zwijger's practice of strategic sustainability communication – a routine composed of the meanings, actions, materials, and motivations explored – can be understood through examining the way in which the organisation views strategy and decision-making. The starting point which the organisation takes that guides and shapes its activities is the urban lens. This emphasis stems from the perception that cities are the focal point in the issues and solutions which with the world is faced today,

> "education, care, innovation and creation, the change power if you like, that lies in the city, in urban conglomerates, moreover in the whole world…now more than 51% of the world population lives in a city and that number is going to grow radically, for 2050 the projections are that 66% of the world population, two thirds, that 66% will also live in an urban environment. That all indicates the importance of the city. That's why we look at those issues from the urban perspective." (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019).

With this lens, and the solutions to urban issues which it hopes to facilitate and support, the organisation aims to contribute to creating a better society. Although it perceives sustainability as a pressing issue, it is not the organisation's core focus. Instead the organisation also engages in sustainability communication because it is also a pressing urban issue.

As sustainability emerged as an issue relevant to the organisation's core focus, the city, it decided to consciously engage in sustainability communication more extensively. Strategy can then be considered emergent, with the realisation of sustainability's relevance

and consequent commitment of resources to communicate on it. This reflects an action perspective in which the focus lies on the activities which take place. Adopting this perspective, sustainability communication is part of an ongoing process in which engagement may change over time, depending on how the thematic develops in relation to the urban. Pakhuis de Zwijger is also aware that,

> "the theme sustainability, I mean in comparison with five or ten years ago, really is mainstream, it has become mainstream in general, that we are talking about it, that it's sort or clear about what we are talking about, and that everyone is busy with it in their own way, that people are aware that climate change is happening, that it's in the newspapers every day, that there are all sorts of measures being made, that people are eating less meat, flying less, you know, that is already a positive in comparison to ten or twenty years ago." (Pakhuis de Zwijger representative 2019, personal communication, October 11, 2019).

With this in mind the organisation continues to aim to inspire and stimulate new solutions and thinking beyond this mainstream perspective of sustainability by focusing on its urban lens.

With Pakhuis de Zwijger's emergent strategy and focus on activities it can be understood to exhibit an action perspective on strategic decision making. This action perspective also extends to the nature of the routine that forms Pakhuis de Zwijger's practice of strategic sustainability communication.

4.4.6. Pakhuis de Zwijger's routine: talk about it

Pakhuis de Zwijger's practice of strategic sustainability communication – a routine composed of the meanings, actions, materials, and motivations explored that take place in the context of strategy – can be understood as a coherent routine. The components can be perceived of as supportive and also anticipative of each other. For Pakhuis de Zwijger strategic sustainability communication is applied and responsive, and can be represented by the notion *talk about it*.

Pakhuis de Zwijger seeks to stimulate discussion and solution-oriented thinking on societal issues like sustainability, taking the urban as starting point. This is reflected in the pragmatic approach it takes to sustainability. Sustainability although understood holistically from a construct, relative, and dynamic perspective is also something which derives meaning from collective sense-making and the values this imbues. The forms and mediums which it

uses in sustainability communication then seek to facilitate this process through encouraging discussion and a shift towards solution-oriented thinking.

The aim of sustainability communication is then for its audience to enter into a process of framing and structuring the issue to arrive at a common understanding. Central to this is that people become more actively involved in discussing complex issues such as sustainability and collectively enter into dialogue to arrive at solutions. The approach to strategic sustainability communication which Pakhuis de Zwijger takes thus can be understood as *talk about it*, with the belief that collective sense-making to arrive at solutions will help achieve sustainability.

4.5. The routines compared

Having individually examined De Ceuvel, Movies that Matter, and Pakhuis de Zwijger's routine which form their practice of strategic sustainability communication, these routines and their components will now be compared. By doing so it is the intention to understand how routines may differ or be alike, and suggest why this may be.

4.5.1. Diverse routines and common components

The routines exhibited by the organisations are diverse, representing different types of practices in strategic sustainability communication. For De Ceuvel this could be considered *just experiment*, for Movies that Matter this could be considered *be conscious*, and for Pakhuis de Zwijger this could be considered *talk about it*. Despite this diversity of routines, the majority of components of which these routines consist are similar. An overview of the organisations' routines and components of which these consist is shown in appendix IV.

Each organisation understands sustainability from a perspective that is both construct, relative, and dynamic, as well as holistic in attending to economic, societal, and environmental issues. Despite this shared perspective of sustainability, the organisations each display variations in the way they understand sustainability. Whereas for De Ceuvel the emphasis is on alternative lifestyles and approaches to those dominant in society, for Movies that Matter it is on a responsible attitude and way of life, whilst for Pakhuis de Zwijger this is on societal solutions to sustainability issues. Although these understandings can be perceived of as similar in a way, in that each understanding shares characteristics of the idea that something has to change, they crucially reflect a different belief in how sustainability should be pursued and achieved. This belief is thus also reflected by the kind of routine exhibited by the organisation and the other components of which this consists.

The organisations each can be thought of as a non-classical cultural organisation, in that culture is not per se their starting point but the focus is on presenting a diverse cultural programme through multiple mediums and forms of culture. This also means that the organisations all use multiple types of mediums and forms in their sustainability communication, some of which overlap. The overarching subject which is addressed through the use of these mediums and forms for sustainability communication however differs, related to their perception of sustainability. For sustainability communication, De Ceuvel primarily uses a showcase innovative sustainable techniques and as a platform for others to present alternative ideas relating to sustainability. For sustainability communication Movies

that Matter primarily uses film and discussion to present sustainability issues and stimulate critical thinking on the basis of this. For sustainability, Pakhuis de Zwijger primarily uses discussion on sustainability issues preceding varying forms, such as a lecture on an issue. The central and guiding means by which the organisations engage in sustainability communication thus reflect an effort to support the belief they exhibit regarding sustainability.

The organisations all engage in the same types of sustainability communication – Communication *of* Sustainability and Communication *about* Sustainability, with the ambition to partake in Communication *for* Sustainability – but the way in which this is done sometimes differs. For each organisation, Communication *of* Sustainability forms the basis of their activities, with the goal of spreading knowledge and information, and educating its audience. The main variation in the way the organisations engage in Communication *of* Sustainability is the focal topic of information addressed. De Ceuvel focuses on innovative sustainable technology, Movies that Matter focuses on sustainability issues captured through film, and Pakhuis de Zwijger focuses on sustainability issues related to and from the urban perspective.

For each organisation, Communication *about* Sustainability through facilitating dialogue and connecting actors is important to their organisational vision, mission, or goal. The emphasis of this however is slightly different for each organisation. De Ceuvel seeks to act as a networking organisation and to establish a common understanding between actors. Movies that Matter seeks to provide interpretation and an action perspective through framing and structuring by bringing actors together to discuss. Pakhuis de Zwijger seeks to act as a networking organisation and platform for others, to provide interpretation and an action perspective on issues through discussion that frames and structures issues.

All organisations aspire to engage in Communication *for* Sustainability, to create societal transformation towards sustainability, through their engagement in Communication *of* Sustainability and Communication *about* Sustainability. As a contribution towards measurable action towards sustainability by nature is hard to measure or identify, it is beyond this study to understand the exact nature of the engagement in Communication *for* Sustainability beyond aspiration. It is however likely that the form this takes follows the meaning they attribute to sustainability.

The organisations exhibit similar motivations in engaging in sustainability communication, sharing the motivation to obtain reputational benefits, moral legitimacy, and partnerships for financial viability. These motivations can be understood as reflecting the socio-cultural approach the organisations take, doing the 'right' thing and increasing their

reach to support doing so. In addition to these core motivations each organisation exhibits other sources of motivation. De Ceuvel is also motivated to engage in sustainability communication to differentiate itself and be known as an important actor with the innovative sustainable technology showcased. This also provides it with recognition both through awards and prizes, and positive social media coverage. Movies that Matter is also motivated to engage in sustainability communication through cognitive legitimacy, a 'social license' to operate as an organisation. Through engagement the organisation experiences a larger audience and positive social media coverage which work to support its ability to achieve legitimacy. Pakhuis de Zwijger is also motivated to engage in sustainability communication as this helps secure its position as an important actor, and also feeds and strengthens the organisation's identity.

The strategy of each organisation regarding sustainability communication can be understood as (partially) emergent, although for one organisation their perspective differs. That organisation is De Ceuvel, who exhibit an interpretive perspective on strategy and decision-making. This difference emerges from the additional way in which it understands strategy, namely as shared, in which engagement itself originated from a collective understanding amongst actors that sustainability was to become the thematic. For Movies that Matter engagement was also related to a collective awareness that came to exist in the organisation, however sustainability communication resulted from decisive acts and resource commitment. The organisation therefore exhibits an action perspective on strategy and decision-making. For Pakhuis de Zwijger engagement in sustainability communication is a result of the focus on activities and resources which it has committed to addressing it. The organisation therefore also exhibits an action perspective on strategy and decision-making.

Whilst the organisations have many common components, the content and consequences of these components can differ. As each organisation exhibits comprehensive routines which are formed by those components, it is not unexpected that the routines which they exhibit also differ. Whilst De Ceuvel's routine embodies the idea *just experiment*, Movies that Matter 's routine signifies the idea *be conscious*, whereas Pakhuis de Zwijger's routine can be understood as the notion *talk about it*. These different routines lead to a diversity in the way that the organisations practice strategic sustainability communication.

4.5.2. Routines as a snapshot of a pathway

The routines which research found represent the organisations' practice of strategic sustainability communication as a specific moment in time. These routines should therefore be understood as a snapshot of an ongoing practice that provides an opportunity to examine and compare practices of these organisations to gain insight. Each of the routines were found to be comprehensive and diverse, despite having many common components. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to give an account why the routines are diverse despite their similar components, it offers a theoretical lens that can be applied to understand why.

The notion of organisations having 'routines' is not new in organizational studies, although this notion differs from routines in the sense of practice theory as employed by this thesis (Becker, 2004; Becker et al., 2005). These different understandings of the concept 'routines' however do share a representation of the 'content' of patterns pertaining to a specific activity, or in the case of this thesis the 'content' of the practice of strategic sustainability communication. 'Routines' in the sense used by organizational studies are thought to be characterised by temporal features, such as being recurrent, processual, context-dependent, and also path dependent (Becker, 2004).

As routines have been conceptualised through practice theory and represent a snapshot of time, they lack the temporal dimension attributed to 'routines' by organizational studies. For these studies the nature of 'routines' are perceived of as containing inherent change, changing in a way which is path dependent (Becker, 2004; Becker et al., 2005). Central to this notion of change is the belief held that "[r]outines build on the past. How they develop is a function of where they have started from" (Becker, 2004, p.653). This is useful because it suggests that routines, in a practice theory sense which likewise signifies the 'content' of practice, may also be understood as developing and changing whilst on a pathway. The diversity of routines which pertain to the practice of strategic sustainability communication then may be explained by the organisations' different pathways and specific histories, of which the routines found are snapshot of.

4.6. Conclusion

This section presented the results of the research conducted, the routines pertaining to the strategic sustainability communication of cultural organisations. The organisations who were the subject of study were De Ceuvel, Movies that Matter, and Pakhuis de Zwijger, respectively. For each organisation, the four components which form their routine of strategic sustainability communication were explored: meanings, actions, materials, and motivations. Having demonstrated how the organisation engages in sustainability communication the nature of the routine they exhibited was then examined, and a description of their routine was given. The routines were then compared and it was found that although the routines were diverse they share many common components. The idea of pathways was suggested as a possible lens to interpret why this diversity may exist, inspired by organizational studies.

5. Discussion

This section seeks to discuss the implications and relevance of the research findings in relation to theory and other research on the practice of strategic sustainability communication, and the concepts sustainability, sustainability communication, and strategic communication on sustainability. Having discussed and reflected on the limitations of the research, suggestions for future research are then presented.

5.1. The practice of strategic sustainability communication

Prior research on cultural organisations and sustainability communication has predominantly focused on sustainability in an operational or organisational sense, and has rarely focused on organisation types other than museums. With the arts and culture sector increasingly attributed a role to play in responding to sustainability issues, through their medium and creating engagement, research was warranted. To bridge this gap this study sought to empirically understand how cultural organisations are engaged in strategic sustainability communication.

Employing practice theory as a 'system of interpretation' this research understood the strategic sustainability communication of a cultural organisation as a practice. By conceptualising practice as a routine of organisational behaviour consisting of four components – motivations, meanings, actions, and materials – the study examined the routines of three cultural organisations in the Netherlands. The resulting routines were found to be coherent, with individual components anticipative of the other and highlighting their interconnectedness in forming practice. The routines found furthermore appeared to provide a comprehensive account of an organisation's strategic sustainability communication. Despite that the routines of the three cultural organisations examined were largely formed by the same or at least similar components, the routines were diverse. Social practice theory then proved to be a useful conceptual framework to gain an in-depth and refined appreciation of the strategic sustainability communication of a cultural organisation. Although related fields like organizational studies, have previously recognised practice theory as a useful heuristic device, this study presented a novel approach as prior research has not considered or operationalised organisational practices as routines consisting of motivations, meanings, actions, and materials (Becker, 2004; Reckwitz, 2002).

Whilst practice theory provided a rich account of the routines examined it was not able to indicate reasons why the routines found were diverse despite their similar

components. This is because the routines can be understood to represent snapshots in time, highlighting that organisations and their communication, perception, and interaction with sustainability is part of a continuous process (Allen, 2006). Practice theory as employed by this study was therefore unable to give sufficient insight into this temporal dimension of strategic sustainability communication to comment on this.

This study offered pathways as a promising explanatory concept for the diversity of routines. Pathways appeared to shed light on routines, even when applied superficially. Whereas the concept of routines can be understood to explain the coherence and internal logic of organisations engaging in sustainability communication, the concept of pathways appears to give insight into the occurrence of this, how and why this occurs over time, and why such logics may differ. This indicates that combining social practice theory with the concept of pathways then can provide a complementary and useful theoretical lens through which to examine social practices of routines. The pairing of the concepts routines and pathways has not been encountered in prior research and is a theoretical innovation of this research. Although this emerged from research on the practice of strategic sustainability communication, these concepts and the pairing thereof are transferable to other organisational practices. This therefore is a finding which is not only valuable in this specific concept but also for other research.

5.2. Organisations and strategic sustainability communication

Through synthesising relevant research on sustainability, strategic communication, and strategic sustainability on sustainability preceding the research phase, this study was able to build and operationalise insights from prior research. In turn the study conducted then also provides insights and expands upon prior research of the concepts drawn upon in the conceptual framework concerning an organisation's practice of strategic sustainability communication.

5.2.1. Sustainability

Faber, Jorna and van Engelen (2005) previously found that over time the dominant definitions given to sustainability by organisations had shifted towards an entity, relative, and dynamic perspective. In examining the meanings attributed to the concept of sustainability by cultural organisations this research found that all of the partaking organisations perceived sustainability holistically from a construct, relative, and dynamic perspective. This difference

could be due to the differing time period and evolving perspectives on sustainability. Another possible explanation could be the types of organisations targeted, as this research specifically examined cultural organisations who were engaged in sustainability communication beyond an operational sense. As such these organisations can be assumed to be actively engaged in strategic sustainability communication and therefore may reflect a more complex understanding of sustainability.

This complexity of understanding can be seen as relevant and perhaps also indicative of the nature of an organisation's motivation in engaging in sustainability communication. With the various benefits which have been attributed to strategic sustainability communication, the motivation of organisations is increasingly scrutinised, with the instrumentality thereof being called into question (Genç, 2017). The organisations studied exhibited various benefits from engaging in sustainability communication, however this mainly concerned moral legitimacy, reputational benefits, and an ability to secure partnerships for financial viability. The motivations of the participating organisations then are not per se instrumental, but rather suggest a deep and rooted concern with sustainability which they seek to support through their organisation.

5.2.2. Strategic communication

Confirming what Allen (2016) previously suggested, that legitimacy is a 'critical resource' for organisations that can lead to reputational benefits, this study found that moral legitimacy in particular is a key motivation for organisations to engage in sustainability communication. Moral legitimacy however was found not to be a benefit which was motivational for organisations because of any ensuing reputational benefits, but predominantly because organisations felt it was the 'right' thing to do, expected by stakeholders, or had even become a condition for their 'social license' to operate.

For all of the organisations examined engaging in sustainability was also part of an emergent strategy, either by adopting an action perspective, or less commonly an interpretive perspective. According to Hendry (2000) intentions are felt to be irrelevant in an emergent strategy, focused either on decisive acts or cognitive processes, however the results of the study conducted can be understood to complicate this view. Although for the organisations examined engaging in sustainability communication occurred gradually with an increasing awareness of sustainability, the intentions of the decision to engage could arguably be perceived as fundamental by the organisations in light of the importance of moral legitimacy

as a motivating factor. Furthermore, as there are a limited number of cultural organisations engaged in strategic sustainability communication, and those studied exhibit an emergent strategy, this may suggest that organisations who are more flexible in their decision-making are more likely to adopt sustainability communication sooner as it gains traction on its organisational or stakeholder agenda.

5.2.3. Strategic communication on sustainability

The conducted research also found that organisations were engaged in all three types of sustainability communication identified by Genç (2017): Communication *of* Sustainability, Communication *about* Sustainability, and Communication *of* Sustainability. Although Genç (2017) describes the three types of sustainability communication as having ambiguous boundaries, in this research the types of sustainability communication appear distinct. The organisations studied employed each type of sustainability communication in an interconnected way, in support of each other. Although each type of sustainability communication was felt essential to the organisations, the use of the types followed a typical pattern. Communication *of* Sustainability was commonly used to create a basis upon which the organisation could engage in Communication *about* Sustainability, with the aspiration to achieve Communication *for* Sustainability.

This finding is interesting as it suggests that the organisations studied perceive a logic in how sustainability should be communicated. The types of sustainability communication here appear to be conditional on the use of the others, suggesting a theory-like categorisation of the types of sustainability communication. The research findings suggest that preceding engagement in Communication *about* Sustainability, an organisation will engage in Communication *of* Sustainability. The findings also suggest that before an organisation will engage in Communication *for* Sustainability, it will first engage in Communication *about* Sustainability. This has not been researched or suggested by prior research and therefore presents a second theoretical innovation of this research. Although this finding is derived from exclusively researching cultural organisations, it likely applies to other types of organisations as well.

The forms and mediums used by the organisations for sustainability communication were predominantly cultural productions, with websites, annual reports and social media playing a supportive role to create engagement, awareness, and provide additional information on cultural productions. Although there is scarce research on how cultural

productions are used in sustainability communication, this study indicates that this form and medium of sustainability communication is central to a cultural organisation's sustainability communication. Prior research on cultural organisations and sustainability communication has largely been limited to sustainability in an operational sense or has considered the other mediums and forms in particular, such as websites or the vision and mission statement. This research interestingly also demonstrated that operational sustainability can also be communicated through cultural productions, such as was the case with De Ceuvel. By demonstrating the importance of cultural productions and the flexible way in which they are used by cultural organisations this research makes a new contribution.

Prior research found that social media and other forms of formal communication such as annual reports were important forms and mediums in which 'green' organisations communicate on sustainability (Reilly and Hynan, 2014). The cultural organisations studied however did not attribute social media or reports the same importance. Instead they were used as a supportive form or medium through which the organisation could engage in sustainability communication, even sometimes limiting the use of social media due to the perceived scrutiny it could bring. Whilst the interactive nature of cultural productions was highly valued, social media was then mainly used as a way to engage in transmitting information about other forms and mediums of sustainability communication, such as cultural productions. This also works to indicate the importance of cultural productions as a crucial medium in which cultural organisations engage in sustainability communication.

5.3. Limitations of research

The research undertaken in this study is subject to some limitations that should be borne in mind when considering its findings. These limitations mainly relate to the research design, use of methods, and representativeness.

This research was both exploratory and explanatory, seeking to understand and explain how cultural organisations communicate on sustainability. This was conducted using a qualitative research design, in which the focus is on gaining an in-depth appreciation of the subject matter. The generalisability of the study is therefore limited as the findings relate to the specific organisations studied and the specific context. Generalisability however was not felt to be a major concern due to the scarce research existing on the subject matter of cultural organisations and sustainability communication. The aim of research was rather to explore practices of strategic sustainability communication which exist amongst cultural

organisations, and explain why, in order to provide new insights. Qualitative research was felt to be most suited in order to realise this and create the understanding needed.

The research was initially intended to use ethnographic methods such as participant observation, in combination with multiple interviews at each organisation. This was felt to reflect the apparent need to examine both the formal and informal processes that form practice, and that practice is constructed in processes throughout the entirety of the organisation. During the sampling phase, this was problematic as the large majority of organisations were unable or unwilling to participate in the study, often due to resource constraints. For the limited pool of organisations able and willing to participate in the study it was only possible to conduct one interview with a representative of each of the organisations due to resource constraints. In order to provide sufficient information to build the case studies it was decided to include the organisations' website and most recent annual report available as additional data sources.

In deviating from the initial plan the findings do not necessarily represent all of the formal and informal communication processes that can be perceived as constituting an organisation's sustainability communication. Despite this it is felt that the substituting methods provide an equally valuable depiction of the practice of strategic sustainability communication. The websites and annual reports, as forms and mediums of sustainability communication itself, furthermore were felt to also provide valuable insights which would not have been derived from ethnographic research. Ethnographic research furthermore requires access and is time intensive, whereas websites and annual reports are easily accessible and research on these sources is relatively less time intensive. Although not initially anticipated, the amended methods in fact generated a rich form of data which was highly suited to the purpose of research, exploring the practice of strategic sustainability communication.

The interviews were held with one representative at the organisation who was identified as most knowledgeable of the organisation's sustainability communication. In reflection on the interviews and also comments of the interviewees themselves, it is not likely that interviews with others in the organisation would have provided very different findings or insights. The interviews themselves however were assumed to be a true reflection of reality, an assumption which likely is not true. This assumption however was considered valid as participants were most knowledgeable on the topic of the organisation's sustainability communication and thus were able to give the most closely full and accurate reflection of reality. This also recognises that qualitative research is always subjective.

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The sample of participants furthermore is not, and is not intended to be, representative for the practice of strategic sustainability communication in the arts and culture sector. Rather the three participating cultural organisations present three diverse routines which pertain to this practice. As each organisation exhibited a different routine it is likely that other cultural organisations would again have different routines. The purposive sampling procedure used to identify cultural organisations also means that the findings are not representative of the sector. Due to the diversity of the sector it was felt that it was beyond the scope of the study to provide an adequate representation of organisations with the chosen methods and resource constraints. A purposive sampling procedure therefore was reasoned to be appropriate as by identifying cultural organisations who were engaged in sustainability beyond an operative sense, in particular organisations other than museums, research would provide the richest data on practice and respond best to the identified knowledge gap. The sample was also comprised of small organisations which may have influenced the way in which they engaged and were able to engage in sustainability communication. The study therefore was focused on exploring the practice of strategic sustainability communication in the cultural sector by examining the routines of this practice amongst the three participating cultural organisations.

5.4. Future research

On the basis of the findings of this study other avenues for future research can be identified. Employing a conceptual framework derived from practice theory provided a comprehensive and coherent understanding of the participating cultural organisations' routines. To create a more representative image of the sector it would be valuable to also explore other types of cultural organisations, of differing sizes, and in different contexts and countries. This would also help explore the different ways in which cultural productions are used in sustainability communication, a form and medium of sustainability communication which was found to be central to the organisations participating in this research.

As this study focused on cultural organisations who were actively engaged in sustainability beyond an operational sense it would be interesting to also consider cultural organisations who do not display such an active engagement. This may also help reveal barriers or motivations which prevent a cultural organisation in engaging in sustainability communication, which can then lead to formulating supportive measures. Asides from the methods used in this study other sources of data such as policy documents, grants, and subsidies may be useful in further understanding such barriers. As this study presented the

theoretical innovation that the concept of pathways appears to be useful in understanding the different routines that cultural organisations exhibit, such methods may be able to provide insights into pathways, how they have been shaped, why they differ, and perhaps even suggest a future direction.

As a second theoretical innovation of this research, it was suggested that the types of sustainability communication are engaged in a distinct, relational, and potentially conditional way. Further research should be conducted on other types of organisations to understand if this indeed is a common logic and mechanism by which organisations engage in sustainability communication. This would be valuable as if it is found that there indeed is a conditional way in which organisations communicate on sustainability, this can help to better understand how organisations can be stimulated, encouraged and supported to engage in sustainability communication.

The findings of this research also suggested that organisations limit their use of social media due to perceived scrutiny they may become subjected to. It would be interesting to examine the social media use of different organisations to communicate on sustainability to see whether there are differences or patterns in usage.

A final avenue for future research that is highlighted is the potential transferability of the conceptual framework employed by this research to examine the practice of strategic sustainability communication of organisations in other sectors. Other sectors such as for-profit businesses and NGOs have more commonly been the subject of research on sustainability communication than cultural organisations. Asides from cross-sectoral comparison it would be interesting to compare the results of a study examining routines in the sector already researched in order to see whether the findings would differ. This would also contribute to further identifying the utility of practice theory in studying an organisation's sustainability communication.

6. Conclusion

This section seeks to conclude the research undertaken on cultural organisations and sustainability communication. On the basis of its findings it provides recommendations to help support and encourage cultural organisations to partake in tackling sustainability challenges.

6.1. Cultural organisations and strategic sustainability communication

Increasingly cultural organisations are presented as having a stake and role to play in overcoming the challenges in communicating on sustainability issues, through acting as gatekeepers of culture and engaging publics. Despite such claims and recognition given to cultural organisations, prior research has not considered how cultural organisations position themselves on, communicate on, and understand their role in relation to sustainability challenges. In an effort to help bridge this research gap, this research sought to examine the sustainability communication of cultural organisations, other than museums, who are engaged in sustainability communication beyond an operational sense.

To provide a conceptual framework for research, strategic sustainability communication was presented as an organisational practice that is formed by a routine composed of meanings, motivations, actions, and materials. On the basis of this framework one overarching research question and three specific research questions were identified which guided research. Employing a qualitative research design, the organisations' website and most recent annual report available were examined, and an interview was conducted with a representative for each organisation. The three cultural organisations who participated and whose cases provide the basis of this study's insights are De Ceuvel, Movies that Matter, and Pakhuis de Zwijger.

6.1.1. Meanings attributed to the concept of sustainability

The first specific research question concerned the way in which the organisations understood sustainability, focused on the three aspects of sustainability and the tripartite characterisation of sustainability. It asked:

> *How do they understand sustainability in terms of focal artefact, goal-orientation, and behavioural interaction? To what extent does their understanding address economic, societal, or environmental sustainability issues?*

The study found that the organisations all understood sustainability from a construct, relative, and dynamic perspective, which holistically attained to economic, societal, and environmental issues. Although the organisations shared this perspective, the organisations displayed slight differences in what this understanding specifically entailed, although a common idea was the notion of needing change to pursue and achieve sustainability. Each of the organisations perceived sustainability issues holistically and thereby also addressed each of the three dimensions that sustainability is commonly characterised by. Although the issues were addressed holistically, the organisations could be understood to place the most emphasis on the issues related to their core organisational strategy or aims. This was mainly societal, with the organisations approaching sustainability from a socio-cultural background.

6.1.2. Types of sustainability communication and mediums and forms used

The second specific research question related to the types of sustainability communication the organisations engaged in, and the mediums and forms which they used to do so. It asked:

> *Do they engage in communication of, about, and for sustainability? And which mediums – vision and/or mission statement, report, website, social media, cultural productions – do they use for sustainability communication?*

The study found that the organisations all engaged in all types of communication and used a variety of mediums and forms to do so. The way in which the organisations engaged in the types of sustainability appeared to follow a typical pattern, with the different types appearing to be distinct and interconnected. The organisations each seemed to engage in Communication *of* Sustainability in order to create a basis on which it could engage in Communication *about* Sustainability, with the aspiration to engage in Communication *for* Sustainability, thereby helping create societal transformation. The mediums and forms through which the organisation engaged in such sustainability communication were diverse and overlapped. The dominant medium and form used by the organisations was cultural productions. Frequently other kinds of mediums and forms, such as reports, websites, and social media, were used in a supportive capacity for the cultural productions.

6.1.3. Motivations for engaging in sustainability communication

The third and last specific research question was focused on the organisations' motivations to engage in sustainability communication, and the benefits which they obtained from doing do. It asked:

> *Do they engage in sustainability communication to obtain the benefits – enhanced reputation, source of legitimacy (pragmatic, moral, cognitive), increase in sales, positive social media coverage, improved stakeholder relationships, and an appreciation in stock price – which may occur for doing so?*

The study found that the organisations all exhibited similar motivations to engage in sustainability communication. The core motivation for the organisations was obtaining reputational benefits, moral legitimacy, and securing partnerships for financial viability. These motivations should not be perceived as entirely instrumental as such motivations also aimed to increase their reach in order to support doing the 'right' thing. This also applies to the other benefits of engaging in sustainability communication which were found to be motivational such as cognitive legitimacy and a source of identity.

6.1.4. Practices of strategic sustainability communication

The overarching research question of this study was focused on exploring what kinds of practices of strategic sustainability – understood as routines formed by meanings, actions, materials, and motivations – exist amongst cultural organisations. It asked:

> *What kind of routines pertaining to strategic sustainability communication exist in cultural organisations?*

The study found that the three cultural organisations who were the subject of research had diverse routines with common components. All of the routines appeared coherent and comprehensive. Although these routines contained common components, the content of this could differ per organisation, related to the notion which the organisations' unique routines embodied. De Ceuvel's routine can be understood as *just experiment*. Movies that Matter's routine can be understood as *be conscious*. Pakhuis de Zwijger's routine can be understood as *talk about it*. The nature of these routines was also found to be similar for each organisation, employing an emergent strategy. It was suggested that a reason why the routines were diverse whilst exhibiting common components could be because the concept of routines represents a snapshot in time, and organisations should be perceived as being on a specific pathway. The kinds of routines at the heart of the organisations' practice of strategic sustainability communication then can be perceived as being fluid, having the possibility to change as it moves through a pathway.

6.1.5. Theoretical relevance

Asides from the novelty of the subject matter of the research conducted, the findings of this thesis presents two theoretical innovations. Routines and pathways were suggested to be complementary concepts, and provide a theoretical lens to understand the logic of organisational practices and why they occur. This novel finding is highly relevant to a broader field of research on organisations, beyond research focused on cultural organisations, and as a transferable framework may lead to new insights into organisational behaviours.

This thesis also found that organisations engage in the types of sustainability communication in a conditional way, with Communication *of* Sustainability required to engage in Communication *about* Sustainability, which is then essential to engaging in Communication *for* Sustainability. This is an important finding for the broader field of sustainability related research as it may provide insight into the process through which an organisation engages in types of sustainability communication, and identify potential barriers and opportunities in this. For research that considers how to move forward in addressing sustainability and the communication thereof this theoretical finding is highly relevant.

6.1.6. Societal relevance

Communicating about sustainability is vital in responding to the sustainability challenges which society faces. Through understanding the way in which cultural organisations practice strategic sustainability communication, this thesis provides insights into how these organisations can best be supported and encouraged in their engagement in sustainability communication. As cultural organisations are thought to have an important role in engaging publics on sustainability issues towards behaviour change, this research by extension then is highly relevant for society in seeking to tackle the sustainability challenges it faces.

6.2. Recommendations

This thesis sought to understand what kinds of routines pertaining to the practice of strategic sustainability communication exist in cultural organisations. This aimed to provide insight into how cultural organisations position themselves, communicate on, and understand their role in relation to sustainability challenges. This research objective was deemed important in order to support and encourage cultural organisations to play the role they are attributed in tackling sustainability challenges. On the basis of the findings of the study the following recommendations can be made in order to do so, each targeted at a different actor.

6.2.1. Governmental and public bodies – prioritise grants, subsidies, and other forms of financial support that are tied to sustainability

This study demonstrated that cultural organisations rely on financial support in order to communicate on sustainability. Through providing financial support to cultural organisations which is tied to them engaging in sustainability should help stimulate more cultural organisations to want and be able to participate in doing so.

6.2.2. Public – partake in the sustainability communication offered and share ideas

This study demonstrated that the public are a central audience which cultural organisations target in their sustainability communication. Through attending and engaging in cultural productions the public can help support cultural organisations to tackle sustainability challenges. A valuable asset which the public can use in further doing this is sharing ideas and collaborating with cultural organisations, as well as helping them widen their reach and network.

6.2.3. Companies – consider financial partnership on sustainability topics related to your core business

This study demonstrated that partnerships, especially those that also make a financial contribution, are crucial for cultural organisations to engage in sustainability communication. When such partnerships are centred around engaging in sustainability issues or topics which are relevant for the company this is mutually beneficial and can lead to a stronger engagement.

6.2.4. Cultural organisations – engage in sustainability communication and push the boundaries of how you do so

This study demonstrated that cultural organisations who engage in sustainability communication also receive benefits for doing so. With the large variety of forms and mediums which this can take, engagement in sustainability communication does not need to be necessarily difficult and can start with small steps. For cultural organisations who are already engaging in sustainability communication keep doing so, knowing that you are making a valuable contribution, and aim to push the boundaries of how you do so through trying out different forms and mediums.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Participant information sheet

Title of study

Cultural organisations and sustainability communication.

Who am I and what is this study about?

Hello, my name is Pamela Hall and I am a master student at Wageningen University & Research studying Communication, Health and Life Sciences. Currently I am doing my thesis on cultural organisations and sustainability communication to complete my studies. The intention of research is to understand how cultural organisations position themselves, communicate on, and understand their role in relation to sustainability challenges. To do this case studies will be created of diverse cultural organisations who have been predetermined as having an affiliation with sustainability. Asides from its academic value research is thought to provide participating organisations with valuable insights about their own sustainability communication as well as that of other organisations in the sector.

Why have you been invited to take part?

Your organisation has been identified as having an affiliation with sustainability in some way and as engaging in sustainability communication.

What will participating involve?

The study involves conducting interviews with a selection of people who work at the organisation and are either involved in strategy, sustainability, and/or communication, or who have an affinity with sustainability. Interviews will cover a range of topics, including the organisation's perspective on sustainability, why the organisation communicates on sustainability, what kind of communication on sustainability the organisation is engaged in, and what kind of forms this takes and the mediums the organisation uses to do so. These interviews are expected to last between 30-90 minutes in length and would take place at your organisation. If preferred, interviews can be conducted in Dutch. In addition to this it may involve informal conversations and observations at your organisation, expected to be 2-4 days depending on your convenience.

Do you have to take part?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your participation, refuse any questions and withdraw at any time during the study without consequence.

Will taking part be confidential?

The organisation will not be anonymous however any individuals will not be named. Non-anonymised data in the form of audio recordings will be collected and retained as part of the research process.

How will information you provide be recorded, stored, and protected?

With the participant's permission, the interviews will be recorded. These interviews will then be transcribed and stored on the researcher's personal laptop and external hard drive. This will only be accessible by the researcher. Organisations may request transcripts of their interviews. Notes may be taken during or after observations and informal conversations.

What will happen to the results of the study?

Research is for the purpose of submitting the master thesis and thereby to graduate. In the case that the final research findings are considered publishable, permission to use any information of participants will first be sought. By taking part in the study you will be making a valuable addition to the limited research on cultural organisations and sustainability. If participants wish, a copy of the final thesis report will be provided which may provide interesting insights about both the participant's own sustainability communication as well as that of the sector.

Who could you contact for further information?

Pamela Hall (researcher)

MSc student in Communication, Health and Life Sciences

Wageningen University and Research

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Dr. Rico Lie (research supervisor)

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Appendix II: Interview guide

The interview guide is intended to be guideline for semi-structured interviews. Depending on how the interview goes not every question may need to be asked, or necessarily in the order shown. This format allows for more freedom in the interview to respond to the dynamic and conversation.

Brief introduction

1. *Briefly introduce yourself*
2. *Briefly introduce project and aim (in essence: to understand how cultural organisations position themselves, communicate on, and understand their role in relation to sustainability challenges)*
3. *Ask for their consent to participate (if not already explicitly obtained)*
4. Could you briefly introduce yourself, the organisation at which you work, and your role there?

Meanings

1. Could you tell me about a recent event or experience at your organisation in which sustainability somehow played a role?
2. Is sustainability something which is important to your organisation?
   2.1. Could you tell me more about why this is?
3. What does sustainability mean to your organisation?
   3.1. What do you think sustainability seeks to achieve?

Actions

1. Concretely, what do you do in terms of sustainability communication?
   1.1. What is the frequency of this sustainability communication?
2. What is the aim of this sustainability communication?
   2.1. Does it serve any specific functions?
3. Do you have a target audience for your sustainability communication?
   3.1. Who do you think it addresses?
4. Can you give me an example of the steps it takes to produce a typical sustainability communication?

Strategy

1. Is the organisation's sustainability communication part of a strategy?

    1.1. If yes, could you tell me more about this strategy and how it was formed?

Motivations

1. Could you tell me something about why the organisation does sustainability communication?

2. What kinds of positive and negative things does sustainability communication bring?

    2.1. Are these important for the organisation?

Materials

1. What kind of mediums and forms do you use for sustainability communication?

    1.1. Why are these used?

    1.2. Are there any positive and negative sides to using these?

2. Are there are forms of communication which are specific to the cultural sector that you feel are valuable for sustainability communication?

    2.1. Can you share any experiences of using these?

Conclusion

1. Is there something you would like to ask or add?

2. Who else do you think I should talk to?

3. Are there other cultural organisations which you think I should include in my research? Why?

4. Thank you for participating

Appendix III: Thematic analysis

Coding tree

Routine

Motivations
- Legitimacy
- Reputation
- Differentiation
- Subsidy/Grant
- Financial viability
- Larger audience
- Media coverage

Meanings
- Holistic perspective
- Mainstreaming of sustainability thematic
- Environmental dimension
- Social dimension
- Economic dimension

Actions
- Accessibility
- Education
- Audience
- Behaviour change
- Inform
- Discussion
- Finding solutions
- Thematic lens
- Inspire
- Connecting people
- Network
- Action perspective
- Impact
- Innovation

Materials
- Choice in medium
- Educational material
- Workshop
- Debate programme
- Follow-up discussion
- Event space
- Secondary/supporting other organisations
- Lecture
- Film
- Festival
- Physical place
- Mission
- Podcast
- Livestream
- Magazine
- Social media
- Website
- Report
- Conference
- Operational sustainability
- Partnership

Strategy
- Dependency on cultural offering
- Emergence on agenda
- Future direction
- Growth potential
- Establishment
- Scope of organisational focus
- Mainstreaming of sustainability thematic
- Financial partner

Themes and their indicators

Meanings: How the organisation understands, perceives and describes sustainability

Actions: The intended purpose and goal of sustainability communication

Strategy: How the organisation began engaging in sustainability communication and the process of this

Motivations: Why the organisation engages in sustainability communication and any benefits/disadvantages from doing so

Materials: How sustainability communication takes place in practice and the form of this

Appendix IV: Overview of routines and components

Table 5: Overview of the routines and components that pertain to the practice of strategic sustainability communication of the organisations studied (Source: author)

Component of routine	De Ceuvel	Movies that Matter	Pakhuis de Zwijger
Routine	Just experiment	Be conscious	Talk about it
Meanings attributed to sustainability	Construct, relative, dynamic perspective Holistic, economic, societal, environmental perspective	Construct, relative, dynamic perspective Holistic, economic, societal, environmental perspective	Construct, relative, dynamic perspective Holistic, economic, societal, environmental perspective

Materials used in sustainability communication	Mission and vision statement
	Annual report
	Website
	Physical place/operational sustainability
	Workshops
	Film screenings
	Music evenings
	Exhibitions
	Lectures
	Festivals
	Platform/event space
	Educational programme
	Social media
		Film
		Mission and vision statement
		Website
		Annual report
		Social media
		Film and debate festival
		Spin-off film festival tour
		Educational programme
		International support
		Expansion programme
		  - Debates
		  - Interviews
		  - Masterclasses
		  - Lectures
		  - Q&A's
		  - Panel discussion
		  - Talk shows
		Workshops
		Theatre
			Website
			Annual report
			Festivals
			Events
			Documentary screenings
			Workshops
			Lectures
			Panel discussions
			Conferences
			Social media
			Livestream
			Podcast

		Music Exhibitions	
Actions carried out through sustainability communication	Communication *of* Sustainability Communication *about* Sustainability Communication *for* Sustainability (aspirational)	Communication *of* Sustainability Communication *about* Sustainability Communication *for* Sustainability (aspirational)	Communication *of* Sustainability Communication *about* Sustainability Communication *for* Sustainability (aspirational)
Motivations for engaging in sustainability communication	Reputational benefits - Important actor - Differentiation - Awards and prizes Legitimacy - Moral Positive social media coverage Partnerships for financial viability	Legitimacy - Moral - Cognitive Larger audience Reputational benefits Positive social media coverage Partnerships for financial viability	Reputational benefits - Identity - Important actor Legitimacy - Moral Partnerships for financial viability
Strategy and decision-making regarding sustainability communication	Interpretive (emergent strategy)	Action (emergent strategy)	Action (emergent strategy)