



Driving organisational culture change for sustainability

Employee engagement as means to fully embed sustainability into organisations

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Abstract

When integrating sustainability, companies are often overlooking the changes needed in their organisational culture. This hinders organisations' core business to efficiently embed sustainability and dooms corporate sustainability initiatives to be superficial. A possible solution is for organisations to develop a sustainability-oriented organisational culture that engages employees with the sustainability change and that develops a leadership supportive of the engagement of their employees. As a result, this thesis aims at exploring how organisations can change their organisational culture in order to fully integrate sustainability by engaging employees and managers. Specifically, it studies how employee engagement can contribute to transforming organizational cultures to fully embed sustainability. Additionally, this paper analyses how managers can support employee engagement with sustainability. The thesis conducts a literature review to set the theoretical foundations; it further resorts to semi-structured interviews and document analysis conducted in a Swedish public company, which has begun to integrate sustainability into its culture. The study finds that organisations' cultures are being changed at the artifact levels and, partially, at the values and beliefs level of their cultures. Additionally, the thesis establishes that organisations are failing to create the conditions for employee engagement. It finally shows that leadership in companies is not efficiently supporting the engagement of employees to integrate sustainability into their culture.

Key Words: Sustainability, employee engagement, organisational culture, organisational culture change, bottom-up approach, top-down approach, adaptive leadership, transactional and transformational leadership.

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1. Introduction, aims of the research and background

1.1. Introduction

This introduction outlines the challenges that organisations encounter when striving to integrate sustainability with a top-down approach. Specifically, it focuses on the specific complexities of sustainability and suggests that companies have to change their organisational cultures in order to successfully embed sustainability into their core. It further identifies the research problem and questions and defines the purpose of the thesis.

Sustainability is a complex challenge that requires significant changes in organizations. Legislation and international standards on human rights, labour rights, the environment and governance have pushed companies to acknowledge their responsibility to do no harm during their operations (Lueneburger & Goleman, 2010; Etzion, Gehman, Ferraro & Avidan, 2017; UNGC & Accenture, 2018). Many of these businesses have acknowledged the need to move away from a business-as-usual model by incorporating sustainability into their business strategies and throughout their business functions and practices (Baumgartner, 2009; Millar, Hind & Magala, 2012). By integrating long-term goals, as sustainability requires, corporate business models and thinking must shift. Done well, this has profound implications on corporate missions, strategies, operations, value chains and cultures (Baumgartner, 2009; Haugh & Talwar, 2010; Lueneburger & Goleman, 2010; Millar et al. 2012).

Several authors agree that sustainability cannot be approached as any other organisational change. For instance, Etzion et. al (2017) stress that sustainability is not the usual corporate initiative: sustainability issues are complex, they differ depending on the industry, the size of the organization, legislation, spatial complexity, conflicting interests among stakeholders, they change over time and require long-term visions. As a result, management approaches that tend to proceed in an orderly manner from planning to execution with well-defined targets, are not a good fit for sustainability's wicked problems (Lueneburger & Goleman, 2010; Lozano 2013, Etzion, et. al. 2017). Additionally, Haugh and Talwar (2010) stress that, when transitioning toward sustainability through management solutions, managers and employees lack the awareness and knowledge of sustainability issues beyond their immediate responsibilities, which feeds the organisational work in silos.

These approaches are conducted in a top-down manner, which is problematic given that they only touch upon the operational and managerial work of companies (Baumgartner, 2009; Lozano, 2013). Furthermore, these top-down approaches often lack the engagement of employees and middle-managers, who tend to be requested to align their work functions to meet sustainability objectives without creating the necessary understanding, communication and incentives. As a result, these organisational changes fail to change the core of organisations, namely their organisational culture. Companies are not adequately planning these organizational changes as they overlook intra-organizational cultures and subcultures, and fail to engage with organizational systems, values, visions and philosophies for long-term organizational change (Baumgartner, 2009; Lozano, 2013; Etzion, et al. 2017).

A possible solution to this organisational change that sustainability requires of companies is to develop a sustainability-oriented organizational culture (Crane, 1995). This is of particular importance given that

organizational changes are often unsuccessful because they don't take into consideration the change in organizational culture that is needed (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Baumgartner (2009, p. 102) agrees that, "if aspects of sustainable development are not part of the mindset of leaders and members of the organization, corporate sustainability activities will not affect the core business efficiently and are more likely to fail." In order to achieve this, it is particularly relevant to turn the attention to employee engagement and the leadership necessary to it. This is true given that organisations need to consider both the activities and interactions between its employees that shape their culture, as well as the less visible aspects of corporate cultures such as espoused values and beliefs and assumptions (Schein, 1984).

1.2. Purpose and aim of the research

The purpose of this thesis is to explore how organisations can drive the change in their organisational culture in order to fully integrate sustainability by engaging employees and managers. Specifically, it will study how employee engagement can contribute to transforming organizational cultures to fully embed sustainability. Additionally, this paper will analyse how managers can support employee commitment to sustainability and its integration in their work.

Through this analysis, this thesis will focus on top-down and bottom-up approaches to integrate sustainability in organisations, as well as the interactions between managers and employees, that facilitate the integration of sustainability into the organisation's culture. Moreover, these topics will be analysed throughout the thesis considering the distinction between formal and informal organisational cultures, comparing their distinct elements and perceptions of them.

This thesis will aim to answer the following research question and sub-questions:

How can organisations embed sustainability into their organisational culture through employee engagement?

1. How can the integration of sustainability in companies change their organisational culture?
2. How are companies creating the conditions for employee engagement to embed sustainability into their organisational culture?
3. How do managers lead to foster and support employee engagement to integrate sustainability into organisational culture?

In order to answer these questions, this thesis will first lay a background that presents the main motivations to conduct this research. Subsequently, a theoretical background will be provided so as to propose the main pillars that will frame this research, namely around organisational culture change, employee engagement and leadership. Thereafter, the method of this research will describe how the empirical study was conducted and what the object of the research is. Eventually, this paper will outline the main results of the empirical study and analyse these outcomes. Finally, this thesis will discuss the results in light of the theoretical foundations and present practical contributions and recommendations for future research.

2. Background

The background yields the context and motivations to conduct this thesis. It first underlines the increasing alignment of companies with sustainability and it clarifies the evolving concept of corporate sustainability. This section further argues that sustainability is a complex organisational change that has been mainly tackled through top-down managerial approaches. It ultimately suggests that companies have to bring about change in their cultures in order to fully shift to sustainable business.

2.1. Companies are increasingly integrating sustainability

Today, numerous companies have embraced sustainability as a strategic part of their operations and their products and services development (Etzion et al., 2017; Lueneburger, 2010; UNGC & Accenture, 2018). According to the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and Accenture's Strategy CEO Studies (2016; 2018), 97% of more than 1,000 leading CEOs believe that sustainability is important to the future success of their business and 89% of them recognize that corporate commitment to sustainability is translating into real impact in their industry. As such, increasing interest and efforts for sustainability are palpable: by 2018, 10,416 business and business associations had committed to respect and work to achieving UNGC's 10 principles, of which 8,544 (or 82%) were active, that is, reporting their progress on these matters (UNGC, 2018). The path for this sustainability momentum has been paved during the past two decades with the multiplication of voluntary initiatives like the Global Reporting Initiative, ISO certifications, OECD Guiding Principles for Multinational Corporations, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Life Cycle Assessment, among others (Lozano, 2012; Etzion et al., 2017).

Many of these businesses have acknowledged the need to move away from a business-as-usual model by incorporating sustainability into their business strategies and throughout their business functions and practices (Baumgartner, 2009; Millar et al., 2012). By envisioning long-term goals, organisations need to rethink their business models and thinking. Done well, this has profound implications on corporate missions, strategies, operations, value chains and cultures (Baumgartner, 2009; Haugh & Talwar, 2010; Lueneburger & Goleman, 2010; Millar et al. 2012).

2.2. Understanding corporate sustainability

Sustainable development is an evolving concept that initially referred to development that "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations, 1987). At this point, the international community turned its attention to aligning human activities with sustainable values, such as satisfying human needs, ensuring social equity and respecting environmental limits (Holden, Linneru & Banister, 2017). This approach is rather broad and doesn't explicitly refer to the responsibility of the private sector in achieving such a vision. Only after a series of corporate human rights violations, the international attention moved to the responsibility of companies to do no harm and to uphold environmental, human rights, labour and governance standards.

With the turn of the millennium, arrived the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which provided with an eight-point agenda for action to be achieved by 2015. More recently, world leaders signed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a sustainable development agenda defined through the participation of actors from the public, private and third sectors, as well as citizens from around the world. The SDGs consist of

17 objectives formally and unanimously adopted by the 2015 Resolution 70/1 of the General Assembly of the UN. This development agenda covers different global issues, including poverty, hunger, education, water, urbanization, environment, health and other aspects of sustainable development. It also sets goals to be achieved by 2030 and it explicitly calls for the private sector's commitment "to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle" (SDG 12, target 12.6, United Nations, 2015). Nowadays, corporations are thus expected to look beyond their shareholders and listen to the concerns of their internal and external stakeholders. But what does sustainability mean for companies?

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), today more often referred as Corporate sustainability (CS), has itself evolved. Initially understood as corporate philanthropy, this concept is today approached as a strategic part of an organisation's strategy. As Chandler and Werther (2011, p.40) put it, strategic CS is "the incorporation of a holistic CSR perspective within a firm's strategic planning and core operations so that the firm is managed in the interests of a broad set of stakeholders to achieve maximum economic and social value over the medium to long term". As such, sustainability requires of companies to integrate social and environmental considerations into their vision, mission, values and business models. Nowadays, not only does the corporate sector recognize its share of responsibility (Lozano, 2012; Millar et al., 2012) but companies have also started to take action for a more sustainable future (Lueneburger & Goleman, 2010; Etzion et al., 2017).

2.3. Sustainability is a complex challenge that has been tackled through top-down approaches

As Haugh and Talwar (2010) express it, the voluntary nature of sustainability means that there is no guiding blueprint and that its implementation relies on company adaptation. Companies have mostly resorted to top-down strategies by developing upper management levels initiatives, including the development of resource-efficient technologies, sustainability reporting schemes and sustainable goods and services (Haugh & Talwar, 2010; Lozano, 2013). Lozano (2012; 2013) affirms that common practices adopted by companies tend to be technocentric and fail to integrate the full spectrum of change that corporate sustainability entails. Furthermore, these changes often focus on environmental issues and tend to be disarticulated from each other, meeting resistance within companies (Baumgartner, 2009; Lueneburger & Goleman, 2010; Lozano, 2013). These technocentric changes reflect the treatment of corporate sustainability as any other management challenge and neglect organizational cultures and human elements such as culture, behaviour and attitudes (Haugh & Talwar, 2010; Lozano, 2013).

Yet, sustainability is not a simple or straightforward problem. There are environmental factors to change that can be of a political, economic, socio-cultural, technological, legal and ecological nature (Senior & Swailes, 2016). These multiple drivers are intertwined when associated to sustainability challenges. A human right issue may simultaneously arise legal, social, political and economic drivers to change a business' practice and policies. As such, today's social and environmental issues are multi-layered and trans-disciplinary (Wells, 2013). They interweave economic, social, political, ethical, governance and environmental challenges, creating complex problems richly interconnected. When various of these factors interact, they irreversibly change into a system that is not decomposable into its original elements (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017). Therefore, wicked issues as sustainability require new and more complex ways to approaching them.

There is consensus that complexity has to be addressed with complexity and not through simplistic and linear approaches that ultimately only increase complexity levels. Wells (2013) underlines that environmental and social issues have to be framed as transdisciplinary and approached with complex thinking, contradicting the contemporary approach that aims at managing for outputs. Likewise, Heifetz (1994) and Uhl-Bien and Arena (2017) point that the current top-down approaches of managing change strive to bring things back to a stable and predictable order that can no longer be achieved, which can do more harm than good. They acknowledge that these are the responses that managers are trained to take and that they should shift to being adaptive so as to enabling and creating the conditions and provide with the flexibility to build on existing knowledge and networks. By being aware of the nature of the changes that sustainability puts on companies, they can better plan for the unexpected outcomes that will arise. This has also implication on the way change has to be conducted: instead of adopting bureaucratic and exclusively top-down approaches, organisations should encourage and allow for adaptive and transformative processes as well as leaving room to make mistakes (Senior and Swailes, 2016; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017).

3. Theoretical background

The theoretical background presents a literature review and the theoretical and conceptual foundations that are most pertinent to this thesis. The theories laid out in this theoretical background pertain to organisational culture change, employee engagement and leadership theories relevant to this paper, namely adaptive, transactional and transformational leadership. This section underlines the importance of organisational culture to integrate sustainability in organisations and how culture can be changed to support this organisational change for sustainability. The following paragraphs offer, as well, the underpinnings of employee engagement and a leadership model to facilitate the engagement of employees with corporate sustainability strategies.

3.1. Organisational culture

As established, organisational change for sustainability cannot be fully achieved without touching upon an organisation's culture. Therefore, it is fundamental to understand the notion of organisational culture. This subsection pays attention to the different perspectives of this concept that are important to understand the focus on artifacts, values and interactions adopted by this thesis.

Organisational culture has transitioned from being studied as an objective and manageable variable to one being understood as a process, which is dynamic, continuously evolving and characterized by social interactions (Hatch, 2006). Authors like Edgar Schein, one of the most influencing scholars on organizational culture, still approach this concept from an objective perspective, but in a less monolithic manner. He defines it as “the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems” (Schein, 1984, p. 3).

Schein (1984) categorizes three levels of organizational culture represented as a pyramid (see Figure 1). At the foundation of the pyramid lie *basic underlying assumptions*. These are unconscious and taken-for-granted as they are internalized by groups and individuals. The second level refers to *values and norms* of behaviour that members learn, use and pass on as models and that allow them to be a part of the organizational life. This includes the set of principles, ideals, goals, strategies and organizational standards. The upper level refers to *artifacts*. This is the most tangible layer of organisational culture, which can be observed and includes culture products (formal charters, documents and policies), its processes and an organization's structure. Yet, this level remains difficult to decipher without being part of it, because only insiders internalize the deep meaning given to them by the organizational culture (Schein, 1984).

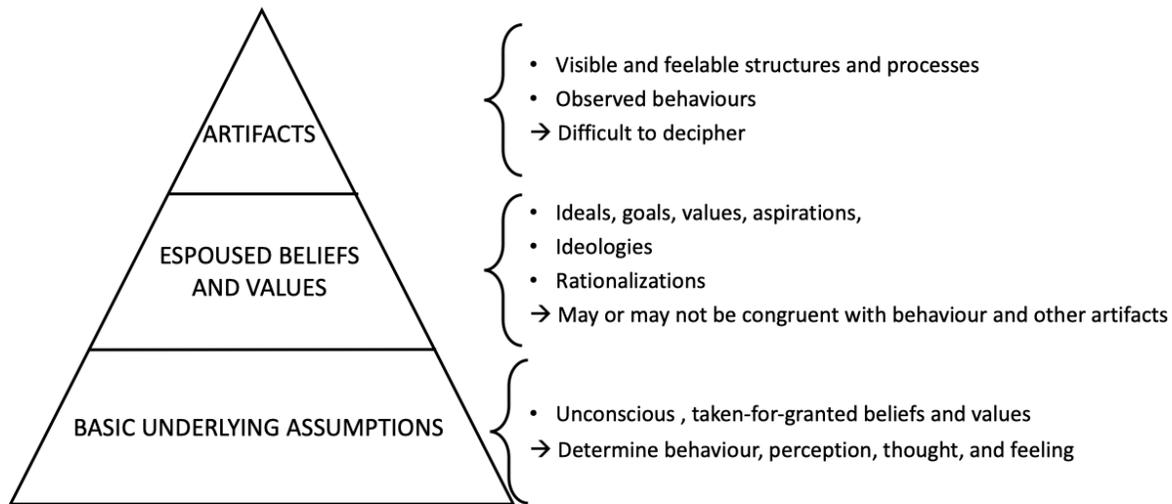


Figure 1: Schein’s organisational culture pyramid (elaborated from Schein, 2010, p. 24).

On the other hand, an alternative take on organisational culture considers it a process. Van Maanen defined in 1998 organizational culture as a set of rules, languages and ideologies that help organizational actors in their daily lives, useful standards for work, behaviour patterns as well as rituals that suggest how to behave with other members and with outsiders. As such, organisational culture constitutes knowledge shared to a different extent by a certain group, which aims at justifying member activities, and serves organisations to adapt to external obstacles. Van Maanen’s idea of culture is based on representations, daily actions and language shared by members, which not objectively visible, but must instead be interpreted (Van Maanen, 1988). This symbolic-interpretivists approach points as well that meaning depends on the context in which actors meet artifacts and symbols. This context is considered from them as culture. For instance, this is the reason why changing the context can influence the meaning of cultural symbols (Hatch, 2006).

3.2. Organisational culture change for sustainability

Building on the previous theoretical foundations of organisational culture, this section focuses on organisational culture change. The following paragraphs lay the specific challenges associated to the endeavour of changing organisational culture. It further outlines the most relevant discussions to better understand this thesis’ take on organisational culture change as a complementary process of top-down managerial and bottom-up participatory perspectives.

There is abundant debate around organisational culture change and divergent approaches to managing organisational culture. Some argue that top-management holds the capacity to influence and alter values, beliefs, ideas and behaviours of organisations’ members (Schein, 2010), others affirm that changing organisational culture is very hard because of the multiple values and the meanings attributed to those values (Brown, 1998; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). While the latter authors support the idea that change is possible, they point at the various sub-cultures and groups within organisations that make this task challenging. A third and last approach to organisational culture change holds that organisational culture lies

beyond the control of leaders as values and meanings are created in small groups and they are subjected to individual characteristics (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

Several models on organisational culture change have been developed, each offering valuable takes for this study. For instance, Lundberg's (1985) approach is relevant given he focus it gives to tackling all levels of culture through continuous and repeated interventions. Additionally, Dyer (1985) has a multi-layered perspective to organisational culture comprised of artifacts, rules and norms, values, and assumptions. This author's analysis suggests a valuable approach to the role of leadership in breaking down existing symbols, beliefs and structures and overcoming conflicts. Furthermore, Gagliardi's (1986) model is valuable as it views organisational culture change as being incremental rather than radical. This author prioritizes the view of organisational culture as being the assumptions and values of its members and it attributes an important role to organisational leaders, who have the task to orient their followers. Cultural change is thus understood as being a process in which leaders work with employees to build a collective experience and set of beliefs that are shared by all. While Gagliardi doesn't pay enough attention to the role that followers have in defining those new values and the importance of engaging employees in shaping the new culture, he points that resistance and tensions may arise until the new values are understood as being desirable and unconsciously shared by all.

Given the Schein's organisational culture definition, changing it relies on the interaction and understanding that the members of an organisation have (Schein, 1985; Senior & Swailes, 2016). As such, a new culture can be neither imposed by a top-management directive nor new values and norms automatically trickle-down and permeate entire organisations. Furthermore, culture is by nature deeply rooted in organisations and it therefore tends to be resistant to change. As Lozano (2013) states, top-down approaches facilitate incorporation of sustainability, they can limit the effective institutionalisation of it, while bottom-up processes have a converse effect, enabling institutionalisation but raising resistance from managers. As a result, any attempt to try to affect an organisation's culture requires a plurality of approaches that engage members of the organisation at different levels and throughout the company's functional units. This is also true when talking about complex challenges that organisations face: companies need to further integrate employees in change and encourage them to act on continuous bases (Senior & Swailes, 2016; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017).

3.3. Organisational culture change as complementary top-down and bottom-up processes

The next section lays the theoretical bases for employee engagement and proposes a model of leadership to leverage the employee engagement necessary to embed sustainability into organisational culture. First are presented the foundations of employee engagement and its importance to the integration of sustainability in organisations; subsequently follows a leadership model that allows employees to further interact with corporate sustainability changes and bring about the necessary culture change.

3.3.1. Bottom-up approach to organisational culture change: employee engagement

The following analysis focuses on the need to include a bottom-up approach and to better understand the role played by employee engagement in embedding sustainability into organisational culture. While there is no single definition of employee engagement, there are key characteristics that can elucidate this concept.

Employee engagement can refer to employees' willingness and attitudes to support their organization to be more successful (Perrin's Global Workforce Study, 2003) and their involvement with work, their enthusiasm for it, emotional attachment and commitment (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Moreover, employees who are engaged tend to have a more positive perception of the organisation they work in and its values, pushing them to create more value for their company (Robinson, 2004).

There are general drivers for the engagement of employees in organisations. First, a positive relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance exists. Studies have found that employee engagement positively impacts employee retention, productivity, profitability, customer loyalty and safety (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). The latter is due to several factors: engaged employees tend to promote the organization to other co-workers and to defend it from possible outsiders; engaged employees are more likely to be loyal to their organisations even with new work opportunities; and employees who are engaged invest more time and effort than required to help the organization to grow (Gorman & Gorman, 2006). Conversely, unengaged employees have a negatively impact on organisations. They are more likely to misuse their work hours, to be less effective, to show less commitment, to look for other jobs, and to negatively influence customers' perception and satisfaction (Markos & Sridevi, 2010).

Moreover, employee engagement is key to integrating sustainability in companies. It has indeed been recognised as a valuable approach to foster a more active participation and interaction of employees with the sustainability challenges that organisations face. Authors like Collier and Esteban (2007) stress that employee engagement is an important element of corporate sustainability. These researchers underline that employees are decisive to successfully implement corporate sustainability strategies and programs. In fact, employees are seen as fundamental in the process of carrying and implementing ethical corporate behaviours. The capacity for employees to carry out this process largely depends on their willingness of doing it and relates to behaviours and values that generally exceeds the framework of their contracts with companies.

Similarly, Eccles, Perkins and Serafeim (2012) observe that employee engagement is essential to a sensitive topic such as sustainability, for which a behavioural change is required. This is due to the fact that people need to fully comprehend the basic assumptions of an organisation's sustainability vision and the changes it entails so as to make that change long-lasting. It is necessary to include employees in making an organisational culture more sustainable, allowing them to understand the motivations to change and the changes that they will contribute to implement. If employees are emotionally linked to the organization and its new values, they will be able to be more productive and create value beyond the framework stipulated in their work contracts (Eccles et al., 2012).

Given the importance of engaging employees for sustainability (Collier & Esteban, 2007), several researchers have studied different approaches to foster employee participation. According to Vance (2006), employee engagement is not only the result of personal attributes (knowledge, skills), but also possible given the organizational context (leadership, social setting), and human resources practices. It is thus crucial to consider that, in order to enable employee engagement, both employees and managers have to take an active role and interact. Furthermore, the organization should actively seek to develop and foster its employees' engagement throughout its processes (Robinson, 2004).

After a careful review of various approaches to employee engagement, the researchers of this thesis identified the following seven fundamental steps for employee engagement:

1. **Engage top and middle-managers** to make engagement possible. Motivated leaders and managers are able to infuse their commitment to employees, which in the present case involves sustainability values (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). This point will be analysed in detail in the next subsection of this document.
2. **Create awareness** of the relevant topic (Markos & Sridevi, 2010), in this case sustainability. Organisations have to make sure that their employees are aware of their sustainability strategy, goals and values. This is the first step for employees to start interacting with an organisational change. If employees are not aware of the company's values shift for a more sustainable mindset, their perception and understanding of the organisation's culture won't change.
3. **Support the understanding** of the area around which organisations wish employees to engage (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Organisations need to secure their employees' understanding of sustainability, how the corporation's sustainability vision and strategy will affect employees' jobs and daily activities, among others. Explaining the motivations and drivers to adopt a more sustainable business strategy can help employees understand the origin of change and better align their behaviours and values at work with it, reducing the chances that they will to a sustainability change.
4. **Assure a two-way communication** between the leadership and employees (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). A constructive dialogue between leaders and employees has to be developed so as to give the chance to employees to freely express their concerns, ideas, doubts and suggestions concerning sustainability questions. This includes as well continuously informing employee about new developments and changes regarding the corporate sustainability strategy, vision and values. This element is key to create a constructive dialogue around sustainability matters as these interactions sustainability and its importance become a common topic and a crucial part of working at the organisation.
5. **Give employees autonomy** in their jobs (Eccles, Perkins & Serafeim, 2012). This includes the possibility for employees to define and decide how their work best contributes to the organisation's sustainability strategy and goals. This allows employees to better understand the contribution that their work brings to the sustainability strategy of the organisation and their individual impact on the organisation's goals. Studies show that a higher autonomy at work is linked to increasing engagement form employees, who feel more in control of their day-to-day work and encouraged to take initiative and a sense of agency at work (Eccles, Perkins & Serafeim, 2012). As such, giving employees the autonomy to define or even innovate ways through which they can contribute to the organisation's sustainability strategy can foster employee commitment and initiative on sustainability.
6. Ensure that employees have the **necessary resources** to engage with the sustainability change. This includes time, information, moral support as well as technical and financial resources (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Once employees are encouraged to take initiatives and individually contribute to the organisation's sustainability vision, it is important to provide them with the resources to actually

engage with sustainability. Without them employees' motivation and commitment may be difficult or may decrease in time.

7. **Ensure the right incentives** for employees to align their work with sustainability. These contingent rewards can be both of economic and social (recognition, human resource development) natures. They are valuable to engage all employees, whether they are interested in sustainability matters or not, and the type of incentive will depend on the employees' individual values and motivations. For instance, some employees share the organisation's sustainability values in their personal lives, while others can be indifferent to it and only wish to focus on their general work objectives. A third group of employees may be reluctant to sustainability values and only see their contract with the organization only as economic and emotionally detached from the organisation's values. It is the leaders' task to develop different approaches to engaging them through the right incentives (Rodrigo & Arenas, 2008; Slack, Corlett & Morris, 2013).

3.3.2. A top-down approach supportive of employee engagement: a leadership model

Given that employee engagement has to be fostered at the organisational level (Robinson, 2004), this section suggests a complementary leadership model that can support the seven elements of employee engagement. Heifetz' (1994) **adaptive leadership** model offers a valuable perspective on how leaders can effectively identify the adaptive challenge their employees face and support them to adapt to sustainability strategies and processes. This model also offers interesting insights on how leaders can assist employees to face complex challenges, such as sustainability. An adaptive leader mobilizes, motivates, organises, orients and focuses employees, while helping them change their values. These are all behaviours necessary in the sustainability context, in which sustainability is strongly values-based and it requires active engagement from employees.

Furthermore, Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) note that a gap between espoused values of the organisation and the actual behaviour of the organisation's members is a challenge that asks for adaptive leadership. This is often true in the context of sustainability, in which organisations adopt sustainability strategies and renew their values through a technocentric approach, but these do not trickle down throughout the rest of the organisation. Subsequently, adaptive leaders should create awareness of complex adaptive challenges, support employees to understand it and develop a two-way communication path (Heifetz, 1994). In other words, Heifetz' adaptive leadership model provides a path to respond to the first four elements identified as key for employee engagement. This initial adaptation prepares employees to understand the motivations and implications of change and to engage with the organisational change.

Breevart et. al. (2014) offer valuable insights on additional leadership models that support the subsequent elements of employee engagement. According to them, both **transactional and transformational leaders** contribute to employee engagement in different ways. Transactional leaders focus on creating effective exchanges between leaders and their followers. These leaders motivate employees to fulfil leaders' expectations and they recur to additional job resources that have a motivating potential and thus influence their followers' outcomes. Transformational leaders go a step beyond by personally engaging with employees and creating meaning for the work employees do to help them reach their full potential (Breevart et al., 2014).

Breevart et al. (2014) point that, while transformational leaders are usually more effective than transactional leaders, the latter's approach to promote employee job performance through contingent rewards is an effective first stage. Transactional leaders are particularly efficient with employees that only hold an economic relation to their jobs; in other words, employees whose main goal is to fulfil their work tasks and who are only motivated by the economic exchange they have with the company. These employees are often not interested to engage in activities that go beyond their official work tasks and they are often not interested in sustainability matters, unless these are directly linked to their job descriptions. Breevart et al. (2014) observe that transactional leadership's elements of contingent rewards and autonomy can positively contribute to these types of employees' engagement by providing them with an additional motivation to engage.

Furthermore, transformational leadership has similar implications on employees' daily work engagement, with even greater effects than transactional leadership (Breevart et al., 2014). As transformational leaders motivate followers to do more than what is expected from them, this leadership style is a good suit to engage employees whose values are aligned with the organisation's sustainability vision and strategy. By raising employees' awareness around the importance of sustainability, mobilizing followers to prioritize the team's or the organisation's interest and pushing followers to address higher level sustainability needs (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994), transformational leaders can engage employees who share the organisation's sustainability values. Similarly, Breevart et al. (2014) note that transformational leadership provides employees with more autonomy and social support. This, in turn, contributes to a better work environment, which allows for employee engagement.

There are four possible ways by which transformational leaders can unleash this engagement (Bass, 1990). By showing charisma, leaders can spread idealized influence between their employees. It regards the emotional sphere of leadership, where followers see their leader as a model to emulate, who often embeds important moral and ethical values for them. The second element is the individualized consideration that leaders have of followers. It means that managers pay unique attentions to personal needs and the situation their employees are in, so that each employee can feel considered in its development and growth, as well as involved in the company. The third factor is intellectual stimulation of employees, supported by the fact that these leaders are always ready to teach new methods, tools, activities for overcoming problems, by stimulating and allowing employees to be innovative and creative. Finally, transformational leaders are an inspiration for followers, by communicating high expectations and keeping high motivations. The latter is done by creating symbols that permits to focus efforts and achieving results that otherwise employees wouldn't gain by themselves (Bass, 1990).

At the organisational level, fostering all adaptive, transactional and transformational leaders requires of companies to establish the right reward systems and bring top and middle-managers as part of the sustainability strategy and mission to commit to this organisational change. Only through leadership commitment can companies reframe their organisational identity and use leadership as a leverage for the organisation's sustainability vision. Eccles and Perkins (2012, p.45) denote that committing leaders is key for sustainability as they show that "leaders of sustainable companies demonstrate personal commitment to sustainability that inspires others throughout the organization (83% vs. 50% at traditional companies). As a result, more employees in sustainable companies view sustainable strategies as essential to the company's success (80% vs. 20% for traditional companies)."

3.4. Conclusion: theoretical approach of this thesis

As a conclusion of this section, it is important to outline the core theoretical elements of this thesis. First, given the two perspectives to organisational culture, this research approaches this concept from a double perspective. On the one hand, it welcomes Schein's layers and distinct elements of organisational culture, which offer well-defined categories that have been widely used in organisational studies. Specifically, this paper will focus on change that touches upon the two levels of organisational culture that are most observable and easy to influence, namely *artifacts* and *espoused beliefs and values*. However, the authors have decided to go beyond Schein's solely objective perspective, by understanding organisational culture a process, characterized by social dynamics, interactions, interpretations. As a result, this study goes beyond the visible aspects of culture, and considers that organisational culture can change over time and be affected by organisational actors and the interactions between them.

Second, based on these theoretical underpinnings of organisational culture change, this research approaches it as a complementary work between top-down and bottom-up directions, in which managers provide with the right support, meanings and incentives, and employees become active members of the change through their daily work. As a result, this thesis accepts that a planned process and a vision can be led by top-management to allow changes to arise and be integrated in the existing organisational structures and processes or to allow for organisational adaptation. Simultaneously, a participative process is as necessary to change organisational culture, one in which employees have the space to participate in the planning of changes and to engage with the processes of culture change for sustainability.

Finally, this research advances a two-pronged approach to the integration of sustainability into organizational culture. This proposal is composed of a process to achieve employee engagement and the leadership allowing for employees to engage with the sustainability change. The former is structured around seven steps, namely: i. top and middle-management buy-in; ii. raising awareness of employees; iii. creating understanding of the sustainability change; iv. ensuring a two-way communication around the sustainability organisational change; v. giving autonomy to employees in their daily work; vi. providing with the necessary resources to employee engagement; and vii. supporting engagement through contingent incentives. The latter proposes a leadership model that reinforces employee engagement. This is a continuum of three leadership style; i. adaptive leadership to the four first steps of employee engagement; ii. characteristics of transactional leadership, namely autonomy and contingent rewards; and iii. transformational leadership as the ultimate inspiring leadership style that encourages employees to go beyond what is expected of them to create ownership of the sustainability organisational culture change.

4. Methodology

The methodology describes how the research of this thesis was conducted. It will first outline the research design and methods and techniques adopted for the empirical analysis through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and secondary data analysis. It will further lay the potential limitations to this study and answer questions of validity and reliability.

4.1. Research design

This thesis will approach the researchers' ontology from an interpretivism and relativism perspective. The authors of this thesis hold true that each reality varies in form and content depending on the people and cultures that are being treated. There are many realities depending on meanings and interpretations that individuals give to them. Additionally, the researchers have a social constructionism epistemology. Reality is not unique and objective but depends on the meanings given by individuals (Corbetta, 2003). Beliefs, values, interactions and interpretations are the focus of attention in studying organizational cultural change.

This research has a two-fold approach. It is firstly and mainly descriptive, by intending to describe the current situation in the studied organization. The aim is to obtain a clear idea of its profile with regards to the sustainability issues introduced. By referring to the theoretical background of the thesis, this first approach allows to analyse how this change for sustainability is affecting the organizational culture and its levels, as well as how leadership supports or not employee engagement.

Subsequently, this study will adopt an exploratory perspective further analysing what is the company's understanding of the research problem while trying to identify new insights for the organisation's sustainability embedment. Through this approach the intent is to apply the model provided in the theoretical background for fulfilling the gaps coming from the collected data. As such, given that specific leadership styles and elements for developing employees' engagement have been provided to better embed sustainability within organisational culture, the research also aims at contributing with new useful insights by highlighting the importance of employee engagement for better embedding sustainability within organisations, in particular in their core: organizational culture.

4.2. Methods and techniques

4.2.1. Secondary analysis

The first approach for defining the background of this research has been driven thorough secondary analysis. It consisted of conducting a literature review about the organizational and leadership theories that the researchers considered central to the development of this paper. The researchers did not conduct a systematic literature review, but they decided to focus on the theories studied as fundamentals to fully understand both the theoretical concepts of previous scholars and the specific connections they have made with the specific topics of this research.

4.2.2. Primary analysis

The research recurs to two specific methods: semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

Semi-structured Interviews

The interviews serve to analyse what the organisation's *informal organizational culture*, that is the unwritten part of the culture, formed by subjective elements, such as perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, that cannot be found in the official documents of the company. In fact, interviews have "*an interest in understanding experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience*" (Siedman, 2013, p. 9). Therefore, when researching perceptions and feelings, as needed for this study, interviews are a good fit and an effective method to adopt.

This research mainly recurs to semi-structured interviews conducted to 3 employees and 2 managers. They were chosen so as to represent different departments of the organisation and having worked for different periods of time. Table 1 presents the profiles of the interviewees.

Position	Department	Time working at the company	Comments
Employee	Pipes Network	More than ten years	-
Employee	Waste	More than ten years	-
Employee	Drinking Water	More than twenty years	This interviewee has had a managerial position in a different department
Manager	Clients and Communications	Less than a year	-
Manager	Mains	Less than five years	Interview conducted over the phone

Table 1: Interviewees' profiles

The interviews lasted between 40 minutes and 1 hour and 15 minutes. They have been conducted both in person and through a telephone call, between the 6th of May and the 10th of May 2019. Four of them have been conducted face to face at the company's main office.

At the beginning of this interview process, a consent form provided by Malmö University was signed by both interviewees and interviewers. This document specifies the timing of this analysis, the aim and context of the research, confidentiality of records, as well as conservation and preservation of privacy. Regarding privacy, at the beginning of each interview the interviewers requested again for an authorisation to record, ensuring that no names would be mentioned, and that data would only be used in the research context.

Content of the interviews

In order to get a balanced overview of both managers' and employees' understanding and interaction with the company's sustainability organisational change, members from both groups were given the space to be interviewed. By doing so, the researchers obtained information from diverse perspectives. Indeed, the structure of the interviews' questions (Appendix 1) followed the theoretical framework and model provided in this thesis, with the intent to investigate it within the company. To do it, the questions between managers and employees have been partially adapted to the relevant elements from both perspectives that the researchers aimed to obtain. In this way, after a first overlook of the company and its culture through

employees' and managers' lenses, all the other questions touch upon the mentioned elements of employee engagement and leadership. The questions have been structured in the following way:

The interviews first focus on having an initial and general vision of the organizational culture. Subsequently, they draw their attention to the interviewees' awareness and understanding of the company's sustainability values, beliefs and strategy; how each member understands and perceives their roles in implementing the organisation's sustainability vision; how each interviewee believes he/she can actively implement the organisation's sustainability strategy. Then the focus is turned to how employees and managers are actively interacting and communicating around the organisation's sustainability vision and strategy and the ways in which this has changed their work. Finally, the last group of questions are about the interviewees' interaction with the organisational change.

The value of semi-structured interviews to this research

Semi-structured interviews offer the possibility to prepare questions in advance, giving the interviewer time, knowledge and preparation for conducting them (Cohen & Crabtree, 2016). Indeed, this thesis' interview questions allowed the interviewers to cover issues defined beforehand as key, avoiding the risk of neglecting the needed data. On the other hand, they give flexibility by granting the interviewer to redirect the main focus to specific themes coming up from the fixed part. This allows to gather initially information and to complement this through a more informal data collection process (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

For instance, the interviewers were able to rephrase and redesign new challenging dialogues with interviewees. This last set of questions allowed as well to deepen in personal experience of the interviewees that weren't known, but that just arose during the formal predefined questions (Bernard, 1988), especially in relation of their tasks, activities and communications with their managers/employees. Another important advantage of semi-structured interviews is given by the possibility to observe the interviewees' behaviours, showing certain attitudes and allowing the interviewer to gather more insights (University of Portsmouth, 2010). It became relevant especially when the interviewees were talking about the CEO, as an inspiring source of motivation in this change.

Documents analysis

The research uses document analysis of three documents: the 2019-2030 Business Plan (BP), the company's 2018 Annual and Sustainability Report (ASR) and the 2020-2030 Operations Strategy (OS).

The document analysis done by this research is here considered to be a primary analysis of secondary data that provide a documentary version of the studied reality (Silverman, 2011). This is due to the fact that this study analyses documents which are data not previously collected for other intents. The decision to follow also this kind of analysis is motivated by two main reasons.

On the one hand, the documents are not used for the sole purpose of providing an analysis of the organizational context, or only to support the interviews (Silverman, 2011). Instead, they are seen as artefacts of that current organizational culture. More precisely, they are seen as emblematic element of the formal organizational culture, which is the written official one. Organizational documents like these provide with the definitions, in this case of strategic sustainability elements, offered by the company itself.

On the other hand, it is important to bear in mind that company documents do not completely represent an objective source of information, but they rather reflect a group’s stance (Bryman, 2008) to be compared with other sources. In this case, they represent the managerial perspective of organisational culture, more than the employees’. Organisational documents like these provide with the definitions, in this case of strategic sustainability elements, offered by the company itself. This aspect, however, is taken by the authors as a positive aspect, given that it allows to compare the formal version of sustainability artifacts (i.e. the managerial perspective), with the actual perceptions that both employees and managers have of the organisation’s culture. In fact, these documents that are described as a part of various organizational strategies and plans, are also studied in relationship with the observed elements that emerge from the interviews.

Data analysis: coding

The analysis of the collected data has been conducted by using Nvivo 12, a qualitative data analysis software. It has been used to reorganise and analyse the qualitative data coming from both the five interviews and the three documents. Through it, the researchers classified the main theoretical themes, coding and labelling them.

With the intent to follow the same structure that the theoretical framework and the interviews present, 22 codes have been created, as presented on Table 2.

Sustainability	Organizational culture	Change	Leadership	Barriers
<i>Sustainability</i>	<i>Artifacts</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Adaptive</i>	<i>Language barrier</i>
<i>Top-down approach</i>	<i>Values</i>	<i>Engagement</i>	<i>Transactional</i>	<i>Conceptual barrier</i>
<i>Bottom-up approach</i>	<i>Underlying assumptions and beliefs</i>	<i>Awareness</i>	<i>Transformational</i>	
	<i>Formal organisational culture</i>	<i>Understanding</i>	<i>Need for adaptation</i>	
	<i>Informal organisational culture</i>	<i>Two-way communication</i>		
		<i>Participation in collective processes</i>		
		<i>Autonomy (opportunity to contribute, liberty, resources)</i>		
		<i>Contingent incentives</i>		

Table 2: List of codes

The first category aims to get a general overview of data linked to sustainability and to how it is embedded within the company (top down approach; bottom up approach). The second one refers to the organisational culture and its three levels in relation to sustainability. Moreover, a distinction between formal and informal organisational culture has been defined. The engagement category includes the main elements of the provided in theoretical framework. The leadership theme regards the three types of leadership identified to be necessary for better embedding sustainability within organisations. The “need for adaptation” has been added every time that the researchers noticed the lack of adaptive leadership, but a necessity to use an adaptive style to face the change. In addition to the main topics, some codes related to the limitations during interviews have been used.

Being aligned with the theoretical structure that has been the foundations of this thesis, the coding gives continuity to the design of the research. These codes were not considered to be mutually excluding as different topics can be interweaved for a same sentence. 685 codes were used during the document and interview analysis. Moreover, the coding of the documents has been conducted in Swedish, since the source was only written in that language. The concepts and the quotations have been translated into English afterwards, for the purpose of facilitating the analysis and comparison of the interview data.

4.3. Limitations

The research faced a number of limitations, given by the organizational context in which the data have been collected. It does not mean that the results are less valuable or reliable. The section below will explain the reason why this research still offers a complete analysis with the application of a specific model created for fulfilling gaps that the analysed organization presented.

There are two main limitations. The first one regards the organizational leadership, given that the director of the company announced that she would leave her position in a few months. This raised internal confusion, concern and stress among managers and employees. As a result, what seemed to be a clear willingness to collaborate with this research at the beginning of the process, turned into a limited availability of the organisation’s members to support this research. The time that the company allocated to the research rapidly decreased, as well as the possibility to contact many members to participate in this study. As a consequence to this shift in the organisational support, the researchers had to modify the methods and the techniques initially envisioned: from interviews and focus groups, to only interviews and document analysis. This change of scenario was mitigated by introducing a document analysis method and by structuring the interviews so as to deeply investigate the interactions between members and the interviewees’ perceptions of their managers’ or employees’ roles to integrate sustainability into the organisation. Taking in consideration how the organization reacts in this difficult moment of internal change became another interesting insight within this research, which was ultimately considered rather valuable than just a limitation to this research.

The second limitation identified lies in the use of the English language. Since the organization is a Swedish public company, most of its employees are Swedish. While they were all presented as being proficient in English, the researchers noticed, and the interviewees expressed, strong language barriers to communicate their thoughts, opinions and perceptions in English. The interviewees said they understood every question and the topic of the interview, but they faced an evident difficulty to express themselves when they had to argue for and motivate some of their thoughts. Language plays an important role in the interview as it can

influence the relationship between the interviewer and the respondent. The interviewee can immediately perceive the interviewer as a person similar to him or different, depending on the language used from the moment both parts meet and introduce themselves. If both the interviewer and the interviewee "speak" the same language, then there will be a greater chance of having greater empathy and relating to similar experiences; it will then be easier to understand each other (Kahn and Cannell, 1967).

During this research the encountered barriers seemed to be strictly related to the difficulties that some interviewees had to express themselves when answering to questions. The interviewers were able to establish good relationships with interviewees, especially given that they're research was initially legitimized by a leader from the organisation and due to the fact that this study was framed in the institutional framework of a Master thesis at a Swedish university. Further, the knowledge of the Swedish language by one of the interviewers allowed to make the atmosphere the more comfortable for the interviewees. Additionally, this limitation was further overcome given the Swedish language knowledge of one of the researchers, who allowed some interviewees to shift from English to Swedish or use Swedish words when it was most difficult to move on with the interview in English. Ultimately, it is hard to measure to what extent this represented a big limitation to the present study, but it is worth taking it in consideration.

Recognizing these difficulties, the researchers believe this study presents a good balance between limitations and collected data. The researchers are confident of this precise, organic and straightforward, but at the same time ambitious, design of the research.

4.4. Reliability and validity

Analysing the methodology of this research also requires understanding the concepts of reliability and validity. The first has to do with the reproducibility of the research's results and it specifically refers to the degree to which a given procedure produces the same result in different situations with the same or equivalent conditions and tools. Instead, validity "refers to the degree to which a given procedure for transforming a concept into actually operationalizes the concept that is intended to" (Corbetta, 2003, p.81).

Validity and reliability tend to be more easily questionable in qualitative methods that rely on a fewer samples and on the study of specific cases. However, when it comes to consider reliability and validity in qualitative research, they have not been clearly defined, to the point that many researchers have identified their own conception of validity, adopting other concepts for verify their research, which are quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003; Davies & Dodd, 2002; Seae, 1999). This triangulation is defined as "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (Creswell and Miller, 2000, p. 126).

For this research, it is difficult to assess with certainty the reliability or validity, as the study focuses on subjectivity, perceptions, that can nevertheless lead to biased result. The limited primary analyse does not allow to assure that the replication of the research in another context would lead to the same conclusions and results. In addition, the validity of this research may be questionable given the specific nature of the organisation and the unprecedented organisational change that it is going through. As such, the results of this study may not be easily applied in other contexts.

The above considerations do not undermine the foundations of this research, due to the fact that the researchers have tried to balance the limitations deriving from a qualitative approach of this type by integrating document analysis to the interviews. Having balanced insights from both employees and managers and having defined a clear theoretical framework on which to base the research, has reduced the potential limitations of the study. Thanks to those elements, the researchers believe that validity and reliability are tested and ensure a balance between quality, rigor and trustworthiness.

5. Presentation of the object of the study

This section presents the organisation where the empirical research was conducted and outlines the most relevant organisational information to the thesis research.

The company where the theoretical background will be applied is a Swedish public company with about four hundred employees. The public mission of this organisation is to manage the wastewater collection in Southwest Skåne and manage the waste in two cities of that region.

The organisation is led by the Federal Council, composed of eight political representatives (with a center-left majority) as well as one Director (the company's CEO) and one Vice-director. This is a matrix organisation led by a CEO, which that interconnects five functional departments with four operational departments, as shown in the Figure 2 below. This structure is of specific relevant to this thesis, given that it shows how the Strategy department, currently in charge of the sustainability questions, is already overlapping with the functional departments.

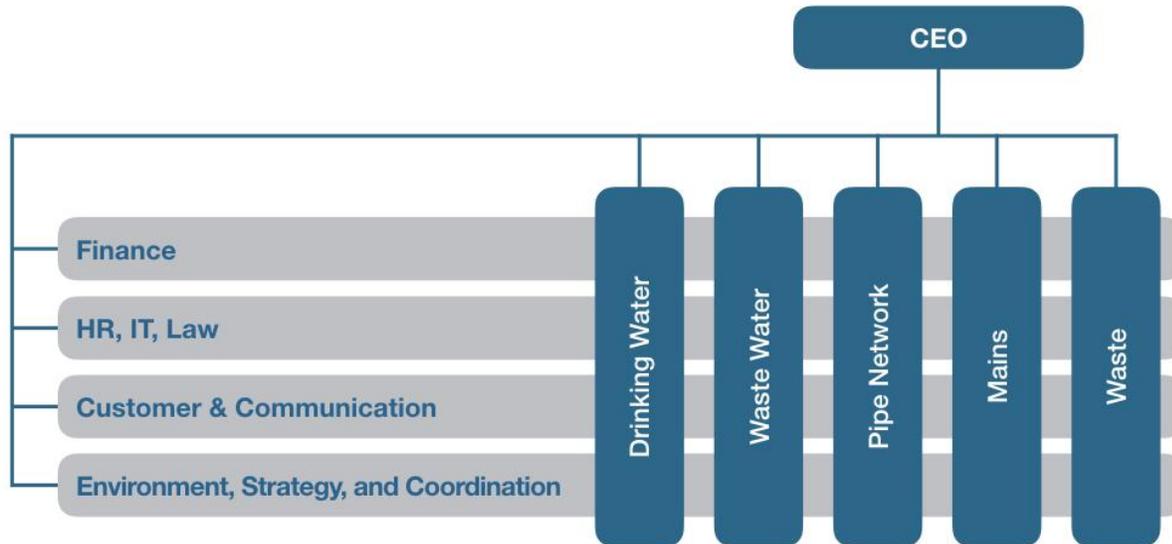


Figure 2: Organisational matrix

The organisation is currently facing a shift from a traditional business model to a integrating sustainability in its business model and culture. This means that the organisation is striving to make sustainability a central value for the company, both in terms of vision, mission and strategy. Furthermore, the company is shifting from concentrating the sustainability within the Strategy department, to infuse it across all their units. This conjuncture, perfectly aligned with the focus of this thesis' research, was the driving factor to apply the theoretical foundations of this thesis. In-depth analysis of a single organisation allows this thesis to understand different perspectives of employees and managers working in the same context and undergoing the same change for sustainability.

6. Analysis: description of the results

The description of the results presents the main outcomes of the empirical study. Furthermore, it analyses how official documents and interviews provide with concurrent or divergent understandings of the themes relevant to this thesis. After outlining the sustainability vision and mission of the company, the results are laid following the same structure as the theoretical background: organisational culture change, employee engagement and leadership. This allows to maintain a coherence with the theoretical foundations and organically describe how the company's artifacts and values have changed; how the organisation is working to engage employees to integrate sustainability in its culture; and to what extent leadership features of adaptive, transactional and transformational leadership are present in the company.

6.1. Sustainability at the studied company

The company has defined a sustainability strategy that is anchored in its core business and operations. This strategy is built around six strategic goals to be achieved either by 2025 or 2030, namely:

1. To be climate neutral and energy positive by 2030
2. Turn residues into new products and reutilize them by 2025
3. Become one of Europe's ten most efficient water, sewage and waste management organisations by 2025
4. Lead the development of high water quality for recreation and consumption by 2025
5. Achieve zero unplanned disturbances for customers by 2030
6. Inspire and engage all customers for a better environment by 2025

(BP; ASR; OS)

Several documents attest the efforts of the company to integrate their sustainability priorities throughout their operations, including their 2019-2030 Business Plan (BP), the company's 2018 Annual and Sustainability Report (ASR) and the 2020-2030 Operations Strategy (OS). On the one hand, the organisation's BP presents the *raison d'être* of the company, its vision, mission, values and context analysis for their operations, as well as the six sustainability strategic goals. On the other hand, the ASR focuses on the summary of the yearly financial and sustainability performance of the company as well as the main activities of that year. Finally, the OS offers an overview on the company's management and governance and a close look at the six strategic goals as well as their subgoals and targets. This last document also focuses on the role of leadership and employees in achieving the organisation's strategic priorities.

The fact that the organisation is going through an organisational change is also confirmed by the evidence that the company's sustainability goals and vision are recent. Therefore, the organisation has rethought its role in society, and it is adjusting to the envisioned sustainability goals. The interviews reflect on the change that the documents convey, as all interviewees expressed that the company is going through a period of "transformation" and exciting renewal. For instance, one employee mentioned:

We are in some kind of transformation, a lot is happening since [name of the CEO] became our director. She came with a completely different approach (...). Since she came along there has been a change with another perspective (...). She wants innovation, participation, she wants everyone to give energy, she wants to change and move forward, to think radically.

As this person puts forward, this transition is perceived with excitement, which seems to be radical as she refers to it being a “transformation”. It is also directly associated to the CEO who took office in December 2016, and who seems to introduce a new perspective, leadership style and vision to the organisation. Furthermore, this change toward sustainability is bringing new elements to the company, including innovation, participation and aligning collective effort with the strategic goals.

Managers recognise this renewal and the organisational change the company is going through. One of the interviewed managers associates it to the arrival of the CEO, while another manager stresses that this time the change is perceived as being more decisive. The latter contrasts former strategic changes with the current transition. He/she underlines that this time the change is more real for management and employees.

*[Before] nothing happened the whole way down, nothing changed, just words, not much action.
(...) But I think this time they started to invoke more leaders to reach out everyone.*

This section touching upon the sustainability vision and strategy of the company is corroborated by the documents and interviews. As one of the interviewees mentioned, this is a complex “cultural change” for the organisation that affects all levels of the organisation as well as the strategy and operations of the company. Therefore, it is relevant to further analyse how it touches upon the core of the company, that is, its organisational culture.

6.2. Organisational Culture Change for sustainability

Below is described how the company’s change to root sustainability in its business also affects the organisational culture. This part follows Schein’s (1984) three levels of organisational culture, namely artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions (Appendix 2). After displaying the results in tables that contrast the insights from official organisational documents and interviews, this section offers a critical analysis that summarizes the key findings.

6.2.1. Artifacts

The first and most visible level of an organisation’s culture is represented by the artifacts. Artifacts include all visible structures, hierarchies, processes, as well as the organisation’s documents, and ways of working, among others (Schein, 1984). This organisation’s artifacts reflect indeed upon the organisational change for sustainability, such as the official website, which in this case is accessible for all employees and the public. As an employee mentioned:

If you go to the home page you can find everything. When you start as a new member of [name of the company] you get all this information, values and everything.

The first element to point is that sustainability has changed the organisation’s strategy, shifting its vision to a long-term one. For instance, the BP states:

We take up our challenges by focusing on six powerful goals that we all work with and follow-up together within the organisation. All we do and say will have a clear bearing in those goals, which helps us develop our work, work in smarter way and use our resources in a better manner.

Similarly, the OS stresses this long-term vision guided by the six strategic sustainability goals:

[The company’s business plan] has a long-term and comprehensive strategy with a strong external focus. It contains our goals, an analysis of our context and it describes our challenges and opportunities to reach our goals.

The interviews confirm that the organisation’s strategy has changed and that it directly affects their work. For instance, while an employee describes the new strategy as being “highly ambitious”, a manager affirms that:

Now we have new goals that (...) have a more of the strategy (...) The goals before were more [numerous], now we have less goals but more identified. If what we do is not pointing at the goals, we have to stop doing it and start doing things that point at the goals. (...) [If we] identify something that does not point to the goals to stop doing it or do it in another way so that it points to the goals.

This new long-term vision of the organisational strategy has affected different aspects of the company’s artifacts. The table below presents a summary of the artifacts that have changed or are to be changed, how they have changed the analysed documents and how the interviewees noticed those alterations.

Artifacts	Documents’ perspective	Interviews’ perspective
<p>Core business of the company</p>	<p>Sustainability becomes a part of and affects the organisation’s business, moving from a business-as-usual to a more sustainable business. This is notable in the OS document, which points at general and specific levels of the company’s operations.</p> <p><i>The operations strategy must be the base for all our work. This includes when we act, plan and budget our operations in the short and the long-term, when we implement and follow-up our work.</i></p>	<p>An employee affirms noticing the changes in the way the company works.</p> <p><i>We have always had a [business plan] like this, but now we want to just twist and turn. Try and to see the results and before even the small changes needs a lot of time, and now it’s try, and see, evaluate, make a decision.</i></p>
<p>Annual monitoring and reporting</p>	<p>All annual monitoring and reporting is to be in line with the sustainability strategy. The ASR also integrates these sustainability goals follows up on their advancements.</p> <p><i>From 2020 onwards the goals will be completely integrated and have new indicators to follow up how [name of the company] contributes to the sustainable development of society.</i></p> <p><i>To follow-up our strategic goals we have indicators that clearly describe when are satisfied with the goal achievement from year to year. (...) [I]t is important that we are transparent in our reporting for how we contribute to sustainable development. In the reporting, we are open and honest with our challenges and weaknesses, but of course also our strengths</i></p>	<p>A manager mentioned their reporting system and the alignment to everyone’s work with the goals.</p>

	(OS).	
Innovation and research	<p>The company aims at further investing in research and development that contributes to sustainable solutions.</p> <p><i>We supply good and fresh water by ensuring both quantity and quality throughout the chain. We initiate and follow research, innovation and development on future purification needs and explore opportunities for applying new methods and techniques (BP).</i></p>	-
Internal processes and ways of working	<p>The documents call for more collaboration and communication between departments and functional units so as to move from a work in silos, where sustainability was the work focus of the strategic department only.</p> <p><i>When we cooperate in the right way, there is no "we and them" thinking and no downpipes. There are no hierarchies that prevent us from taking initiatives between our departments or between [name of the company] and the outside world (OS).</i></p> <p><i>Concretize the business strategy at departmental level and ensure that we take advantage of synergies between the departments. The [department] plans are developed in dialogue with other departments to ensure that we cooperate and to avoid goal conflicts, duplication and other sub-optimizations (OS).</i></p>	<p>Organisational members concur. A manager mentions that a more open communication between departments is "part of the vision of the organisation" that the company is striving to achieve. The interviewee puts himself as an example:</p> <p><i>I and my colleague are trying to have meeting with other units to get better with the communication and to foster it.</i></p> <p>Two employees also mention that they have reached out to other departments for collaboration.</p>
Sustainability certifications	The company is certified ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 and got a Great Place to Work® certification in 2018 (ASR).	-
Company's attractiveness to human capital	<p>The organisation states in its documents that its new sustainability strategy needs to be a leverage to become more attractive to highly qualified human capital, with a special focus on female workers.</p> <p><i>During the year, various efforts were made to strengthen the employer's brand in order to make work within the male-dominated occupational groups attractive to female applicants (OS).</i></p>	<p>A manager agrees:</p> <p><i>When I say to my friends that I work here they are "oooh cool", it would haven't been like this years ago. It creates meaning. We are really trying to make for future. Save the world.</i></p>
Participation in events and international platforms	Due to the new strategic vision, the company partook in various international and national events in 2018, including the IWA Congress in Tokyo and Malmö's Pride Parade. It also became a signatory of the International Water Association (ASR).	-

Table 3: Artifacts according to documents and interviews

Table 3 presents the visible changes in the company's artifacts as stated in the analysed documents. The organisation has also strongly worked communicating this new strategy, which reflects on the interviewees'

answers. Both managers and employees mention that several artifacts have changed and have been adapted to the six strategic goals, pointing that these changes are being evident to the organisation’s members. It is fair to affirm that the company is effectively integrating its sustainability vision and strategy into its artifacts and that these are permeating the organisation at all levels.

Nevertheless, stating changes in documents, strategies and processes is not enough to bring about a successfully transition. At this point, it is too early to evaluate if the operational work of the company is successfully adapting to the new directives or if the planning and budgeting of all departments is been done in accordance with the sustainability vision.

Additionally, changing artifacts doesn’t necessarily provide with the tools to change the ways of working of employees. For instance, when mentioning an increasing communication and collaboration of different departments, a manager stated that the employees under her leadership have understood that they now can break out of the traditional hierarchies and directly reach out to colleagues in other departments. Yet, she also pointed that these employees were still shy to make such connections and that they sometimes don’t know who to reach out to.

6.2.2. Espoused values and beliefs

The new goals constitute an organisational change that promotes new espoused values that the company strives to integrate into their culture. The analysed documents explicitly state that new and clear values are to be considered for the company’s operations. They are described as being of particular importance for the company given that it considers itself a values-driven organisation whose recruitment processes put a strong focus on potential employees and managers sharing their values. Furthermore, the BP states that the company sees itself as a robust and leading actor in the industry that can make a difference.

We are grounded in our common values, both as leaders and employees at [name of organisation]. The basis for the values is a summary of how we view ourselves, how we meet each other and how we strive to be perceived in our contacts with the outside world (OS).

Interviewees recognise that the company has set to itself new idealistic values, which, according to the employee, come across as if the organization “wants to save the world”. In that line, as an employee puts it, sustainability has itself become a core value the company strives to and that all employees should work with and for.

The new beliefs and values that the sustainability goals bring to the organisation are listed below as found throughout the documents and interviews.

Value or espoused belief	Documents’ perspective	Interviews’ perspective

<p>Climate change</p>	<p>The company believes that climate change is a contextual challenge that is imposing new ways of working that require adaptation and the mobilisation of all actors. The company sees climate change as a higher value that the company needs to adapt to and protect:</p> <p><i>[Climate change] is something we all need to learn to live with, adapt to and protect us from. We can call it a climate mobilisation (BP).</i></p> <p><i>There is a rising interest for the environment, weather and society questions, which have to also become important when we recruit. We increasingly choose people based on their values and leadership (BP).</i></p>	<p>When asked about the company's values and sustainability values, most interviewees referred to being climate positive. A manager states:</p> <p><i>We are supposed to be climate positive, when it comes to traveling, when it comes to eat vegetarian (...). We work in communication, how can we make our customers understand the climate change.</i></p>
<p>Sustainable development and sustainable societies</p>	<p>The company expresses a responsibility in supporting sustainable development and to build more sustainable societies. The BP asserts that:</p> <p><i>A positive trend is that more and more people are making active choices to contribute to a more sustainable society. As the challenges affect locally all over the world, [name of the company] also intensifies the international work to learn, develop and evaluate new solutions (BP).</i></p>	<p>The interviewees refer of sustainable development as a driver to change certain behaviours in the company:</p> <p><i>We have decided to buy vegetarian food for our meals, because we will help people to have a better life. Vegetarian food is better for people and the world. We will save the world, we can't do it in another way.</i></p>
<p>Resource efficiency and circularity</p>	<p>The company makes a priority to be responsible with the resources it uses. According to the BP, this is a moral and economic requirement for all actors in society.</p> <p><i>It is time to prioritize the hidden infrastructure and acknowledge the burden society has put on and see the resources we manage as just resources. We, just like the rest of society, need to change our view of what we are working with. Where we have previously seen waste and wastewater, we must now see valuable resources (BP).</i></p>	<p>A manager also puts the spotlight of the company's new values on this theme. This interviewee affirms that:</p> <p><i>It is important that everyone understands and takes for granted that we will be resource neutral and energy effective, not take more resources than those we produce and not use more energy than we actually need.</i></p>
<p>Protecting the environment</p>	<p>Protecting the environment is now on top of the list of drivers of the company's business. All the documents analysed stress this point:</p>	<p>Several employees concurred that the environmental aspects of sustainability were a major value of the company.</p>

	<p><i>Protecting our environment, both locally and globally, is an important part of our identity and at the same time creates value for our customers (BP).</i></p>	<p>This includes from the food that is selected during official events, to the transportation used for meetings and setting the strategic goals themselves.</p>
<p>Results and solution-orientation</p>	<p>The organisation states repeatedly that its work has to be more results and solutions oriented. This should reflect at all levels, including on leadership and performance measurements.</p> <p><i>We need to work results and solutions-oriented with the goal conflicts and positive synergies that arise in the spaces and which no one really has a clear responsibility for (BP).</i></p> <p><i>To achieve the goals, a result-oriented, united and courageous leadership is required where each leader takes full responsibility and ownership for [name of the company]'s development and goal work (BP).</i></p>	<p>Two employees interviewed has noticed this values shift, and one mentions that:</p> <p><i>Historically it has been really traditional and technical. We have always had this way for doing, and now we are changing that. We want to work to more goal-oriented and we want to catch those visions.</i></p>
<p>Create a sense of community</p>	<p>The BP asserts that the company has the responsibility to create a sense of community and collaboration in the organisation thanks to the strategic goals.</p> <p><i>Our commitment contributes to a positive development and provides with good conditions for community and pride. The engagement is turned into action if we are what we say and do! We listen, interact and find solutions.</i></p>	<p>-</p>
<p>New ways of thinking</p>	<p>The organisation pushes for new mindsets such as being more innovative, using modern technologies, risk-taking and daring to do things.</p> <p><i>We invest structurally on innovative solutions in the community building with an innovative mindset that builds the thought that we have greater opportunities, challenging the traditional and gives us courage to test and dare to take a stand. We drive on the digital transformation, in time we change the organization and make sure to use modern technology to make the changes that are needed and in this way we optimize management and control and the use of our resources (BP).</i></p>	<p>The interviewees have noticed these new organizational values as some affirm:</p> <p><i>Right now, it is very visionary, we want to be really far ahead.</i></p> <p><i>I think we have a more open mind now.</i></p>
<p>A creative and inclusive leadership</p>	<p>The organisation envisions new ways of leading to be able to achieve the strategic goals. These should be more innovative, creative, inclusive and based in trust:</p>	<p>-</p>

	<i>A modern, learning organization needs leaders who are innovative and creative. It is about creating a development-oriented culture, focusing on everyday life - and involving all employees in the change process (BP).</i>	
Engaged employees	<p>The company affirms in its official documents that employees should be involved in this change for sustainability.</p> <p><i>At [name of company], we work actively to be an open and inclusive organization where employees feel comfortable, feel good and contribute to the whole (ASR).</i></p>	<p>A manager affirms that the company sent a first message on this direction by making the definition of the goals a participatory process with a few employees:</p> <p><i>These goals are not from the top, but are from employees. As employees together [it] was important to define what was important. I think it has come from all the employees, everybody has been working [on it].</i></p>
Sustainability is good for the brand	<p>The ASR presents this strategic shift as an opportunity for the company to provide with new and exciting challenges to employees and attract high quality human resources. As such the strategy is good for:</p> <p><i>[Company name]'s brand for attracting and retaining employees.</i></p> <p><i>[Company name] is to be an attractive workplace that is developing and stimulating for the employees, where the business is characterized by our core values and where competence and creativity are utilized (ASR).</i></p>	-

Table 4: Values and espoused beliefs according to documents and interviews

Additionally, the company continues with its three values as a guiding line for its work: commitment, quality and responsiveness.

Table 4 presented the new values and beliefs that the sustainability strategic vision brings to the organisation. As shown, most of the times these beliefs and values have been noticed by some of the interviewees. Yet, when paying attention to how the values are brought up, some interesting elements arise:

1. The questions relating to the company's organisational and sustainability values were not easy to grasp for all interviewees. While some language barriers may have been the initial cause, even after engaging in additional clarification and after giving examples, a manager and an employee couldn't come up with words that would have described their perception of the organisation's values.
2. All of the interviewees referred to 'the environment' as being a core value to the organisation and to its business. This shows that when speaking about sustainability, the co-workers seem to have narrowed their vision to the environmental elements while leaving aside the social (and even economic) concerns. As one of the employees highlights it:

I think the sustainability vision within the company has to do very much with environment sustainability and much less with social and economic. I had a colleague who tried to have a project in social sustainability, but it didn't work out because the organization does not really understand the social perspective. The engineer's perspective is still the main line.

3. In other cases, the interviewees mention or make an effort to remember the values as stated on official documents. This could be a reflection that these beliefs and values are new to the organisation and not fully embraced or organically noticed by the employees yet.
4. A last element is how an employee referred to sustainability as a 'buzzword'. This interviewee, who has been working in the company for over fifteen years, noticed that sustainability has become part of the daily discussion. Yet, this person affirms that the mindset and values of some colleagues have not change as some employees who have been in the organisation for a longer time do not see the relevance of it.

When I was employed there was not a focus on people being particularly interested or knowledgeable about sustainability. Quite few people are now not into sustainability in their daily activities. We have it as a buzzword of the company, "sustainability". But if you have been here for 15 years, a buzzword (sustainability now), doesn't help, because it is not in your mindset. This is a problem. Most people understand, but there are few think this is crap, still, even though it is today's buzzword, so it does not go all the way.

6.2.3. Critical analysis of the results - Organisational culture for change

These results of the empirical study allow this thesis to understand how an organisational change for sustainability can affect an organisation's culture. Through the document analysis and the semi-structured interviews, it became evident that the company has strived to embed new ways of working, leading, new mindsets and values to move the organisation toward its sustainability vision and goals. This has been mostly pursued with a top-down approach: it was the top management's initiative to lead this process, to come up with a new vision and find new ways of driving the organisation's business. It is also the leading team that calls for a different type of leadership and for increasing employee engagement, including creating the workshops with some employees to redefine the sustainability priorities.

Moreover, this section allows reflecting on the formal organisational culture, in other words, how the company through the top-management presents it. All three analysed documents were written by the communications and strategy teams, not through a participative process. They thus reflect only how a handful of employees and managers would define the organisation's culture - and it is questionable that the co-workers who personally wrote these documents agree with how the top-management defines the organisation's culture.

The disparities between formal and informal cultures are visible through all interviews. On the one hand, when asked about their perception of the organisation's culture and values, some interviewees tried to recall for the exact words appearing in official documents. When they could not remember the values as stated in by top-management, some struggled to define themselves these values or used words contrary to the official ones such as "hierarchical", "traditional", "afraid", among others. While they all recognise that the company

is going through a “visionary” change, they do not express it as fully being part of the organisation’s identity today.

It is also worth pointing at the very encouraging and inspiring message that the documents have, especially the OS. They call for employee “ownership”, “engagement”, “trust”, “communication”, “collaboration”, “courageous”, among others. This is encouraging for the employees’ engagement prospects and the renovation of the organisation's leadership style. Yet, it does not bring forth concrete tools and directives for this work. For example, as a manager expressed, the employees that he/she leads show the interest to reach out and collaborate with other departments; yet, they don’t know how to proceed or who to contact. Similarly, an employee who affirmed trying to work with other departments found resistance from her direct boss, a middle-manager. These examples illustrate how the aimed culture has not fully impregnated all the ways of working and mentalities of the company’s members.

Finally, building new and sound values and artifacts is part of the process of integrating sustainability in an organisation but it doesn’t necessarily permeate the values of the employees. For example, a manager mentioned that regardless of the vegetarian food policy of the company, he/she wouldn’t consider changing his/her food habits. This dichotomy raises the question of conflicts between individual values and organisational ones and potential resistance to cultural change. It is therefore not enough to list new organisational values but to also support employees in getting aligned to them.

6.3. Employee engagement

This section presents the company’s understanding and work with employee engagement to advance the integration of sustainability into its culture. In order to provide with an analysis cohesive with the theoretical background, it will follow the same structure and refer to the seven elements identified as being pivotal to allow for employee engagement. A summarizing analysis is provided after the comparative table that compares the insights obtained from the official documents and the interviews.

Employee engagement is identified as being key to the company. The official documents analysed, especially the Operations Strategy, envisions it as a necessary step to reach the sustainability goals and vision. For instance, during an operations review of two departments conducted in 2018, external consultants noticed that employees have a latent interest to get involved and go beyond their work functions.

There are employees who feel responsible, have great commitment and who want to change and work in better ways (ASR).

Additionally, the OS openly calls for employees to take initiative at work so as to contribute to the achievement of the sustainability vision of the organisation. This document views engagement and collaboration between departments as a stepping stone to make the strategic goals come true. As such, employees should be proactive and an active actor in the organisation’s growth, while ensuring their own development.

Most important of all: involve the colleagues you know are needed. No matter where they are in the organization. You have the ability to do this and thus achieve results that will determine if you are considered successful or not.

As an employee at [name of company], we are all co-creators in the business and contribute to achieving the desired results. As an employee, you are expected to use your commitment, take responsibility for and manage opportunities and requirements, but also ensure that your full potential is used for both your own and [name of the company]'s development and success.

Furthermore, the strategic documents suggest two concrete ways through which employees should further engage. First, the company has set itself the goal to develop entrepreneurship from within so as to become more efficient in the way the organisation works and how it efficiently uses the right human resources internally and externally. Second, the OS aims at promoting innovative solution by fostering a “mindset for innovation and a new way of looking at the business” so that employees can contribute to better meet the company’s future needs. This could be done by an innovation lab where employees could further engage and bring innovative ideas to be developed.

Engagement is thus put forward as a new value and an element that already exists within the company but that has to be fully used. The interviews allowed the researchers to confirm and contrast this organisational approach to employee engagement. While managers replicated the official view of the need for and possibility for employees to engage, employees has mixed opinion with regards to the actual feasibility to engage. As a matter of fact, all employees referred to their interest and personal experiences with engagement, but some noted the existing challenges to do so in a systematic way. These results are presented in the table 5, which traces the engagement elements step by steps and provides with both the documents’ and interviews’ insights.

Employee engagement elements	Documents’ perspective	Interviews’ perspective
Buy-in of leadership	<p>The company explicitly puts forward the need for a leadership that is conscious of the need to engage employees:</p> <p><i>A modern and learning organization needs leaders who are innovative and creative. It is about creating a development-oriented culture, focusing on everyday life - and involving all employees in the change process (BP).</i></p>	-
Awareness	<p>In strategic documents, the company recognises the importance of creating awareness of the sustainability change among all employees and managers.</p> <p><i>In 2018, a lot of work was done to develop new goals and the annual meeting of all employees in 2018 had for the theme “Now we have goals - now we will reach the goal!” and contained both large and small workshops, inspirational lectures and the storytelling of [name of company]’s ten-year existence (ARS).</i></p>	<p>Interviews confirm that the goals have been extensively shared, both to employees and managers to create awareness. Several of the interviewees mention regular meetings (weekly, every other week and monthly) where their unit or department has had the chance to talk about these strategic goals.</p> <p><i>We have regularly these kinds of meetings. when it comes to developing goals we are all part taking in one way or in another. In the</i></p>

	<p><i>All managers and safety officers attended a joint work environment training in the autumn of 2018 to increase knowledge in the work environment and to create a better consensus on work environment work (ARS).</i></p>	<p><i>department we have regular meetings to focus on the goals and what we are going to do in the coming year, and this is something we do as a collective work.</i></p> <p>By contrast, one manager mentioned to be unaware of the sustainability part of the strategy while an employee was not aware that the OS with detailed goals and targets was published a month previous to the interview.</p>
Understanding	<p>The analysed documents point at the importance to not only create awareness but also understanding of the goals and how they affect every department, unit and employee's work.</p> <p><i>To achieve the goals, a result-oriented, united and courageous leadership is required where each leader takes full responsibility and ownership for [name of company]'s development and goal work. Leadership means providing the conditions for inclusion and for all employees to be able to participate in their conditions - this is how we create understanding, motivation and commitment to achieve the goals (OS).</i></p>	<p>The interviewees agree that the organisation has strived to create understanding of the strategic shift. As an employee mentioned:</p> <p><i>We have a vision of being a sustainability partner. We have 6 new strategic goals that have been well presented. [They have been introduced to] everyone of us in workshops, that kind of things, in understanding and developing them. All the goals have to do with sustainability.</i></p> <p>In contrast, another employee is sceptical about the true understanding of sustainability and the company's vision of it.</p> <p><i>I think that maybe in some employees there is a lack of knowledge about what sustainability is because they didn't study it. It would be fantastic to have some knowledge raising activities. And we are so many knowledgeable people, that would be easy to do it in for basic knowledge.</i></p>
Communication	<p>The company explicitly mentions the value of communicating its official strategy, values and goals, both to employees and managers.</p> <p>The OS identifies a current lack of clarity between departments and functional units' ways of organising their work and how to achieve the goals. Therefore, better communication about this can facilitate the work and alignment of each department to the six strategic goals.</p> <p>The same document also calls for employees to better communicate between departments and units with the goal of supporting and contributing to the goals through</p>	<p>Employees pointed at department and units meetings that are held regularly, where communication with team-members, leaders and department colleagues takes place. Planning days were also mentioned as a scenario where in-depth communication and planning takes place.</p> <p>A manager expressed that:</p> <p><i>This is something we are working with every time, communication about everything, it's developing us and the co-workers, to develop the units.</i></p>

	<p>daily work. It mentions as well regular meetings as a tool to enhance communication and alignment to the strategic sustainability goals. There is only a brief mention of a two-way communication and continuous dialogue between managers and employees to discuss the goals and the best way to achieve them.</p> <p><i>In order for this to happen [to successfully achieve the goals], [name of company]'s managers and employees need to have a continuous dialogue and discussion about the goals and the way there throughout the year (OS).</i></p> <p>Finally, the OS encourages a leadership that is including of all employees and that creates the necessary conditions for so as to engage employees in this process, including by fostering a continuous communication between managers and their employees.</p>	<p>Nevertheless, the opinions were mixed as an employee was more critical about the communication of the sustainability strategy:</p> <p><i>I was part of the strategy day, that's why I heard things that are not usually communicated in the normal way. Sometimes you have to know how to find things yourself. This is a bit the challenge.</i></p>
Autonomy	<p>Autonomy is briefly mentioned in documents. On the one hand, the BP calls for a leadership style that drifts away from micromanagement and that builds on trust in employees.</p> <p><i>As an employee, you are expected to use your commitment, take responsibility for and manage opportunities and requirements, but also ensure that your full potential is used for both your own and [name of the company]'s development and success (BP).</i></p> <p>Additionally, a more recent document considers employees as responsible for leading their work, taking initiative to achieve the goals. The CEO's message to the employees advises them to independently reach out to peers and colleagues in other departments that are necessary to achieve the work they need to do in order to achieve the six strategic goals. The same document places a lot of expectations on employees' own initiative taking and engagement so as to fully explore their full potential and find opportunities in their work that contribute to the strategic goals.</p>	<p>Interviews provided with a less optimistic perspective of how autonomy is actually being integrated in employees' daily work:</p> <p><i>We need to work active but sometimes I'm quite unsure what kind of decision I could take myself. I [asked to] change the description of my work so I could know what I can or I cannot do. (...) I kind of forced this change. I've been really frustrated that things don't happen, following up wasn't happening.</i></p>
Resources	-	<p>The employees interviewed agreed that there were no resources made available to further engage with the sustainability vision of the company and to support employee engagement.</p> <p><i>We have discussed it recently in a department meeting. There were few people asking for time and forum for discussion innovation.</i></p>

		<p><i>they were feeling to have ideas but there is no time during daily activities and no way to communicate them. There should be then, specific time and place where to sit and discuss.</i></p> <p>Managers were more optimistic and affirmed that even if resources are not explicitly given to employees, this should not be a problem for them to take initiatives that are additional to their job descriptions:</p> <p><i>The goals are so important now and if we do something for these goals nobody is going to say no, but you have to show.</i></p>
<p>Incentives</p>	<p>Incentives are not used by the company to engage their employees and assure their active commitment to the company's sustainability goals and strategy. This is suggested by both the official documents and the interviews.</p> <p>The sole incentive proposed by the documents targets a specific organisational purpose. This is the possibility to organise an Innovation Lab to foster innovation of smart solutions that help solving societal problems in line with the company's business.</p>	<p>The interviews of employees and managers concur with the lack of concrete incentives associated to the support of the sustainability strategic goals. A manager mentioned that he/she had seen</p> <p><i>some kind of competition here for employees that are the most innovative... That's something but I don't know more. (...) No other kind of incentives.</i></p> <p>An employee had a vague idea of a current initiative:</p> <p><i>Now they got a new way you could nominate colleague that can do these changes in everyday life and I think there is going to be some form of rewards. There are going to be some sort of...we have days where we got together and there will be a work ceremony and rewards with study trips I think.</i></p> <p>Furthermore, an employee mentioned past experiences that were unsuccessful and discouraging.</p> <p><i>There has been couple of years ago suggestion boxes that didn't really work.</i></p>

Table 5: Employee engagement according to documents and interviews

6.3.1. Critical analysis of the results - Employee engagement

Table 5 presents and contrasts the main empirical findings regarding employee engagement by following the step-by-step approach presented in the theoretical background. Some elements show similar insights from both documents and interviews (awareness raising, lack of resources and few incentives) while the other components were less cohesive. The latter reveals a discrepancy between the formal culture that the organisation and sometime managers present with regards to the perception and lived culture of the employees. Below are analysed these results, focusing first on the elements that showed alignment and then turning the attention to the engagement components that offer a more critical perspective.

Among the elements that present a cohesive view between documents and interviews, is *awareness*, showing that the company understood that raising awareness on the new strategic goals was fundamental for their implementation and achievement. They used their annual meeting, department meetings, this year's Operations strategy document and other artifacts to communicate this strategic change for sustainability. The employees confirm that a wide broadcasting has been done by the top-management.

Similarly, documents and interviews coincide that no institutional *resources* have been formally allocated to foster the engagement of employees around the sustainability strategy. This is concerning given that the official documents expect employees to take initiative and come up with additional or new ways of working that contribute to the strategy without clearly providing with time, information or financial resources that may be necessary. While managers considered resources not being a problem, employees mentioned time and information as being potential hinders to their engagement.

Finally, both official sources of information and employees concur that the company has not established *incentives* for employee engagement yet. Only an Innovation Lab was identified both by the documents and interviewees as being a formal incentive to develop ideas. This is diverging from the expectations set by top-management of employees to take more responsibility, initiative, come up with new ideas and adapt their work to the sustainability shift.

On the other hand, several engagement components reveal conflicting views between what the documents aim and what managers and employees perceive. *Understanding* is a good example of this: while the documents state that employees and managers are expected to understand the strategic goals and work with them, employees were more cautious to assert that understanding is widespread throughout the organisation. Some interviewees made an effort to repeat word-by-word the six goals, but they wouldn't necessarily explain them in depth. Additionally, two employees affirmed not to have received information about how or if this organisational change would affect their work, denoting a lack of understanding in relation to the implications to their daily tasks. Similarly, not all employees had a clear understanding of what sustainability means and the company's interpretation of it. Beyond the environmental aspect at large or considering that the company's core business was intrinsically sustainable, many interviewees didn't seem to have a real understanding of it. This can be problematic to meet what is expected from them: aligning their work to the goals and contributing to the organisation's sustainability vision.

Likewise, employees were critical to the existence of a *two-way communication*. While all agreed that they could approach their managers or employees with questions and doubts regarding the sustainability strategy, several of them did not agree that this dialogue was continuous or enough. They also mentioned that this is relative to every department and functional unit as middle managers can either be a leverage and

multiplicators of information or bottlenecks. Similar insights came up when studying the *autonomy* given to employees in the organisation. On the one hand, document propose an ideal approach with high expectations on employees and putting pressure on the role they have to fulfil, but without providing the concrete ways of doing it. In contrast, the interviewees suggested that employees are aware that they should and can work autonomously but they are sometimes unsure on how to proceed. This element is also dependent on the department each interviewee works in. As a result, it is not enough that the company promotes employee engagement if it doesn't provide with enough guidance, resources and incentives to achieve this goal.

6.4. Leadership

This last subsection lays the results obtained through interviews and analysis of official documents on leadership styles. The three leadership styles of the model proposed in the theoretical background, namely adaptive, transformational and aspects of transactional leaderships, are outlined as referred in documents and interviews. A summarizing critical analysis is provided after the comparative table.

The company expressed throughout official documents the need for it to adapt to the pressuring sustainability changes. For this, top-management representatives have called for a new leadership style that is more active, courageous, based on trust of colleagues, that fosters collaboration and helps employees to take action through their work. Additionally, the arrival of a new CEO in December 2016 and the recently launched sustainability strategy represent relevant contextual changes to further study the leadership styles present in the organisation. This section will focus on three main leadership styles, namely adaptive, aspects of transactional and transformational, which have previously been identified as a prerequisite for employee engagement.

Leadership	Documents' perspective	Interviews' perspective
Adaptive leadership	<p>Aspects of adaptive leadership are the leadership features most recurrent in the company's organisational documents. For instance, the OS emphasises the need for employees to get the necessary pedagogy and communication that allows co-workers to understand the operational shifts necessary. Similarly, this document encourages the development of a</p> <p><i>mature leadership that is agile and feels comfortable being coaching and transparent</i></p> <p>in order to reach the company's strategic goals. This leadership style should be based on trust and reliance on employees, where managers feel comfortable giving the work back to the people after having identified the adaptive challenge to tackle.</p>	<p>Both interviewed managers affirmed that they and their peers hold continuous meetings where employees, and that they have explained the strategic change to their employees and given guidance and support to identify the adaptive challenges that they may encounter.</p> <p><i>Me and my colleague started early with these conversations with co-workers and conversations about the goals. What we can do to reach the goals and start the dialogue around the goals. So they can see what they are doing and they can identified.</i></p> <p><i>First, I have to see what is new in terms of sustainability and makes worst for them to work. We test it, again and again and then we</i></p>

	<p>Other traces of adaptive leadership can be found throughout the same document, which stresses the importance of explaining to employees the why of the organisation and of its strategy and how leadership is key for this purpose. This can be achieved thanks to a</p> <p><i>Leadership that relies on trust and delegates the work to employees, with sound communication and that creates the necessary understanding and encourages an environment of continuous learning (OS).</i></p> <p>This leadership style should also focus on leaders taking full responsibility and owning the sustainability challenges and goals [name of company] faces. This is expressed as a precondition for managers to truly include co-workers in reaching the company's goals and creating understanding and engagement.</p>	<p><i>try to make a strategy about how to do it. Now we are trying to develop everything to make it easy for us (...). Try to be there and try to show how they can think.</i></p> <p>In contrast, employees affirmed that their managers had not directly explained to them the strategy. They also mentioned that the guidance, support, trust and communication is strongly dependent on the leader. As such, despite the awareness raising and support that top-management has triggered, the adaptive support and guidance that employees get is contingent to their direct manager.</p>
<p>Transactional leadership</p>	<p>The organisation is not strongly recurring to transactional leadership, especially the contingent incentives that characterise this leadership style. The one incentive, as mentioned, is an Innovation Lab that fosters and supports employee development of new ideas so as to contribute to the organisation's smart innovations for sustainability.</p> <p>Additional aspects of autonomy, another feature of transactional leadership, have been presented in Table 5. As explained in the previous section, these are not supported by concrete guidance or understanding of how employees can make use of that autonomy.</p>	<p>The interviews confirm that transactional leadership is not common practice in the company as no contingent rewards currently exist.</p> <p><i>We have to do all of our normal activities and then some more...</i></p>
<p>Transformational leadership</p>	<p>The CEO's transformational leadership shines through the documents. This leader has transformed the way top-management leads and envisions the work of the organisation.</p> <p><i>The prerequisites for successful co-creation are leadership that demonstrates trust and trust, delegates responsibility and encourages a climate of change and constant learning (OS).</i></p> <p>Additionally, in the official documents analysed, the CEO's messages to the employees repeatedly calls for employee commitment and to do beyond the bare minimum.</p>	<p>All interviewees concurred that the current CEO is an inspiring leader that is pushing for managers and employees to transform their ways of working and to go beyond what is expected of them.</p> <p><i>[The CEO] wants to change and move forwards, to think radically, and she even said it out loud "if you don't like this way of work, you don't belong here".</i></p> <p><i>[The CEO] brought to the discussion, we shouldn't stay just on our box, protecting our vision. We need to reach out the other part of society.</i></p>

		<p><i>We have the power to initiate whatever [we want]. We are expected to do that. it's really a [name of CEO] way.</i></p>
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Table 6: Leadership according to documents and interviews

6.4.1. Critical analysis of the results - Leadership for employee engagement

Table 6 presents the leadership aspects of the three leadership styles identified as being necessary to successfully engage employees with an organisation’s sustainability integration and ultimately make it a part of the organisational culture. The most predominant leadership style revealed by documents and interviews is adaptive leadership. This initial leadership is needed to create awareness, understanding and support a two-way communication. It is put forward by the documents, which see it as a necessary step to make the strategic goals known and a part of all co-workers’ jobs. Similarly, managers recognise either doing or attempting to fulfil these practises, while employees questioned the efficiency of how their managers were doing it.

According to documents and interviewees, transactional leadership is less present in the organisation. The features of contingent rewards are almost non-existent as an institutional practice, while the autonomy given to employees comes only straight from top-management and it is not supported by the guidance and tools to make use of it.

In contrast, transformational leadership is very much present in the company, embodied by the CEO. This leader is personally responsible for giving to sustainability a central role and reshaping the sustainability vision of the organisation. The documents and the interviewees explain that this leader inspires co-workers, pushes for a more engaging leadership and encourages employees to further take responsibility for the sustainability agenda in their work and to engage beyond their job descriptions. This is concerning given that the CEO is about to leave the company, creating a sense of uncertainty concerning the future of the organisation. This is problematic for two main reasons: first, if solely associated to one leader, a transformational leadership style can be dependent on the leader’s presence and it may not trickle down to all managing positions; second, it may put on hold the sense of empowerment that employees may have gotten and the transformation that the company is undergoing. Managers and employees confirm these concerns.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

This last section discusses the results of the empirical study and contrasts them with the theoretical foundations that allow to answer the research questions. This section closes with a conclusion that summarizes the thesis and explicitly answers to the questions raised at the beginning of this research. Lastly, it lays practical implications of this thesis and proposes recommendations for future research.

7.1. Discussion

The discussion provides with the main conclusions of the empirical research in light of the theoretical concepts and models established earlier. This section follows the same structure as the theoretical chapter: organisational culture change for sustainability; employee engagement; and leadership. To help the reader, the research questions raised at the beginning of this paper are stated again: How can the integration of sustainability in companies change their organisational culture? (RQ1); How are companies creating the conditions for employee engagement to embed sustainability into their organisational culture? (RQ2); and How do managers lead to foster and support employee engagement to integrate sustainability into organisational culture? (RQ3)

7.1.2. Formal cultural artifacts, beliefs and values have been changed to integrate sustainability in the organisational culture (RQ1)

Schein's (1984) definition and three levels of organisational culture play an essential role in the consideration of the organisational culture of the Swedish company studied. As presented in the empirical results, the organisational change has indeed affected all three levels, predominantly the most investigable levels: artifacts and values (Schein, 1984). This is coherent with this author's definition of the third level, which cannot be observed in documents given that they "are typically unconscious but which actually determine how group members perceive, think, and feel. Such assumptions are themselves learned responses that originated as espoused values" (Schein, 1984, pp. 3-4). Additionally, since this change for sustainability has been predominantly conducted by top-management, it is arguable that Schein's (2010) approach that management can organise and lead for cultural change is held true for the initial integration of sustainability in the studied organisation.

However, Van Maanen's (1998) approach to organisational culture as a process characterized by an organisation's members daily lives and interactions has also been fundamental to analyse the company's organisational change for sustainability. In fact, studying organisational culture as a process that is characterized by organisational members' daily lives has been necessary for investigating the more subjective and deeper levels of the organisational culture of the company (Van Maanen, 1998). It allowed to consider those fundamental elements of this change that are not objective, such as perceptions, interpretations, social interactions and representations. Van Maanen's (1998) approach allowed this thesis' researchers to consider through interviews the perceptions, interpretations, social interactions and representations that managers and employees have of the undergoing organisational change. By focusing on interactions and approaching the organisational change as a process, this thesis has been able to observe divergent perceptions, opinions and processes that are divergent to the top-down managerial process.

Gagliardi's (1986) analysis of organisational culture change, who views it as being incremental rather than radical, is also of special value for this thesis' analysis. The changes observed in the artifacts and values of the company haven't fully permeated the artifacts (ways of working, performance measurements, innovation, for example) and values of employees. This process will most likely take time and, above all, requires the effective orientation of leaders (Gagliardi, 1986). If the company does not equip leaders with the right tools and training to better support employees, a sustainability culture change many never properly change how employees relate to, work with and value sustainability.

7.1.3. The company fails to effectively engage employees for sustainability (RQ2)

Concerning the engagement of employees, the studied company also identified it as playing an important role in successfully implementing corporate sustainability strategies and processes and incorporate sustainability values in the daily organisational life (Collier & Esteban, 2007). This process has been led by the current CEO, both in official documents and during organisational events, meetings and workshops. By calling for employee understanding and alignment of their work to the strategic goals, and by fostering their empowerment, initiative taking and proactiveness, the CEO concurs with Eccles and Perkins (2012). As these authors state, changing employees' behaviour and aligning their values with the organisational ones is necessary for organisation's transition to sustainability.

The process for engaging employees proposed in the theoretical background was not reflected in the engagement approach adopted by the company. As a matter of fact, neither the official documents nor the interviews suggest explicit steps to attain the company's vision of employee engagement, besides raising awareness. This is the second step identified as necessary for employee engagement (Markos & Sridevi, 2010) and it was conducted through the launch of the new sustainability vision and strategy during the company's annual event, workshops and department meetings. The interviews confirmed that managers and employees are aware of this organisational change for sustainability and they confirm the efforts put by the company on this matter.

Most of the other components of employee engagement were recognised by the company as being necessary to engage employees with the new sustainability vision, whether explicitly or not, as presented in the results section. The challenges lie in the fact that the company has an aspirational approach to them: the company doesn't provide with concrete mechanisms to achieve these mechanisms or it has no institutionalised processes to conduct each step. The latter is problematic given that employee engagement is doomed to be unsuccessful without the listed elements (Rodrigo & Arenas, 2008; Markos & Sridevi, 2010; Slack et al., 2013). For instance, the fact that employees don't show to fully understand the goals, especially how they relate to their work functions, is worrisome for their capacity to align their behaviours and values at work (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Additionally, the fact that employees see their direct bosses (middle-managers) as bottlenecks for information and that they feel they have to struggle to find relevant information, is concerning to efficiently create a continuous dialogue around the organisational change and to effectively making a part of employees everyday work (Markos & Sridevi, 2010).

A similar conclusion can be drawn from the empirical results concerning the autonomy component of engagement. While the formal culture is pushing for managers to give more autonomy to the employees they lead and for employees to have more freedom in how they align their work to the sustainability change, the employees seem to either find resistance from their immediate bosses or to not know how to use this

autonomy. This is problematic for employees to understand how their work can contribute to the sustainability strategy of the company and their individual impact on the organisation (Eccles et al., 2012). A lack of resources and incentives can have a similar negative effect on employee engagement in the studied organisation: while Markos & Sridevi (2010) warn that a lack of resources may hamper the initiative that employees take, Rodrigo & Arenas (2008) and Slack et al. (2013) point that without incentives many employees will lack the motivation to further engage at work beyond their mandatory work tasks. This can be attributed to the fact that some employees do not care about sustainability issues and CSR programmes and will therefore refrain from partaking in them when possible (Rodrigo & Arenas, 2008; Slack et al., 2013).

7.1.4. Managers are not providing with all the leadership features necessary to engage employees (RQ3)

A clear interconnection between elements of adaptive, transactional and transformational leadership came up during the interviews in which managers and employees revealed to interact with different leadership styles on daily bases. Heifetz' (1994) Adaptive leadership was the most recurrent in the company. On the one hand, documents call for a leadership that supports the sustainability adaptive change by creating the right conditions (awareness, understanding and communication) for it. On the other hand, the interviews to managers reflect their perception that they are fulfilling their task to create awareness, understanding of and communication around the sustainability strategy, as well as identifying the adaptive sustainability challenge that their followers have to adapt to. While the employees challenge that this is done by all middle-managers of the company, a majority of interviewed employees confirmed to personally rely on leaders who prepare them for the first steps of employee engagement.

To the contrary, the two traces of transactional leadership most important to this thesis were not common practice in the organisation. This leadership style that promotes contingent rewards and gives autonomy to employees (Breevart et al., 2014) was missing. As mentioned, there are no additional incentives for employees to reach their sustainability goals and align their work to it. For employees who are goal-oriented and focus on complying with the bare minimum stipulated in their contracts, these contingent rewards could be efficient to further engage them with the sustainability strategy (Breevart et al., 2014).

Lastly, transformational leadership was present in the organisation through the figure of the CEO who drives the cultural change for sustainability. As Bass (1990) and Eccles et al. (2012) suggest, an inspirational leader that pushes employees to explore their full potential and who demonstrate personal commitment are fundamental feature to engage the employees and managers that share the organisation's values. The CEO presents three of the main characteristics of a transformational leader including having the charisma, motivating through inspiration and stimulating employees intellectually (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1994). This became evident through the interviews, during which managers and employees showed to be inspired by the CEO and to be encouraged by this leader's approach to work and vision of sustainability. While this leadership style allowed for the sustainability change to unfold, it may not be enough if other top-managers and middle-managers don't learn from this approach. Managers and employees hint to this when expressing their concern for the future of the company and the visionary strategy recently launched associated to the fact that the CEO will leave her position in 2019.

7.2. Conclusion

This conclusion presents the key findings of the empirical research and answers to the research questions. It further presents the practical contributions of this thesis and presents recommendations for future research.

7.2.1. Key findings

This thesis concludes that there are some companies, like the organisation studied, that have realised the need to change their organisational cultures in order to effectively integrate sustainability in their core business and values. Specifically, the Swedish company analysed in this thesis has understood that employee engagement is a requirement to introduce sustainability into its values, operations, functional daily-work, as well as prerequisite to create organisational ownership of the sustainability change. Furthermore, this company recognises that leadership has to change in order to support employees' engagement with sustainability and lead the integration of sustainability into the organisation.

In response to RQ1, the integration of sustainability into organisational cultures is having formal implications on its artifacts and values. Artifacts like organisational hierarchies, structure, strategies, processes and documents are indeed changing in light of sustainability embedment in organisations. For instance, in the studied company, official documents have integrated sustainability strategic goals that impact how employees fulfil their daily works; these goals also change how departments communicate and collaborate; and sustainability reframes the core business of the organisation. Documents, managers and employees concur in the existence of such changes in artifacts. Additionally, new values are formally introduced in documents, which in this case include protecting climate change; creating sustainable societies and a sense of community; new mindsets; producing in a more circular way; and the importance of employee engagement and new leadership styles. These new values are however rather formal (i.e. introduced by top-management) and do not necessarily permeate the values and beliefs of different departments and individual employees, who often still define the organisation through its traditional values.

In response to RQ2, organisations that formally foster employee engagement are not providing with the sufficient guidance nor with concrete tools that are a precondition to engaging employees. The studied company shows how the engagement of employees to embed sustainability into their cultures is more aspirational than factual. The company's bottom-up approach is thus rather aspirational, proving that the preeminent leadership approach remains top-down. Besides calling for leadership support to employee engagement and creating awareness about the new sustainability vision and strategy, the company fails to create a real understanding of this sustainability change. Employees lack indeed the comprehension of the motivations and effects on their jobs associated to the sustainability change. Communication is not perceived by employees as being continuous or informative enough, while the autonomy allocated to employees on paper lacks the guidance on how to make use of it and it is not followed by the needed resources such as information and time. Similarly, contingent incentives are not used by the organisations to effectively engage employees. As a result, this organisation has, indeed, not provided with the necessary leadership support and guidance, hindering the actual engagement and proactive work of employees, as the interviews with employees concur.

In response to RQ3, managers are expected to shift their leadership styles and accommodate them to support employee engagement. Managers are indeed encouraged to trust their employees and lead by creating the necessary understanding, communication, collaboration and autonomy for their employees to engage with the sustainability change. These features of adaptive leadership are visible at the studied organisation in documents and according to the managers interviewed. Yet, the perceptions of employees question the existence of such elements or the success in which managers are fulfilling with these roles. Additionally, transformational leadership characterises the top-management through the CEO, who has given birth to the sustainability alignment of the organisation and who has shifted the values, ways of leading, of working and encouraged employees to go beyond what is expected from them. She presents three of the main characteristics of a transformational leader including having the charisma, motivating through inspiration and stimulating employees intellectually. This leadership style is so far solely associated to the CEO, which is problematic and concerning for managers and employees, given that this leader will soon leave the company. Finally, managers lack the traces of transactional leadership like providing with contingent rewards and ensuring the autonomy of their employees. This is particularly troublesome for employees who are indifferent or resistant to engaging with the sustainability change and who better respond to explicit incentives.

Overall, this research proves that changing organisational cultures to fully integrate sustainability is an ongoing process in organisations that requires more than a vision and ambitious goals. Creating organisational cultures for sustainability needs supportive environments in which organisational values are owned by employees, where employees are empowered and equipped to effectively engage and where leaders provide with the leadership practices that enable such engagement.

7.2.2. Practical contribution

This thesis provides with practical insights for organisations aiming at integrating sustainability around three main areas, namely organisational culture change for sustainability, employee engagement and leadership. First, this study does a literature review that suggests that sustainability is a complex challenge that companies cannot successfully tackle solely through a top-down perspective. Organisations have to strive to embed sustainability into their core, namely their culture. In order to do so, companies can start by targeting the most visible and palpable levels of an organisation's culture: their artifacts and beliefs and values. Further, organisations should focus on their members' interactions and allow for a bottom-up approach of employee active participation to make the sustainability vision and values theirs. Only by doing so the culture will change and successfully root sustainability into the organisation's core.

Second, this thesis yields a model to successfully engage employees with the sustainability change. Through a seven-step process, organisations can create the right conditions for leaders to support employee engagement and for employees to become aware of and understand the sustainability change while assuring a two-way communication. These components, along with the provision of autonomy, the necessary resources and the right incentives, are fundamental to foster the engagement of employees with the sustainability strategy at work. As the empirical data showed, a missing piece in this puzzle can hinder how employees understand and relate to the change for sustainability; it can hamper the initiative that employees take; and it can inhibit employees from bringing their ideas to life.

A company like the one studied should focus on several points: make sure that middle managers support the engagement of their employees and that they efficiently trickle down the relevant information about the sustainability change; further creating understanding of the sustainability strategy among employees so as to allow them to concretely align their daily work with it; institutionalising channels for communication and collaboration between departments; yielding better guidelines on what employee autonomy entails and how their managers should leverage that gained liberty; provide with time, information and even financial resources that employees need to further engage with the sustainability vision and goals of the company; and create formal contingent incentives that mobilize employees toward this change (e.g. include sustainability in job functions; create sustainability performance indicators; visibility to employees who come up with innovative solutions; scale-up and replicate sustainability ideas; economic incentives for those who substantially change their work and performance to fully align it with the sustainability goals, among others).

Finally, this thesis lays out the necessary leadership support that employee engagement requires and that organisations thus need to develop. Through an adaptive leadership, employees get the needed support and guidance to be aware and understand the adaptive challenge they have to face. This leadership style also brings the mobilization, motivation and orientation that challenges such as sustainability demands. Companies cannot stop there; instead, they should proceed by evolving their leadership efforts to respond to employees that are personally interested, aligned or motivated by sustainability issues and to co-workers who focus on the economic relation that they have to the company and only wish to fulfil their work tasks. While the latter can be engaged by getting more autonomy at work and getting contingent incentives (traces of transactional leadership), the former can better benefit from transformational leaders who inspire them and push them to go beyond what is expected of them.

7.2.3. Recommendations for future research

Future research could benefit from further exploring how companies undergoing this organisational change for sustainability can break down their work in silos. As mentioned in this document's background, business are often leading a top-down approach to integrate sustainability. Delegating the sustainability work to an individual department and disconnecting the rest of the organisation from collaboratively working toward the company's sustainability vision are among the effects of this approach. While this was not the focus of this thesis, some valuable insights arose from the empirical research. The analysed company tried to foster communication and collaboration between departments and units, but, in practice, employees lacked the information, guidelines and spaces to work in such a way. Even organisations with the intention to mainstream the sustainability work in a collaborative way struggle to overcome this traditional manner of organising and working. Therefore, additional studies contributing to solve this challenge can bring valuable insights to organisations.

Furthermore, the present study can be improved by conducting empirical research with more time and more resources. As previously mentioned, this thesis research was conducted while the company of study was undergoing a specific conjunction, namely the announcement of a top-leadership change. This delayed the beginning of the research and created a sense of anxiety and stress among managers and employees, including the researchers' contact person. As a result, the initial support and collaboration to this research was limited, pushing the researchers to shift away from the methods that were initially intended to be used. A survey that provides with the insights of more employees and managers, as well as focus groups that

contribute to obtain qualitative data to contrast how employee engagement and leadership is perceived and varies between departments and functional units, are possible integrative methods for future research.

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Appendix 1. Interview guides

Interview guide: managers

GENERAL

Name, position

1. How would you describe the values, beliefs and hierarchies (organisational culture) you believe [name of the company] has?

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Awareness

2. What would you say are [name of the company]'s sustainability values?
3. Are you aware that [name of the company] has a sustainability strategy (vision, mission, thematic priority, timeline)?
 - a. Did you know that [name of the company] just published a new sustainability strategy [date of publication]?
 - i. If so, were you involved in the development of the strategy?
 - ii. If not, in what context did you find out about it?
4. How long have you been working for the company?
 - a. If you have been working three years or more: have you seen changes between the sustainability vision that [name of the company] had and has today?
 - b. Do you feel like [name of the company]'s sustainability strategy is changing/has changed the organisation's culture? (If so, how so? What did you notice?)

Understanding

5. Have you explained to your employees why [name of the company] started to focus and prioritize sustainability?
6. Have you explained to your employees [name of the company]'s sustainability strategy?
7. What do you know about [name of the company]'s sustainability strategy?

- i. (general goals, vision, mission, thematic focus...)
8. Have you or anyone from management explained to your employees if [name of the company]'s sustainability vision and strategy would impact their day-to-day work or responsibilities?
9. Do you personally believe that sustainability is creating value for [name of the company]? Please elaborate.

Interaction between managers and employees

10. Are you regularly informing your employees about new elements or changes in [name of the company]'s sustainability vision or strategy?
11. Do you provide with the guidance and support that your employees may need to integrate sustainability into their daily work?
12. Do you feel like you have been giving the opportunity to your employees to talk about ideas, doubts or questions they may have on sustainability?

Interaction with change

13. Have you had the chance to participate in a collective process to define [name of the company]'s sustainability vision, values and work?
14. Do you feel like [name of the company]'s sustainability vision has changed the way your employees work and their goals or tasks?
15. At this point, do you feel like your employees are given the chance to contribute to the implementation of [name of the company]'s sustainability vision and goals? If so, how?
16. Do you feel like your employees have been given the liberty to decide how they contribute to [name of the company]'s sustainability vision through their work?
17. Are there organisational incentives encouraging your employees to contribute to [name of the company]'s sustainability strategy and vision?

Interview guide: managers

GENERAL

Name, position

1. How would you describe the values, beliefs and hierarchies (organisational culture) you believe [name of the company] has?

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Awareness

2. What would you say are [name of the company]'s sustainability values?
3. Are you aware that [name of the company] has a sustainability strategy (vision, mission, thematic priority, timeline)?
 - a. Did you know that [name of the company] just published a new sustainability strategy [date of publication]?
 - i. If so, were you involved in the development of the strategy?
 - ii. If not, in what context did you find out about it?
4. How long have you been working for the company?
 - a. If you have been working three years or more: have you seen changes between the sustainability vision that [name of the company] had and has today?
 - b. Do you feel like [name of the company]'s sustainability strategy is changing/has changed the organisation's culture? (If so, how so? What did you notice?)

Understanding

5. Has anyone from management explained to you why [name of the company] started to focus and prioritize sustainability?
6. Has your manager explained to you the company's sustainability strategy?
7. What do you know about [name of the company]'s sustainability strategy?
 - i. (general goals, vision, mission, thematic focus...)

8. Has someone from management explained to you if [name of the company]'s sustainability vision and strategy would impact your day-to-day work or responsibilities?
9. Do you personally believe that sustainability is creating value for [name of the company]? Please elaborate.

Interaction between employees and managers

10. Is your manager regularly informing you about new elements or changes in [name of the company]'s sustainability vision or strategy?
11. Do you feel like your manager provides with the guidance and support that you may need to integrate sustainability into your daily work?
12. Do you feel like you can talk with your manager regarding ideas, doubts or questions on sustainability?

Interaction with change

13. Have you had the chance to participate in a collective process to define [name of the company]'s sustainability vision, values and work?
14. Do you feel like [name of the company]'s sustainability vision has changed the way your work and your work goals or tasks?
15. At this point, do you feel like you have the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of [name of the company]'s sustainability vision and goals? If so, how?
16. Do you feel like you're given the liberty to decide how you contribute to [name of the company]'s sustainability vision through your work?
17. Are there organisational incentives encouraging you to contribute to [name of the company]'s sustainability strategy and vision?

Appendix 2. Underlying assumptions

While understanding the changes in underlying assumptions has not been the focus of this thesis (and nor is it a realistic goal), the researchers have remained aware of their existence and were open to identify them if they arose during the interviews. This is the main reason why the main findings about to underlying assumptions are here presented:

1. An employee mentioned that he/she had the impression that the sustainability strategy was indeed permeating the way she worked and the mentality of colleagues. This interviewee couldn't explicitly explain how the culture was changing but she was under the impression that in his/her department there was somewhat more of an open-minded and innovative mindset.
2. A manager that has been working in the company for less than a year was under the impression that sustainability was part of "*the DNA of the organisation*", but was unsure of it.
3. An employee who has been working for over fifteen years in the organisation couldn't explain why he/she believed that sustainability creates value to the organisation, but he/she had the feeling that it did. In this line, a manager who also struggled to explain why sustainability created value for the organisations, expressed that it is what the organisation "*wants and needs*".
4. Another employee mentioned that he/she was under the impression that the possibility to innovate and come up with ideas existed within the company. Yet he/she couldn't explain why nor could he/she come up with formal mechanisms to do it.

These elements reflect that sustainability values and the new strategic goals are unconsciously permeating some of the employees' and managers' work, mindsets or ways of working. Yet, these were seldom compared to the most visible and palpable elements of the organization's culture.