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Master Thesis

Leadership, Communication and Network Characteristic Effects in Retailing; A Whole Social Network Analysis of Sustainable Performance in a Shopping Mall

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Abstract

The increased focus on sustainable development within the retail industry, has forced shopping malls to focus on and address sustainability issues in their operations. As the retail industry requires changes and critical strategic choices, the impact of leadership is considered to be crucial for its future results.

This research on shopping malls is conducted within the private sector, and explores the effect of leadership, communication and network characteristics (echo chambers, social ties, gatekeeper) on innovation. Furthermore, innovation is claimed to have an effect on sustainable collective action in a whole network. Structured interviews with centre managers at Steen & Strøm and an in-depth interview with an industry professional were conducted. The interviews were then analysed through descriptive statistical analysis, grounded theory analysis and thematic analysis.

The findings from our research shows that leadership characteristics, communication, network characteristics and innovation, has an effect on sustainable collective action in a whole network. This research emphasises the importance of mapping the network structure, to gain a better understanding of how the network operates, and the objectives and visions for each retailer.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

Shopping malls are an essential pillar of social and economic growth and commerce (ICSC, 2017). Retail real estate environments are crucial to facilitate growth, increase efficiencies, and improve productivity by providing retailers with the appropriate infrastructure and a marketplace where they can engage with their consumers and support local communities. (ICSC, 2017).

The shopping mall industry is undergoing one of the most profound transformations in its history. The rapid advance of technology and the growing influence of the millennial generation, among other trends, have created both new challenges and opportunities for shopping malls (ICSC, 2020).

In recent years, shopping malls have experienced several stores closing due to falling traffic in customers (CNBC, 2015). This is due to a change in customers wants and needs, and property owners are diversifying their tenant mix to include non-retail tenants (ICSC, 2017).

There has been an increased interest and thereby higher demand for sustainable development, which is in the best interest for the triple bottom line (people, planet, profit) within the shopping mall industry. This has forced shopping malls to focus on and address sustainability issues in their operations (ICSC, 2017). As the retail industry requires changes and critical strategic choices, the impact of leadership is considered to be critical for its future results. The aim is to extend the life cycle of shopping malls and maintain and preserve the environment. Previous research has found network characteristics to be essential enablers for the diffusion of information, which increases the level of innovation (Lin, Chen, Sher & Mei, 2010; Chiang, 2007; Granovetter, 1973). How does the management handle such challenges within their network, with the increasing focus on sustainability?

For this thesis the focus is on how leadership, network characteristics and communication in a whole network affects innovation and sustainable collective action. We explore shopping malls as the whole network.

Business problem:

Which factors affect the retailers at a shopping mall to collaborate on sustainability goals?

The business problem will be undertaken by answering the research question.

Research question:

How does leadership, network characteristic and communication in a whole network affect sustainable collective action through innovation?

1.1 Shopping malls

A shopping mall is a group of retail businesses planned, developed, owned and managed as a unit (Kotler, Armstrong & Opresnik, 2018). Levy, Weitz and Grewal (2014) defined shopping malls as closed, climate-controlled, lighted shopping centers with retail stores on one or both sides of an enclosed walkway. Shopping mall is a type of whole network with more than three organisations connected to facilitate the achievement of a common goal. It is formally established, governed and with a concrete goal, including members that are linked through information, materials, financial resources, services and social support. Connections between members within a shopping mall may be informal and trust based, as well as formalised through a contract (Provan, Fish & Sydow, 2007; Kilduff & Tsai, 2003).

Shopping malls have experienced an evolution over time and continues to develop. The first shopping mall was opened in Edina, Minnesota in 1956 and marked a revolution within retail. Southdale Centre was the first modern indoor mall in the U.S, which featured a large central atrium with escalators leading to second floor and parking spaces surrounding the mall. Later, thousands of malls copied the layout of Southdale Centre and further developed (Garfield, 2017). Shopping malls initially served as a convenient retail hub for local residents, where value was derived from their convenience of parking, location and store mix. Food and beverage, entertainment offerings such as cinemas and food courts drove people to the shopping mall, and away from more traditional retail outlets (KPMG, 2017).

Over the years, shopping malls have transformed from a suburban concept, to one with a broader and more varied applications and locations (Kramer, A., & Urban Land Institute, 2008). Today, malls can be categorized into community,

regional and destination malls or super-malls, all targeting everything from local customers to visitors from all over the world (KPMG, 2017). Future malls are expected to grow and develop with the influence of technology. Mall developers will need to consider how to integrate the latest technology in order to stay relevant and attractive. Technological advancements and integrations will play an important role for the future, as mall developers can access improved data capture, in-store customer data capture, mobile integration and advancements related to infrastructure (KPMG, 2017).

These perspectives and transformations will play an important role for understanding and coping with challenges in the future, related to sustainable development and survival of the shopping mall. Are there certain ways and essential changes which needs to be implemented to handle such a transformation? One way may be to look at previous challenges shopping malls have faced, such as the entry of internet- and digital solutions. This is an ongoing transformation, but actions have been made in order to cope and survive in the digital age. Traditional retailers have been threatened by online retailers' lower operating costs, creating a more competitive environment and new opportunities.

There has been a shift to entertainment-type tenants, introduction of a hybrid model where consumers browse, order and pay online, but pick up their order locally (Hendershott, Hendershott & Hendershott, 2000). The key mechanism for achieving integration and coordination of such activities is communication (Radovic-Markovic, 2011). The shopping mall management may have to perform skilful management and communication in order to become more sustainable, competitive and attractive in the market and industry. Their willingness to focus on and improve communication within the whole network may be crucial in order to be entrepreneurial, and thereby perform in a sustainable manner.

1.2 The importance of sustainable development

The demand for sustainable development has grown in significance at the global level since the 1980s, when the World Commission on Sustainable Development (WCED) established the Brundtland Commission in 1983. The goal was to unite countries in the pursuit of addressing unsustainable development (UN, 1987). Following, it has been an increased awareness of global warming, environmental

degradation and strong concerns regarding the planet, and many countries are developing strategies to address climate change (Shiel, Paço & Alves, 2020).

Within retail and retail real estate, environmental sustainability has become a key consideration for landlords. Sustainable initiatives related to; the use of energy-efficient building materials, lighting and refrigeration systems, renewable power sources, water conservations, recycling etc., are increasing in demand (ICSC, 2017).

The "triple bottom line" concept has been adopted by several organisations and agencies, and includes the environmental, economic and social impacts (Wilson, 2015).

1.2.1 Environment

Environmental considerations are one of the leading strategies implemented by organisations to enhance their image, reduce costs and create a competitive advantage (Wilson, 2015). Within retail real estate; store construction, maintenance and refurbishment, are some independent benchmarks which can be used for assessing a building's green characteristics. US Green Building Council developed 'The leadership in energy and environmental design' (LEED) certification system, with six main areas for assessment: sustainable plots; water efficiency; energy and atmosphere; materials and resources; environmental quality of the interior, and innovation in processes and technologies (Wilson, 2015).

1.2.2 Economy

The second area of sustainability is economic sustainability, which centres around the question; How can we meet the economic needs of the present without diminishing economic opportunities for the future? A sustainable economy must be able to maintain its productivity and value to society indefinitely, and essentially forever (Ikerd, 2012). In order for an organisation to survive in a dynamic and competitive market and be economic sustainable, one should create a strategic market advantage. This can be achieved through e.g. quality and cost of time; however, the marketplace is a very competitive space with limited room to differentiate (Wilson, 2015). In addition, an organisation must be willing to learn. Pedler et al., (1991) defined a learning company as "An organisation that facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself".

1.2.3 Social

The third area of sustainability concerns the social aspect, where an organisation should identify and manage their business impacts, both positive and negative, on the people. Customers are increasingly concerned with ethical and environmental issues, which affect their purchase decision (Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001). In addition, the quality of a company's relationships and engagement with its stakeholders is critical. Companies can, both directly and indirectly, impact what happens to employees, workers in the value chain, customers and local communities. Therefore, a lack of social development, including poverty, inequality and weak rule of law, can ruin business operations´ growth (Wilson, 2015).

The importance and focus on sustainable development and the increased awareness of the three dimensions of sustainability, has brought new challenges for how businesses operate. The concept of sustainability as a major guiding principle of economic policy has added a new dimension to the development of the decision-making process (Tiwari, 2000). Businesses must consider and evaluate costs and benefits related to the sustainable business model. For instance, H&M has experienced difficulties with a bad reputation related to harassment and abuse among female garment workers in Asian factories. In 2018, H&M experienced a pressure for quick turnarounds and low overheads. Pressure to meet fast fashion deadlines led to women, working in Asian factories supplying H&M, being physically and sexually abused (Hodal, 2018). As a consequence, it was exposed to the public by media, which affected H&M's reputation and may affect its profit in the long term.

Sustainability is gaining momentum across every retail category, including fashion, cosmetics, food and home furnishings. People are conscious of changing the environment and the importance of sustainability (Mattson-Teig, 2020). This does not solely include products, but also shopping malls and landlords. Commercial landlords are learning that sustainability and a building's operations has the potential to increase an asset's value (Hudgins, 2008). Fornebu S in Norway is the world's most sustainable shopping centre, and achieved the highest possible classification in the system, named BREEAM-NOR (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) (BREEAM, 2020). To accomplish this, one collects points within nine different areas; energy, health and indoor air quality, leadership, materials, transport, land use and ecology, pollution,

waste and water (Fornebu S, 2020). The focus on sustainability has become more important for businesses, as the companies who place emphasis on sustainability practices, have higher financial performance measured by return on assets, profit before taxation, and cash flow from operations, compared to those without such commitments (Ameer & Othman, 2012).

In order for an organisation to develop new ideas and processes with the goal of becoming sustainable, the company would benefit from innovation. The embeddedness of innovation and entrepreneurship is of particular relevance for sustainable development (Wagner, 2012). In a market, sustainable development requires sustainability innovation and entrepreneurs who can achieve environmental or social goals with superior products or processes. Innovations driving sustainable development can be created by leaders who put them into the core of their business activities. The goal is for firms to generate new services, techniques and organisational modes with the intention to reduce environmental impacts and increase the quality of life (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

1.3 Leadership and communication in whole networks

Network governance of a shopping mall is characterized by the network administrative organization (NAO) model, where the basic idea is that a separate administrative entity is set up with the main goal to govern the network and its activities (Provan & Kenis, 2008). Steen & Strøm have an executive director, staff and board operating out of a physically distinct office dealing with complex network - level problems and issues, with the intention to reduce the complexity of shared governance (Provan & Kenis, 2008).

To explain how leadership is embedded in organisational action, Robinson (2001) claimed that: "Leadership is exercised when thoughts expressed in talk or action are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them." In other words, leadership communication is a perceived articulation of conversations or actions (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2017).

Leadership has proven to play an important role of organisational life generally and during changes. Organisational change reflects the move from the ongoing situation towards a certain desired situation in the future, which aims for an increase in efficiency and competitiveness. Top management have an important role when launching and implementing changes, such as sustainability goals within

the organisation. The leaders at a shopping mall must therefore focus on scanning and interpreting opportunities and threats, in addition to motivating employees to accept changes. The most important tool a leader practices in such a situation to generate results is communication and securing effective internal processes (Voica & Vasila, 2013). Therefore, this research will look further into the aspects of leadership, communication, social influence and the ability to build relationships within a whole network like Steen & Strøm, as these are central to generate sustainable collective action.

1.4 Background for the research

Agglomeration or clusters are powerful network structures to provide entrepreneurship and growth (Delgado, Porter, & Stern, 2010). Marshall (1920) argued that innovative change was driven by agglomeration of resources, competencies, firms and markets. Climate change, ecological development and intertwined social problems have exposed the appearing need for entrepreneurship and innovation of sustainable development. Accordingly, agglomeration of firms is a creative power behind economic growth, and innovation is a relevant framework to analyse entrepreneurial drive for sustainability (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011; Marshall, 1920). In a business network like Steen & Strøm, the centre management is the NAO that coordinates and facilitates activities and decisions. Therefore, the role of the centre management is complex and multifaceted' representing collective interests of the property owners and all the network participants. Hence, communication is a central NAO instrument as a mediator to encourage sustainable performance both for each retail unit, the shopping mall and the society in general (Lawless & Moore, 1989). Steen & Strøm, can therefore be seen as both the agent and the principal of the network units (Provan & Milward, 1995).

The background for the research is due to the absence of research within the field of network organisations and communication based on data from shopping malls, which Provan, et al. (2007) supports. Their research indicate that a large part of the empirical research based on network theory, have been conducted in the public sector. Therefore, this study aims to make a network study within a new empirical context. In order to investigate this empirical context, we conducted research on leadership, communication and the network characteristics; gatekeepers, social ties and echo-chambers, in a shopping mall. Based on previous

research, these factors have been identified as essential in order for innovation to prosper. Thus, this research focuses on how innovation initiated by the centre manager and the structure of a whole network, affects the shopping malls´ collective actions, in becoming more sustainable.

We decided to study the business problem within a whole network. In 2015 an empirical study was done on Steen & Strøm by Nygaard and Brovchenko (Nygaard & Brovchenko, 2015). The researchers studied the strategic importance of building networks in order to produce sustainable performance (p.51). They analysed; competition, communication modality, acquaintance density and innovative culture, as factors that drove sustainable outcomes. However, the collected data only consisted of data from one shopping mall within Steen & Strøm; the Metro Senter, in Lørenskog. As our research focus on the centre managers (NAO) and the structure of a whole network, we found it interesting and essential to study all the NAO's within Steen & Strøm Norway.

Steen & Strøm, Norway

Steen & Strøm in Norway had a total gross rental income of NOK 682.3 million in 2018. Operating income, adjusted for fair value changes and income from disposals, amounted to NOK 549.4 million. Like-for-like increase in net rental income was 1.5% in 2018 (Steen & Strøm, 2018).

For years, Steen & Strøm has managed a sustainability program with the vision of being one of the leaders within corporate responsibility in its industry. "Shopping centres are important social players in the local communities, and this constitute the best possible basis for influencing both the environment and the society around in a positive direction." (p.12). To carry out this vision, Steen & Strøm has implemented the audit ISO-14001. In 2018, Steen & Strøm participated in "GRESB's" annual benchmark, which confirmed that the group maintained a very high level of sustainable performance (p.13). Steen & Strøm rated as one of the most sustainable shopping centre companies in Europe, classified as "Green Star" in both 2018 and 2019. "Green Star" is the highest level of rating in the "GRESB" quadrant benchmark methodology (Steen & Strøm, p.4, 2019).

A strategic key element in Klépierre; the French majority owner, is environmental and social responsibility. This cover all subsidiaries in the Klépierre group, as well as in the operation, regardless its own real estate portfolio and/or managed portfolio. In addition, Steen & Strøm together with majority owner

Klépierre, launched the new CSR approach; 'Act for Good' in 2018. 'Act for Good' combines the requirements of operational excellence with environmental, societal and social performance and rests on three pillars: Act for the Planet, Act for the Territories, Act for the People (Steen & Strøm, p.13, 2018). Each of the pillars are broken down into specific quantified commitments with a five-year timeframe until 2023 (see Appendix 4).

In the next chapter, theoretical perspectives related to the research topic, are reviewed and critically evaluated. The literature review assesses research within sustainability and innovation, collective action, leadership, communication and social influence, and network characteristics.

2.0 Theoretical perspective

2.1 Sustainability and innovation

There is a wide variety of sustainability definitions which are often overlapping. However, recent research has agreed on the model developed by Elkington (1998); Triple Bottom Line (TBL) which involves the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainability. This is often referred to as people, planet and profit. Sustainable development itself has been defined as "development, which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (UN, 1987). The concept made its entrance during the rising interest in environmental issues and problems in 1980s, and since then it has attracted growing interests. Over the past decade there has been an increase in consumer awareness, pressure from government, trade unions and investors, new legislation, developments in information and communication technologies, and media attention. All together it has forced a number of retailers to take an increasing and visible interest in the environmental, economic and social impact of their activities (Jones, Comfort, Hillier & Eastwood, 2005).

Retailers have a central role by being the intermediaries between product producers and manufacturers on one side, and customers on the other. Some retailers are more passive while others have taken a more active role in driving production and stimulating customer demand (Jones et al., 2005). Durieu (2003)

recognizes the retailers' central role by stating that "they can greatly influence changes in production processes and consumption patterns and are well positioned to exert pressure on producers in favour of more sustainable consumer choices". By taking this into consideration, retailers have the chance to address a number of environmental issues including energy consumption and emissions, raw material usage, water consumption, waste, the volume of packaging, recycling and the use of chemicals.

Recycling programmes are becoming more prominent and a number of retailers have begun to introduce recycling units at their stores for customers use. In addition, retailers are increasingly seeking to redesign and make their packaging simpler, in order to reduce costs and packaging waste. Retailers also recognise the social impacts their business and operations have on society, in addition to the communities in which they operate. Their focus includes training and staff development, health and safety, and charitable actions within the community. The main argument in the long-term for integrating sustainability is economic growth and financial security, which is in the interest of all stakeholders (Jones et al., 2005).

Challenges related to sustainability calls for more than just incremental changes to existing patterns of production and consumption (Wüstenhagen, Hamschmidt, Sharma & Starik, 2008). Entrepreneurship in a network has been cited as one of the solutions to meet future challenges, such as climate change (Youssef, Boubaker & Omri, 2018). Sustainable entrepreneurship is a business creation process which links entrepreneurial activities to the achievement of sustainable value-related social and environmental goals (O'Neill, Hershauer & Golden, 2006). In all essence, sustainable entrepreneurship relies on integrating environmental and social issues into core business goals. (Wüstenhagen et al., 2008).

Processes of sustainability-driven entrepreneurship often have their starting point in the enterprising individual, and further occurs in the organisations. Their efforts are supported or hampered by societal level factors in both formal aspects, such as public policy and informal dynamics, such as social norms (Meek, Pacheco & York, 2010). Innovation is an important business aspect for outperforming others and for being successful (BCG, 2019). It has become a collaborative process that requires the input of many specialized actors or institutions, both within and beyond the firm. Building and maintaining an organisation that is open for innovation, requires a willingness to engage in dialogue and the external environment, such as customers. Firms involved must agree to cooperate and integrate knowledge and

resources to successfully commercialise new inventions. It requires trust and alliance-building capabilities to lay the foundation for sharing of knowledge and skills through cooperative relationships (Wagner, 2012).

Lee and Poussing (2013) stated that the size of the organisation impacts innovation sustainability, and the larger the company, the stronger the innovation sustainability. In addition, Hu, Du and Zhang (2020) found that an environment with preferable information flow should lead to enhanced and expedited decision making, and a greater capacity for innovation. Hence, an increase in CSR information disclosure can improve the motivation to innovate and thereby improve on sustainability. By exposing vital information about the company's sustainability measures and CSR to the public, it can increase the investors' trust and understanding of the actual operating conditions. It will also improve information transparency and overall corporate reputation (Hu et al., 2020).

2.2 Collective action

A shopping mall is characterised by a whole social network where all parts involved work towards a common set of objectives by collective action (Weimann, Brosig-Koch, Heinrich, Hennig-Schmidt, & Keser, 2019; Lee, Struben and Bingham, 2017). Lee et al., (2017) defined collective action as any activity aimed at the provision of a collective good. An organisational unit occupying a central network position can access new knowledge from many other units. Such a central network position will have a more positive impact on the unit's innovation output and business performance if the unit has high absorptive capacity. The more central role in the intra organisational network, the broader the knowledge sources the unit has (Tsai, 2001).

Working towards a common set of objectives related to sustainable development, is an important focus for businesses going forward as consumers are demanding changes, and governments are implementing regulations to preserve the environment. In many cases, solving environmental problems requires collective action, as environmental goods are often public goods (Weimann et al., 2019). However, it is often challenging to achieve because the parties involved may not perceive their own and others' contributions as making a difference, have conflicting goals, may be unfamiliar with or do not trust each other, or may intentionally withhold making contributions (Lee et al., 2017).

Within a shopping mall there are a number of businesses ranging from cafes to clothing stores, all working towards operating successfully as individual businesses. However, all individual businesses are also required to work together in order to enhance the malls performance; maximizing shopping malls' profitability, as this is a competing company in itself. An important challenge to acknowledge in such a situation is to balance and preserve both the goals of the individuals stores and the shopping mall (Pitt & Musa, 2009).

2.2 Leadership

Shopping mall is a type of NAO network where the basic idea is that a separate administrative entity is set up to govern the network and its activities. The network broker plays an important role in coordinating and sustaining the network (Provan & Kenis, 2008). The roles of the shopping mall management consist of decision-making, managerial activity and the art of management, which encompasses of three main aspects; property, facilities and tenant mix (Pitt & Musa, 2009). The quality of shopping mall management is identified as the third most important factor that can affect the success or failure of a shopping mall (Morgan & Walker, 1988).

In order to introduce change successfully, it requires effective leadership. (Gill, 2002). Change is traditionally one of the drivers associated with innovation and is a necessary condition for innovation to take place (Moreira, De Aquino Guimarães & Philippe, 2016). Because organizational change and innovation often occur on a large scale, involve multiple actors and units, and extend over a longer period of time, the role of agency is often obscured (Poole & Van De Ven, 2004). In order to cope with changes and challenges related to the rising focus on sustainability, the inter organisational network must be well managed meaning it must be planned, organised, directed and controlled.

Changes often fail because of poor management, due to poor planning, monitoring and control, lack of resources and know-how, and incompatible corporate policies and practices (Gill, 2002). Another reason for why change efforts often fail is a greater focus on the objective, rather than on the steps and process involved. It may also be a result of failure to monitor progress and take corrective action. Another common obstacle is that corporate policies and practices sometimes remain the same and become inconsistent with the aims and strategies for change. Change is all too often regarded as a 'quick fix' (Gill, 2002).

Lack of communication or inconsistent messages and the resulting misunderstanding of the aims and process of change may lead to rumours that demoralise people and to a lack of commitment to change (Gill, 2002). Therefore, communication is a crucial NAO instrument for the management and their role as a broker. Communication is essential to encourage and succeed with sustainable performance for each retail unit, the shopping mall and the society in general (Lawless & Moore, 1989). Top management itself may demonstrate a lack of commitment to change. Change efforts that are purely 'managerial' in nature, especially those that are mismanaged, result in a lack of dedicated effort, conflict between functional areas and resistance to change (Gill, 2002).

2.3 Communication and social influence

A shopping mall provides a valuable empirical setting for investigating innovative mechanisms of business agglomeration. One way to explore this is network analysis (Tichy, Tushman & Fombrun, 1979).

Social network perspective, views organisations as consisting of social units with relatively stable patterns of relationships over time (p.509). Social networks define the access to information. Therefore, the dynamic combination of social ties and competition makes the retail unit an innovative area to produce synergies based on ideas from other units and the competitive environment (Tsai, 2001).

Social influence occurs when an actor adapts his behaviour, attitude, or belief, to the behaviours, attitudes or beliefs of other actors in the social system. A precondition for social influence to occur is the availability to gain information regarding the attitudes or behaviours of other actors (Leenders, 2002). When forming an opinion, people tend to use other people as a frame of reference and thereby take their opinions into account. According to Lendeers (2002), the frame of reference is centred around two processes: communication and comparison. For this literature review the communication process is considered.

Communication refers to social influence through direct contact between two people. It was found that social influence often occurs in communicating through networks, where there is a great possibility that one person's information reaches a particular other person repeatedly. In a typical network, individuals are connected and receive information both directly and indirectly from the same source, and further send information directly and indirectly to a specific other

source. To rationally gather information by an individual, one has to take into account the structure of the network and adjust how one weighs the information received (Leenders, 2002).

Within a shopping mall, knowledge transfer occurs among organisational units which provides opportunities for mutual learning and interunit cooperation. Further, this stimulates access to new knowledge and at the same time contribute to organisational units' ability to innovate (Tsai, 2001). A study conducted on personal networks and knowledge transfer in inter-organisational networks found that; members with multiple ties through other members of their network, can offer more opportunities for themselves and for their organisation, in gaining important intellectual and emotional resources. However, transfer of good practices does not solely rely on number of ties and size of the network but is explained by the individual's absorptive capacity (Rejeb-Khachlouf, Mezghani & Quélin, 2011).

Shopping malls provide a great setting to study the network level, instead of single retail businesses or social ties between single businesses in a network (Müller-Seitz, 2012). A *"whole network"* like a shopping mall, is an organised membership in a network. A whole network consists of multiple organisations linked through multilateral ties and connected in ways that facilitate achievement of a common goal. By examining the whole network, we can understand issues such as how networks evolve, how they are governed, and how collective outcomes and actions might be generated (Provan et al., 2007).

Entrepreneurship within a network similar to a shopping mall, works as a rich setting for learning through social ties in the external business environment (Slater & Narver, 1995). Agglomeration or clusters are strong network structures which provides entrepreneurship and growth (Delgado et al. 2010). This is especially important in a shopping mall where individual employees are in daily contact with the consumers, and have the power to influence and develop markets for end users (Jayawardhena & Farrell, 2011). Interaction with other businesses in the co-located network is important to speed the flow of ideas, because workers learn skills quickly from each other in an industrial cluster (Ellison, Glaeser & Kerr, 2010).

2.4 Network characteristics

For this study we found it interesting to research if network characteristics has an effect on innovation and sustainable collective action. The network characteristics that have been discussed in previous research, are echo chambers, social ties and gatekeepers. This section of the literature review will give an overview of different aspects regarding these different network characteristics.

2.4.1 Echo chambers

Through extensive quantitative analysis is has been found that social homogeneity is the primary driver of content diffusion, and one frequent result is the formation of homogeneous, polarised clusters. These are often called "echo chambers" (Vicario et al., 2015). Echo chambers reinforce existing perspective and foster confirmation biases. Thus, we cluster together into tribes that comfort us with reaffirmation and protect us from disagreement (Vicario et al., 2015).

Campbell's (2013) review of literature on networks and participation suggests that, though the effect of cross-cutting ties may not always be negative, it is rarely positive. Thus, while its effects are not monolithic, political homophily on average appears to be an asset for many kinds of collective action.

Törnberg (2018) understands an echo-chamber as a set of users characterized by two properties: opinion and network polarisation. In relation to a given question, opinion polarisation means that they are more prone to share similar views. Network polarisation means that they are more densely connected with each other than with the outside network. In other words, an echo chamber is a tightly connected set of nodes more inclined to share a common view on a given narrative. This model focuses on the existence of a single echo chamber in a larger network. Echo chambers who generally can be understood as cluster network, have been assumed to constitute impediments to the spread of diffusion, as they reduce the number of weak ties that have in turn been found to be central enablers of diffusion. Echo chambers are commonly understood as also playing a role in the formation of interpretive frames and collective identities, rather than simply constituting a hub for information diffusion (Boutyline & Willer, 2017).

The opinion polarisation imply that their thresholds are lower than that of the surrounding network. This is related to what in network terms is referred to as homophily: the probability that neighbouring nodes have similar thresholds for

activation. If there are moderate levels of homophily, then this is generally understood to increase the network's capacity for diffusion (Chiang, 2007; Valente, 1996). This can also be connected to the suggestion in critical mass theory that an initial group can solve the large group problem by creating a "bandwagon effect" (Nadeau, Cloutier & Guay, 1993; Oliver & Marwell, 1988; Oliver, Marvell & Teixeira, 1985).

2.4.2 Social ties

There has been done several research studies regarding social ties. However, many of the previous studies focused on the importance of strong ties, and not weak ties. Weak ties - relationships involving less frequent contact, limited intimacy, and low emotional intensity - argue some important benefits. In his pioneering article, Granovetter (1973) demonstrate that weak ties are important for diffusion of information (such as innovations, news, and job openings) across a social network. While information remains within isolated clusters of strong ties (i.e., family and close friends), without weak ties to bridge between them.

As Sandstrom and Dunn (2013) state in their article, the previous studies have been using a wide variety of methodological approaches, from experience sampling and daily diaries, to the day reconstruction method. All converge on the same finding: people enjoy socializing. Nonetheless, these studies have primarily focused on interactions with family and close friends, largely overlooking minimal interactions with acquaintances.

More recent research advocate that a wider range of relationships may contribute to fulfilling the need to belong. Although further research is needed to examine causality; people feel a greater sense of belonging, and positive affect after simply having a conversation with the barista at a coffee shop (Sandstrom & Dunn, 2013). For this research, it will therefore be interesting to study the effect of weak ties on diffusion of information.

2.4.3 Gatekeepers

Previous research typically views gatekeepers as boundary spanning individuals, where their role is to meet information requirements by acquiring external information, and maintain a high level of communication, both inside and outside of the organisation (Allen, Tushman, Lee, 1979; Tichy, Tushman, & Fombrun, 1979. p.509). Gatekeepers role is solely as intermediary (Talmor & Vasvari, 2011).

Tushman & Katz (1980) investigated the role of gatekeepers in the transfer of information in a single R&D setting by comparing directly the performance of project groups with and without gatekeepers. They found that direct contact and contact mediated by a gatekeeper, are two contrasting ways to link project groups with their external areas. As a consequence, the relative effectiveness of these linking mechanisms is depending on the nature of the project´s work.

The gatekeeper in an R&D team serves as an important communication channel and discriminates R&D performance (Hung, 2017). They are usually accomplished performers who writes presentations and publications and thus receive more recognition from their peers (Shumsky & Pinker, 2003). If a corporate scientist has a high number of publications, they serve as central conduits for the inflow of knowledge from outside of their organisations, thereby stimulating innovation (Furukawa & Goto, 2006). Ergo, social networks and the gatekeeper functionality accumulates technology ties, which involve dense technological connections within a network, leading to advantages in knowledge transfer and sharing (Lin, Chen, Sher & Mei, 2010). Further, research conducted by Hung (2017) demonstrated that a dense social network and well-performed gatekeepers' functionality of an R&D team enhanced performance, even though dense technology ties were unable to support high R&D performance.

Having discussed previous research as the foundation of our study, the following chapter will present hypotheses and the conceptual model related to the research question.

3.0 Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical findings from previous research, a theoretical model was developed in order to study the relationship between the antecedent variables, mediating variable and sustainable collective action. We argue that leadership, communication and network characteristics have an effect on the mediating variable, innovation. Furthermore, the innovation generated from the three antecedent conditions, is claimed to have an effect on sustainable collective action. Innovation and entrepreneurship are of particular relevance for sustainable development (Wagner, 2012). The model is summarized in figure 3.1 below.

As a result of performing qualitative analysis, the hypotheses operated more as a tool to guide and structure the research, due to a small dataset with no opportunities to test statistical significance nor correlation.

Based on previous literature regarding sustainability, we argue that leadership management have the power and motivation to encourage sustainable collective action. Sustainability does not only concern customers but has become a key consideration for landlords within retail and retail real estate, in addition to investors and the governments. Therefore, it is important for the leadership management to encourage sustainable growth within the whole network, because retailers have the chance to address a number of environmental issues. Businesses should operate and develop in a way that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (UN, 1987). According to these perspectives, our hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Leadership has an effect on innovation.

As mentioned earlier, the shopping centre management (NAO) acts as a network broker. Therefore, we assume that communication has an effect on the businesses ability to be innovate, and thereby lead to sustainable collective action. Innovation is an important business aspect for being successful (BCG, 2019). Within a shopping mall, knowledge transfer among organisational units provides opportunities for mutual learning and interunit cooperation. This further stimulates access to new knowledge and at the same time, contribute to organisational units' ability to innovate (Tsai, 2001). Hence, based on these arguments, our hypothesis is as follows:

H2: Communication has an effect on innovation.

After thorough examination of previous research on the network characteristics; echo chambers, social ties, and gatekeepers, we argue that these characteristics will have an effect on the sustainable collective action within the whole network, Steen & Strøm. The reasoning behind including echo chamber as one of the characteristics is due to the studies by Valente (1996) and Chiang (2007) that argues; if there are moderate levels of homophily within an echo chamber, then this is generally understood to increase the network's capacity for diffusion of information. In regard

to social ties, Granovetter's (1973) pioneering article, demonstrate that weak ties are important for diffusion of information, such as innovations, news, and job openings, across a social network. Hung (2017) found in his research on gatekeepers, that a dense social network and well-performed gatekeepers' functionality of an R&D team, enhance performance. Based on these network characteristics, our hypothesis is as follows:

H3: Network characteristics have an effect on innovation.

Hu, Du and Zhang (2020) found that an environment with preferable information flow should lead to a greater capacity for innovation. Hence, an increase in CSR information disclosure can improve the motivation to innovate and thereby improve on sustainability. Entrepreneurship in a network has been cited as one of the solutions to meet future challenges, such as climate change (Youssef, Boubaker & Omri, 2018). Sustainable entrepreneurship links entrepreneurial activities to the achievement of sustainable value-related social and environmental goals (O'Neill, Hershauer & Golden, 2006). In a shopping mall context, we could therefore assume that a higher innovative culture leads to sustainable collective action. Thus, our hypothesis is as follow:

H4: Innovation has an effect on sustainable collective action.
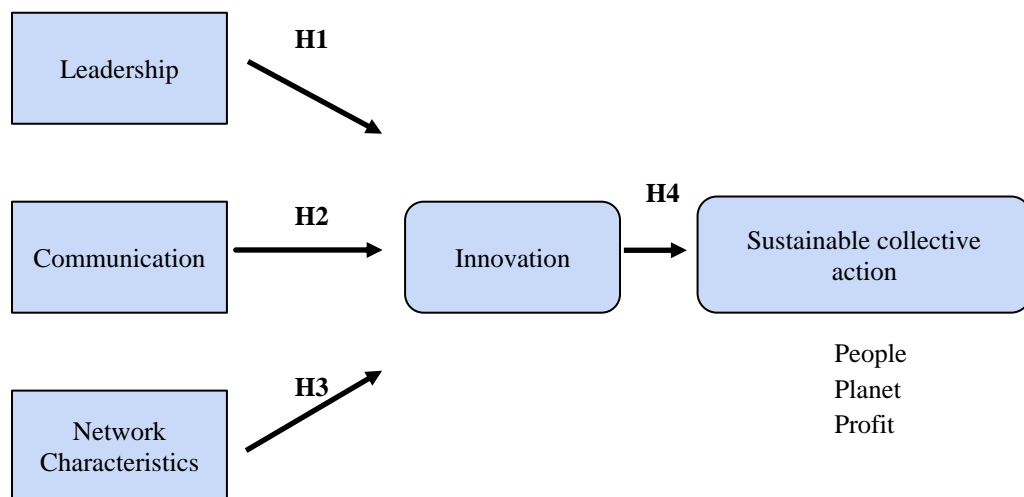
3.1. Conceptual model for the theoretical approach

After providing a broad and relevant review of the literature and argumentation of the hypotheses, we then tested these hypotheses and provided an answer to the research question. For the following chapter concerning methodology, we discuss and present the choice of methodological approach, methods for data collection, and methods for analysis. Lastly, we consider the trustworthiness, credibility, internal and external validity of the analysis and research.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Methodological approach

Network research aims to look at patterns and relations between data, and both quantitative and qualitative methods can be applied through the in-depth analysis. To get a broader understanding of the empirical research, this study employed descriptive statistics and two qualitative methods, in answering the research question, hence a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative analysis aims to go further than descriptive analysis, unpicking the accounts that were given, and asking questions like 'What is going on here?' and 'How can we make sense of these accounts?' (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The aim was to gain a deeper understanding of the gathered data and look 'beneath the surface'. In addition, it was necessary to understand why and how these accounts were generated, and further provide a conceptual account of the data, and some theorising around it.

4.2 Methods for data collection

In addition to the gathering of existing research, academic papers, theories, and reports, more information was needed to get a broader understanding of the research question. Therefore, structured interviews and an in-depth interview were conducted to help answering the research question. Two different qualitative methods and analytic methods were implemented.

Structured interview

All the six centre managers for Steen & Strøm shopping malls located in Norway, answered the survey. The distribution process began at the end of March 2020, and

nine out of ten responses were collected by 4th of June 2020. Only one response was missing when the analysis started.

The survey was first distributed to the centre managers through the social network platform, LinkedIn. All six centre managers for Steen & Strøm Norway, responded to the survey. As some of the centre managers are in charge of two of Steen & Strøm´s shopping malls, they responded the survey two times, one for each shopping mall. Hence, seven centre managers gave nine responses. Due to the emergence of Covid-19 in Norway and its many ripple effects, Steen & Strøm faced a challenging time where crisis management became top priority. Therefore, it took longer time than anticipated to receive all the responses. However, the Leasing Director of Steen & Strøm assisted in collecting the missing responses. Finally, we decided to move forward with the analysis; grounded theory.

Grounded theory (GT) focuses on building theory from data and organise the analysis around key categories. For this study we conducted a contextualist (constructivist) GT, which acknowledges the role of the researcher in shaping the analysis, and views meaning as contextual (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). The analysis did not answer the research question alone but was rather a contribution and supported the results from the in-depth interview thematic analysis.

For the data analysis, the following software were used:
- Qualtrics - conducting the survey
- SPSS - descriptive statistics

In-depth interview

To gain more insight into the importance of leadership and communication in a network organisation, the in-depth interview was conducted in a deductive way, where an industry professional was interviewed. The interview object was the CEO of the company IML – Institutt for Medskapende Ledelse, a consultant agency with expertise in the development of organisations, management and employees (IML, 2020). After the in-depth interview was conducted, a transcript of the interview was performed.

When interpreting a qualitative in-depth interview, Avis (2003) argues that the use of specific theoretical perspectives can impede the emergence of insights from the data. Thematic analysis prevents the analysis from becoming too subjective. For the in-depth interview we therefore decided upon performing a

thematic analysis. When the analysis was performed, the findings were viewed in relation to the literature review (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The analysis did not answer the research question alone but was rather a contribution and supported the results from the grounded theory.

4.3 Methods for analysis

4.3.1 Descriptive statistical analysis

The dataset contained a total of nine out of ten responses. As the dataset was small, our analyses were limited to focus on descriptive statistics rather than test statistical significance nor correlation. All of the completed surveys were included for the descriptive statistical analysis. However, all shopping malls were renamed to maintain the anonymity of respondents.

Sustainability

Sustainable development refers to "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (UN, 1987). Table 4.4 regarding sustainability indicates that all centre managers are in charge of a fairly sustainable shopping mall and that it is one of Steen & Strøm's main goal. Centre managers listed their shopping mall as a somewhat important arena for customers that are concerned with sustainability (Q13_1) ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .53$). However, when it comes to measures with the goal of becoming more sustainable, the mean is a bit higher. Minimizing the environmental effects (Q13_2) is important for most managers. ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .50$). Sustainable growth (Q13_3) is for some centre managers a top priority ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .33$). The importance of sustainable growth (Q13_4) is a topic most managers seems to prioritize ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .71$), in addition to consuming less energy than competing shopping malls (Q13_5) ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .67$).

Most centre managers reported that they have reduced energy consumption (Q14_1) a lot over the last years ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .50$). In addition, most managers agreed that they recycle (Q15_1) 60 - 80% of their waste. ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .50$).

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Arena for sustainable consumption	9	3	4	3.44	.53
Minimize environmental effects	9	4	5	4.33	.50
Sustainable growth is a top priority	9	3	4	3.89	.33
Important with sustainable growth	9	3	5	4.33	.71
Consume less energy than competitors	9	3	5	4.22	.67
Development over the last years	9	4	5	4.33	.50
Recycle	9	3	5	4.00	.50

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistic related to CSR

Innovation

Drucker (2012) defines innovation as "the act that endows resources with a new capacity to create wealth" (p.36). Table 4.5 shows that the centre managers are somewhat discussing innovations within certain areas. Introduction of new profile (Q17_1) is sometimes discussed internally at the shopping mall ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.054$). However, ideas of new measures (Q17_2) are often discussed at all of the shopping malls ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .00$). According to the centre managers, new techniques and routines (Q17_3) are fairly often discussed ($M = 3.67$) ($SD = .50$), in addition to new procedures and practices (Q17_4) ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .44$). New ways to communicate internally (Q17_5) is only discussed 'once in a while' ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .60$).

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Introduction of profile	9	1	4	2.89	1.05
Ideas of measures	9	4	4	4.00	.00
Techniques and routines	9	3	4	3.67	.50
Procedures and practices	9	3	4	3.78	.44
Ways to communicate internally	9	2	4	2.89	.60

Table 4.2. Descriptive statistic related to innovation

Leadership

Leadership has proven to play an important role of organisational life generally and during changes. And the most important tool for a leader in such a situation is communication, to secure effective internal processes and to generate results (Voica & Vasila, 2013). Looking at table 4.2, the centre managers of Steen & Strøm have the impression that they listen to retail manager (Q8_1) ($M = 4.44$, $SD = .53$), are open for new ideas (Q8_2) ($M = 4.44$, $SD = .53$), and that the threshold for the employees talking to the centre managers (Q8_3) is fairly low ($M = 4.44$, $SD = .53$). Their openness for changes (Q8_4) is fairly high ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 4.11$). Regarding leadership characteristics; engage/ inspire (Q8_5) and a clear and safe (Q8_6) leadership approach, both have a somewhat lower average ($M = 3.89$, $SD = .33$) ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .44$). These questions are both right skewed, indicating that most centre managers have a positive perception of their leadership approach (Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2). These patterns could be interesting to further investigate for the grounded theory analysis and/or thematic analysis.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Listen to retail managers	9	4	5	4.44	.53
Open for new ideas	9	4	5	4.44	.53
Openness towards employees	9	4	5	4.44	.53
Open for changes	9	4	5	4.11	.33
Engage and inspire	9	3	4	3.89	.33
Clear and safe approach	9	3	4	3.78	.44

Table 4.3. Descriptive statistic related to communication and leadership
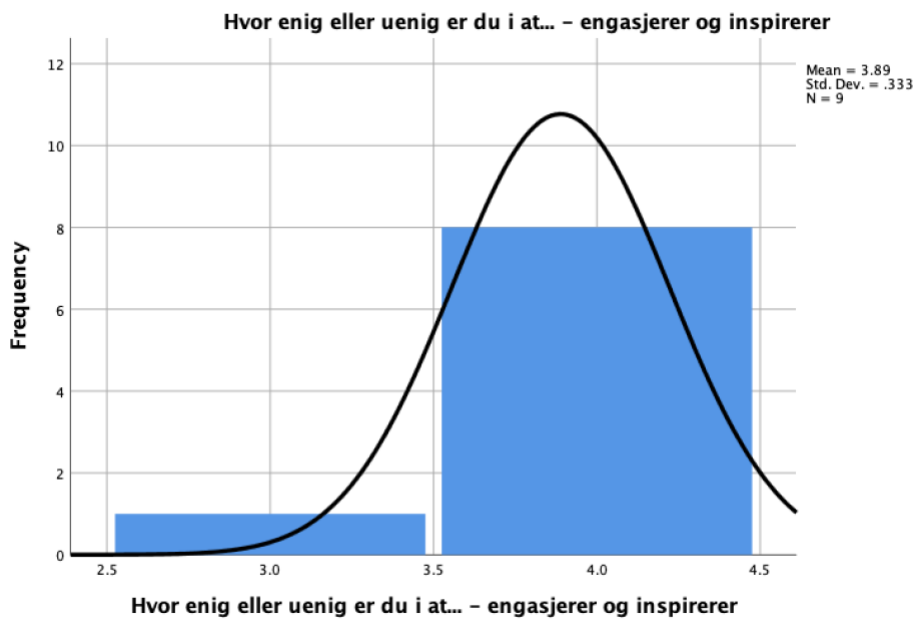
Figure 4.1. Leadership approach - Engage and inspire

25

Mean = 3.78
Std. Dev. = .441
N = 9

Figure 4.2. Leadership approach - Clear and safe

Communication

Table 4.3 concerning communication, indicates that the top five stores the centre manager is in most contact with, communicates with the manager once in a while (Q12_1) ($M = 3$, $SD = .71$). While, it appears that the manager speaks to the respective five stores (Q12_2) a bit more occasionally ($M = 2.78$, $SD = .83$). The remaining stores speak to the manager (Q12_3) a bit more often than the top five stores ($M = 3.11$, $SD = .78$). In addition, the manager is in contact (Q12_4) with the remaining stores a bit more often than the top five stores they listed ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .93$). The aspect of communication would be interesting to further investigate in grounded theory analysis.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Top five stores speak to manager	9	2	4	3.00	.71
Manager speak to top five stores	9	2	4	2.78	.83
Remaining stores speak to manager	9	2	4	3.11	.78

Manager speak to remaining stores	9	2	4	2.89	.93

Table 4.4. Descriptive statistic related to communication

Corporate social responsibility

"Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a business approach that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social and environmental benefits for all stakeholders" (Farina & Burnaz, 2019). Table 4.1 illustrate the descriptive characteristics related to CSR in the study sample. The vast majority of centre managers rate their degree of economic growth for the owners, retailers' distributors and society (Q3_1) as relatively high ($M = 4.56$, $SD = .53$). In addition, centre managers state that their shopping mall supports the local community, both economically, socially and through other measures (Q4_1) ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .50$). It appears that they create financial opportunities for their owners, retailers and society through investments and employment (Q5_1) ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .50$).

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Economic growth	9	4	5	4.56	.53
Support local community	9	4	5	4.33	.50
Financial opportunities	9	4	5	4.33	.50

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistic related to CSR

Competition

Table 4.6 indicates that the centre managers are overall neutral to competition and to what extent the mall's existence is threatened by the following external conditions; Competition in general (Q18_1) ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.17$), Price competition (Q18_2) ($M = 3.22$, $SD = .67$), Competitors innovation and adaptability (Q18_3) ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .93$) and store closures (Q18_4) ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.12$).

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Competition in general	9	1	4	3.11	1.17
Price	9	2	4	3.22	.67
Innovation and adaptability	9	2	4	2.89	.93
Store closures	9	2	5	3.33	1.12

Table 4.6. Descriptive statistic related to competition

4.3.2 Grounded theory of structured interview

There are no strong prior theory concerning our research question, and so the literature review is based on theory and research within the main themes of this study. However, there is a gap in the research of collective actions within private sectors, and especially where the network consists of many different actors, like a shopping mall. When approaching research without any strong prior theory, qualitative researchers are inevitably faced with the problem of making sense of a vast amount of unstructured data (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). Grounded theory (GT) focuses on building theory from data and organise the analysis around key categories. The grounded theory conducted for this study is contextualist (constructivist) GT, which acknowledges the role of the researcher in shaping the analysis, and views meaning as contextual. It argues that it is not possible to generate one 'true' reading of data (Charmaz, 2006).

Low-level concepts and abstract features

Firstly, we worked systematically through the basic data transcripts and the descriptive statistical analysis, to describe low-level concepts and the abstract features that were presumed relevant. To succeed with generating grounded theory that is faithful to the data, it all depends upon maintaining a balance between full use of our own intellect, and the requirement of fit between low-level descriptions and the data.

After working through the data systematically, the low-level concepts found that; most centre managers were confident in stating that the shopping malls performed well on *corporate social responsibility* (CSR), *sustainability*, and high on their *leadership characteristics*. More often, the shopping malls tend to discuss *innovative* activities like; ideas for new actions, techniques, routines, and procedures, than discussing new profile in the market. Furthermore, the questions regarding finding new ways to communicate within the shopping mall had lower value responses. In other words, this is something the whole network, Steen & Strøm, occasionally do. Another low-level concept found, was the centre managers' perception of risk from *competitors*, which was at a low degree. However, one of the centre managers answered that the threat of competitors and their prices was high.

After finding the low-level concepts, we explored the more abstract features that were relevant, and its fit with the data. The centre managers reported a neutral pattern on the communication frequency with the *'top five'* retail managers compared to the remaining retail managers during a normal week. However, the remaining retail managers more often tend to give feedback to the centre managers (Av og til = 4, Sjelden = 2, Ofte = 3), than the *'top five'* retail managers (Av og til = 5, Sjelden = 2, Ofte = 2). Hence, the remaining retailers can be suggested to have more of an influence than we initially thought.

Another abstract feature found relevant, was the centre managers *leadership characteristics*. Most centre managers responded with high values on these questions ("svært enig" and "enig"). This is the leaders' own perception of how they are as a leader, which can often differ from what the employees perceive. For the retail managers who are in charge of two shopping malls, the questions were answered differently at each of the malls. Thus, there might be a difference in how well the centre manager connects with the two networks, and therefore his/her leadership characteristics will adapt differently for each of the networks.

For the questions within the category *innovation,* most of the centre managers answered that they often discuss new ideas, routines (ofte = 6, av og til = 3), procedures and practices (ofte = 7, av og til = 2). However, all the managers responded that they do not have enough time nor resources to test promising ideas on sustainable activities. The aspect of time constraint is therefore conflicting with the frequency of discussion of innovative ideas.

Categorisation and analysis

A set of categories are built up, each of which is referenced to one or more instances in the data. There are some routine operations that help to move towards a conceptually rich understanding, and systematic assimilation of the low-level categories into a coherent theoretical account (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992). These include; coding of categories, writing definitions for the codes, linking categories together, involving the creation of new overarching categories at higher levels, and seeking more data where this appears necessary to elucidate aspects of the emerging theory. As this analysis is performed on structured interviews with only five options per question, the codes and categories already existed before the transcription. Therefore, we knew which types of themes and codes we were interested in looking at, in regard to the research question.

For the structured interviews, the goal was to collect data within different areas of the research; sustainability, innovation, leadership characteristics and communication. Thus, these can also be seen as the codes for this analysis. These codes are described in categories, in both literature review and throughout the study.

What are the differences and similarities which exists between instances, concepts and cases, to ensure that the full diversity and complexity of the data is explored? A key idea in all of this, is the method of constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This will typically generate a deep, rich and well-integrated conceptual system, organised at various levels of theoretical abstraction all of which in some way articulate with our data (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1992).

For the questions regarding *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)* and *sustainability*, most centre managers were safe in stating that the shopping malls performed well on these factors. There were no remarkable findings in neither of the categories, and the findings were close to what we initially thought. Meaning that Steen & Strøm performs well on sustainability goals and takes responsibility and actions for people, planet and territories. When comparing the shopping malls who have the same centre manager, an interesting aspect regarding *CSR* is that they respond differently on each of their malls. For instance, one of the centre managers was more confident in their CSR at one of the malls, than the other. This can indicate different prerequisites on how well malls achieve a high level of CSR. Looking at *Sustainability*, most centre managers replied with high value answers. In Norway, Steen & Strøm recycles 63%, while 37% is incinerated, and 0,3% is share of waste without energy-recovery. Accordingly, the number of centre

managers responding with a waste recycling at the level of 60% - 80%, were seven out of nine, which highly correspond to the official number from the report (see Appendix 5).

The *'top five'* retail managers who the centre manager has the most contact with can be seen as an echo chamber, as both parts have more frequent contact than the remaining retailers. Hence, this group of five can be viewed as one single echo chamber in a larger network. Echo chambers have been assumed to constitute impediments to the spread of diffusion, as they reduce the number of weak ties, that have in turn been found to be central enablers of diffusion. As these *'top five'* retail managers can indicate a stronger tie, the remaining retailers can indicate a weaker tie to the centre manager. This weak tie can be argued by remaining retail managers not being a part of the '*top five*', and by how the centre managers replied to the question concerning how often the remaining retail managers gave positive/negative feedback. As this tended to be more often than the *'top five'* retail managers, it can indicate a weaker tie. In other words, it is easier for the remaining retail managers to contact the centre managers regarding positive/negative aspects and will therefore give a better diffusion of information than the '*top five*'.

For the questions regarding the centre managers *leadership characteristics*, most centre managers responded with high values which indicate that they perceive themselves as good managers. However, this does not necessarily mean that it is just a perception. A reason could be that the centre managers have received feedback from the retail managers regarding their leadership approach, and therefore took this into consideration when answering these questions. The category concerning leadership characteristics are somewhat related to the next category *innovation*, as leaders are the ones who sets the agenda for innovative activities within a whole network.

For the questions regarding the category *innovation,* most of the centre managers answered that they often discuss new ideas, routines, procedures and practice. However, all the managers say that they do not have enough time nor resources to try out promising ideas on sustainable activities (Enig = 9, Hverken eller = 1). These aspects are therefore conflicting as they apparently often discuss 'change' in general, but at the same time does not have enough time nor resources to apply these changes. The aspect of time spent, and time constraint is therefore conflicting. Another important part of innovation is finding good ways to communicate across and within the whole network.

From previous theory and research, it is found that with limited level of communication, it will become more difficult to achieve a common strategy and change (Gill, 2002). Looking at the centre managers response on how often the whole network discuss new ways of communicating, most of them answered "now and then" (6 out of 9). This could indicate that the whole network already has a good flow of communication and therefore has no need to discuss this as often. Or it could indicate that this is due to the lack of time to try out the ideas on sustainability, as they e.g. spend too much time discussing strategies and activities than finding ways to implement them and coordinate. Accordingly, the centre manager and the whole network should focus more on this and find a more suitable way of communicating and limiting the ineffectiveness on time consumption.

Conclusion

Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 4 were supported by the categories *Leadership characteristics* and *Innovation*. Based on previous research and the survey responses, the well-managed leadership can also be reflected by the frequency of the innovative activities that occurs inside the whole network (e.g. discussion of new ideas, techniques and processes). As both the survey responses and Steen & Strøm's report states that they achieve high sustainability results, it can be argued that this is due to the well-managed leadership and innovative activities that arise within the shopping malls.

In addition, the category "*Top five*" supported hypothesis 3. It illustrated the positive effect the remaining retail managers have on giving feedback to the centre managers, which can increase the diffusion of information within the shopping malls. Nonetheless, the survey does not clearly categorise the different network characteristics, which makes it more difficult to state that all three characteristics have an effect on sustainable collective action. From the grounded theory analysis, the network characteristic that stands out is weak ties' effect on diffusion of information, which increase the level of innovation. and thereby sustainable collective action.

4.3.3 Thematic analysis of in-depth interview

Thematic analysis was first developed by Gerald Holton in 1970s and was later accepted as a "robust, systematic framework for coding qualitative data, and for

then using the coding to identify patterns across the dataset in relation to the research question." (Braun & Clarke, 2014). With this data analysis method, we could identify commonly recognized patterns and relationships to meaningfully answer the research question of the study. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), this method involves seven steps: transcription, reading and familiarisation, coding (see Appendix 3), searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finalising the analysis (SAGE Publications, 2019).

Searching for themes

After performing the coding of the transcript, we examined patterns that were appearing within the data. A pattern-based analysis allowed us to identify salient features of data, which is meaningful in answering the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Frequency and importance of codes were taken into consideration when identifying the patterns in the data.

After the pattern-based analysis, the derived results gave six sub-themes and four main themes. Braun and Clarke (2013) states that it is important to have in mind that themes are not supposed to cover everything in the data, but rather illustrate the data relative to the research question. Furthermore, the themes are not universal in the sense that different theoretical influences and perspective, may lead to the themes being analysed and viewed differently.

Themes and Sub-themes with their associated codes:

Code	Sub-themes	Themes
Enhanced collaboration	Communication and collaboration	**Communication and collaboration**
Communication of information		
An understanding of how things actually work on a daily basis	Project groups	**Structure of whole network**
Project group		
Time		
Find the common interests		
Mapping	Organisation of whole	

Structure	network	
Meaningful and easy to see the direction of the organisation	Approaches for change	**Leadership approaches and characteristics**
Systems Theoretical approach; lift your perspective and be curious.		
Trustworthy/reliable	Essential leadership characteristics for change	
Anchoring from the management		
Relational capacity		
Transformational leadership		
Correlation between incentives and goals		
Only people at the top works with strategy and activation, knows the process.	Barriers for collaboration	**Barriers for sustainable collective action**
People at the bottom are not involved in the process		
Lack of knowledge and problem solving- lack of enhanced collaboration		

Analysis

For the final stage of the thematic analysis, the sub-themes and themes were represented in the light of the research question; "How does leadership, network characteristic and communication in a whole network affect sustainable collective action through innovation?". To do so, the sub-themes and themes were viewed in relation to the literature review. This can contribute, and in some cases, answer the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). As the in-depth interview applied a staged approach, the interview alone is not meant to answer the research question, but rather contribute and support the results from the grounded theory analysis.

Therefore, we took the hypotheses into consideration when performing the thematic analysis.

Communication and collaboration

From the thematic analysis there were two essential factors needed to achieve sustainable collective action in a whole network; *communication* and *collaboration*. These two factors are dependent on each other. In other words, with no communication there will not be potential for collaboration, and without collaboration the level of communication will be poor.

Concerning the structure of the network, the actors will need to find a common set of goals, agree on problem solving, and have a good understanding of everyone in the whole network. It is evident that to enhance the collaboration, the actors' commitment to learn about each other and take use of everyone's knowledge is essential.

Flow of information throughout the network is crucial for achieving collective action, however too much information may have the opposite effect. The communication of information should be relevant, accessible and clear for the related actors. In the process of implementing strategies for achieving sustainable collective action, the management should communicate what the agreed strategy is, why we do it, and how to achieve it.

Leadership approaches and characteristics

When a whole network is in a transformational process towards a collective action of becoming sustainable, leadership must be well managed - meaning the process must be planned, organised, directed and controlled. It is important that the management believe in the process of change and anchor this through their communication with the whole network. Also, for the rest of the network to join the transformational process, the communication must be trustworthy and reliable. The most important tool a leader uses in such a situation to generate results, is communication and securing effective internal processes (Voica & Vasila, 2013). From the analysis of the sub-themes and theme, it is evident that the owners and management requires to decide on incentives and goals that correlates for the retailers. Incentives should mirror the importance of becoming more sustainable when retailers e.g. reuse and recycle, an incentive could be discounted marketing activities.

Structure of whole network

To achieve a collective action, it is also essential to study the structure of the whole network. What are we working towards? Who do we need to have contact with? To answer these questions, the management should perform a mapping of the relations regarding this topic and find the common interests across the whole network. Further, a project group consisting of employees from different retailers and positions that represents different groupings within the network, should be established. This project group should consist of a number of weak ties, that have in turn been found to be central enablers of diffusion. To increase the diffusion of information within the whole network, a gatekeeper can provide additional information from the industry that may be beneficial for the project group. The project group can then collaborate and find valuable solutions for how the management should communicate the new transformational activities to the remaining employees of the network.

By implementing a project group, the management can gain new insights and an understanding of how information communicated or activated by the management, is perceived by the employees working at retail level. In addition, by gaining information and learning, the management can benefit from wisdom on how activities can be done differently and better. This way, the communication and flow of information will enhance the collaboration and therefore innovation within the whole network, in reaching the goal of becoming more sustainable.

Barriers for sustainable collective action

Common barriers for innovation and collective actions are generally a lack of the aforementioned themes. The absence of knowledge and problem solving, and a narrow focus on employees' own work tasks are some common examples. In addition, the absence of leadership characteristics and organisational characteristics, will decrease the employees understanding of "the bigger picture", as little information will be given by the management. If the retailers are not included from the very start in the process of change, they will more likely distrust the strategies and activities. Hence, their motivation for change will be limited. It is therefore important to make the subject of change relevant for all the employees of the network, to reduce the impediments for innovation and collective action.

Conclusion

Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were supported by the findings of sub-themes and themes. The analysis of the themes "*Communication and collaboration*" and "*Leadership approaches and characteristics*" demonstrated to have a positive effect on innovation within Steen & Strøm.

In addition, the theme "*Structure of whole network*" supported hypothesis 3, illustrating the positive effect project groups, social ties and Steen & Strøm's gatekeeper, can have on innovation within the shopping malls.

We support hypothesis 4 as we argue from the literature review and the findings based on hypotheses 1-3, that the innovation from leadership, communication and network characteristics further effects the sustainable collective action within Steen & Strøm.

While the theme "*Barriers for sustainable collective action*" illustrate that the absence of the aforementioned themes impedes innovation and collective action within Steen & Strøm shopping malls.

4.4 Validity

Our research consists of a mixed method approach as the study obtained different statistics, and qualitative analysis. Qualitative analysis acknowledges trustworthiness, while quantitative analysis often considers validity and reliability. Due to the mixed-methods approach, we consider both trustworthiness and validity when evaluating the research process.

Trustworthiness is discussed by researchers to persuade that their findings are worthy of attention (Nowell, Norris, Jill, White & Moules, 2017). Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed the concept of trustworthiness by introducing the criteria's; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to parallel the traditional criteria of validity and reliability within quantitative analysis.

Credibility addresses the "fit" between the centre managers' view and this study's representation of them. As no peer debriefing was completed to provide an external check on the research process, the credibility of this process is threatened (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability refers to generalisability of the analysis. As the study provides a thorough analysis description, the findings can with more certainty be transferred to other areas of research. In addition, the research process

is logical, traceable, and clearly documented, making it easier for the readers to judge the dependability and trustworthiness of the study (Tobin & Begley, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lastly, confirmability is established when credibility, transferability and dependability are all achieved, making our research process trustworthy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Furthermore, both internal and external validity of the research process were examined. The data was collected over a short timeframe and at one occasion, which threatens the internal validity.

As the centre managers could have felt pressured to give answers that are socially preferable, this may have created a response bias. Hence, this is a limitation in relation to validity. A solution to minimise the potential risk of bias, would be to conduct the same structured interview on centre managers within a different shopping mall chain.

The centre managers work with the same contracts and policies from the Steen & Strøm Management. Ergo, the homogenous shopping mall environment does not affect the results of the research, in terms of biases. This is due to the Norwegian society being an egalitarian culture with minor economic and social inequalities (Steckermeier & Delhey, 2019). Moreover, it is a stable and homogenous business environment, which reduces the potential threat of specious findings. Thus, this will affect the internal validity, in a positive manner.

Concerning the validity of the thematic analysis, the analysis can lead to inconsistency and lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research data (Holloway & Todres, 2003). As the analysis is based on our interpretation of the data, it may weaken the internal validity due to bias. This also applies for the analysis; grounded theory, where it is challenging to detect or prevent bias. In addition, the subjectivity of the data may lead to difficulties establishing reliability and validity of the findings.

Concerning the external validity, it is important to evaluate if the study results can be generalised beyond the specific setting of this study. As aforementioned, Steen & Strøm was awarded with the GRESB Green Star both in 2018 and 2019 and ranked in the top 7% of the 964 GRESB participants worldwide (Steen & Strøm, p.4, 2019). It is evident that Steen & Strøm is one of the leading actors within the Real Estate Assessment (GRESB, 2019). Thus, this research may not be generalisable for other shopping malls in Norway, nor e.g. Europe or U.S., due to differences in sustainability criteria and objectives. Thus, the external

validity is limited. However, this study may provide valuable insights for future strategies and operations within NAO´s, for both the Norwegian and other markets.

Ultimately – it is difficult to say whether this study can be generalised to other national or industrial conditions, because there has not been done many studies based on true network data in the private sectors (Provan, et al., 2007). Rather this study can contribute with beneficial insights for future research within social networks in various industries.

After assessing the trustworthiness and validity of the research process, the next chapter is dedicated to present the theoretical contribution, managerial implications, limitations and potential further research.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Theoretical contribution

The purpose of this thesis has been to investigate leadership, communication and network characteristics within a whole network, and its effect on sustainable collective action through innovation. To initiate innovative culture, we found important leadership characteristics to be openness for new ideas and procedures suggested from the employees of the network. To affect the sustainable collective action within the network, the leader needs to anchor upon the decided strategy. Moreover, the trustworthiness and reliability of the communication from the centre managers are essential characteristics for employees to embed sustainable collective action.

For communication, the flow of information throughout the network is crucial for achieving collective action, however too much information may have the opposite effect. The communication of information should be relevant, accessible and clear for the whole network to increase the level of understanding of what the sustainable strategy is, why we do it, and how to achieve it.

In regard to the structure of the network and its characteristics, it is important for the organisation to ask themselves; "What are we working towards?" and "Who do we need to have contact with?". To answer these questions, the management should perform a mapping of the relations, and find the common

interests across the whole network. Further, an echo chamber that represents different groupings within the network should be established. The echo chamber should consist of a number of weak ties, that have in turn been found to be central enablers of diffusion. In addition, a gatekeeper can provide additional information from the industry that may be beneficial for the whole network, and thereby the level of innovation.

The characteristics presented are essential for achieving sustainable collective action within a whole network. Thus, the absence of these characteristics will create impediments of collective action.

5.2 Managerial implications

We argue that the managerial implications presented in this research, can be applicated for other networks in various private sectors.

When constructing a project group, our main implication is to have a moderate level of homophily, as this increase the network's capacity for diffusion of information. Hence, the project group should consist of employees from different positions and levels within the network. In addition, an action that can improve communication and level of innovation is a gatekeeper's contribution of valuable information and insights from the industry sector.

An action that can stimulate sustainable collective action is through a mapping of the whole network. The process of mapping will help to uncover the relations within the whole network and find its common interests. It is therefore essential for a shopping mall to create a framework for how they should plan, organise, implement and control the change(s), with the intention to include the whole network. Moreover, the process of becoming united and coordinated concerning a sustainable strategy, will improve the level of collaboration within the network.

To maintain a more professional relation and improve the level of feedback between centre managers and retail managers, the social tie is suggested to be considerably weak. It is important to create a business culture where high level of feedback is valued to gain information, learning and knowledge on how to improve as employees and thereby as an entrepreneurial business.

Our study provides beneficial managerial implications for Steen & Strøm on how to improve their collaboration, through mapping of the network, creation of a project group and level of feedback between centre manager and retail managers. By improving collaboration, the accomplishment of specific goals and objectives will be less challenging.

5.3 Limitations

Our contacts in Steen & Strøm, 'Leasing Director' and 'Head of Maintenance and Sustainability Scandinavia', expressed a wish to expand our studies to Steen & Strøm Scandinavia. However, due to the outbreak of Covid-19 we experienced complications collecting the data from all centre managers in Scandinavia. Therefore, due to a small data set the intention to conduct both qualitative- and quantitative analysis was not realised. This made it difficult to further test the statistical significance of the hypotheses and correlation. Thus, our conceptual model and findings could not be supported by statistical significance but can be justified by the qualitative analysis and theoretical contribution.

In addition, it would be beneficial to collect longitudinal data to expose causal structures and carry out more in-depth interviews or structured interviews for the qualitative analysis. However, this research process would demand a higher budget, longer timeframe and normal market conditions (absence of Covid-19), thus this was outside the opportunity window of this thesis.

5.4 Further research

A recommendation for further research would be to include all shopping malls in Steen & Strøm Scandinavia to explore our findings, and further test additional variables' effect on sustainable collective action.

There are few studies in the field of leadership and communication in network organisations based on data from shopping mall. This study is an attempt to make a leadership and network study within a new empirical context. However, there is a need to expand the research and study other shopping malls than those owned and managed by Steen & Strøm, such as; Olav Thon gruppen, Citycon or KLP. This would give a broader and more precise view of the situation concerning

leadership, communication and network characteristics within a whole network, across businesses. There has been an increased attention to sustainable development goals among the government and businesses, and its importance continues to rise. Therefore, we believe this study will encourage to further research on this topic.

Due to a shopping mall being comprised of several individual businesses, it might be difficult to coordinate innovation and sustainability goals for Steen & Strøm, while also complying with the individual retail enterprises' goals. Hence these distinctive objectives can be interesting to further research.

Conclusion

Shopping malls have gained an increasingly important position in societies, both socially and as an economic component. However, the retail industry has been predicted to be threatened by the presence of online retail and globalisation, as both continues to rise.

Our contribution has been new and valuable insights to how leadership, communication and network characteristic in a whole network, like a shopping mall, affect innovation and thereby sustainable collective action. We found that centre managers who are trustworthy and anchor the process of change through their communication with the whole network, will affect collective action in a positive manner. The combination of possessing network characteristics like echo-chamber, weak ties and gatekeeper in a whole network, can increase the chances of diffusion of information throughout the network.

Based on these insights, we found that leadership characteristics, communication, network characteristics and innovation, has an effect on sustainable collective action in a whole network This research emphasises the importance of mapping the network structure to gain a better understanding of how the network operates. With this knowledge, the management is better equipped to understand how the whole network can achieve sustainable collective actions.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Structured interview

Steen & Strøm

Følgende spørreundersøkelse er gjeldende for en verden før koronaviruset.

Q1 Hva heter senteret du er leder for? Dersom du leder flere sentre, vennligst fyll ut ett skjema per senter.

_____

I de første spørsmålene skal vi måle senterets prioriteringer av samfunnsansvar, både mht. lokalsamfunnet man er en del av, i tillegg til ansatte, kundene og miljøet.

Q3 Vi skaper økonomisk vekst for eierne, butikkene, distributører og samfunnet som helhet.

	Svært uenig (1)	Uenig (2)	Verken/eller (3)	Enig (4)	Svært enig (5)
Velg et alternativ	○	○	○	○	○

Q4 Vårt senter støtter lokalsamfunnet, både økonomisk, sosialt og gjennom andre tiltak.

	Svært uenig (1)	Uenig (2)	Verken/eller (3)	Enig (4)	Svært enig (5)
Velg et alternativ	○	○	○	○	○

Q5 Vi skaper økonomiske muligheter for våre eiere, butikker, og for samfunnet gjennom investeringer og sysselsetting.

	Svært uenig (1)	Uenig (2)	Verken/eller (3)	Enig (4)	Svært enig (5)
Velg et alternativ	○	○	○	○	○

Q6 Sikkerheten er meget høy ved dette kjøpesenteret.

	Svært uenig (1)	Uenig (2)	Verken/eller (3)	Enig (4)	Svært enig (5)
Velg et alternativ	○	○	○	○	○

Q7 Vi følger alle Helse, - Miljø og Sikkerhet (HMS) retningslinjene på senteret.

	Svært uenig (1)	Uenig (2)	Verken/eller (3)	Enig (4)	Svært enig (5)
Velg et alternativ	○	○	○	○	○

Page Break

De neste spørsmålene omhandler kommunikasjon mellom senterleder og butikksjefene.

Q8 Hvor enig eller uenig er du i at...

	Svært uenig (1)	Uenig (2)	Verken/eller (3)	Enig (4)	Svært enig (5)
lytter til dine ansatte	○	○	○	○	○
er åpen for nye ideer	○	○	○	○	○
ansatte kan komme til deg	○	○	○	○	○
åpen for endringer	○	○	○	○	○
engasjerer og inspirerer	○	○	○	○	○
tydelig og trygg	○	○	○	○	○

Q9 Vurder hvilke fem butikksjefene du har mest kontakt med i løpet av en normal uke. Noter navnet på butikkene i prioritert rekkefølge.

○ 1 _____

○ 2 _____

○ 3 _____

○ 4 _____

○ 5 _____

Q10 Noter ca. antall år de fem butikksjefene har hatt sin stilling på senteret (bruk samme rangering som forrige svar).

◯ 1 _____

◯ 2 _____

◯ 3 _____

◯ 4 _____

◯ 5 _____

Q11 Er det betraktelig mer kommunikasjon med de fem butikksjefene i løpet av uken, sammenlignet med de andre butikksjefene?

	Nei, absolutt ikke (1)	Nei (2)	Hverken eller (3)	Ja (4)	Ja, absolutt (5)
Velg et alternativ	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q12 Hvor ofte...

	Aldri (1)	Sjelden (2)	Av og til (3)	Ofte (4)	Svært ofte (5)
Tar de fem butikksjefene opp positive og negative forhold med deg i løpet av en normal uke?	○	○	○	○	○
Tar du opp positive og negative forhold med de fem butikksjefene i løpet av en normal uke?	○	○	○	○	○
Tar de resterende butikksjefene opp positive og negative forhold med deg i løpet av en normal uke?	○	○	○	○	○
Tar du opp positive og negative forhold med de resterende butikksjefene i løpet av en normal uke?	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Sustainable people

Start of Block: Sustainable planet

De neste spørsmålene omhandler senteret sin bærekraftige vekst.

Q13 Ta stilling til de ulike utsagnene nedenfor...

	Aldri (1)	Sjelden (2)	Av og til (3)	Ofte (4)	Svært ofte (5)
Vårt senter skal være en arena for kunder som er opptatt av bærekraftig forbruk	○	○	○	○	○
Vi legger til rette for at miljø-effektene skal bli så små som mulig	○	○	○	○	○
Bærekraftig vekst har topp prioritet på senteret.	○	○	○	○	○
Generelt er det viktig for senteret med en så stor bærekraftig vekst som mulig	○	○	○	○	○
Sammenlignet med andre konkurrerende sentere, forbruker vi betydelig mindre energi	○	○	○	○	○

Q14 Hvordan har energiforbruket på senteret du styrer utviklet seg over de siste årene?

	Har økt energiforbruket svært mye (1)	Økt forbruket (2)	Omtrent samme forbruk som tidligere år (3)	Redusert energiforbruket mye (4)	Har redusert energiforbruket svært mye (5)
Velg et alternativ	○	○	○	○	○

Q15 Vi kildesorterer så mye av avfallet vårt:

	ca.0-20% (1)	ca.20-40% (2)	ca.40-60% (3)	ca.60-80% (4)	ca.80-100% (5)
Velg et alternativ	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

De neste spørsmålene omhandler intern-kommunikasjon.

Q16 Vi har mange lovende ideer om bærekraftige tiltak som vi ikke har tid og ressurser til å prøve ut.

	Svært uenig (1)	Uenig (2)	Verken/eller (3)	Enig (4)	Svært enig (5)
Velg et alternativ	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q17 Hvor ofte er de følgende forholdene diskutert internt på senteret.

	Aldri (1)	Noen ganger (2)	Av og til (3)	Ofte (4)	Alltid (5)
Introduksjon av ny profil i markedet	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ideer om nye tiltak	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Nye teknikker og rutiner	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Nye prosedyrer og praksis	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ny måte å kommunisere på i senteret	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q18 Tenk tilbake på en normal uke på senteret. I hvilken grad trues senterets eksistens gjennom følgende forhold:

	Veldig lite (1)	Lite (2)	Hverken eller (3)	Mye (4)	Veldig mye (5)
Konkurranse generelt	○	○	○	○	○
Tøff priskonkurranse	○	○	○	○	○
Konkurrentenes innovasjon og omstillingsevne	○	○	○	○	○
Butikkdød (utkonkurrering av fysiske butikker)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Competitors

Start of Block: Senterleder

Q19 Hvor lenge har du hatt lederstillingen på dette senteret?

_____

Q20 Hvilken utdanning har du?

○ Grunnskole (1)

○ Videregående skole (2)

○ Bachelorgrad (3)

○ Mastergrad (4)

Q21 Kjønn

○ Mann (1)

○ Kvinne (2)

Appendix 2: Responses from structured interviews

Q1	Shopping mall 1		Shopping mall 2		Shopping mall 3		Shopping mall 4	
Q3		4		5		4		5
Q4		4		4		5		5
Q5		4		5		4		5
Q6		4		5		3		4
Q7		4		5		4		5
Q8_1		4		5		5		5
Q8_2		4		5		4		5
Q8_3		4		5		4		5
Q8_4		4		4		4		5
Q8_5		4		4		4		4
Q8_6		4		4		4		4
Q9_1	Bik bok		Kitchn		Flying Tiger		Vita	
Q9_2	Burger King		H&M		Yes! Vileker		Taras	
Q9_3	Narvesen		Lindex		Meny		Morris	
Q9_4	Jack & Jones		Kicks		Synsam		HM	
Q9_5	Kicks		Vita		Boys of Europe		Volt	
Q10_1		4		5		2		6
Q10_2		3		8		1		6
Q10_3		1		1		3		3
Q10_4		3		2		27		1
Q10_5		5		12		10		2
Q11		4		1		3		2
Q12_1		4		2		3		3
Q12_2		4		2		2		3
Q12_3		4		2		3		4
Q12_4		4		2		2		4
Q13_1		4		4		3		3
Q13_2		4		5		5		4
Q13_3		4		4		4		4
Q13_4		4		5		4		5
Q13_5		4		5		5		4
Q14		4		5		5		4
Q15		4		5		4		4
Q16		4		4		4		4
Q17_1		4		4		3		2
Q17_2		4		4		4		4
Q17_3		4		3		4		4
Q17_4		4		3		4		4
Q17_5		4		2		2		3
Q18_1		4		4		2		4
Q18_2		4		4		3		4
Q18_3		4		3		2		2
Q18_4		4		5		3		3
Q19		5		5		23		6
Q20		4		3		3		4
Q21		2		2		1		2

Shopping mall 5	Shopping mall 6	Shopping mall 7	Shopping mall 8	Shopping mall 9
5	4	5	5	4
4	4	4	5	4
4	4	5	4	4
4	5	4	4	4
4	4	5	4	4
4	4	4	4	5
4	5	5	4	4
4	5	4	5	4
4	4	4	4	4
3	4	4	4	4
4	4	4	3	3
Tilbords	The Body Shop	Zizzi	Jams	Cubus
Intersport	Kremmerhuset	Vita	Skogstad	Intersport
Burger King	Bla Bla	Soho	Kaffemakeriet	Narvesen
Lindex	G-sport	Princess	Vic	Coop extra
La Baguette	Name IT	The Body Shop	Rema 1000	Mester Grønn
7	14	3	0,5	7
5	14	6	5	2
4	20	3	4	7
10	10	3	0,5	1,5
2	10	1	8	1
3	2	3	4	4
2	3	3	3	4
2	2	3	3	4
3	3	3	2	4
2	2	3	3	4
4	3	3	3	4
5	4	4	4	4
4	3	4	4	4
5	3	4	5	4
4	3	4	4	5
5	4	4	4	4
4	3	4	4	4
4	4	4	4	3
3	2	1	3	4
4	4	4	4	4
3	4	4	4	3
3	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3
1	2	4	3	4
2	3	3	3	3
2	2	3	4	4
2	2	3	3	5
6	7	2	1,5	3
3	3	3	2	2
1	2	2	1	1

Appendix 3: Transcript of in-depth interview & Thematic analysis

Data	Code
1. Who should the center manager include in the first steps of change management process to become a more sustainable business? S: Jeg tenker litt sånn som det Liza skriver, i forhold til hvordan det er organisert. For det er jo det som ville vært aktuelt hvis vi skal tenke vår inngang. Da ville det vært å få kontroll på det. Hvordan er strukturen deres i systemet? Hvordan pleier de å forholde seg til organisasjonsutviklingen i endringsprosesser? Jeg kjenner ikke strukturen til organisasjonen og hvordan de formelt er satt opp, men det er jo da å komme frem til en form for informasjonsflyt når de skal kommunisere ut alt de gjør. Alt fra kampanjer og tiltak som skjer, nye retningslinjer. Hvordan er det da strukturen er? Ta utgangspunkt i den. Det jeg ville gjort ideelt sett, om jeg skulle anbefale de hvordan de bør jobbe med endringsprosesser for å nå helt ut til alle som jobber der og som har sitt daglige virke så ville jeg sagt, den formelle strukturen den må involveres i første omgang. Og informeres om hva det nå er vi setter i gang med, hva skal vi gjøre, hvorfor gjør vi dette og hva er planen vår for å få det til. Også ville jeg sagt at dere bør ha en prosjektgruppe som er sammensatt, ikke ut ifra struktur men ut ifra hvilke grupperinger det er viktig for de å møte, og ha representanter fra disse. Så rett og slett hente folk fra systemet til en arbeidsgruppe/plangruppe som kan si noe og har en del forståelse for hvordan dette faktisk virker ute i virkelige og i hverdagen. Som også da kan komme med tips på hvordan man skal nå en medarbeider som jobber 50%.	Structure Structure Structure Enhanced collaboration Structure Structure Communication of information Project group Project group An understanding of how things actually work on a daily basis.
A: Så ta med de som er nærmere der hvor det faktisk skjer?	

N: Men ikke ned på selve «gulvet», at man henter ut en butikkansatt og spør om ens erfaring? S: Jo, det kunne vi gjort. Altså hvertfall 1 av den representanten. Finn 1 sånn medarbeider, men den medarbeideren kan ikke være hvem som helst. Det må være en person som evner å forstå litt av systemet og tenke litt utover og snakke ikke bare for en selv, men hvordan er det å være deltidsmedarbeider der? Og hva skal til for å treffe oss? Rett og slett satt sammen en sånn gruppe og jobbet med den. Vi har erfart at de som er på toppen sitter mye og jobber med strategiske prosesser, målsetninger og tiltak. Også vet ikke de som er nede hva som foregår, de kjenner ikke til det, også har de diskutert det masse så når de skal implementere det så vet de veldig godt hva det handler om. Også glemmer de at alle de andre ikke har vært involvert i alle disse prosessene. Sånn at det som de har sittet og jobbet med i et halvt år, det skal alle de andre forstå på en halv time. Men det går ikke, og hvertfall ikke når det gjelder et så komplekst område som bærekraft som ikke bare som en brannrutine. Du må forstå det dersom man skal klare å få det til i møte med kunden. Så er det jo de der ute som skal bære det så de må virkelig forstå hva dette handler om. Sånn at da må de involveres på en annen måte i prosessen for å få det til.	An understanding of how things actually work on a daily basis. Project group Only people at the top works with strategy and activation, knows the process. People at the bottom are not involved in the process Only people at the top works with strategy and activation, knows the process. People at the bottom are not involved in the process Time Sustainability is complex Meaningful and easy to see the direction of the organization
A: Mange tenker jo at dette er den beste måten å gjøre det på. Men er det vanskelig å få det til og faktisk utføre det? Blir det sett på som noe negativt fra ledelsens perspektiv? S: Det er ulikt og det handler mye om kultur. I Norge er jo avstanden mellom de ulike nivåene veldig lav, slik at for en medarbeider i Norge å skulle gå til en direktør er jo ikke noe kjempestort, men i Frankrike så vil det være det og da blir man mer kalt inn på teppet. I Norge har vi egentlig en modell og kultur for det, men det er vanskelig å få det til fordi at som	Structure

medarbeider blir man utfordret til å løfte ditt perspektiv og ikke bare tenke på ditt eget virke, men å se litt mer overordnet å være mer nysgjerrig på hvordan vi får det til som en organisasjon. Litt systemteoretisk tilnærming. Men vi har et ordtak at dersom alle kunne tenkt som om de satt et nivå opp ville det gjort mye mer hvordan man agerte. Så det er jo det vi prøver å få til og de moderne arbeidsliv så må man gjør det. Man driver ikke fabrikk så du kan ikke fortelle de akkurat hvilken måte man skal gjøre ting må. De må ta selvstendige valg og sånn er det for butikkarbeidere også, de må ta selvstendige valg i møte med den enkelte kunden og da må de forstå litt mer av hva det er vi prøver å få til. Og da kunne tenke litt annerledes og bruke egen kompetanse og forståelse, men da må de vite mer til det. Sånn at det er litt mer krevende å få til, men i det lange løp så har du ikke noen annen vei.	Systems Theoretical approach; lift your perspective, and be curious. meaningful and easy to see the direction of the organization Systems Theoretical approach; lift your perspective, and be curious.
2. What is important for an enhanced collaboration between the retailers? What actions could be taken to lay the foundation for collaboration? S: Forskningen viser at man må hvertfall få en viss forståelse av hva er intensjonen med det? Hva er målet? Hvorfor skal vi gjøre det? Det vi snakket om, altså et felles mål og forståelse av en felles oppgave. Og når vi har definert det, at det er av interesse, for alle butikkene å vite mer om hva de andre gjør. Da kan vi bruke hverandre mer og vi kan være mer på mot kunden og få en sammenheng. Da er det kjennskap som er faktor nummer en, de må vite mer om hverandre. Sånn at jeg må vite når den andre butikken, hvilke kampanjer de kjører eller hva som er viktig for de, sånn at jeg kan ta hensyn til det i det virke eller de prosjektene jeg begynner å dra i gang. Også nummer to er rett og slett problemløsning, hva gjør vi når problemer oppstår? Evner vi å ta tak i det? Og si at her har det blitt en feil. Den må vi finne ut av hva var det som gjorde at det skjedde, slik at vi kan	enhanced collaboration enhanced collaboration enhanced collaboration enhanced collaboration enhanced collaboration enhanced collaboration

lære og ikke reprodusere feilen. Og ikke bare skylde på hverandre og si at dere må skjerpe dere.	
A: Blir det da senterleder sitt ansvar? S: Jeg ville tenkt som senterleder at dette er viktig for meg. Så jeg ville tenkt at her må jeg ta et ansvar. Det er to avgjørende ting, kjennskap og problemløsning,. Og hvis vi har problemløsning så kan vi også finne bedre måter å samarbeide på. Også er det dette med grunnholdningen og kultur elementet, ønske om samarbeid og respekt for hverandre som er viktig. Også er det selvfølgelig informasjon og kommunikasjon. Kommunikasjon er nøkkelen, men vi må først vite hva er det vi skal kommunisere og kommunisere om? Det er nok mange som tenker at det er viktig med informasjon, men det kan bli altfor mye informasjon. Det å være mer spisset på hvilken informasjon er det vi skal få ut og hvorfor? Så når jeg får den informasjonen så vet jeg at dette er relevant for meg, ellers så forsvinner det i mengden. Så da er det den kommunikasjonen, det er ikke bare å kommunisere mer, men kommunisere bedre og mer målrettet inn mot det som vi skal få til. Og da snakker vi ikke bare om at vi skal sette oss ned å ta mer kaffe og være venner, men kommunisere godt om det man skal få til. **N: Den gruppen du snakket om, er det de du tenker skal sette seg sammen å finne ut hva som skal kommuniseres til de ansatte?** S: De er hvertfall en god representant og kan si noe om hva de trenger å vite, hva gir mening for de å vite noe om, og hvordan gjør vi det best mulig? Hvordan kan vi nå de og hvilke kanaler bruker vi? Da kan de gi gode innspill til de som er ansvarlig for dette arbeidet. For eksempel dere må gjerne sende ut en sånn mail, men det er ingen som kommer til å lese den. Hvordan gjør vi det? Er det bedre å gjennomføre et møte på 10 min, 4 ganger i løpet av en dag og da vil vi at alle skal sende 1. Dersom vi gjør det i løpet av 3 dager så vet vi at vi nesten har fått snakket med	enhanced collaboration enhanced collaboration Communication of information Meaningful and easy to see the direction of the organization An understanding of how things actually work on a daily basis. Time

<table>
<tr><td>

alle medarbeiderne her, hvertfall kanskje 80%. Og det har mye mer effekt enn masse plakater og informasjon osv. Hvis jeg som direktør kan stå å si at dette er viktig for oss, og dere er det som gjør det så får du en helt annen effekt. Man må finne de grepene i kommunikasjonen.

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3. What kind of leader approach would be best suited to ensure and encourage collaboration among retailers?

S: Da er det transformasjonsledelse som jeg ville tenkt er beste tilnærmingen. Og det tror jeg er viktig, at i en sånn tematikk må du klare å skape motivasjon hos dine medarbeidere til å faktisk gjøre det. Da nytter det ikke å bare styre ut i fra ytre insentiver og konkurranser. Det er et komplekst område og det er jo på sett og vis litt kontraproduktivt i forhold til den virksomheten som de tradisjonelt har drevet. De må få forståelse og ha en individuell interesse av å være med på dette, at det ikke bare er påtvunget.

Jan Ketil Arnhulf fra BI sa ledelse som målrettet samarbeid gjennom å gjøre det meningsfylt sier han. Det er ledelse. Og det er jo det. Det må rett og slett være meningsfylt, de må se poenget i det, også må man være tydelig med retningen man går. Sånn at det er ledelsestilnærmingen.

Column
Transformational leadership
Meaningful and easy to see the direction of the organization
Systems Theoretical approach; lift your perspective, and be curious
Meaningful and easy to see the direction of the organization

4. As a leader how do you combine all the different cultures and sustainability goals within each store, when deciding on main goals and culture for the whole shopping mall.

S: Det er en litt umulig prosess. Jeg vet ikke om dere har sett den reklamen til KLM, altså må du fly? Og neste spørsmålet er; virkelig? Også hvis du trenger transport, tenk på dette. Hvis du skal fly, tenk på dette. Vi er et flyselskap som ønsker å ta vare på jorda vår. Og det er rett og slett at jeg nesten tror de. Jeg tror ikke Norwegian eller SAS hadde våget å si

70

dette. De må ta et virkelig oppgjør. Mener vi virkelig dette eller gjør vi det ikke? Er det på strøssel å gjøre det litt sånn finere? Jeg jobbet jo i Finn før og da snakket noen av oss om at vi måtte fronte mye mer gjenbruk for Finn har jo en fantastisk posisjon, men det var Schibsted som er drevet av profitt. Men nå begynner de å gjøre det mye sterkere. Så nå begynner jeg i større grad å tro på dem. De også har en interesse av det. Jeg som forbruker får den type reklame som Norwegian har og leser Dagbladet med masse artikler om klima også er 20 sider om reisevirksomhet og annonser. Da tenker jeg at de ikke har troverdighet. Det er jo det jeg tenker er den store utfordringen for disse her også. Er det troverdig at de snakker om bærekraft? Og da må vi virkelig ta tak i det vi tenker er de store utfordringene for oss. Hva er det vi virkelig kan gjøre? Og da tenker jeg det handler både om den salgselement biten og hvordan er det de driver sentrene sine i forhold til klimatiltak og energi. Og ha medarbeidere som er oppmerksomme og bevisste på det. Og da tenker jeg vi må jobbe med ledelse. De som er eiere og om de har insentiver som går på bruk av energi og den type ting som ikke er kontraproduktive mot det som de butikkene prøver å få til. At de faktisk kan si; vi jobber for et godt salg, men vi skal gjøre det innenfor disse rammene. Kanskje er det viktige elementer? Det er en av de store utfordringene for veldig mange, å få til samsvar mellom insentivene og målene man setter seg. For de kan snakke om fine strategiske mål også har de insentiver som egentlig går i en helt annen retning. Ut i fra mitt kjennskap til salgsmiljøet er jo typisk enkle insentiver er konkurranser. At den som er best på det ene og det andre får pris. Men rett og slett at man kutter disse prisene og innfører nye som går på bruk av energi for eksempel, tiltak som går på gjenbruk, mindre plast, hvordan avfallssortering er. På UIO skal 90% av avfall bli gjenbrukt og da får man ikke søppelbøtte på kontoret ditt. Og hva er de tingene som sentrene kan gjøre for å gjøre dette. Og for eksempel Houdini har gjenbruks	Trustworthy/reliable Trustworthy/reliable Meaningful and easy to see the direction of the organization Correlation between incentives and goals Correlation between incentives and goals

stativ i alle sine butikker hvor man kan bytte et Houdini-plagg som man ikke bruker mer. Den som kommer opp med den beste ideen som kan være med å styrke fokus på bærekraft. Holde på med sånne ting som har troverdighet samtidig som vi vet at vi skal ha profitt. Vi kan ikke late som at vi ikke driver butikk.	Trustworthy/reliable
Dersom man skal få til slike insentiver må man først inn på ledelsesnivå slik at det starter tydelig hos lederne. For de må forankre og gå god for det, og forstå hva vi prøver å få til. Også kan jo en prosjektgruppe være en god idemyldring gruppe hvor de tenker gjennom hva som kan være gode insentiver for å skape dette ut? Men jeg tror at det er viktig at ledelsen gjør en ordentlig jobb i forhold til de insentivene de har og rydder opp. Og når de har fått definert det, så kan de involvere prosjektgruppen sin i hvordan man skal jobbe med dette.	Anchoring from the management

Project group

Correlation between incentives and goals

Project group |
| **5. What can be typical barriers in collaborating on the sustainability goals?**
S: De dimensjonene vi snakket om for å få til samarbeid, det er typisk mangel på det som gir lavt samarbeid. Så mangel på kjennskap og mangel på problemløsning, altså når vi er dårlige på det og skylder på hverandre. Og hvor man bare er opptatt av seg og sitt, altså som vi sier at hvis alle bare gjør jobben sin blir ikke jobben gjort. Man må tenke litt større. Og da tenker jeg endringsmotstand handler også om usikkerhet og utrygghet og hva er det dette er for noe? og hva betyr det? Og hvordan vil det påvirke min arbeidssituasjon og meg rett og slett. Så det å skape motivasjon for den utviklingen. Også er det ofte mangel på forståelse. Også tror jeg at når vi snakker om hvordan man jobber med endring så er det mange som begynner å implementere endring når de bare vet hva endringen skal være. Men vi ser i endringsledelse faget så snakker man mye om tvilen, altså få opp spørsmålene. Hvis vi kan få våre medarbeidere til å begynne å tenke på dette uten at man vet akkurat hvordan man skal gjøre det, men | Lack of knowledge and problem solving- lack of enhanced collaboration

Systems Theoretical approach; lift your perspective, and be curious

Meaningful and easy to see the direction of the organization

An understanding of how things actually work on a daily |

begynne å tenke hvordan skal vi jobbe med bærekraft hos oss på en god måte? Hva er våre utfordringer? Hvordan er det for dere i dag å stå i denne jobben? Hva kan være gode grep? Å gjøre tematikken aktuell for de som er medarbeidere. Av erfaring er det mange som ikke bryr seg så mye og da blir det bare; "åååå nå kommer nok en ting". Skal vi gjøre dette i tillegg? Men det å da prøve å få mobilisert dem mer på det.	basis.
Jeg tror at senterlederne må ha tydelig insentiver for å følge opp dette også må de legge en strukturell plan for hvordan skal vi gjøre det? Slik at det ikke bare blir enda et tiltak. Det må høyt opp i hierarkiet. Skal man få til virkelig endring så må man ha en tydelig forankring høyt opp i hierarkiet og med en tydelige ansvarsområder. Slik at det ikke blir bare snakk for den enkelte leder.	Correlation between incentives and goals Anchoring from the management
6. How do you go from a weak tie to a strong? S: Fra vår tilnærming og vår metodikk er det jo veldig nærliggende å tenke relasjonell kapasitet og da vil jeg jo først definert; hva er det vi skal samarbeide om? Hvem er det vi trenger å ha kontakt med? Dersom vi skulle gjort det ville vi gjennomført en kartlegging, i hvor stor grad opplever vi at vi har relasjoner rundt denne tematikken. Også sett på hvilke områder er det vi er svake på. Det vi helt sikkert ville fått da er kjennskap til hverandre, rett og slett arbeidssituasjon, hva er dere opptatt av? Det er lett å tenke at de er konkurrenter, men tenke at her må vi samarbeide for å få til dette. Så har vi noen felles interesser. Så da ville jeg tenkt; hvilke grep gjør vi for at de skal bygge denne kjennskapen. Så det handler om et strukturert arbeid i forhold til dette og relatert til det vi har snakket om før. Det er relasjons- utviklingsprosess. Det er ikke en quick fix, for evnen til å samarbeide om bærekraft gjenspeiler evnen til å jobbe med sentral-strategiske satsinger generelt.	Relational capacity Mapping Find the common interests Enhanced collaboration

Appendix 4: Steen & Strøm 'Act for Good'

Act for the planet

2022 Commitment

- Act for a low carbon future
- Contribute to a circular economy
- Develop a 100 % certified assets portofolio
- Innovate for sustainable mobility

2030 Ambition

> Be a recognized leader in environmental performance

> In collaboration with our retailers create a zero-waste business

> Turn promising assets into an efficient carbon-neutral property portfolio

> Support new trends in mobility to accelerate customers' switch to sustainible modes of transportation

Act for the people

2022 Commitment

- Increase visitors satisfaction
- Promote health and wellbeing
- Offer group employees positive experiences
- Champion ethics in local communities
- Be socially concious

2030 Ambition

> Make our centers a top destination for local communities

> Be recognized as an exemplary emplyer

> Promote more ethic business practicees

> Put charity at the heart of our strategy

Act for territories

2022 Commitment

- Promote local employment
- Participate in local community
- Pursuit our social citizenship
- Involve local actors in development projects

2030 Ambition

> Make our centers a benchmark in local value creation

> Incorporate social responsibillity into our sphere of influence

> Jointly develop the shopping centers of the future

Appendix 5: Steen & Strøm output of sustainability measures

Summary of performance against targets

Commitments	Target descriptions		Norway	
			2019 >	2022 Target
Act for a low carbon future	Reduced energy consumption per square meter in the common areas (vs. 2013)	>	- 26 %	- 40 %
	Percentage of renewable electricity in the consumption of the common areas (in 2018)	>	100 %	100 %
	Emporia/Fields is carbon neutral*	>	NA	NA
Contribute to a circular economy	Percentage of recovered waste	>	100 %	100 %
	Engage retailers in circular economy	>	70 %	100 %
Innovate for a sustainable mobility	Percentage of shopping centers accessible by public transportation	>	100 %	100 %
	Percentage of shopping centers equipped with charging stations for electric vehicles	>	90 %	100 %
Develop a fully certified portfolio	Percentage of centers with BREEAM in-Use certification	>	100 %	100 %
	Percentage of new developments with BREEAM Construction certification (at least "Excellent")	>	NA	100 %
	Percentage of new developments using wood from a certified forest during construction	>	NA	100 %

*common areas

Waste by destination

Norway

- ● Share of waste without energy recovery 0,29 %
- ● Share of energy recovery waste 36,75 %
- ● Share of material recovery waste 62,96 %

(Steen & Strøm, 2019)